

# **Register of change Part 2**

## **2010-2021**

Research Report

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# Introduction

During recent years there have been many changes in education and assessment. Curricula have been updated, qualifications have been introduced and other qualifications withdrawn, particular skills have been valued then removed from assessment. When so many changes occur in a short space of time it is difficult to keep track of the changes that have occurred, and the time at which they happened. This document tracks some of the changes that have occurred to education in England since 2010<sup>1</sup>. The start date was chosen as it coincided with the beginning of the Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition government, which introduced many changes to qualifications. This document is intended to provide details for some of the changes that have occurred since then. It focuses mainly on secondary school education and general qualifications, although where appropriate it also includes information on changes to primary school and technical education. We hope and intend that it will be regularly updated so that it continues to provide up-to-date information.

This report is not intended to give a comprehensive account of any particular event or document. Instead, relevant references are provided that will hopefully provide a useful starting point to enable the reader to investigate further. Where possible, the references given are for published documents and publications, so that the reader can use them as a reference for the dates of particular events without needing to carry out further research. Occasionally it has been necessary to provide links to web pages instead. If this has been done, every effort has been made to ensure that the links are likely to prove permanent.

The document is divided into sections to enable the changes to qualifications to be tracked more easily. The first section tracks the introduction of new qualifications and withdrawal of old qualifications. Only the key dates have been given for these, such as first and last teaching / assessment, as it is hoped that other dates can be calculated from these. There are also individual sections for A levels and GCSEs, tracking the important changes that have been made to these qualifications. In general, these changes affect all the subjects within that qualification. Any references to subject-specific changes are only those that have arisen from government policy, such as the increased emphasis on spelling, punctuation and grammar in some GCSE subjects, as it is not possible to give a comprehensive and detailed account of all the changes to individual subjects here. For the first time, this version of the register contains two sections relating to the COVID-19 pandemic. The first provides an overview of the changes to schooling and assessment as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the second provides an overview of the changes affecting vocational and technical qualifications. The remaining sections of the report track themes that occur independently of particular qualifications, such as technical education, key government and research papers, the National Curriculum, the creation of and amendments to performance tables, and the changes in the UCAS tariff. Further sections may be added in the future.

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<sup>1</sup> A separate document, 'Register of Change Part 1', covers the period from 2000 to August 2010.

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# 1. Introduction and withdrawal of qualifications

