



Isle of Man
Government

Reiltys Ellan Vannin

14-16 Qualification Reform

Changes and Choices for the Isle of Man

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Department of Education and Children

14-16 Qualification Reform

Changes and Choices for the Isle of Man

Overview:

GCSEs in England are being significantly reformed from 2015.

Northern Ireland and Wales have rejected these reforms.

The educational landscape for 14-16 years olds is changing.

The Isle of Man has choices to make.

A public consultation will be launched in the IOM on 2nd April, 2014.

When GCSEs were introduced (for first award in 1988)...

They were welcomed because:

- They removed the two tier education system of O Level and CSE - which could not easily be taught in the same classroom.
- For the first time they provided a single grading system from A - G covering almost the full ability range.
- GCSE Grade C equated to the O Level grade C (formerly Grade 6) and the CSE Grade 1.
- They set out to assess “what pupils know, understand and can do” rather than catching them out with unexpected questions.
- They provided teachers with much more detailed syllabuses so every school was clear about what content and skills had to be taught.
- They set out to be accessible to more pupils.
- They broadened the basis of assessment - they removed the reliance on 100% end of course exams and introduced practical exams and coursework in more subjects.

GCSE - Where did it run into trouble?

From its very inception, GCSE has had its critics.

The criticism grew:

- with increasing A-C pass rates in English and Maths
- with the introduction of the A* in 1994 (argued by some as evidence of falling standards in the first decade)
- with the introduction of 'modular' (or 'unitised' assessment) which began with new Science specifications several years ago but was introduced across all subjects in 2009.
- the grade boundary debacle in 2012 proved the end of the line - this was not just about the difficulties of maintaining standards across different modules - it was a change the mechanism through which standards were set.
- in September 2012 the English Baccalaureate Certificate was announced - and abandoned 5 months later.
- GCSEs became 'linear' courses with all exam papers sat at the end of the course from 2013.
- in June 2013 the reform of GCSE was announced.

GCSE - What do they say is wrong with it?

Some of the issues

- Inconsistency of A* - A grades - are some subjects harder than others?
- GCSE English and Maths result improve (so-called 'grade inflation') - but do standards of literacy and numeracy improve?
- Are pupils being stretched and challenged?
- Overlapping tiers (Higher and Foundation) - do some pupils lose out? Do schools aim low? Are there 2 standards for grade C?
- Coursework - is it the pupil's own work? - is 'high stakes' teacher assessment reliable?
- Controlled assessment - does it adequately discriminate between students?
- GCSE grades - how well does GCSE discriminate between students attaining at grades B, C and D?
- Maths - do pupils get enough?
- Too many exam boards - are they all the same standard?

GCSE - and in Northern Ireland and Wales?

Wales and Northern Ireland have rejected the reforms planned for England

- Extensive consultations have shown that GCSE has considerable support across all stakeholder groups.
- It is overwhelmingly regarded as fit for purpose.
- Wales and Northern Ireland will be keeping modular GCSEs graded A*-G with controlled assessment - at least for the time being.
- However, discussions with officers from both Wales and Northern Ireland have left us far from convinced that their decision to maintain the current GCSE arrangements is sustainable in the medium to long term.

GCSE - Three Options Identified - and a fourth area to be considered

1 GCSE (England)

2 International GCSE Core (+Wales/Northern Ireland subject options)

3 Scottish National 4s and 5s

4 The Broader Opportunities that come at a time of significant reform

GCSE (England)

Key Features

- 2015 - first teaching of new English Language, English Literature and Maths.
- New qualification graded from 9 (high) to 1 (low) - equivalencies with GCSE not known.
- The “higher grades” boundary will be more difficult than Grade C.
- English (and most other subjects) will be “untiered” (all pupils will sit the same exam paper). Maths will be tiered (possibly 3 tiers).
- Coursework/controlled assessments will disappear from most subjects - Science practical exams worth 10% - fully linear, end of course assessment.
- 2016 - first teaching of Sciences, Geography, History, MFL (and some other subjects?).
- 2017/18? - no clear statement yet on when other subjects will be introduced but assumed to be 2017.
- Some subjects may not retain GCSE status at all - doubts cast about subjects without main assessment through end of course written papers (Art? Design Technology?).
- Strong focus on “rigour” and “reliability”.

International GCSE (IGCSE)

Key Features

- Introduced alongside GCSE - first awarded in 1988.
- “International qualification” - not regulated by a government.
- Owned by Cambridge International Examinations - part of Cambridge University.
- Graded A* - G. Grades accepted as equivalent to current GCSEs.
- Over 70 titles - used in 140-150 countries.
- Total entry 500,000 plus (Isle of Man total entry over 8,000 - ie 1.6%)
- Linear assessment - but can enter in November as well as June in many subjects.
- Tiered papers in most subjects (including English, Sciences and Maths) - often with 2 grade overlap (A*-E and C-G).
- Flexibility and choice - optional coursework - exam alternative - in some subjects.
- No major reforms planned - reform takes place through stakeholder consultation.
- Standards maintained through comparative performance - benchmarked against a group of schools.

