



14-19 CHANGES
A LEVEL

A Level **ICT**



Available for first teaching
from September 2008

"Our learners do well with the practical element, and the tasks always inspire and challenge them. The changes made seem to be eminently sensible, and marking will be much easier."



"Straightforward, dropping the technical computing aspects to provide a more realistic qualification."

OCR A Level ICT

Skills for the real business world

In today's world, where ICT is constantly changing, individuals will increasingly need technological and information literacy skills. These skills are now as essential as the traditional skills of numeracy and literacy.

As well as the rapid development of new technologies, familiar technologies like television, telephone and computers are evolving and being expanded by digitised information. As a result of this, there is a growing need for individuals who can master and manipulate these new technologies.


A Level ICT encourages learners to become discerning users of ICT. It allows them to develop a broad range of ICT skills, knowledge and understanding.

The new A Level in ICT

In the new OCR specification for A Level ICT, the whole emphasis of the qualification has shifted. Elements of traditional computing such as algorithms have been removed, ensuring that the focus is now on the practical applications of ICT, which gives learners the skills they'll need to enter today's business world.

Benefits of our new specification:

- The new specification provides an ideal foundation for learners who want to pursue ICT at degree level or as a career.
- It enables learners to develop the essential skills needed to apply ICT to the real world, for example presentation and project management skills.
- Learners explore the latest technologies, through completely updated course content, for example Bluetooth, broadband and global positioning systems.
- Assessment is now more streamlined and manageable: the coursework element is still 40%, but there are now only two examinations at just two hours each.
- There's now a greater emphasis on encouraging practical skills, and coursework has been retained as the best method for assessing them.



"I think the whole course will engage learners with the right enthusiasm, but the parts where the most hands-on work is done will be the most rewarding."

A Level ICT course details

For AS

Teaching units	Assessment method and weighting
<p>G061: Information, Systems and Applications</p> <p>Topics covered in this unit include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data, information, knowledge and processing • Software and hardware components of an information system • Characteristics of standard applications software and application areas • Spreadsheet concepts • Relational database concepts • Applications software used for presentation and communication of data • The role and impact of ICT – legal, moral and social issues. 	<p>Mandatory unit</p> <p>2 hour exam</p> <p>AS – 60%</p> <p>A Level – 30%</p>
<p>G062: Structured ICT Tasks</p> <p>This unit gives learners the opportunity to explore:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design • Software development • Testing • Documentation. 	<p>Mandatory unit</p> <p>Coursework</p> <p>AS – 40%</p> <p>A Level – 20%</p>

For A2

Teaching units	Assessment method and weighting
<p>G063: ICT Systems, Applications and Implications</p> <p>In this unit, learners gain an understanding of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The systems cycle • Designing computer-based information systems • Networks and communication • Applications of ICT • Implementing computer-based information systems • Implications of ICT. 	<p>Mandatory unit</p> <p>2 hour exam</p> <p>A Level – 30%</p>
<p>G064: ICT Project</p> <p>Here learners explore:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definition, investigation and analysis • Design • Software development, testing and implementation • Documentation • Evaluation. 	<p>Mandatory unit</p> <p>Coursework</p> <p>A Level – 20%</p>

What stays the same, and what changes?

If you're already working with the current OCR A Level ICT, you'll want to know which parts of this remain in the new specification – and what the main changes are.

The table below outlines the key points.

Main aspects that stay the same	Most important changes
<p>Coursework has stayed at 40%, as this is the best way to assess practical skills. It also helps learners gain communication and presentation skills, which are highly valuable in the business world.</p>	<p>Traditional computing elements, such as algorithms, have been removed to put more emphasis on the new business ICT focus.</p>
<p>The AS Level 'Structured ICT Tasks' unit still comprises tasks set by OCR. We will pre-release these tasks in advance to enable learners to prepare fully.</p>	<p>Assessment has been streamlined: there are now only two exams at just two hours each, and the size of both coursework units has been reduced from 120 marks to 80. This streamlining is another reflection of OCR's desire to focus on business ICT content and remove the traditional computing elements.</p>
	<p>'Stretch and Challenge' style questions have been introduced at A2 assessment, following Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) guidelines. These give higher-ability learners the opportunity to build on their achievements.</p>

For more information on A Level ICT, visit www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/1419changes/alevels

"All units are suitable; they cover what I perceive to be areas that learners should be aware of and skills required to become competent ICT users."



'Stretch and Challenge'

A new Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) initiative for A Levels, 'Stretch and Challenge' is designed to give learners the opportunity to demonstrate their potential, and to help universities differentiate between applicants. It will be part of the A2 units, so it won't involve additional questions or exam papers.

'Stretch and Challenge' is achieved through a new approach to exam questions:

- The questions invite a greater variety of thinking and type of answer. For example, the introduction could ask the learner to 'analyse', 'evaluate' or 'discuss'.
- The questions are structured to show more connections between different sections of the specification.
- Extended writing is encouraged in all subjects (except in areas such as Maths, where it is clearly inappropriate).
- There's a wider range of question types – such as case studies and open-ended questions – rather than just short-answer questions.
- There are more synoptic assessments – exploring connections between different areas and levels of a subject – over and above the superficial links within question types.



You'll find examples of 'Stretch and Challenge' style questions in your ICT sample assessment materials. Here's a short selection:

"Discuss developments in ICT that may have an impact on how lessons could be taught in the future in schools."

"Discuss hardware and software developments which may change the way the company runs in the future. You should consider the sales force, warehouse workers and factory production methods in your answer. You should not limit yourself to existing systems and the way in which they could be advanced but allow an imaginative approach given possible trends and directions of hardware and software development in the future."