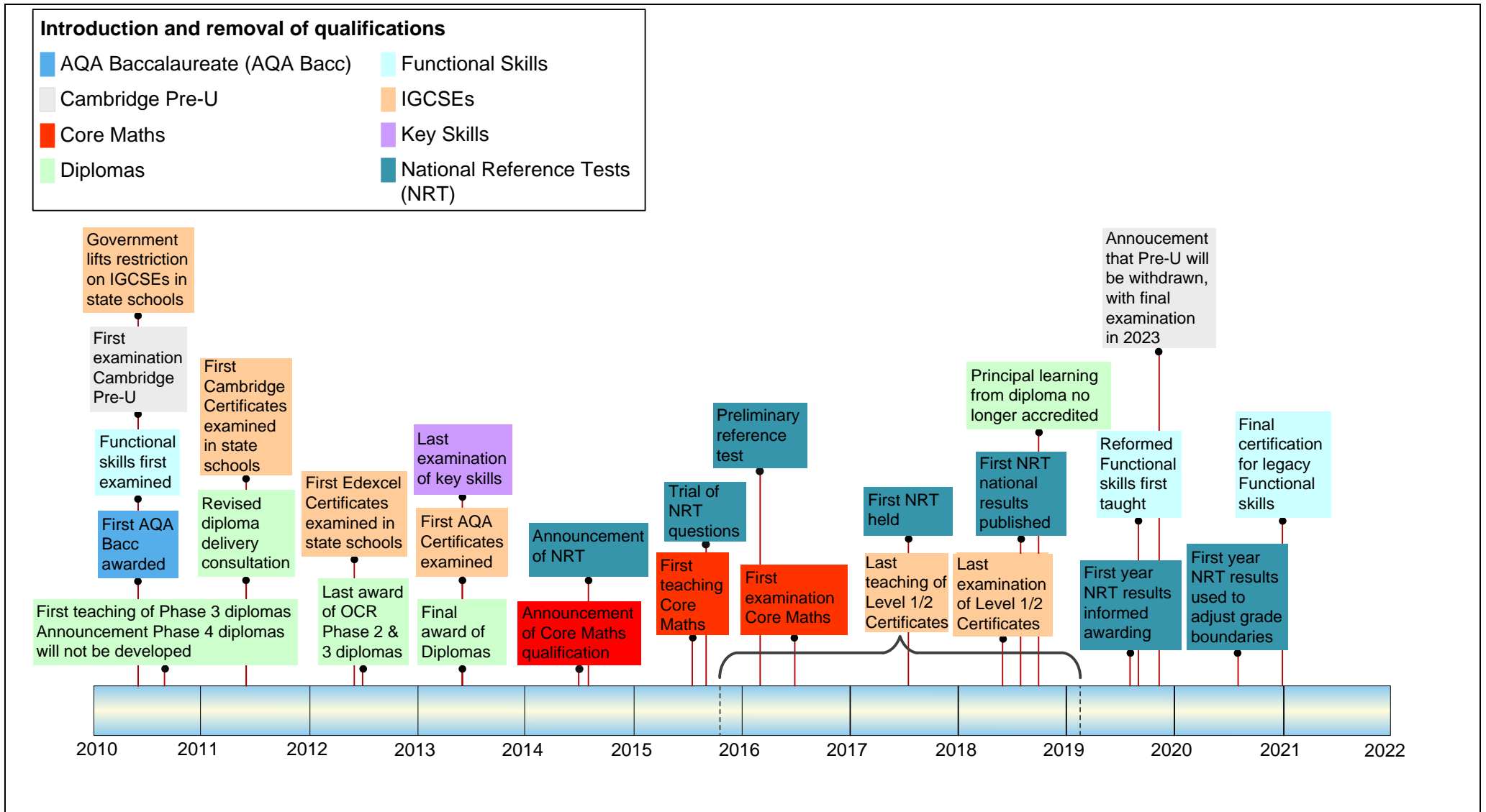


Figure 1. First and last dates for offering qualifications plus other key dates.

Since 2010, several new qualifications have been introduced and further qualifications have been withdrawn from the Register of Regulated Qualifications<sup>2</sup>. This section aims to list key dates and information for some of the qualifications offered in schools and colleges.

Table 1. Details of qualifications.

<i>Year</i>	<i>Details</i>
<b>Advanced Extension Award</b>	
On-going	Mathematics continues to be offered as an AEA. No other AEAs are now available.
<b>Cambridge Pre-U</b>	
2010	The first (full course) students sat the Cambridge Pre-U examinations for their Principal Learning subjects. (Cambridge International Examinations, 2010)
2019	Cambridge Assessment International Education announced that they were planning to withdraw the Pre-U. Since the reforms to the A level in England, the Pre-U was not considered distinctive enough from A level and its low entries made it unsustainable to run. (Cambridge Assessment International Education, 2019)
2023	Last examination of the Cambridge Pre-U (Cambridge Assessment International Education, 2019)
2024	Final resit of the Cambridge Pre-U (Cambridge Assessment International Education, 2019)
<b>Core Maths</b>	
2014	The Department for Education proposed a new level 3 qualification in Core Maths. It was aimed at students with a grade C or above in GCSE Mathematics who were not studying Mathematics at AS/A level. (Department for Education, 2014b)
2015	First teaching of Core Maths qualifications. (Department for Education, 2014b)
2016	First examination of Core Maths qualifications. (Department for Education, 2014b)
<b>Diplomas</b>	
2010	In June 2010, the new coalition government announced that all development of the phase 4 Diplomas would cease immediately. (Department for Education, 2010a)

<sup>2</sup> Ofqual regulates qualifications that are taken wholly or mainly by people in England, are awarded by a recognised awarding organisation (e.g. OCR) and are below foundation degree level (Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act, 2009). The Register of Regulated Qualifications provides details about all regulated qualifications.

<i>Year</i>	<i>Details</i>
2010	The Ofqual Chief Regulator's report identified difficulties with awarding diploma qualifications and stated that its design needed to be revised so that the delivery of the qualification was manageable. (Ofqual, 2010b)
2011	<p>In June, Ofqual ran a consultation on changes to the aggregation of the phase 1-2 diplomas, resulting from the government's intention to close the Diploma Aggregation Service. Following the consultation, Ofqual recommended that the final award of the aggregated diploma would be made in 2013, with provision for resits to take place in 2014. (Ofqual, 2011a)</p> <p>Individual components of the Diploma (e.g. Principal Learning) were not included in the consultation, and awarding bodies were still able to offer these. (Ofqual, 2011a)</p>
2012	<p>The last award of the Phase 2 and 3 OCR Diplomas at levels 1 to 3 took place in summer 2012. This included the following lines of learning (and their related Principal Learning components):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business, Administration and Finance</li> <li>• Hospitality</li> <li>• Manufacturing and Product Design</li> <li>• Public Services</li> <li>• Retail Business</li> <li>• Sports and Active Leisure</li> <li>• Travel and Tourism.</li> </ul> <p>(OCR, 2011)</p>
2013	<p>The last award of the Diplomas by any awarding organisation took place in the summer of 2013 (Ofqual, 2010a). This included the lines of learning for the following OCR Phase 1 Diplomas and their related Principal Learning components (OCR, 2011):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creative and Media</li> <li>• Information Technology</li> <li>• Society, Health and Development.</li> </ul> <p>Some parts of the Diplomas continued beyond summer 2013, although the actual elements that were continued and abandoned depended upon the individual awarding organisations. For example OCR (2011) stated that they would continue to offer the Principal Learning in Engineering and the Foundation, Higher and Extended Project as stand-alone qualifications and that successful elements of other subjects that were also popular would be reflected in the development of future OCR qualifications.</p>

<i>Year</i>	<i>Details</i>
2018	The final 10 Principal Learning qualifications were removed from the list of accredited qualifications at the end of September. (Ofqual, 2017b)

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### **Functional skills**

2010	First teaching of Functional Skills. This qualification is available to all learners aged 14+ in English, Mathematics and ICT. (Ofqual, 2015b)
2017	Ofqual announced plans to reform Functional Skills in English and Mathematics (Ofqual, 2017c).
2018	New subject content and assessment requirements were outlined in outcome of consultation (Ofqual, 2018a)
2019	Candidates registered on or after 1 September 2019 will be awarded the reformed Functional Skills qualifications in English and Mathematics (Ofqual, 2018b).
2020	Legacy Functional Skills qualifications were originally scheduled to be phased out a maximum of 12 months after the reformed qualifications were introduced, effectively ending them by the end of August 2020. (Ofqual, 2018a)
	Due to the impact of COVID-19, the end date for the legacy Functional Skills qualifications was moved to the 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2020. (Ofqual, 2020c)

