

## **AS/A Level GCE Mathematics (MEI) – 3895-3898; 7895-7898 Frequently Asked Questions**

### **What are the rules for A\* in GCE Mathematics?**

A\* will be awarded from June 2010. You can get an A\* for an A level qualification, but not for an AS or an individual unit.

For A level Mathematics you need to

- Get grade A for the A level (an average of at least 80 UMS)
- Get an average of 90 UMS on Core 3 and Core 4

For A level Further Mathematics you need to

- Get grade A for the A level (an average of at least 80 UMS)
- Get an average of 90 UMS on your best three A2 units

For A level Additional Further Mathematics the rules are the same as for Further Maths.

[Here](#) is a leaflet from QCA that explains it.

### **Can you use units already taken to get an A\*?**

Yes. Many candidates who are awarded an A\* in June 2010 will have taken Core 3 in January 2010 (for example).

### **Can you get an A\* if you finished your A level in 2009, or earlier?**

To get an A level in June 2010 you have to *either* enter for any GCE Maths unit from that specification in June 2010 *or* have a unit from a previous series that has not counted towards any qualification. You also have to recertificate for the A level.

### **When are new A levels in Maths starting?**

New A levels in Maths and Further Maths are being designed for first teaching in September 2012. QCA are consulting at the moment about what the A levels should look like. Please contribute to the consultation [here](#).

### **What units make an A level? What about Further Maths?**

The best way to find what combinations of units make up A level Maths or Further Maths is from pages 22 – 24 of the specification [here](#). Exams officers could also look at the OCR Admin Guide.

Briefly ...

There are 3 combinations for AS Mathematics: C1, C2 plus one of M1, S1, D1.

There are 7 combinations for A level Mathematics: C1 – C4 plus one of these 7 pairs: M1&M2, S1&S2, D1&D2, D1&DC, M1&S1, M1&D1, S1&D1.

For AS Further Mathematics a candidate has to take FP1 and two other units. You must be taking or have taken AS Maths or A level Maths, and none of the units can be shared. For A level Further Mathematics you have to sit FP1, FP2 and 4 other units, 2 of which have to be A2 units. You need to be taking or have taken A level Maths, and have entered at least 12 units for the two qualifications. You can be awarded an AS Additional Further Mathematics for 15 units and an A level Additional Further Mathematics for 18 units.

### **How do I enter for Further Maths (MEI) if my A level is with another specification?**

More and more centres are doing this, entering for Maths and Further Maths with different specifications. It is common for the Further Maths qualification to be entered with the MEI specification.

We need to know what specification the Maths qualification was entered for, and what units were used to do so. It is important that the units for Maths and Further Maths do not overlap. We ask centres to complete a [form](#) to give us this information.

### **What are the rules for working out grades? Which units go in Further Maths?**

Some units can count towards either Mathematics or Further Mathematics. JCQ issue rules about which units count towards which qualification. These rules are complicated and can be found [here](#).

This example illustrates the process.

If a candidate enters for 12 units and certificates for A level Mathematics and A level Further Mathematics there will usually be different combinations of the units that are valid. The rules say that of all the valid combinations of units possible the only ones considered are those that give the best possible grade for A level Maths. Of these combinations only the ones that then give the best possible grade for A level Further maths are considered. Of these combinations one is selected that gives the highest possible UMS score for A level Maths.

### **Why recertificate? Is it always the best option?**

We advise candidates that when they enter for a qualification in the GCE Maths suite they should recertificate for any qualification that they have previously entered. This often has the potential to lead to an improved grade.

For example if you enter for AS Maths using C1, C2, S1 one summer and then A level Maths the following summer with C3, C4, M1 you might improve your AS grade (or UMS) by recertificating; C1, C2, M1 might be a higher-scoring combination.

Another example would be if you enter for A level Maths using C1-4, M1, S1 one summer and then AS Further Maths using FP1, NM, D1 the following summer. By recertificating for the A level you are opening up the possibility that you might improve your result from a combination like C1-4, M1, D1.

There is one situation where this might not be to the advantage of the candidate. Sometimes we hear of universities that make offers based on (say) over 90 UMS on all A level Maths units, with Further Maths ignored. In this case you might wish to contact someone in the Maths team to discuss what the best approach is.

### **Markschemes: what do all the symbols mean?**

What does M1 mean? Or ISW? These notations appear in the markschemes published on the website. Come back soon for a description of what these notations mean.