

Introduction

Most of the new GCSE specifications are unitised, with candidates taking individual assessment units throughout the course and Uniform Marks (UM) being used to 'cash-in' results.

Once the candidate has completed all of their units they 'cash-in' their results to obtain a final GCSE award.

With these new GCSE specifications there are new rules that ensure a 'level playing field' for all candidates and determine which units are used towards the final GCSE award.

Click on the buttons below to be taken to a summary of the particular rule, examples of how the rules are implemented, or links to more detailed documents.

There is a 'Home' button in the bottom right hand corner of each page that will return you to this menu. There are other buttons on some of the later pages which will take you to the menu indicated. The '<' and '>' buttons will take you to the previous or next page respectively.

- When a GCSE New Specification award is claimed, at least 40% of the award must be done at the time the award is claimed.
- Weightings of units (i.e. the percentage a unit contributes to the final award) are given in the [Entry Codes](#) booklet.
- **Caution** - there are different weightings for different units and obviously the weightings change according to the qualification (full course, short course, or double award) for which they are used.
- The results for the units that satisfy the 40% terminal requirement will be used in certification, even if there is a better mark for an earlier attempt.
- If a candidate is absent from a unit which satisfies the 40% terminal requirement they will receive a uniform mark of zero for that unit. The unit will still be used towards the subject award.
- Centres will be sent reports alerting them to any problems concerning the 40% terminal requirement:
 - The *Certification Warning Report (Unsubstantiated)* report which lists candidates who do not satisfy the minimum requirement for the subject award.
 - Pre-emptive reports showing where the 40% terminal requirement cannot be satisfied without further re-sit entries.
- If the 40% terminal requirement is not satisfied then the award cannot be claimed and will be 'Unsubstantiated'.
- If the 40% terminal requirement is not satisfied then an entry will need to be made in order to satisfy it, or the award withdrawn.

- Units can be re-sat only once before certification i.e. 2 attempts at any unit are allowed before certification.
- For tiered units candidates can only re-sit the unit once regardless of the tier. They are not allowed to have 2 attempts at each tier before certification.
- Options within the same unit are considered separate for re-sit purposes i.e. 2 attempts at each option are allowed before certification.
- If a candidate is absent they will not be considered to have used up one of their attempts. A uniform mark of zero will be recorded for absent candidates.
- The better mark will be used for certification, provided that the 40% terminal requirement has been satisfied (see the 40% terminal requirement summary).
- After certification the award can be re-taken by simply re-sitting the desired units and re-using other units. The better mark from the **2 most recent attempts** will be used when certificating, provided that the 40% terminal requirement is satisfied.

- The best available marks will be used, provided that the 40% terminal requirement is satisfied (see 40% Terminal Requirement and Re-sit rules summary sheets).
- A result for a unit can only count towards one GCSE award title e.g. if there is a common unit for Business and Economics then a result for the common unit can only be used to count towards one award.
- Short Courses can be 'topped up' to Full Courses and Full Courses can be 'topped up' to Double Awards i.e. the units used in the smaller award remain available for use in the larger award.
- Short Courses, Full Courses and Double Awards can all be claimed at the same time but the 40% terminal requirement must be satisfied for all awards **including** the smaller award(s).

[40% Terminal Requirement](#)

[Re-sit Restrictions](#)

[Cashing-in](#)

[Miscellaneous](#)

40% Terminal Requirement

- ★ [What is the 40% terminal requirement?](#)
- ★ [Is it possible to take more than 40% at the end of the course?](#)
- ★ [What is a weighting and how do I know what makes up 40%?](#)
- ★ [Do weightings always remain the same?](#)
- ★ [What if the candidate has satisfied the 40% terminal requirement on more than one occasion before June 2012?](#)

Re-sit Restrictions

- ★ [How many times can a candidate sit a unit?](#)
- ★ [Can a candidate re-sit units at different tiers?](#)
- ★ [How do the re-sit rules apply to different options within the same unit?](#)
- ★ [Can a candidate re-sit the whole award again?](#)
- ★ [What happens if a candidate is absent?](#)