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### **IGCSE<sup>3</sup>**

2010	The government lifted restrictions upon state schools offering International GCSEs. From September 2010, state schools were able to offer accredited International GCSE courses alongside GCSE courses. (Department for Education, 2010a)
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<sup>3</sup> There may be some confusion about the IGCSE and the International Certificate qualifications. IGCSEs were developed by Cambridge International Examinations and Edexcel as the International version of GCSEs. The IGCSEs offered by Cambridge International Examinations are called Cambridge IGCSEs, whilst those offered by Edexcel are International GCSEs. International Certificates are the accredited versions of the International GCSEs. They appear on the Register of Regulated Qualifications as Cambridge International Certificates if they are offered by Cambridge International Examinations and Edexcel Certificates if they are offered by Edexcel. Whilst they are often informally referred to as IGCSEs or International GCSEs, any documentation falling under the remit of Ofqual (e.g. results certificates) cannot use these titles.



<i>Year</i>	<i>Details</i>
2012	<p>The first state school students sat Edexcel international GCSEs (accredited by Ofqual as 'Edexcel Level 1/Level 2 Certificates') in the summer 2012 examination session. (Edexcel, 2012)</p> <p>The first students sat AQA international GCSEs (accredited by Ofqual as 'AQA level 1/2 Certificates') in the summer 2012 examination session<sup>4</sup>.</p>
2015-17	<p>AQA, Cambridge International and Edexcel international GCSEs (accredited by Ofqual as 'level 1/2 Certificates') were discontinued when reformed GCSEs were introduced and stopped being included in the performance tables. Each subject ceased to be taught from the session in which the reformed GCSE was first taught (AQA, 2015; Cambridge Assessment International Education; Edexcel, 2015). They were discontinued due to projected low candidate numbers – state schools could no longer offer them, and private schools were expected to take the unaccredited international GSCSEs rather than the level 1/2 certificates (Cambridge Assessment International Education). Therefore, English Literature, English Language and Mathematics were not available for first teaching in September 2015. The second set of subjects stopped being available from September 2016 and the final set of subjects stopped being available from September 2017.</p>
<b>Key Skills</b>	
2013	<p>The last certification of Key Skills took place at the end of September 2013. (OCR, 2012b)</p>
<b>National Reference Test (NRT)</b>	
2014	<p>Ofqual announced that a new National Reference Test (NRT) in English and Mathematics would be introduced in to provide additional information for awarding the new GCSEs. (Ofqual, 2014d)</p>
2015	<p>Ofqual announced that the test would be run by NFER and provided extra details about the test. The NRT will assess a random sample of students from 300 schools in either English or Mathematics, and will be held in March each year. (Ofqual, 2015d)</p> <p>In September and October Ofqual carried out a trial of the questions that were developed for the test. (Ofqual, 2015c)</p>

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<sup>4</sup> No direct references were found for this, but the specifications for English Language, English Literature and Mathematics (the first three subjects to be approved) state that they will first be available in the June 2012 session, and there is a June 2012 results sheet for these subjects ([http://filestore.aqa.org.uk/over/stat\\_pdf/AQA-I-GCSE-DBL-STATS-JUNE-2012.PDF#page=1&zoom=auto,-14,26](http://filestore.aqa.org.uk/over/stat_pdf/AQA-I-GCSE-DBL-STATS-JUNE-2012.PDF#page=1&zoom=auto,-14,26))

<i>Year</i>	<i>Details</i>
2016	<p>A full-scale trial of the NRT (the preliminary reference test) was carried out in March 2016. (Ofqual, 2015c)</p> <p>In September, Ofqual announced the final details for the NRT. Each school will enter 30 students for the test in each subject. The tests will last for an hour, and will be divided into booklets, so that no student sits the entire test. The tests will be kept secure so that questions can be reused. No scores or grades will be released, but performance measures will be published from 2018 onwards. (Ofqual, 2016a)</p>
2017	<p>The first National Reference Test was sat in March 2017. (Ofqual, 2017a)</p> <p>The 2017 NRT scores were equated to GCSE grade boundaries but were not used for awarding. (Ofqual, 2016a)</p>
2018	<p>The first year that the NRT results were published. The results showed the percentage of students expected to achieve at least a 4, a 5 or a 7 in their GCSEs. The results were compared to the 2017 results, but were not used to inform awarding. (Ofqual, 2018c)</p>
2019	<p>The NRT were considered as evidence in awarding GCSE English language and maths for the first time, although it was not used to make any adjustments to the standards for either subject. (Ofqual, 2019b)</p>
2020	<p>The NRT was sat in 2020, and the results led to a small adjustment for several of the grade boundaries for mathematics. This adjustment was used when working out students' calculated grades. (Ofqual, 2020i)</p> <p>(Note that calculated grades were generated in 2020 as the exams were cancelled due to COVID-19; students received the best results from their calculated grade or their teacher-assessed grade.)</p>

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## 2. COVID-19 pandemic effects on schooling in England<sup>5</sup>

