



GCSE SURVEY 2018

UCAS

Results of the UCAS survey on higher education GCSE requirements

The last few years have seen the introduction of a range of new and reformed versions of qualifications across the UK. This reform has been extensive, encapsulating academic, vocational, and technical education, and we are seeing increased diversity of qualifications with the same title.

2017 saw the first award of GCSEs in England with numeric grades, and 2019 will see the first substantive cohort of students holding these GCSEs entering higher education. GCSEs in Wales continue to follow the A* – G GCSE grading scale, while in Northern Ireland from 2019 first award, CCEA has introduced a new nine-letter GCSE grading scale (A* – G), including **a new C* grade**.

To provide clarity on what universities and colleges intend to do in response to these changes, we surveyed all UCAS higher education providers (HEPs) in the UK about their future intentions.

It is likely that HEPs will adopt different entry requirements relating to GCSEs, and may have additional subject or grade-specific requirements for certain courses. This should be made clear to applicants as part of their published entry requirements. We would always advise that applicants review the entry requirements at a particular university or college, and for specific courses.

If you have any queries regarding this publication, please contact Amy Smith, Senior Policy Executive, at a.smith@ucas.ac.uk.



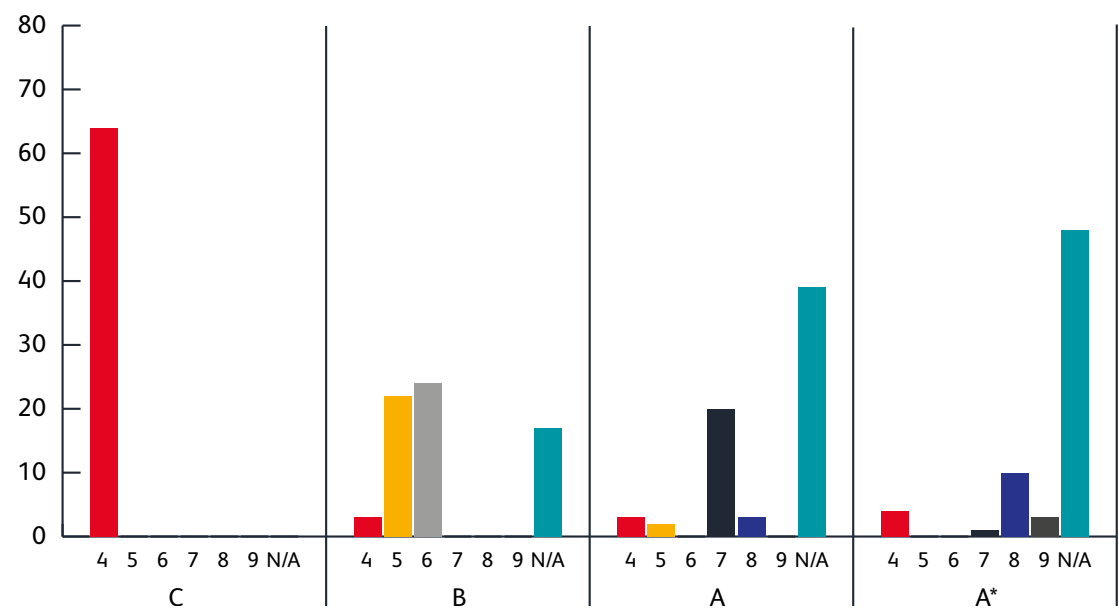
Figure 1: Survey responses to how universities and colleges are positioning their entry requirements using the numeric grading scale

The UK qualification regulators are clear that the A* – G grading scale in England and Wales, and the 9 – 1 scale, are not directly comparable. Ofqual has set anchor points between the old and new scales for qualifications in England, meaning:

- > the same proportion of students will achieve a grade 4 and above as currently achieve a C and above (the alignment being at the bottom of each grade)
- > the same proportion of students will achieve a grade 7 and above as currently achieve an A and above
- > grade 9 will be awarded to the top 20% of those who get grade 7 or above
- > the bottom of grade 1 will be aligned with the bottom of grade G

HE providers may therefore position their entry requirements differently, although it should be noted that for some courses, this may be determined by Professional, Statutory, and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs).