Cashing-in

- ★ *When can a candidate claim an award?*
- ★ *Will the best results be used in an award?*
- ★ *What happens if a candidate is absent?*
- ★ *What do we do if the candidate was not entered for the award code?*
- ★ *If a candidate claims a Short Course award can they 'top up' to a Full Course award?*
- ★ *Can a candidate claim a Short Course, Full Course and Double Award at the same time?*
- ★ *If a candidate has sat all Short Course units in a previous series can the Short Course award be claimed in a later series?*
- ★ *Is it necessary to decline a previous GCSE award before re-claiming the award following re-sits?*
- ★ *If a candidate has sat all necessary Full Course award units before the first opportunity for certification is it possible for them to claim an award in a later series?*
- ★ *A candidate satisfies the requirements for a subject award but does not claim it. The candidate then re-sits some units and claims the award in a later series. This award has a poorer grade than if they had claimed it at their first attempt. Is the candidate able to claim the previous, better, award retrospectively?*

Miscellaneous

- ★ [How long do unit results remain available for?](#)
- ★ [Does a candidate have to stick to a particular tier of entry?](#)
- ★ [To which specifications do these new rules apply?](#)
- ★ [Is it possible to transfer credit from an outgoing GCSE specification to a new GCSE specification?](#)
- ★ [Is it possible to transfer GCSE units or grades between awarding bodies?](#)
- ★ [Is there any official documentation on these new rules that I can refer to?](#)

40% Terminal Requirement

- **What is the 40% terminal requirement?**

It is a requirement of the new GCSE specifications. It states that at least 40% of the assessment must be taken at the same time as final certification for the subject award.

- **Is it possible to take more than 40% at the end of the course?**

Yes. Provided the units are available a candidate could take 100% of the assessment at the time when final certification is applied for. However, they must take at least 40% otherwise they will not be able to receive an award.

- **What is a weighting and how do I know what makes up 40%?**

The weighting is the percentage that a unit contributes to the final award. The weightings of individual units, together with their availability, are detailed in the AQA [Entry Codes](#) booklet.

- **Do weightings always remain the same?**

No. The weightings will change from one size of award to another. For example, Short Course awards are half the size of Full Course awards. If we consider a unit that can contribute to both the Short Course and the Full Course awards, the weighting of the unit, when used towards the Short Course award, will halve when it is used towards a Full Course award. Similarly, unit weightings will change between Full Course and Double Awards. The AQA [Entry Codes](#) booklet should be referred to for full details of weightings of units.

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- **What if the candidate has satisfied the 40% terminal requirement on more than one occasion before June 2012?**

In such cases, e.g. where a candidate has satisfied the terminal requirements but has not been able to claim a Full Course award in June 2011 and/or January 2012 and enters again in June 2012, then the best subject award from those 2 or 3 series will be awarded.

Re-sit Restrictions

▪ How many times can a candidate sit a unit?

The new GCSE specifications allow candidates to re-sit a unit once before certification i.e. the candidate can take a unit twice before certification.

Once the award has been certificated then the candidate can have up to a further 2 attempts at the unit before they have to certificate again. Of course the 40% terminal requirement still holds for certification purposes.

▪ Can a candidate re-sit units at different tiers?

Yes they can but they can only re-sit the unit once at either tier before certification i.e. they cannot have 2 attempts at each tier of a unit before certification. The better available mark will be used in any awards, providing that the 40% terminal requirement and re-sit rules have been met.

▪ How do the re-sit rules apply to different options within the same unit?

Options within an assessment unit (e.g. 40401A and 40401B in History A unit 1) and optional units (e.g. any unit in Religious Studies A) are treated as separate units with regard to re-sits i.e. 2 attempts are allowed at each option or optional unit before certification.

However, where there is an on-screen and paper-based version of a unit (e.g. 45201 and 45201S in ICT unit 1) only 2 attempts are allowed before certification i.e. 2 attempts are not allowed at each version of the unit before certification, similar to re-sitting a unit at different tiers.

