Introduction - GCSEs

Ofqual have announced that reformed linear (non-modular) GCSEs will be phased in from 2015 to 2017, with the first awards of these qualifications being made in 2017. Reformed GCSEs will be awarded in English Language, English Literature and Mathematics in 2017. A wider range of subjects will be included in the reformed GCSEs awarded in 2018, 2019 and 2020:


Traditionally, GCSEs have been graded on an alphabetical scale, with A* as the highest grade. In England, reformed GCSEs will be graded on a numerical scale. The numerical scale does not directly align with the alphabetical scale:


In Wales, reformed GCSEs will still be graded on the A*-G scale. In Northern Ireland, candidates may present alphabetical grades, numerical grades or a combination from different providers. In addition, candidates in Northern Ireland may present a C* grade (which equates to Grade 5 in the English grading system).
How will the GCSE changes impact on applications to Medicine at the University of Sheffield?

The first numerical grades will be awarded for GCSEs in Summer 2017. These will be reflected in applications to the Medical School in 2018 for 2019 entry onwards. The University of Sheffield Medical School includes a GCSE requirement as part of its academic entry criteria. Applicants may apply with purely alphabetical grades, purely numerical grades or a combination of both. We anticipate that in the coming years we will see a gradual shift from applications only with alphabetical grades to applications only with numerical grades.

We consider the legacy (alphabetical) GCSE grades to equate to the reformed (numerical) GCSE grades as follows for the purpose of admission to the MBChB programme:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prior to GCSE reform</th>
<th>Required Alphabetical Grade</th>
<th>Post GCSE reform</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>England: Numerical Grade</td>
<td>Wales: Alphabetical grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A*–C</td>
<td>9-4</td>
<td>A*–C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A*–B</td>
<td>9-6</td>
<td>A*–B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We will accept any combination of Alphabetical and Numerical grades, providing that these equate to the required Alphabetical grades as above.

Introduction – AS Levels and A Levels

It has been announced by Ofqual that between September 2015 and 2017, AS and A Levels in England will be decoupled and reformed, and will become separate, linear qualifications, examined at the end of the course:


http://comment.ofqual.gov.uk/a-level-regulatory-requirements-october-2013/part-1-our-proposed-changes/as-qualifications/as-qualifications/

Reformed AS Levels are designed to be taught alongside the first year of reformed A Levels so that schools can teach groups of students together regardless of whether the students intend to stop at AS Level or pursue the full A Level. However, even if a student sits an AS Level and then decides to pursue the full A Level, material from the whole two years will be examined as part of the A Level. AS marks cannot be carried forward and AS grades will not contribute to A Level grades.

In addition to changes to the AS Level, the assessment of practical skills in reformed Physics, Chemistry and Biology A Levels will be separate from the written exams which
lead to the final grade. The A Level will be graded A* to E, and the practical element will get a separate pass or not classified grade which will not count towards the final A Level grade.

All of these changes will impact on students starting their post-GCSE education in 2015, planning to apply in 2016 for 2017 entry, and beyond.

How will the AS Level changes impact on applications to Medicine at the University of Sheffield?

The University of Sheffield understands that some schools and colleges will still wish to enter all students for AS Levels whereas others will carry out internal assessment at the end of Year 12 to inform students’ progression to Year 13, grade predictions and university decisions. The decision whether a student should sit an AS Level even if he or she intends to take the full A Level must rest with the school or college and the student.

For applicants seeking to enter the MBChB programme from September 2017 onwards, AS Levels will not form a part of our entry criteria. Where an applicant has AS Levels, these will not be considered, and will confer no advantage to the application. Similarly, no disadvantage will accrue to applicants who do not hold AS Levels.

AS Levels do not form part of offers made for the MBChB programme.

Applicants who do not have a degree are still required to meet GCSE and A Level requirements and a UKCAT requirement. Applicants who have a Bachelors degree are required to have a ii:1 or 1st class degree in addition to BBB or better at A Level.

How will the changes to A Levels with a practical component impact on applications to Medicine at the University of Sheffield.

Practical skills are a crucial part of science education and the University of Sheffield will expect students to pass the practical element of any science A Level taken.

Applicants seeking to enter the MBChB programme from September 2017 onwards who undertake A levels that have a separate practical endorsement will be required to demonstrate that they have passed this component for each A Level to which it applies. For example, candidates who apply with A Levels in Biology, Chemistry and Physics will therefore be required to have A (Pass), A (Pass), A (Pass). This will be made explicit in any MBChB offer they receive.

Applicants who have taken an A Level that has a separate practical element who do not complete or who fail the practical endorsement will be deemed unsuccessful in their application.

The University of Sheffield’s Policy Statement
The University of Sheffield’s policy statement on qualification reform can be found at:

www.sheffield.ac.uk/undergraduate/policies/reform