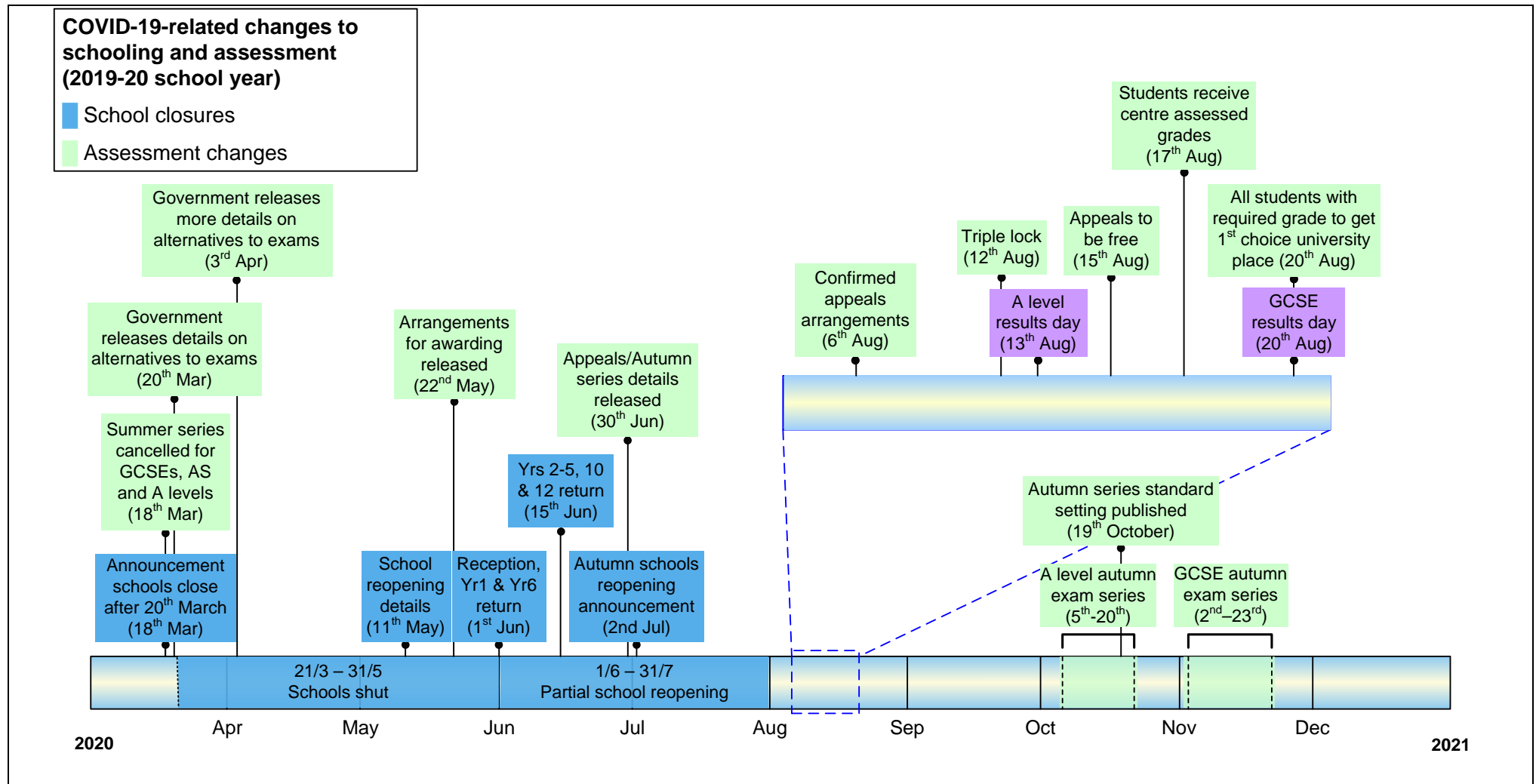


Figure 2. COVID-19-related changes affecting 2019-20 academic year/students certificating in Summer 2020.

<sup>5</sup> This section only covers the general qualifications that students sit in England (GCSEs, AS and A levels, Extended Project and AEA maths); however, other general qualifications offered in English schools (e.g. the International Baccalaureate, IGCSEs and the Cambridge Pre-U) were also affected by COVID-19. Their exams were cancelled and they had to use calculated grades, predicted grades or coursework grades instead. They did not follow exactly the same methods to generate those grades as were used for the general qualifications.

