

EDEXCEL INTERNATIONAL ADVANCED LEVELS FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL CENTRES

CHANGES TO GCE A LEVELS IN ENGLAND

I What changes are happening to GCE A Levels in England?

The UK government and Ofqual (the regulator of qualifications, examinations and assessments in England) announced the following changes to GCE A Levels for awarding organisations in England:

From 2013 onwards

Immediate removal of the January examination series from all Ofqual regulated GCE A Levels. As Edexcel GCE A Levels are regulated by Ofqual, we have had to remove the January examination series from these qualifications. Edexcel GCE A Level examinations can now only be taken in June of each year.

- Edexcel GCE A Level specifications and assessment remain unchanged.

From 2015 onwards

- New GCE A Levels are to be developed for first teaching in September 2015 in the facilitating subjects* (except Mathematics, Further Mathematics and Languages), along with six additional subjects:

English (Language, Literature and Language & Literature)

History

Sociology

Physics

Geography

Business Studies

Biology

Psychology

Economics

Chemistry

Art & Design

Computer Science

- These new GCE A Levels will be linear, with examinations taken only at the end of the course.
- Mathematics, Further Mathematics and Languages require more fundamental work and will be developed for first teaching from September 2016.
- AS Levels to be stand-alone qualifications from September 2015 onwards and will no longer contribute to a GCE A Level grade.

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HOW CHANGES TO EDEXCEL GCE A LEVEL IN ENGLAND WILL AFFECT INTERNATIONAL CENTRES AND STUDENTS

2 Does the removal of GCE A Level January examinations affect international centres?

Yes. The UK Government has asked for all awarding organisations in England to remove the January examination window for all GCE A Level subjects. We have been advised by Ofqual that the removal of January examinations applies to all centres teaching Ofqual-regulated GCE A Level qualifications, wherever they are in the world.

3 What does the removal of January examinations mean for my centre and students?

The decision to remove January examinations is with immediate effect. Therefore, there will be no examinations in January that lead to Edexcel GCE A Level awards after January 2013. Students who started their studies in 2012 taking the current Edexcel GCE A Levels will now only be able to sit examinations in June 2013 and June 2014. For information on how this affects students who intended to finish their GCE A Level course in January 2014, please see question 4.

In response to the Government announcement we have developed a new suite of A Level qualifications in some subjects called Edexcel International Advanced Levels (IAL), specifically for our international centres, which do contain both January and June examinations. Please refer to the *Edexcel International Advanced Level* section later in this document.

4 My students need to complete their Edexcel GCE A Level course in January 2014. Do these changes mean they can no longer complete their course in January 2014?

Not necessarily, a one-off arrangement is in place whereby exams for some of the current Edexcel GCE A Level units will be available to ensure students are not unfairly disadvantaged by the speed of the changes. Students, who are currently studying the Edexcel GCE A Level subjects below, can sit examinations in January 2014, to enable them to cash in and receive their qualification results in March 2014.

The Edexcel GCE A Level units available in January 2014 are as follows:

- Business Studies*
- Economics*
- Mathematics*
- Accounting*
- Biology, Chemistry, Physics* (100% written examination specification)
- Psychology, Unit 3
- Religious Studies, Unit 2 (1A: The study of Religion)
- English Literature, Units 3 & 4

* Only the Edexcel GCE A Level units that were available in January 2013 will be available in January 2014, for the subjects mentioned above.

If this option is taken, the following important points should be noted:

- The specification and assessment remain unchanged; therefore you should continue to prepare your students for their final January examinations in 2014 in the usual way.
- Students will be awarded an *Edexcel International Advanced Level*, regulated by Pearson, instead of an Edexcel GCE A Level. This is because no awarding organisation can now award an Ofqual regulated GCE A Level that includes January examinations.
- For those using the transitional unit codes for January 2014, unit entries must be accompanied by a cash-in code that will lead to the award of a final Edexcel International Advanced Level qualification grade in March 2014.

5 Can students who sat Edexcel GCE unit exams in 2013 switch to an Edexcel International Advanced Level qualification in order to sit IAL exams in January and June 2014?

Yes, if the student is studying one of the Edexcel International Advanced Level subjects listed below:

- Mathematics
- Business Studies
- Economics
- Accounting
- Biology, Chemistry, Physics (100% written exam specification)

Students who have banked completed GCE A Level units until June 2013 will be able to combine these with the new IAL units up to June 2015. The student will be awarded an Edexcel International Advanced Level at the end of the course.

6 My 2012 students are supposed to complete their course in June 2014. What do these changes mean for them?

Students who are due to complete their Edexcel GCE A Level in June 2014 will still be able to do so. The only change for these students is that they will no longer be able to sit examinations in January 2014.

7 Will my students be awarded an Edexcel GCE A Level if they sit their final examinations in June 2014?

Yes, in most subjects providing they do not sit exams in January 2014.

The exception is those qualifications that are not available in the UK and therefore are not regulated by Ofqual. Students sitting examinations in the subjects listed below will be awarded an *Edexcel International Advanced Level* qualification instead of an *Edexcel GCE A Level*:

- Accounting
- Law
- Biology, Chemistry, Physics (100% written exam specification)

8 Will Edexcel GCE A Level Biology, Chemistry and Physics continue to have practical coursework?

Yes. These qualifications will continue to have practical coursework and will now only have examinations in June of each year. International students who have completed the assessment for units 1, 2, 4 or 5 of the GCE A Level science specifications can have these results contribute to a GCE A Level award. However, in order to be awarded a GCE A Level science qualification students will have to complete the coursework requirements for both AS and A2 (units 3 and 6) of the GCE A Level science specifications. Students will need to be registered for these coursework units so that external moderation can be arranged.

