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## Qualifications covered by these regulations

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These rules **apply** to:

- new GCSE specifications introduced for first teaching in September 2009
- GCSE English, Maths and ICT specifications introduced for first teaching in September 2010
- GCSE Science specifications for first teaching in September 2011.

These rules **do not apply** to:

- outgoing GCSE specifications
- A-level specifications
- any other qualifications.

## 2 Main features

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- The new GCSE specifications are modular or ‘unitised’. In other words, they are made up of individual units
- Each unit is assessed by either a written exam or controlled assessment
- Units can be taken during or at the end of the course
- Different units can be taken at different tiers
- Candidates must be entered for each of the units which contribute towards the overall subject award
- Entries for the overall subject award (known as certification) are usually made in the terminal exam series (at the end of the course)

## 3 Terminal rules

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- For all revised GCSEs (including short course, full course and double awards) at least 40 % of the assessment must be taken in the final exam series
- This rule applies to all subjects and all awarding body specifications
- Terminal assessment can be either written exam, controlled assessment or both
- Terminal assessment must comprise between 40 % and 100 % of the total assessment
- Some individual units form exactly 40 % of the total assessment but many have lower or higher percentage weightings

The final grade includes the results of the units which meet the terminal rule. If a re-sit unit(s) forms part of the 40 % terminal requirement, the result for that unit(s) will be used to calculate the final grade, **even if it is lower than in an earlier attempt.**

## 4 Re-sit rules

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- One re-sit is allowed for each unit
- A tiered unit can only be re-taken once, either at the same tier or at a different tier
- Options within a unit count as different units for re-sit purposes
- The better result counts towards the final grade **but**, if a unit constitutes part of the 40% terminal requirement, the most recent result will be used
- Candidates can re-take the whole qualification by:
  - re-sitting all units
  - or
  - re-sitting some units and re-using previous results for others.
 In either case, the 40% terminal requirement must be met
- If there is more than one valid combination of results, we will generate the best grade from the unit results available

### Re-sitting controlled assessment units

Candidates who re-sit a controlled assessment unit may make another attempt at the task previously submitted, provided the task is still appropriate to the year of submission. **However, the work submitted for assessment must be entirely new.** Candidates cannot amend the work they previously submitted but may re-use the research they carried out previously.

For further information, see the JCQ *Instructions for conducting controlled assessments*.

## 5 Certification (also known as cash-in)

- You can make certification entries when candidates have been entered for all required units – usually in the final entry series
- Certification is not automatic; it is not triggered by a valid combination of unit entries but by you submitting the specified subject award code
- Without the certification entry we will not issue subject grades for your candidates
- First certification of the new GCSEs was/is available:
  - in 2010 for short course (where possible)
  - in June 2011 for full course awards

There are special rules for candidates who complete all units **before** June 2011. They may defer certification to June 2011 provided that the terminal requirement was satisfied in an earlier series. Contact our Entry Exceptions team if you have any queries about this.

- For the new GCSE specifications in English, Maths and ICT, first certification is available in June 2012 for full course awards. First certification in the ICT short course is June 2011
- First certification for the new GCSE Science specifications, for first teaching from September 2011, will be in June 2013. *Further information will be available from September 2011*

### 5 Certification

## 6 Rules for transition between outgoing specifications and new specifications

- We cannot transfer credit from outgoing specifications to new specifications. This means that candidates can't combine units from outgoing specifications with units from new specifications to gain a GCSE qualification
- Please check information about assessment arrangements during the transition to new specifications, including final re-sit opportunities for outgoing specifications

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**Transition between outgoing and new specifications**

## 7 Practical examples

- GCSE Art and Design comprises two units:  
Unit 1 = 60 %  
Unit 2 = 40 %  
Either unit, if taken in the series in which the candidate is certificating, satisfies the 40 % terminal rule

Each subject is made up of two, three or four units (one unit for some short courses).

Each unit has its own percentage weighting. You need this information to check that your entries comply with the 40 % terminal rule.

- GCSE Geography B comprises four units:  
Unit 1 = 25 %    Unit 3 = 25 %  
Unit 2 = 25 %    Unit 4 = 25 %  
(controlled assessment)

To satisfy the 40 % terminal rule, at least two units must be taken in the series in which the candidate is certificating

You will find the information in '*Entry codes – All Examination series 2010–2011*' and in the subject specifications.

### 7 Practical examples

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## Entry codes booklet – Geography B (Specification 4035)

The weightings for each unit are given in the Entry codes booklet.