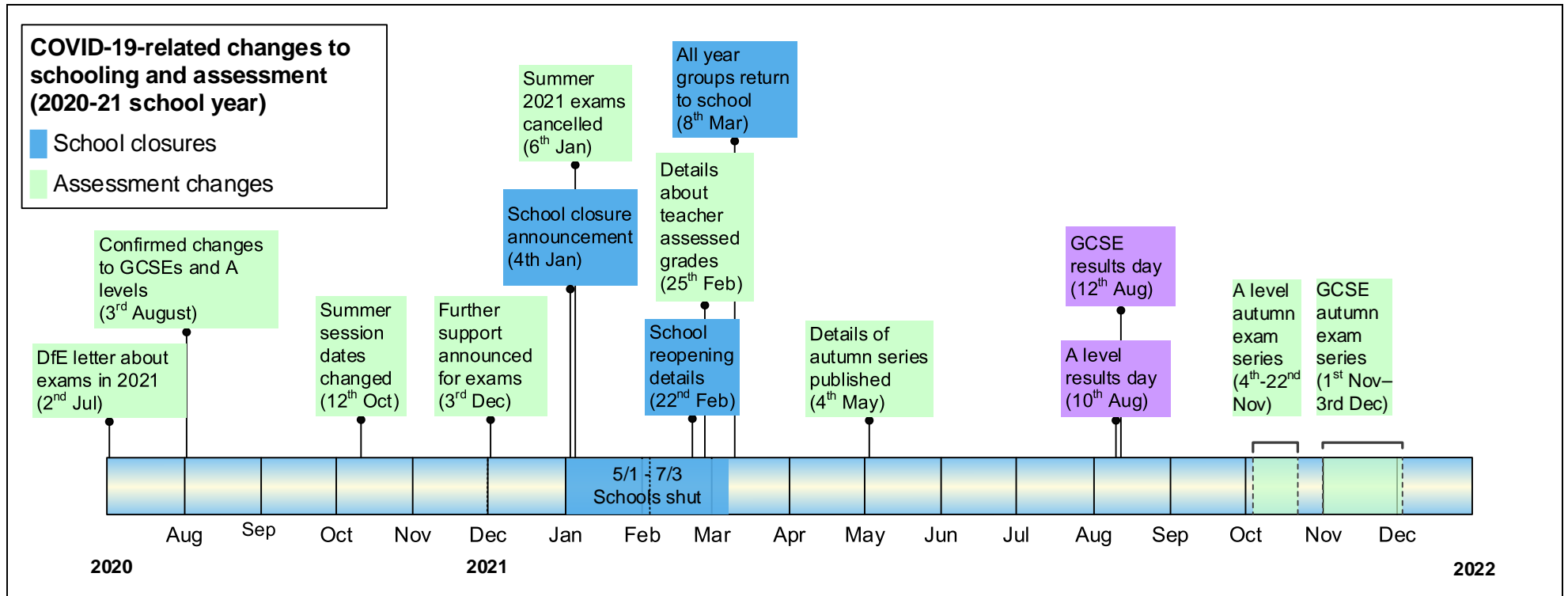


Figure 3. COVID-19-related changes affecting 2020-21 academic year/students certificating in Summer 2021.

In 2020 a new disease, COVID-19, led to the World Health Organisation declaring a pandemic. Education around the world was affected. In the majority of countries, including England, it led to periods of school closures and affected the assessments of students at key stages in their education. This section lists the school closures and provides details on the proposed changes to the assessment of general qualifications (GCSEs, AS and A levels, Extended Project and AEA maths) in England over this period. It is important to note that some of the proposals were superseded or countered by later proposals so were never implemented. Accompanying the changes were a large number of consultations carried out by the Department for Education and Ofqual. These are listed in a separate document (see Rushton, 2022).

Table 2. Covid-related changes affecting the 2019-20 academic year/students certifying in summer 2020.

<b><i>Date</i></b>	<b><i>Details</i></b>
<b>11<sup>th</sup> March 2020</b>	The World Health Organisation declared COVID-19 to be pandemic. (World Health Organization, 2021)
<b>18<sup>th</sup> March 2020</b>	The Prime Minister announced that all schools in England would close from the 20 <sup>th</sup> March onwards, except for vulnerable children and the children of essential workers. He also announced that the exams planned for May and June would be cancelled. (Prime Minister's Office & Johnson, 2020) The Department for Education confirmed that no exams for primary and secondary schools would go ahead in the summer. (Department for Education & Williamson, 2020e)
<b>20<sup>th</sup> March</b>	Two days later, the Department for Education released the first details about the alternatives to examinations. They stated that each student would receive a calculated grade. The teachers would use students work, both class work and mock examinations, to state what grade each student would have received in an examination. Ofqual would use those grades alongside prior attainment data to produce the calculated grades. Overall, the intention was that the calculated grades would have a similar distribution to the exam results in a normal year. Students who were unhappy with their grade would be given an opportunity to take an examination early in the 2020-21 academic year. (Department for Education & Williamson, 2020b)  From the 20 <sup>th</sup> March onwards, the vast majority of students moved to home learning. All schools provided work for students to complete at home, and some schools (49% of primaries and 62% of secondaries) offered active provisions such as online classes. (Cattan et al., 2021)

<b>Date</b>	<b>Details</b>
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> April</b>	<p>Ofqual released further information about the centre assessed grades, including the types of work that could be used to inform the judgements. Alongside the grades, they also asked teachers to rank students within each grade for a subject to allow Ofqual to standardise the grades across different centres. No further details of the standardisation process were provided, but they announced their intention to consult about the principles of the model that they would use.</p> <p>(Ofqual, 2020e)</p>
<b>11<sup>th</sup> May</b>	<p>The Department for Education provided the details for how schools would reopen. They planned for a staggered reopening, starting with nursery, reception, year 1 and year 6 on the 1<sup>st</sup> June at the earliest. Other primary-aged children would return later in June. They wanted secondary schools to provide some face to face teaching for years 10 and 12, but anticipated that the other years at secondary school would not return before September.</p> <p>(Department for Education, 2020a)</p>
<b>22<sup>nd</sup> May</b>	<p>Ofqual published the results of its consultation on how to award qualifications in the summer of 2020. A statistical model would be used to adjust students' grades based on students' prior attainment (based on the cohort within the school, not individual students), schools' previous results, and the expected national outcomes. Schools' historical performance in subjects was prioritised over their assessed grades for the current students. Trends in centres grades were not used in the model, so it would not reflect schools' results' improvement or deterioration.</p> <p>Students would be able to appeal results on the basis of bias or discrimination; schools could appeal if they thought there was an error in the information that was submitted or if they believed there was an error in the awarding organisation's calculation of the grade. Students could not appeal their results on the basis of their position in the rank order.</p> <p>Ofqual also released additional details for the autumn series. This would be available to any students who could not receive a calculated grade (e.g. private candidates) and to students who wanted to improve their grade. Awarding organisations would be expected to offer all papers in every subject. AS and A levels would take place in October and GCSEs in November.</p> <p>(Ofqual, 2020g)</p>
<b>1<sup>st</sup> June</b>	<p>Reception, Year 1 &amp; 6 students were able to return to school from this date. Return was not compulsory and there were restrictions on the number of students in classrooms.</p>
<b>15<sup>th</sup> June</b>	<p>Years 2-5, 10 and 12 were able to return. Return was not compulsory and there were restrictions on the number of students in classrooms.</p>



