

# GCSE ENGLISH, ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND ENGLISH LITERATURE

## – the move to linear specifications

**From September 2012, students in England starting two-year GCSE courses will follow linear specifications in the majority of subjects. This move to linear specifications is being implemented in response to a decision made by the Secretary of State for Education. Ofqual has confirmed that the move to linear specifications, and the reinforced assessment of spelling, punctuation and grammar in some subjects, will be the only major alterations to specifications. There will be no other changes to the content of specifications at this stage.**

This change does not affect candidates who started a two-year course in September 2011, or those starting a one-year course in September 2012. However, Year 9 students who started a three-year course in September 2011 will be affected. (See separate document attached – ‘GCSE reforms affecting Year 9 candidates’)

From September 2012, all GCSE English, English Language and English Literature examination units must be taken at the end of the course, in the June 2014 series, unless the course is completed in one year. Controlled assessment units will also be entered at the end of the course, but the tasks can be completed at any point during the course. Tasks must be correct for the year of submission, even if the tasks are completed in advance. The terminal rule is therefore 100% in all English GCSE specifications from September 2012, unlike the current 40% terminal rule.

For GCSE English and English Language there will be additional examination series in November, from 2013 onwards. This re-sit opportunity in November will not be available for GCSE English Literature. Re-sit candidates entered for English and English Language in the November examination series will be permitted to carry forward marks from controlled assessment units, provided they have certificated the qualification already (i.e. marks from units that were not used for a previous certification cannot be carried forward.)

## A SUMMARY OF THE CHANGES FROM 2012:

### GCSE English and English Language

- The examination unit, A680, must be taken in the terminal series (e.g. Year 10 students starting a two-year course in September 2012 will take the examination in June 2014).
- The controlled assessment units, (English: A641, A642, A643 and English Language: A651 and A652) can be completed at any point, but must be entered at the end of the course.
- Reminder: Controlled assessment tasks must be appropriate for the year of submission.
- There will be an additional examination series in November, and controlled assessment units can be carried forward, provided they have been used for certification already.
- It is permissible to complete a GCSE course in one year, as long as the terminal rule is met (40% in 2013; 100% in 2014.)

### GCSE English Literature

- The three examination units, A662, A663 and A664, must be taken in the terminal series.
- A662 (Modern Drama) and A663 (Prose from Different Cultures) will continue to be taken in one examination session, with a short break between each unit.
- A664 Literary Heritage Prose and Contemporary Poetry will be unchanged.
- A661, the controlled assessment unit, can be completed at any point, but must be entered at the end of the course.
- Reminder: Controlled assessment tasks must be appropriate for the year of submission.
- Centres will still be entitled to mix candidates' entries across Higher and Foundation tiers.
- It is permissible to complete a GCSE course in one year, as long as the terminal rule is met (40% in 2013; 100% in 2014.)

### Spelling, punctuation and grammar (SPaG) in GCSE

#### English Literature

An additional change to GCSE English Literature is to be implemented from January 2013 onwards. Ofqual has confirmed that additional marks are to be rewarded in English Literature for spelling, punctuation and grammar. Therefore 5% of the marks for English Literature will be for SPaG; this will be assessed in Unit A662 Modern Drama only. The English and English Language specifications will continue to include assessment of SPaG.

English Literature A662 (Modern Drama) and A663 (Prose from Different Cultures) will continue to be taken in one examination session, with a short break between each unit.

**English Literature Unit** A662 (Modern Drama) will include additional marks for spelling, punctuation and grammar.

**November 2014** Re-sit opportunity in GCSE English and English Language. All units must be retaken, except for controlled assessment units that have been used previously for certification.

**June 2015** GCSEs continue as linear qualifications.

### Timeline for the changes to GCSE English, English Language and English Literature specifications

**September 2012** First teaching of new two-year linear GCSE English specifications.

**January 2013** All GCSE English units available, as in January 2012, but entry restricted to candidates certificating no later than November 2013.

English Literature Unit A662 (Modern Drama) will include additional marks for spelling, punctuation and grammar.

**June 2013** All GCSE English units available, but entry restricted to candidates certificating no later than November 2013.

English Literature, unit A662, will include additional marks for spelling, punctuation and grammar.

**November 2013** GCSE units available in English and English Language, but only to candidates certificating in this series. The 40% terminal rule still applies.

**January 2014** Series is no longer used for GCSE examinations.

**June 2014** First linear series All GCSE English units offered.

### Curriculum planning for English GCSEs from 2012

#### GCSE English Language and GCSE English Literature – two-year courses

There will be four examined units, taken in three examination sessions at the end of the course, for candidates taking the combined course over two years.

1. English Language – A680, Information and Ideas
2. English Literature – A662, Modern Drama
3. English Literature – A663, Prose from Different Cultures (Taken together in one examination session)
4. English Literature – A664, Literary Heritage Prose and Contemporary Poetry

There is a Curriculum Planner at the end of this document for delivering this combined course over two years, with all four examined units taken at the end of the course.

GCSE English Language and GCSE English Literature – one-year courses

Centres can enter candidates for GCSE English Language in one year, and English Literature in the following year (or vice versa). This approach would also need to meet the terminal rule (40% in June 2013; 100% in June 2014.)