Edexcel GCE A Levels in Biology, Chemistry and Physics with 100% written examination instead of coursework, are being renamed Edexcel International Advanced Level qualifications. These will have exams in January and June of each year.

9 Where can I read more about the changes to Edexcel GCE A Levels?

Stay up-to-date on Edexcel GCE A Level changes by regularly checking the [Edexcel GCE A Level home page](#).

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HOW CHANGES TO EDEXCEL GCE A LEVEL IN ENGLAND AFFECT INTERNATIONAL CENTRES AND STUDENTS

10 What are Edexcel International Advanced Levels?

Edexcel International Advanced Levels is a new suite of A Level qualifications developed for international centres. With a modular structure, our new suite of International Advanced Levels have examination windows in January and June of each year, allowing students to finish their course in January if they need to, for entry to local and international universities. Please note Law will continue to be examined in June of each year only.

11 What are the differences between Edexcel GCE A Levels and Edexcel International Advanced Levels?

	Edexcel GCE A Levels	Edexcel International Advanced Levels
Structure	<p>Modular structure until 2015. A linear structure will apply from first teaching in 2015 with all exams taken at the end of the two-year GCE A Level courses in some subjects (see question 1)</p> <p>AS will become a standalone qualification from 2015.</p>	<p>AS can be used as a stage on the way to completing an Edexcel International Advanced Level or as a stand-alone qualification.</p>
Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mix of coursework and examinations until 2015. • June examinations only. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No coursework (100% examination). • January and June examinations.
Recognised by universities	Yes.	(see question 14).
Regulator	Regulated by Ofqual.	Regulated by Pearson.

12 Which subjects will have an Edexcel International Advanced Level qualification available?

Mathematics, Economics, Business Studies, Accounting, Law, Biology, Chemistry, Physics.

13 Will there be new specifications for Edexcel International Advanced Level Business Studies, Mathematics and Economics subject areas?

New International Advanced Level specifications are available to download from the IAL [Mathematics](#), [Economics](#) and [Business Studies](#) subject web pages in the 'specification' section. These subject pages are accessible from the [IAL home page](#).

We have produced mapping documents for Business Studies, Economics and Mathematics to outline where the changes in content occur between the Edexcel GCE specification and the Edexcel IAL specification. Mapping Guides can be found on each of the IAL subject pages accessible from the [IAL Home Page](#) in the *Teacher Support Materials* section.

Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Law and Accounting

The existing Edexcel GCE Science specifications (with 100% written examination instead of coursework), Law and Accounting are being moved into our new suite of Edexcel International Advanced Levels. There is no change to the content or assessment of these specifications, only the name of the qualification will change. The specifications are exactly the same, except for the specification covers, which have been to reflect the change of qualification titles. They will now be called Edexcel International Advanced Level in Biology/Chemistry/Physics/Law/Accounting.

14 Are the Edexcel International Advanced Level qualifications recognised by universities?

Edexcel International Advanced Level qualifications are already recognised by many leading universities in the UK and internationally. You can find the growing list of universities by clicking on the 'International Advanced Levels – find out where they can take you' banner on the [Degree Course Finder](#) website.

The qualifications have been written to the same rigorous standard as all Edexcel qualifications. An independent benchmarking exercise by UK NARIC to assess the comparability of the Edexcel International Advanced Level against the Ofqual-regulated GCE A Level found that IAL qualifications can be considered comparable to the overall GCE A Level standard.

[Read the executive summary of the NARIC report.](#)

15 Will my centre/students be disadvantaged in any way by taking Edexcel International Advanced Level qualifications if they are not regulated by Ofqual?

As mentioned in question 14, Edexcel International Advanced Level qualifications have been written to the same high standards as our Edexcel GCE A Levels and are being recognised as providing progression to higher education by universities around the world. If a student is interested in applying to a university that is not on our list then they should contact that university directly to confirm which qualifications they will accept for entry. For further advice and guidance, please contact our Progression and Recognition team: progression@pearson.com.

16 Can students re-sit IAL units before certification of the qualification?

Yes, where an IAL unit is taken more than once by a student, the better result of the last two attempts will be used for the qualification award. GCE units from 2013 or before will not be counted in the application of this rule.

17 Will AS be available for Edexcel International Advanced Level and will it count towards an Advanced Level?

Yes. The new Edexcel International Advanced Level will have an AS/A2 split, therefore AS can either be taken as a stand alone qualification or used as a stage on the way to completing an Advanced Level.

18 Which GCE A Level unit results can contribute to a Edexcel International Advanced Level award?

As stated in question 7, students with results from June 2013 or before for Edexcel GCE A Level units in the following subjects – Mathematics; Business Studies; Economics; Accounting; Biology, Chemistry, Physics (100% written exam specification) - will be able to combine these with the new IAL units for an Edexcel International Advanced Level award if they wish.

GCE A Level unit results from awarding organisations other than Pearson Edexcel can be transferred to an Edexcel International Advanced Level award only in specific circumstances. These arrangements are designed for individual candidates who need to transfer to complete their GCE A Level studies. Full details can be found here <http://www.edexcel.com/iwantto/Pages/transfer-of-credit-arrangements.aspx>. Please note that results for IAL units will not be able to contribute to a GCE A Level award.

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Can students in the UK take Edexcel International Advanced Level qualifications?

No. Edexcel International Advanced Level qualifications are not available to centres in the UK, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man. Additionally, British Armed Forces schools based overseas are not able to make entries for these qualifications.

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What textbooks should I use for Edexcel International Advanced Levels?

Textbooks used for the current Edexcel GCE A Levels can be used for Edexcel International Advanced Levels. There is no need to purchase additional textbooks.