<b>Date</b>	<b>Details</b>
<b>30<sup>th</sup> June</b>	<p>Ofqual published further details about appealing calculated grades. After consultation they decided that the standardisation process should not be different for schools with significant demographic changes. Any schools affected by this were already able to appeal their results on these grounds.</p> <p>Ofqual also published its decisions about the role of non-examined assessments (e.g. fieldwork) in the autumn series. It was removed from all subjects except art due to issues of manageability and fairness.</p> <p>(Ofqual, 2020h)</p>
<b>6<sup>th</sup> August</b>	<p>Ofqual confirmed the basis for appealing results that were originally published on the 22<sup>nd</sup> May and 30<sup>th</sup> June. They also confirmed that centres would be able to appeal the results of an individual student who did not match the usual pattern of results for that centre, for example a student of unusually high ability for that centre.</p> <p>(Ofqual, 2020a)</p>
<b>11<sup>th</sup> August</b>	<p>Gavin Williamson announced that students would be able to use mock results instead of calculated grades. This appeared to follow a change of policy in Scotland that allowed students to receive their estimated grades rather than their calculated grade.</p> <p>(Hazel, 2020)</p>
<b>12<sup>th</sup> August</b>	<p>Gavin Williamson, the Education Secretary, confirmed that students would be given a 'triple lock'. They could either accept their calculated grade, appeal to be allowed to use a valid mock grade instead, or sit autumn exams.</p> <p>(Department for Education &amp; Williamson, 2020g)</p>
<b>13<sup>th</sup> August</b>	<p>A level results day</p> <p>The application of the standardisation algorithm meant that almost forty per cent of calculated grades were one or more grades lower than the school estimate, and there was widespread concern about the results.</p> <p>(Adams et al., 2020)</p>
<b>15<sup>th</sup> August</b>	<p>The government confirmed that appeals of GCSE and A level results would be free to ensure that the system was fair and that people were confident in it.</p> <p>(Department for Education, 2020b)</p>
<b>17<sup>th</sup> August</b>	<p>The Government and Ofqual confirmed that GCSE and A level students would receive their centre assessed grades. They would keep their calculated grade if their calculated grade was higher.</p> <p>(Department for Education &amp; Williamson, 2020c)</p>

<b>Date</b>	<b>Details</b>
<b>20<sup>th</sup> August</b>	<p>GCSE results day</p> <p>Universities and the Government agreed that all students who met the offer for their first choice of university, whether by calculated or estimated grades, should be offered a place. The government removed the cap on places to allow this, but also gave universities the option of offering students deferred places if they had reached capacity.</p> <p>(Department for Education &amp; Donelan, 2020)</p>
<b>5<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> October</b>	Autumn AS and A level series
<b>19<sup>th</sup> October</b>	<p>Ofqual published a blog to explain how standards would be set for the Autumn series, which had far fewer entries than the summer exam series. As numbers were so low, examiners' judgement was prioritised over statistics. The grades would be set using the difference in results from summer 2019 to summer 2020, so that students taking exams in the autumn series were treated fairly in comparison to the summer 2020 students.</p> <p>Ofqual also confirmed that students whose grades did not increase on the autumn series would keep their summer result.</p> <p>(Jadhav, 2020)</p>
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup> November</b>	Autumn GCSE series

Table 3. Covid-related changes affecting the 2020-21 academic year/students certifying in summer 2021.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Details</b>
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> July</b>	<p>The Department for Education announced that schools would fully reopen in September, with no restrictions on class sizes. Other covid measures, such as bubbles<sup>6</sup> would continue.</p> <p>(Department for Education &amp; Williamson, 2020d)</p> <p>The Department for Education also published a letter from Gavin Williamson (the Secretary of State for Education) to Sally Collier (Chief Regulator at Ofqual) about the arrangements for examinations in Summer 2022. In it, Gavin Williamson stated that he wanted exams to go ahead if possible, and that standards should be maintained. He stated that students may not have studied all the content, and asked Ofqual what adaptations could be made to mitigate the effects of this. He also asked Ofqual to consider altering the exam timetable to give schools more teaching time before the exams started.</p> <p>(Williamson, 2020)</p>
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> August</b>	<p>Ofqual confirmed the adjustments for the summer 2021 exams. No change would be made to the format, length or number of exam, but students would be given a choice of questions in some subjects, and there would be changes to the fieldwork, spoken language assessments and non-exam assessments.</p> <p>(Ofqual, 2020d)</p>
<b>12 October</b>	<p>The Government announced that the summer 2021 exam series would be delayed by three weeks, and that it would run from the 7<sup>th</sup> June to the 2<sup>nd</sup> July. A level results would be published on the 24<sup>th</sup> August and GCSE results would be published on the 27<sup>th</sup> August.</p> <p>(Department for Education &amp; Williamson, 2020f)</p>
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> December</b>	<p>Gavin Williams announced extra measures for the 2021 exams in response to the covid disruption and to make them fairer for students. Students would be told some of the examined topics in advance, and grading would match the standard of summer 2020. Examination aids such as formula sheets would be provided in some subjects. There would also be additional chances to sit papers if students were absent on the day of the examination.</p> <p>For primary schools, the key stage 1 tests and the key stage 2 English grammar, punctuation and spelling test would not go ahead.</p> <p>(Department for Education &amp; Williamson, 2020a)</p>