▪ Can a candidate re-sit the whole award again?

Yes. An award (qualification) can be taken more than once by the candidate either re-sitting all units or just re-sitting some units and re-using previous results, providing that the 40% terminal requirement and re-sit rules are satisfied. When an award is re-taken the candidate may have up to 2 further attempts at a unit but only the better of the last 2 attempts will be used in the final certification. Of course the 40% terminal requirement still needs to be satisfied.

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- **What happens if a candidate is absent?**

If a candidate is absent from the examination of a unit then they are not considered to have used up an attempt at that unit. For the purposes of certification the candidate will receive a mark of zero for any unit for which they were absent. Please note that if a candidate is absent from a unit that satisfies the 40% terminal requirement then that mark of zero must be used towards the overall subject award and the overall uniform mark will be correspondingly lower.

Cashing-in

▪ **When can a candidate claim an award?**

The new GCSE specifications are unitised i.e. the overall subject awards are made up of individual units. Entry for the subject award must be made in the same series or season as those units which satisfy the 40% terminal requirement.

Candidates are eligible for a subject award when they have entries and/or results for a valid combination of units and for the final award code. Both the new 40% terminal requirement and re-sit rules still apply. Full details of the requirements for subject awards are given in the AQA [Entry Codes](#) booklet.

▪ **Will the best results be used in an award?**

Provided that the 40% terminal requirement and re-sit rules have been satisfied then the best results will be used in the final award. The best grade possible will be awarded to the candidate even if:

- They have taken more units than are necessary
- There is more than one valid combination of units to give an award
- They have taken units at different tiers

Please note that if a unit result satisfies the 40% terminal requirement then it must be used in the award. Where a re-sit attempt for a unit is not integral to the 40% terminal requirement being satisfied, then the better result of the 2 most recent attempts will be used in the subject award.

▪ **What happens if a candidate is absent?**

If a candidate is absent from the examination of a unit then they are not considered to have used up an attempt at that unit. For the purposes of certification the candidate will receive a mark of zero for any unit for which they were absent. Please note that if a candidate is absent from a unit that satisfies the 40% terminal requirement then that mark of zero must be used towards the overall subject award and the overall uniform mark will be correspondingly lower.

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▪ **What do we do if the candidate was not entered for the award code?**

Late Awards are allowed to be claimed free of charge (40% terminal requirement and re-sit rules permitting) in a specified period after the publication of results, usually up to the last date for enquiries about results. After this date requests for late awards will be considered on an exceptional basis only, but those agreed will incur a fee as detailed in the [Entry Fees and Other Charges](#) booklet.

Requests for late awards should be submitted, on the *Late Request for Subject Awards* form (which is available on the Secure Key Materials area of e-AQA), to AQA Entry Exceptions, Stag Hill House, Guildford, GU2 7XJ or faxed on Fax 01483 303 968.

▪ **If a candidate claims a Short Course award can they ‘top up’ to a Full Course award?**

Yes, the units already taken remain available for inclusion in a future award, providing that the 40% terminal requirement and re-sit rules are satisfied. The candidate can simply take the additional units that they need to complete the Full Course. The same applies to a candidate moving from Full Course to Double Award.

▪ **Can a candidate claim a Short Course, Full Course and Double Award at the same time?**

Yes they can but the 40% terminal requirement and re-sit rules have to be satisfied for each award.

▪ **If a candidate has sat all Short Course units in a previous series can the Short Course award be claimed in a later series?**

The award can be claimed but the 40% terminal requirement must be satisfied in the later series. Alternatively, the centre could request a late award for the series in which the 40% terminal requirement was satisfied. Such requests for late awards will be considered on an exceptional basis only and those agreed will incur a fee as detailed in the [Entry Fees and Other Charges](#) booklet.

Requests for late awards should be submitted on the *Late Request for Subject Awards* form (which is available on the Secure Key Materials area of e-AQA) to AQA Entry Exceptions, Stag Hill House, Guildford, GU2 7XJ or faxed on Fax 01483 303 968.