The graph below indicates the position for the 65 providers that responded to the survey



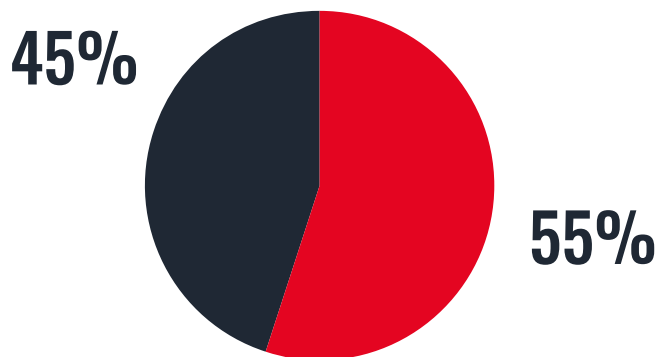
* N/A means the university or college does not have any courses with this specific GCSE requirement.

Figure 2: From 2017, English domiciled students who hold a grade 4/C in either GCSE English language or English literature, are not required to resit in Year 12/13. To meet your GCSE requirements, do you generally accept:

Achieving a GCSE grade 9 to 4, or A* to C, in both maths and English helps students progress to further study, training, and skilled employment. In England, all 16 to 19 year olds have the opportunity to continue studying maths and/or English to achieve this standard, if they have not already done so by age 16.

The condition of funding, however, means students who achieve a grade 3 and 4 in either English literature or English language, regardless of the combination, will not be required to resit the grade 3 GCSE.

In response to this, we asked HE providers how they were assessing the suitability of GCSE English qualifications for entry to their HE courses.



- GCSE English language only
- Both GCSE English language and GCSE English literature interchangeably

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Figure 3: From 2017 first award, students taking GCSEs in Wales

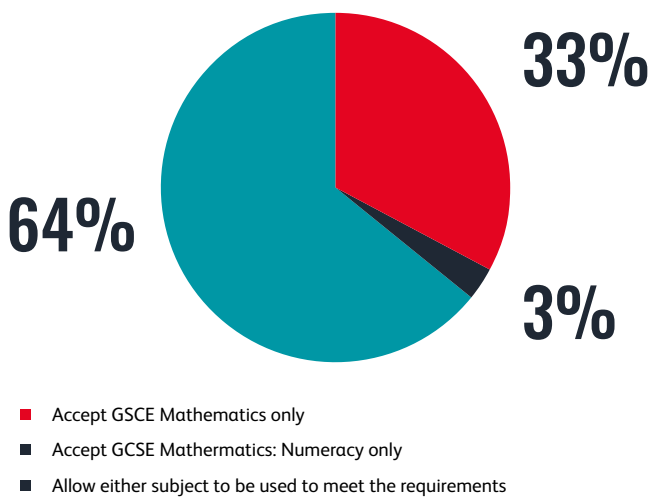
may take GCSE Mathematics only, GCSE Mathematics: Numeracy only, or both. To meet your GCSE requirements, do you generally accept:

From 2015 first teaching, students in Wales have had the opportunity to take two separate GCSEs in mathematics – GCSE Mathematics, and GCSE Mathematics: Numeracy. Qualifications Wales indicated that most students in Wales will take both, and 59% of respondents to the **UCAS qualification provision survey 2018** were offering both GCSE qualifications to all students.

The two GCSE qualifications are different, both from the previous GCSE Mathematics specification and each other, and broadly cover the following areas:

- > Mathematics: Numeracy assesses the mathematics students will need in their everyday lives, the world of work, and other general curriculum areas.
- > Mathematics extends to aspects of mathematics needed for progression to scientific, technical, or further mathematical study.

Where HE providers indicated they had a GCSE Mathematics entry requirement, we asked how they were assessing the suitability of these qualifications for entry to their HE courses.



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