

Georgia Gould OBE MP
Minister for School Standards
Department for Education
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Great Smith Street
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By email only to:
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26 February 2026

Dear Minister Gould,

Thank you for your letter dated 26 February about your subject content expectations for students taking GCSE qualifications in mathematics, physics and combined science from 2028.

Ofqual requires exam boards to produce GCSE exam papers that test students on the knowledge, skills and understanding set out in the Department for Education's published subject content. Prior to the pandemic, this included testing students' ability both to recall and to use specific formulae and equations in GCSE mathematics, physics and combined science exams. For exams from 2022 to 2027, however, the government confirmed that students would not have to recall these formulae and equations. Instead, given this decision and following consultation, Ofqual has required exam boards to provide the relevant formulae and equations for students to use in exams.

Your letter highlights that following the final report of the Curriculum and Assessment Review, your Department is now considering whether students should be required to memorise and recall each formula and equation in these subjects, as well as being able to apply them. I understand that your longer-term expectations will be confirmed when revised subject content for these GCSEs is developed.

Thank you for setting out the decisions you have taken as a result of this. You confirm that from 2028 and for the lifetime of current specifications in these

subjects, including any resit series and examinations in the November series, you have decided that students taking these qualifications should not have to recall but should be able to use the usual formulae and equations.

To support this change in your subject content expectations, Ofqual will now consult on adaptations to the assessment requirements for these subjects. The consultation will seek views on continuing to require exam boards to provide support materials, in the form of formulae and equation sheets, for these exams. As set out in your Department's response to the government's Curriculum and Assessment Review, I understand that you intend that new qualifications in these subjects will be first taught in either 2029 or 2030. Based on this timing, Ofqual expects the proposals set out in the consultation will apply to GCSE exams taken by students up to and including 2030 or 2031, and any resit series after that.

It is important that there is clarity for teachers and students so they know, as soon as possible, what changes will be made to the exams for which they are preparing. In view of this Ofqual's consultation will be launched on Monday 2 March and will remain open for 3 weeks until 11.45pm on Monday 23 March. Ofqual will consider all responses to the consultation and will announce its decisions as soon as possible after that.

Yours sincerely,



Sir Ian Bauckham CBE
Chief Regulator