# Birmingham City University: Statement on Qualification reforms in England

# What’s happening and when?

# New AS and A levels will be taught in schools in England from September 2015. Additional reformed subjects will be taught from 2016 and 2017\*. The first results for the new AS qualifications will be in 2016, with the first revised A levels being awarded in 2017.

# New GCSEs will begin to be taught in England from September 2016\*\*. Further GCSE subjects will be taught in England from 2017. The first results of the reformed GCSEs will be awarded in 2017.

# Our approach at Birmingham City University

# Birmingham City University welcomes applicants holding the new qualifications.

# We appreciate that the qualifications reforms for England can be a little daunting but would like to reassure our applicants that all qualifications, both old and new, will be considered equally and fairly by us.

# Our approach to admissions is to always carefully consider the full range of applicant information when deciding upon whether to offer someone a place. Personal statements, references, predicted and actual academic achievement – and in some cases interviews, auditions and portfolios – are all taken into account.

# We recognise that some applicants, teachers and advisors have questions about the qualification reforms and hope that the information below helps answer these.

# Students may not have AS qualifications for all of their subjects taken at A level – how do you view this?

# We understand that AS levels will not be held by all A level applicants once the AS begins to be decoupled from the A level qualification. We are clear that applicants who have not had the opportunity to take AS levels at their school or college will not be disadvantaged.

# How do you view the mix of A level qualifications that will begin to occur?

# We welcome applications with the new and old qualifications. We recognise that we will begin to see a mix of ‘old’ and ‘new’ A levels for some applicants who will be applying to us in 2016-18. We will not discriminate between different years / awards.

# How will you assess applications where AS results are unavailable?

# We look at applicants in a broad and holistic way, not simplistically. Where an applicant does not hold AS qualifications we will make our decision using the applicant’s personal statement, references, predicted and actual academic achievement (and in some cases interview, audition or portfolio).

# Will applicants taking Physics, Biology or Chemistry in England be required to pass the Practical Skills tests?

# For entry to Engineering programmes we will require a pass in the practical element of the reformed Science A Level qualifications. Applicants who fail this element will be assessed on a case by case basis.

# What’s your advice to anyone who feels they may be in a stronger position if they take an AS level in addition to three A levels?

# We advise applicants not to spread themselves too thinly and to think carefully about whether undertaking additional qualifications might harm their chances of achieving the grades required for their place.

# How do you view the mix of ‘old’ and ‘new’ GCSE qualifications that will begin to occur?

# As with A level qualifications we welcome applications with the new and old qualifications. We recognise that we will begin to see a mix of old and new GCSEs for some applicants who will be applying to us. We will not discriminate between different versions of these qualifications.

**What will be the minimum pass grade that you will accept for GCSEs?**

We will continue to accept grade ‘C’ GCSE as the minimum pass for those with the old GCSE. We will accept grade 4 as the minimum pass for those with the new GCSEs.

# Further details of the qualification reforms can be found here:

# [UCAS Qualification Reform Guidance](https://www.ucas.com/advisers/guides-and-resources/qualification-reform)

# [Ofqual Guidance](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofqual)

# Or contact us at admissions @bcu.ac.uk

# \*Reformed A levels will be available in the following subjects for first teaching from September 2015:

* Sciences: biology, chemistry, physics
* English: English language, English literature, English language and literature
* Art and design
* Business
* Computer science
* Economics
* History
* Sociology
* Psychology

Additional reformed subjects will be first taught from 2016 and 2017 in subsequent phases. These subjects are yet to be reformed – they are either in the process of being reformed or under consultation.

\*\* Reformed GCSEs will be taught in the following subjects from September 2016:

* Art and design
* Biology
* Chemistry
* Citizenship
* Computer science
* Food preparation and nutrition
* Dance
* Double award combined science
* Drama
* Geography
* History
* Modern foreign languages and ancient languages
* Music
* Physical education
* Physics
* Religious studies.

Further subjects will be revised for 2017 first teaching.