Scottish National 4s and National 5s

Key Features

- Introduced in September 2013.
- National 4 courses - assessed by teachers - moderated by SQA - no external assessment.
- National 4 qualifications either “pass” or “fail”.
- National 4 - includes coursework, assignments, case studies, question papers as thought appropriate by the teacher.
- National 5 courses - teacher assessment based on classwork - plus external exams.
- National 5 qualifications graded A - C (all passes), D (“First fail”) and “No Award”
- National 5 - pupils typically study 8 subjects in Year 10/11
- National 5 - the most able students start Highers in Secondary 5 (S5 = Year 11).

Broader Opportunities to be considered

An opportunity to raise community aspirations

Communicating the importance of education

Tackling underachievement of boys

Tackling underachievement of disadvantaged learners

An opportunity to develop the curriculum

Entitlement Framework

Post-16 Options

IT / Computer Science

Collaboration / Supported Self Study / Distance Learning

Critical thinking

Manx Baccalaureate

An opportunity to develop learning and teaching (pedagogy)

Using ICT to transform learning

Independent learning / Flipped Classrooms / Deep Learning

Collaborative learning / Team working

6Rs / Leadership Skills / Confidence building

Skills for work

Problem solving

SWOT Analysis by DEC Senior Managers

We asked all our senior school managers to undertake a SWOT Analysis of the the three options with the following outcomes:

- For GCSE (England) the result was that the group identified nearly twice as many weaknesses as there were strengths and twice as many threats as there were opportunities
- For the IGCSE there were nearly twice as many strengths as there were weaknesses and around 30% more opportunities than threats identified
- For the Scottish examination model the strengths and weaknesses were seen as roughly equal whilst opportunities outweighed threats by around 30%

Towards Public Consultation

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Department of Education and Children
Քույր-Եղբայրների Գնահատման Մեթոդ

14-16 Qualifications Reform
Consultation Questionnaire

Please read the explanatory paper before completing the questionnaire. GCSEs, the main qualification for schools in the Isle of Man, are changing. The consultation is about the new qualification for schools in the Isle of Man. The consultation period starts on 2 April 2014 and will run until 18 May 2014. Your views will be greatly appreciated and will be used to help formulate the Department's future decision and plans. The Department is consulting to establish views on some general issues as well as gather broad responses to the following questions. The questionnaire is not a test. Your views are important. The Department will continue to address and respond to your views.

Name: _____

Capacity in which you are offering a response please tick just one of the following boxes.

Parent	<input type="checkbox"/>
Employer	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teacher	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>

(*) Name of organisation you view represent _____

Please answer the following questions (mark with 1-5)

1 Strongly disagree
 2 Disagree
 3 Neither agree nor disagree
 4 Agree
 5 Strongly agree

General Questions on Education
 The following questions are about the changes that are taking place. The following questions will help to help answer, 'What should be done about these changes?'

1 Strongly disagree 2 Disagree 3 Neither agree nor disagree 4 Agree 5 Strongly agree

1. Vocational qualifications offered in schools in the Isle of Man should be publicly independent of the government as far as possible. 1 2 3 4 5

2. Vocational qualifications that young people obtain at the end of their education should be based solely on a course seen in their papers where possible. 1 2 3 4 5

3. Vocational qualifications should be based on a variety of forms of assessment including coursework. 1 2 3 4 5

4. Schools should be able to offer a variety of 14-16 qualifications open to the public. 1 2 3 4 5

5. Man should be prepared to follow other than those available in England and use advantages to our students in the UK. 1 2 3 4 5

6. With education system in place, Scottish National qualifications (in place of GCSE) should be offered in Man. (in place of GCSE) 1 2 3 4 5

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Other (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>

(*) Name of organisation you view represent _____

Please answer the following questions (mark with 1-5)

1 Strongly disagree
 2 Disagree
 3 Neither agree nor disagree
 4 Agree
 5 Strongly agree

Specific Questions on International GCSEs
 The following questions are about the changes that are taking place. The following questions will help to help answer, 'What should be done about these changes?'

1 Strongly disagree 2 Disagree 3 Neither agree nor disagree 4 Agree 5 Strongly agree

7. Following the International GCSE would mean individual qualifications linked to an individual subject at GCSE level. I would find this acceptable. 1 2 3 4 5

8. Following the new GCSEs in England would mean more to do with grading designed to reduce the number of students who achieve a higher grade. I would find this acceptable. 1 2 3 4 5

9. It would be harder to recruit and retain teachers in the Isle of Man if our schools moved away from the qualifications used in England. 1 2 3 4 5

10. It would be harder to recruit and retain key personnel (senior staff) working in the Isle of Man if our schools moved away from the qualifications used in England. 1 2 3 4 5

11. I would like to see additional comments on the following issues:
 a. Please return the consultation questionnaire with additional comments (if required).
 b. Continuing below 11-19 Education, Department of Education and Children, PO Box 100, St. John's, T. 01624 800333

Towards Public Consultation

Consultation statements

Educational qualifications offered in schools in the Isle of Man should be as politically independent of other governments as possible.

Qualifications should be based solely on end of course examination papers where possible.

Following the Scottish education system would mean pupils obtaining Scottish National 4 and National 5 qualifications (in place of GCSE) and Scottish Highers and Advanced Highers (in place of A levels). I would find this acceptable.

Following the International GCSE would mean moving away from qualifications linked to an individual jurisdiction at 16 but pupils would progress to A Levels or International A Levels. I would find this acceptable.

It would be harder to recruit and retain key personnel (ie with families) working in the Isle of Man if our schools moved away from the qualifications used in England.