

Clarification about AS qualifications in Mathematics and Further Mathematics following the recent proposed changes to A levels

There has been considerable concern amongst mathematics teachers that new arrangements for AS Mathematics and AS Further Mathematics would mean that students would no longer be able to take them as the first year of a two year A level programme. Michael Gove's [letter to Ofqual on 14 March 2013](#) stated:

'The key educational argument for the AS qualification is that it provides students with the opportunity to study a broad range of subjects, which we know universities value in addition to a core A level programme. We are keen to preserve this breadth. As A levels become linear in 2015, the AS must be entirely decoupled to become a standalone qualification that is also linear. We should also clarify that an AS is a qualification in its own right, so performance in an AS will not count towards an A level. Any subject changes made to the corresponding A level should also be reflected in the design of the AS. You have advised me that you are not able to deliver more substantial changes to the AS for 2015. I remain committed to a reformed AS and we have agreed that the Department and Ofqual should continue to discuss the options for the longer term. I would also like you to keep the content and level of challenge of AS under close review as part of your post-qualifications review process.'

DfE representatives have now confirmed that this means that, from 2015, AS Mathematics and AS Further Mathematics can continue to be based on the content of the first year of the A level courses. The key differences are that, should a student choose to take the AS, the AS marks will make no contribution to the A level grade, and the content covered by the AS will be re-assessed within the A level at the end of the course.

This means that when students embark on A level Mathematics or A level Further Mathematics courses at the start of year 12 they will continue to have the option to undertake external assessment at the end of year 12, which can be used to assess their progress and will also provide a valuable qualification, should they choose not to go on to study for a full A level. It also means that students will continue to be able to choose to study for AS Mathematics or AS Further Mathematics in year 13, or over years 12 and 13.