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- **Is it necessary to decline a previous GCSE award before re-claiming the award following re-sits?**

GCSE awards cannot be declined. This does not prohibit the re-claiming of an award following re-sits, provided that the 40% terminal requirement and re-sit rules are adhered to.

- **If a candidate has sat all necessary Full Course award units before the first opportunity for certification is it possible for them to claim an award in a later series?**

Yes. For example, if first certification is available in June 2012 but units have been available prior to this series, then as an exception to the general rule (where 40% of the assessment must be done at the same time as final certification) and in **June 2012 only** the candidate may apply for the Full Course award, provided that the 40% terminal requirement was satisfied in a previous series.

For example, where certification is deferred from June 2011 to June 2012 the determination of the grade will require that the terminal requirement was satisfied in June 2011 i.e. the examination series in which the award would have been requested had it been available.

In this example, no results that post-date the June 2011 series would be available for inclusion in the June 2012 award.

A similar exception will be applied to those candidates studying the new GCSE sciences who have completed units for a specification and satisfied the 40% terminal requirement in June 2012 (or January 2013) but where first certification for that specification is only available in June 2013.

- **A candidate satisfies the requirements for a subject award but does not claim it. The candidate then re-sits some units and claims the award in a later series. This award has a poorer grade than if they had claimed it at their first attempt. Is the candidate able to claim the previous, better, award retrospectively?**

Yes if the request was granted and provided that the 40% terminal requirement and re-sit rules were satisfied in the earlier series. The centre would need to write to Entry Exceptions, Stag Hill House, Guildford, GU2 7XJ or Fax 01483 303 968 to request this and would have to pay a late award fee of £39.65 per subject award per candidate if the request was granted.

Miscellaneous

▪ **How long do unit results remain available for?**

The unit results remain valid and available for inclusion in any future award for as long as the shelf-life of the specification. However, any future subject award must use the results of those units which satisfy the 40% terminal requirement for that award.

▪ **Does a candidate have to stick to a particular tier of entry?**

No. Candidates can take different units at different tiers but the maximum uniform mark available for Foundation tier is lower than that for Higher tier. The best available uniform mark will be used in any awards, providing that the 40% terminal requirement and re-sit rules have been satisfied.

▪ **To which specifications do these new rules apply?**

These new rules apply only to the following:

- New GCSE specifications for first teaching from September 2009
- New GCSE Maths, English and ICT for first teaching from September 2010
- New GCSE Science for first teaching from September 2011

They do not apply to outgoing GCSE specifications or to any other qualification (GCE AS, A-level, IGCSE etc.).

▪ **Is it possible to transfer credit from an outgoing GCSE specification to a new GCSE specification?**

No. AQA cannot transfer credit from previous or outgoing GCSE specifications to new GCSE specifications and it will not be possible for candidates to combine units from previous or outgoing and new specifications to make up a GCSE qualification.

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- **Is it possible to transfer GCSE units or grades between awarding bodies?**

Individual GCSE units cannot be transferred from one awarding body to another. Additionally it is not permissible for candidates to transfer an award e.g. a GCSE Short Course award, from one awarding body to another. Units from a GCSE Short Course award cannot be transferred from one awarding body to another in order to enable the candidate to 'top up' units for a Full Course award.

- **Is there any official documentation on these new rules that I can refer to?**

Yes. See the [Links](#) section of this document.

Further details of these new rules are given in the following documents:

[JCQ Notice - Rules for new GCSE specifications: Terminal requirements, re-sits and cashing-in](#)

[GCSE Administrative Procedures 2010-11](#) (Section 5)

[Entry Procedures All Exam Series 2010-11](#) (Sections 15 and 16)

▪ **Example 1 (using a 4 unit GCSE with all units equally weighted at 25% each):**

The table below shows the results gained by a candidate who re-sits units 1 and 2 and then cashes-in their GCSE award in June 2011. The weightings of each unit are given in brackets.