<sup>6</sup> *Bubbles* refers to a method of preventing COVID-19 transmission that was used within schools from June 2020 until July 2021. A defined group of students, usually consisting of a class (or a year group in secondary schools), were allowed to mix with one another. Mixing with students outside their bubble was minimised as far as possible. Where possible, staff were allocated to one bubble and did not move between them.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Details</b>
<b>4<sup>th</sup> January</b>	The Prime Minister announced that schools would be closed from the following day and that there would be a national lockdown. (Prime Minister's Office & Johnson, 2021)
<b>6<sup>th</sup> January</b>	The Education Secretary, Gavin Williamson, announced that GCSE, AS and A level exams would not go ahead in the summer. He stated that teacher-assessed grades would be used rather than an algorithm. Fairness and consistency would be achieved through support and training for teachers (Department for Education & Williamson, 2021b). He also announced that the key stage 2 tests would not go ahead (Department for Education & Williamson, 2021a). (The key stage 1 tests had already been cancelled.)
<b>22<sup>nd</sup> February</b>	The government announced the details for the reopening of schools, with students returning from the 8 <sup>th</sup> March. The return was not staggered, but secondary school students needed to take COVID-19 tests (medical tests to indicate whether the students were infectious with the virus) before returning and then throughout the term.
<b>25<sup>th</sup> February</b>	The Education Secretary, Gavin Williamson, announced the details of the teacher-assessed grades. Teachers could use a range of evidence when deciding the grades, including exams, coursework and class work. He confirmed that an algorithm would not be used to moderate or standardise results. The results day for GCSEs and A levels would be brought forward to the week of the 9 <sup>th</sup> August so that there was more time to complete appeals, particularly for students applying to university. (Department for Education & Williamson, 2021c)
<b>8<sup>th</sup> March</b>	Students return to school
<b>4<sup>th</sup> May</b>	Ofqual announced that students certifying with a teacher-assessed grade in summer 2021 would be able to take an exam in that subject in autumn 2021. There would be no adaptations to the format of papers for the autumn series. Non-examined assessments would only be used in art and design subjects. AS and A levels would take place in October and GCSEs in November. (Ofqual, 2021b)
<b>4<sup>th</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup> November</b>	Autumn AS and A level series
<b>1<sup>st</sup> November – 3<sup>rd</sup> December</b>	Autumn GCSE series

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### 3. COVID-19 pandemic effects on vocational and technical qualifications in England

