

November 2017

Dear colleague

Overseeing the Winter 2017/18 GCSE exam series

Before each exam series, we write to all schools and colleges to explain our approach to overseeing the award of GCSEs, A levels and the Welsh Baccalaureate. In this letter, I will be focusing on the GCSEs that learners will sit this November, and the GCSE and Welsh Baccalaureate components they will sit in January 2018.

The November 2017 series

The new GCSE Mathematics – Numeracy and GCSE Mathematics qualifications will be examined for the third time this November. This November is also the first opportunity for candidates to re-sit the new GCSE qualifications in English Language and Welsh Language.

The January 2018 series

In January 2018, some units from the new English Literature and Welsh Literature GCSEs will be examined. Individual components of the Key Stage 4 and Advanced Welsh Baccalaureate Skills Challenge Certificate can also be submitted for moderation and award.

Some units within unreformed GCSE subjects, such as Applied Business, and Health and Social Care, will also be examined.

There will be final re-sit opportunities for legacy GCSEs in subjects in which reformed qualifications were introduced for first teaching from September 2016, such as the science suite. You can find more details about re-sit opportunities on awarding body websites. We expect only small numbers of students will be entered for these exams.



November exam entries

Provisional entry data collected by WJEC gives us an early indication of entry patterns for each exam series. We use this data to help plan our approach to overseeing the award and to interpret the results. We will publish the entry data for the November series on our website at the end of November 2017.

For this November's exams, entries for Mathematics and Mathematics-Numeracy remain high, with around a third of the Year 11 cohort entered for each GCSE. Overall, however, the number of entries for these qualifications is lower than in November 2016. This reduction reflects two significant factors: first, this is now the third exam series for these qualifications and they are no longer new to schools, and second, many students sat the exams in the summer when they were in Year 10. We note that around half of the Year 11 students entered this November sat one or both of these qualifications at the end of Year 10.

In both Mathematics and Mathematics-Numeracy, a smaller proportion of candidates have been entered for the intermediate tier compared to November 2016, with proportionate increases in entries for the foundation and higher tiers. These changes in entry pattern for each tier, where different grades are available, may reflect a different overall profile of ability across the cohort sitting the exams.

Overall, these changes to the entry for Mathematics and Mathematics-Numeracy this November mean that results may be different to November 2016 results. This is likely to make it difficult to make meaningful comparisons between the two sets of results.

This November's exams for the new English Language and Welsh Language GCSEs are only available to students who are re-taking these qualifications. In the summer, we saw large numbers of year 10 entries for both subjects. Around half of those Year 10 students who took these qualifications in the summer have been entered again this November. There are no previous exam series against which to compare this November's entry or results.

Issuing results

Students will get their results for this November's GCSEs on **Thursday 11 January 2018**. Schools and colleges will get the results the day before, on Wednesday 10 January 2018.

Students will get their results for January's GCSEs and units taken on **Thursday 8 March 2018**. Schools and colleges will get the results the day before, on Wednesday 7 March 2018.

Further Information

I hope you find this letter helpful. We give regular updates to schools and colleges on GCSEs, A levels and the other qualifications we regulate through our 'Slate' newsletter. You can sign-up to receive this from our [website](#)

Yours sincerely



Philip Blaker

Chief Executive