Support for A Level ICT teachers

To help you get started with the new A Level ICT, OCR will run a number of training courses. We will also provide a range of detailed support materials and resources – some produced by OCR, some by our publishing partners.

Training

The following INSET courses will be available from September 2007:

Get ready – introducing the new specifications (first teaching from September 2008)

These **free** half-day sessions are designed to give you an overview of the new OCR specifications.

They will:

- **Look at the structure of the new specifications**
- **Compare the new specification content with the old, including coursework and 'Stretch and Challenge' implications**
- **Discuss the support and resources available from OCR**
- **Summarise the benefits of the OCR specifications.**

Get started – towards successful delivery of the new specification (first teaching from September 2008)

These full-day sessions will give you guidance and support in planning to teach the new AS/A Level specifications.

They will:

- **Give an introduction to the structure and content of the new specifications**
- **Consider approaches to first teaching, and suggest best practice**
- **Look at coursework and 'Stretch and Challenge' implications**
- **Review the support and resources available from OCR.**

This course will have some similarity to the half-day 'Get ready' sessions, but will look at the new specifications in more depth, with the emphasis on first teaching

Places are allocated on a first come, first served basis – so if you're interested in attending one of these events, visit www.ocr.org.uk/training to find out the dates of the events nearest to you.

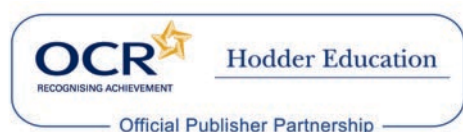
Support materials

OCR is producing the following materials to help you prepare for the new A Level ICT:

- **Overarching scheme of work:** topic outlines, suggested teaching and homework activities, suggested resources and points to note.
Available autumn 2007.
- **Sample lesson plans:** detailed breakdowns of suggested teaching formats for the more difficult concepts within the unit(s).
Available autumn 2007.
- **Exemplar candidate work:** real candidate answers to sample assessment materials, including indicative marks and examiner commentaries.
Available spring 2008.

For more information on all these support materials, visit www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/1419changes/alevels

- **e-community:** OCR offers an ICT e-community which allows virtual networks of subject specialists to share their knowledge, views and ideas. For more information, and to join this e-community, visit <http://community.ocr.org.uk>

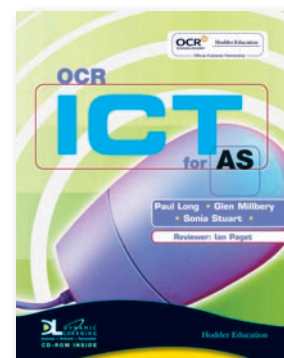


We're also working with publishing partner Hodder Education to provide further resources to support the new specifications:

- **OCR ICT student book including Dynamic Learning CD-ROM.**
AS available spring 2008, A2 available autumn 2008.
- **Interactive teacher resources – OCR ICT Dynamic Learning Network Edition CD-ROM.**
AS available spring 2008, A2 available autumn 2008.

For more information on these resources, visit www.hoddereducation.co.uk

Other publishers may also produce support material, and we will consider them for endorsement after we've assessed them against the OCR Quality Assurance process.



Other OCR IT qualifications

OCR offers a wide range of IT qualifications to suit all learners. As an ICT teacher, you may be interested to know about these OCR qualifications.

GCSE ICT

This course takes a systematic and practical approach to develop a body of skills, knowledge and understanding in a work-related context.

For more information on GCSE ICT, visit www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/gcse

OCR Nationals in ICT

These motivational, flexible qualifications have clear assessment objectives and engaging content. Learners taking OCR Nationals in ICT have the opportunity to develop and demonstrate ICT skills in a vocational context.

For more information on OCR Nationals in ICT, visit www.ocrnationals.com

IT Diploma

OCR has developed an innovative approach to the IT Diploma, one of the first five lines of learning offered within this government flagship development, and received accreditation for the Principal Learning specification in July 2007. Starting in September 2008, the Diploma will be available to the first wave of consortia which passed through the Gateway selection process; other consortia will be able to access the qualification in succeeding years.

This applied and practical course, offered at Levels 1, 2 and 3, will offer an exciting and challenging way of gaining access to a broad range of IT sectors. The course will focus upon real work-related contexts and tasks which will prepare the learner for additional training and further or higher education, and will be instrumental in the development of transferable IT-related skills.

For more information visit www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/1419changes/diplomas

iMedia

Creative interactive media is a dynamic, fast-moving industry, and OCR's iMedia qualification is the complete learning package for this market. It's a valuable tool for anyone wanting to specialise and enter a wide range of interactive media jobs, including web designers, graphic artists, multimedia producers and animators.

For more information visit www.imedia.ocr.org.uk

Global partners

OCR has developed many of its ICT qualifications with industry. These active relationships with leading global IT vendors enable OCR to offer qualifications that provide learners with the opportunity to develop skills relevant to the workplace or potential future careers.



Following a review of 14–19 education, the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) has revised the subject criteria for A Levels. These changes are intended to reduce the volume of marking for teachers, and the amount of assessment for learners, and to ensure that every young person has the opportunity to realise their full potential. Along with all awarding bodies, OCR has revised A Levels for first teaching from September 2008.

We've made sure it's a change for the better

QCA's decision to revise A Levels has given us a great opportunity to make further improvements to our qualifications. We've been talking to teachers, heads of departments, local authority advisers, subject experts and examiners to make sure the new specifications, support materials and schemes of work meet your needs.

Want to find out more?

For more information on the new OCR A Level ICT –
and on all our IT qualifications –

visit www.ocr.org.uk or call **01223 553998**

www.ocr.org.uk

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