Series	Unit 1 (25%)	Unit 2 (25%)	Unit 3 (25%)	Unit 4 (25%)	Final Award (100%)
Jan 2010	50				
June 2010		60			
Jan 2011			70	80	
June 2011	55	50			255

June 2011 award – the shaded units have been used in the final award:

Unit 1 - June 2011 attempt must be used as this satisfies the 40% terminal requirement (coincidentally it is also the better mark of the 2 most recent attempts).

Unit 2 - June 2011 attempt must be used even though it is a poorer result than the June 2010 attempt as it satisfies the 40% terminal requirement.

Unit 3 - Jan 2011 attempt used as this is the only attempt.

Unit 4 - Jan 2011 attempt used as this is the only attempt.

▪ **Example 2a (using a 4 unit GCSE with all units equally weighted at 25% each):**

The table below shows the results gained by a candidate who re-sits unit 1 and cashes-in their GCSE award in June 2012. The candidate then re-sits and cashes-in again in June 2013, as shown in example 2b. The weightings of each unit are given in brackets.

Series	Unit 1 (25%)	Unit 2 (25%)	Unit 3 (25%)	Unit 4 (25%)	Final Award (100%)
Jan 2011	70				
June 2011		60	70		
June 2012	50			65	245

June 2012 award – the shaded units have been used in the final award:

Unit 1 - June 2012 attempt must be used as this, together with unit 4, satisfies the 40% terminal requirement. The better result from January 2011 cannot be used as this would mean that the 40% terminal requirement would not be satisfied.

Unit 2 - June 2011 attempt used as this is the only attempt.

Unit 3 - June 2011 attempt used as this is the only attempt.

Unit 4 - June 2012 attempt used as this is the only attempt and also satisfies the 40% terminal requirement.

▪ **Example 2b (using a 4 unit GCSE with all units equally weighted at 25% each):**

Following on from Example 2a the candidate has re-sat units 2 and 3 and cashed-in again for the subject award in June 2013. The results from units used in the June 2012 award remain available for use in the June 2013 award but the 40% terminal requirement still has to be satisfied. The weightings of each unit are given in brackets.

Series	Unit 1 (25%)	Unit 2 (25%)	Unit 3 (25%)	Unit 4 (25%)	Final Award (100%)
Jan 2011	70				
June 2011		60	70		
June 2012	50			65	245
June 2013		55	68		258

June 2013 award – the shaded units have been used in the final award:

Unit 1 - January 2011 attempt used as this is the better result of the 2 most recent attempts and the 40% terminal requirement is now satisfied by units 2 and 3.

Unit 2 - June 2013 attempt must be used as this, together with unit 3, satisfies the 40% terminal requirement. The better result from June 2011 cannot be used as this would mean that the 40% terminal requirement would not be satisfied.

Unit 3 - June 2013 attempt must be used as this, together with unit 2, satisfies the 40% terminal requirement. The better result from June 2011 cannot be used as this would mean that the 40% terminal requirement would not be satisfied.

Unit 4 - June 2012 attempt used as this is the only attempt.

Note:

For the June 2013 award units 2 and 3 from June 2013 have to be used as they satisfy the 40% terminal requirement. This now allows the better result from the 2 most recent attempts for unit 1 from January 2011 to be used in the final award, resulting in a better UMS score for the subject award.

▪ **Example 3a (using a 4 unit GCSE with all units equally weighted at 25% each):**

The table below shows the results gained by a candidate who re-sits units 1 and 2 and cashes-in their GCSE award in January 2012. The candidate then re-sits and cashes-in again in June 2012, as shown in example 3b. The weightings of each unit are given in brackets.

Series	Unit 1 (25%)	Unit 2 (25%)	Unit 3 (25%)	Unit 4 (25%)	Final Award (100%)
Jan 2011	65				
June 2011		55	65	80	
January 2012	55	60			260

January 2012 award – the shaded units have been used in the final award:

Unit 1 - January 2012 attempt must be used even though it is a poorer result than the January 2011 attempt as it satisfies the 40% terminal requirement.

Unit 2 - January 2012 attempt must be used as it satisfies the 40% terminal requirement.

Unit 3 - June 2011 attempt used as this is the only attempt.