GEOGRAPHY B FULL COURSE and SHORT COURSE				SERIES AVAILABILITY 2010-2011		Weighting %			MAX UM
				Jan 2011 1A11	June 2011 6G11	SC	FC	DA	
Specification Code:	4035	QAN: Full Course:	50046676	ENTRY CODE					
Basedata Group Code:	4035	QAN: Short Course:	50046548						
Classification Code:	3910								
Unit 1	Managing places in the 21st century	Foundation Tier	40351F	✓	✓	50	25		69
		Higher Tier	40351H	✓	✓	50	25		100
Unit 2	Hostile world	Foundation Tier	40352F	✓	✓		25		69
		Higher Tier	40352H	✓	✓		25		100
Unit 3	Investigating the shrinking world	Foundation Tier	40353F	✗	✓		25		69
		Higher Tier	40353H	✗	✓		25		100
Unit 4	Local investigation including fieldwork and geographical issue Investigation	Controlled Assessment	40354	✗	✓	50	25		100
Subject Award: Full Course									
40351F or 40351H + 40352F or 40352H + 40353F or 40353H + 40354			4037	✗	✓				400
Subject Award: Short Course									
40351F or 40351H + 40354			4036	✓	✓				200

### 7 Practical examples

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## Example 1

### Geography B (Specification 4035)

This candidate is taking AQA Geography B which is a four unit GCSE. She re-sits unit 2 and achieves a lower UMS than on her first attempt. As this re-sit unit, together with unit 4, forms part of the 40% terminal requirement, the mark must be used to calculate the overall grade.

Series	Unit 1 25 %	Unit 2 25 %	Unit 3 25 %	Unit 4 25 %	Certification (100 %)
January 2011	65				
June 2011		60	70		
January 2012					
June 2012		55		80	270



This re-sit UMS is lower than the previous attempt *but* it must be used towards the overall grade because the unit forms part of the 40% terminal requirement.

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## 7 Practical examples

## Example 2

### Geography B (Specification 4035)

This candidate is also taking AQA Geography B which is a four unit GCSE. He re-sits units 1 and 2. In unit 1 he achieves a higher UMS than on his first attempt. In unit 2 he achieves a lower UMS than on his first attempt. As there are potentially 3 units to satisfy the 40% terminal rule, the units with the higher UMS will be used to calculate the overall grade.

Series	Unit 1 25 %	Unit 2 25 %	Unit 3 25 %	Unit 4 25 %	Certification (100 %)
January 2011	50				
June 2011		60	70		
January 2012					
June 2012	55	50		80	265



As units 1 and 4 satisfy the 40% terminal requirement, the higher UMS in June 2011 will be used to calculate the overall grade.

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## 7 Practical examples

## 8 Top tips

- Ensure regular communication between the Senior Leadership Team, subject teachers and the exams office
- Ensure teachers are aware of the rules and the implications for their subject
- Encourage staff to plan ahead and schedule assessments to comply with the 40% rule
- Have a system for tracking which units students are taking and when
- Use the Entry codes booklet to check percentage weightings of each unit for individual subjects
- Ensure staff are aware of the risk of unnecessary re-sits if the 40% rule isn't met
- Check and act on any potential award and unsubstantiated entry reports
- If you have any queries contact Exams Office Support on **0844 209 6614**

## 9 Frequently Asked Questions

**Q** Can we decline GCSE grades?

**A** No. It is not possible after results have been published.

**Q** Can we apply for late certifications?

**A** Yes. You have until the closing date for post-results services to make any late certification entries.

**Q** Can we claim retrospective late awards after the closing date for post-results services?

**A** Yes, provided the candidate has met the terminal requirement in the series claimed. Late award fees will apply.

**Q** How long do unit results remain valid?

**A** They are valid for the shelf life of the specification.

**Q** What if a candidate is absent?

**A** It doesn't count as an attempt at that unit. It is the result, not the entry that counts.

**Q** What if a candidate has taken more units than they need?

**A** We will look at the combination of unit results and generate the best possible grade.

**Q** Will you alert us to any problems with entry combinations for individual students?

**A** Yes. We will send you potential award reports or unsubstantiated reports which we have revised to recognise the 40% rule for new specifications

**Q** Do all subject specifications have the same number of units?

**A** No, the number of units and their weightings vary from subject to subject.

**Q** Where can we find information about the new GCSEs?

**A** Information is provided in the Entry codes booklet and the Entry Procedures online document. Details of the assessment model are given in the subject specifications to enable teachers to determine how they schedule assessments.

**Q** Where can I find information about controlled assessment?

**A** Details of controlled assessment units can be found as follows:

[aqa.org.uk/controlled-assessment](http://aqa.org.uk/controlled-assessment)

[aqa.org.uk/ca-guide-for-eos](http://aqa.org.uk/ca-guide-for-eos)

[aqa.org.uk/ca-leaflet](http://aqa.org.uk/ca-leaflet)

[aqa.org.uk/controlled-assessment-leaflets](http://aqa.org.uk/controlled-assessment-leaflets)

<http://www.jcq.org.uk/attachments/published/1125/ICA.%202010%2D2011.doc>

Controlled assessment tasks are in the Secure Key Materials area of e-AQA.

**Q** When are unit assessment opportunities available?

**A** January and June for most subjects but please check the entries information for details of individual subjects.

**Q** Can a candidate re-sit a controlled assessment unit?

**A** Yes. They can make another attempt at a previously submitted task, provided the task is still appropriate to the year of submission. However, they cannot amend work previously submitted, the work they present must be entirely new.

## 10 Other sources of information on new GCSEs

[aqa.org.uk/](http://aqa.org.uk/)

*Entry codes – All examination series 2010–2011*

[aqa.org.uk/entry-procedure-codes](http://aqa.org.uk/entry-procedure-codes)

*Entry Procedures – All examination series 2010–2011*

[aqa.org.uk/entry-procedures](http://aqa.org.uk/entry-procedures)