Unit 4 - June 2011 attempt used as this is the only attempt.

▪ **Example 3b (using a 4 unit GCSE with all units equally weighted at 25% each):**

In this example the candidate has taken units 1 and 2 for a third time and cashed-in again in June 2012. The results used in the January 2012 award remain available for inclusion in the June 2012 award but the 40% terminal requirement still has to be satisfied. The weightings of each unit are given in brackets.

Series	Unit 1 (25%)	Unit 2 (25%)	Unit 3 (25%)	Unit 4 (25%)	Final Award (100%)
Jan 2011	65				
June 2011		55	65	80	
January 2012	55	60			260
June 2012	61	59	63		265

June 2012 Award - shaded units used

Unit 1 - June 2012 attempt must be used as it satisfies the 40% terminal requirement and is also the better result from the 2 most recent attempts. Using this result to satisfy the 40% terminal requirement, rather than the June 2012 attempt at unit 3, will give the best UMS score for the subject award.

Unit 2 - June 2012 attempt must be used as it satisfies the 40% terminal requirement. Also, using this result to satisfy the 40% terminal requirement, rather than the June 2012 attempt at unit 3, will give the best UMS score for the subject award.

Unit 3 - June 2011 attempt used as this is the better result from the 2 most recent attempts and the June 2012 attempt is not needed to satisfy the 40% terminal requirement or to give the best UMS score for the subject award – see units 1 and 2 above.

Unit 4 - June 2011 attempt used as this is the only attempt.

The best subject award UMS score possible is achieved with the 40% terminal requirement and re-sit rules being satisfied.

▪ **Example 4a (Short Course award ‘topped up’ to Full Course in Example 4b):**

The table below shows the results for a candidate taking the units required for a Short Course award and attaining that award in June 2011. The candidate then ‘tops up’ their Short Course award to a Full Course award in June 2012 as shown in example 4b.

The weightings for the units are shown in the top two rows of the table. Note how the units’ weightings change when moving from the Short Course to the Full Course.

The units required for each award are as follows:

Short Course Award (SC) = Unit 1 + Unit 2

Full Course Award (FC) = Unit 1 + Unit 2 + Unit 3 + Unit 4

Series	Unit 1	Unit 2	Unit 3	Unit 4	Final Award
% Weightings (SC)	40	60	n/a	n/a	100
% Weightings (FC)	20	30	20	30	100
Jan 2011	60	85			
June 2011		80			140 (SC)

June 2011 Short Course Award – the shaded units have been used in the final award:

Unit 1 - January 2011 attempt is used as this is only attempt.

Unit 2 - June 2011 attempt must be used even though it is the poorer mark of the 2 most recent attempts as it satisfies the 40% terminal requirement for the Short Course award.

▪ **Example 4b (Short Course award from Example 4a ‘topped up’ to Full Course award):**

In this example the candidate has re-taken units 1 and 2 and ‘topped up’ their Short Course award from June 2011 (see example 4a) by taking units 3 and 4 to attain a Full Course award in June 2012.

Series	Unit 1	Unit 2	Unit 3	Unit 4	Final Award
% Weightings (SC)	40	60	n/a	n/a	100
% Weightings (FC)	20	30	20	30	100
Jan 2011	60	85			
June 2011		80			140 (SC)
Jan 2012		82			
June 2012	58		75	80	297 (FC)

June 2012 Full Course Award – the shaded units have been used in the final award:

Unit 1 - Jan 2011 attempt used as this is the better result of the 2 most recent attempts and the 40% terminal requirement is satisfied by units 3 and 4.

Unit 2 - Jan 2012 attempt used as this is the better result of the 2 most recent attempts and the 40% terminal requirement is satisfied by units 3 and 4. The unit can be taken for a third time in January 2012 because the Short Course award was gained in a previous series.

Unit 3 - June 2012 attempt used as this is the only attempt and also satisfies the 40% terminal requirement.

Unit 4 - June 2012 attempt used as this is the only attempt and also satisfies the 40% terminal requirement.