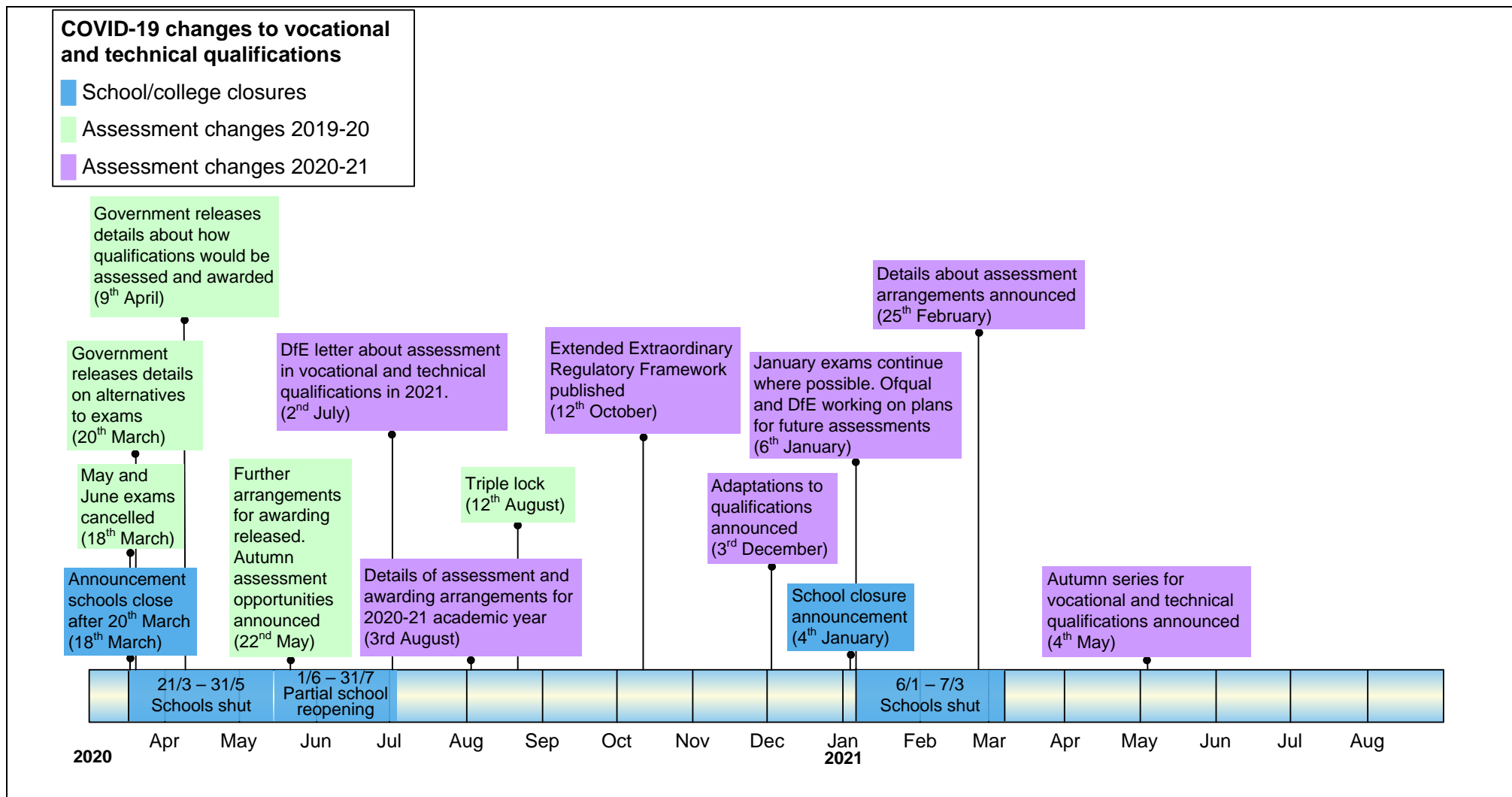


Figure 4. COVID-19-related changes affecting learners studying for vocational and technical qualifications.



This section lists the proposed changes to the assessment of vocational and vocationally-related qualifications due to COVID-19 during the 2019-20 and 2020-21 academic years. It is important to note that some of the proposals were superseded or countered by later proposals so were never implemented. Accompanying the changes were a large number of consultations carried out by the Department for Education and Ofqual. These are listed in a separate document (see Rushton, 2022).

Table 4. COVID-19-related changes affecting vocational and technical qualifications.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Details</b>
<b>11<sup>th</sup> March 2020</b>	The World Health Organisation declared COVID-19 to be pandemic. (World Health Organization, 2021)
<b>18<sup>th</sup> March 2020</b>	The Prime Minister announced that all schools in England would close from the 20 <sup>th</sup> March onwards, except for vulnerable children and the children of essential workers. He also announced that the exams planned for May and June would be cancelled. (Prime Minister's Office & Johnson, 2020)  The Department for Education confirmed that colleges would also close and that no exams for primary and secondary schools would go ahead in the summer. (Department for Education & Williamson, 2020e)
<b>20<sup>th</sup> March</b>	Two days later, the Department for Education released the first details about the alternatives to examinations. They did not give a specific approach for vocational and technical qualifications, recognising that assessment approaches would depend upon the qualification and the awarding organisation. Instead they requested awarding organisations were flexible in their approach, and stated that Ofqual would explore the options for awarding these qualifications. (Department for Education & Williamson, 2020b)
<b>9<sup>th</sup> April</b>	The Department for Education published details about how vocational and technical qualifications would be assessed and awarded. The approach would vary according to the qualification. Some qualifications would have calculated results, based on the judgement of teachers, tutors and trainers. For qualifications where it was not possible to calculate a result, other approaches would be investigated, such as adaption to the assessment or its delivery. The Department for Education thought that there would be a few qualifications, such as occupational competence qualifications, where the only option would be to postpone assessments until they could be run normally. (Ofqual, 2020b)

<b>Date</b>	<b>Details</b>
<b>22<sup>nd</sup> May</b>	<p>Ofqual published further details about the approaches to assessing and awarding vocational qualifications in the summer of 2020. Calculated grades would be used for qualifications that enabled progression to higher or further education. Assessments and delivery modes would be adapted for qualifications used to show occupational competence. Qualifications with both purposes could adopt either approach, depending on their main purpose and which approach would provide the most valid result.</p> <p>They also announced that there would be autumn assessment opportunities for all qualifications including those that did not normally have assessments in the autumn.</p> <p>(Ofqual, 2020f)</p>
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> July</b>	<p>The Department for Education also published a letter from Gavin Williamson (the Secretary of State for Education) to Sally Collier (Chief Regulator at Ofqual) about the arrangements for examinations in Summer 2022. In it, Gavin Williamson requested advice and proposals on how to minimise the impact of the disruptions for learners taking vocational and technical qualifications. He also asked for Ofqual's views about how to ensure learners are not more or less disadvantaged than students taking general qualifications</p> <p>(Williamson, 2020)</p>
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> August</b>	<p>Ofqual confirmed the arrangements for students taking vocational and technical qualifications in the 2020-21 academic year. Awarding would not use calculated results as the government wanted assessments to be held. Instead, awarding organisations would be permitted to adapt assessments as mitigation for the effects of COVID-19. They stated they would allow the adaptations to vary across awarding organisations, although they would facilitate common approaches where possible.</p> <p>(Ofqual, 2020d)</p>
<b>12<sup>th</sup> August</b>	<p>Gavin Williamson, the Education Secretary, confirmed that A level and GCSE students would be given a 'triple lock'. They could either accept their calculated grade, appeal to be allowed to use a valid mock grade instead, or sit autumn exams. He stated that there would be a similar arrangement for vocational and technical qualifications.</p> <p>(Department for Education &amp; Williamson, 2020g)</p>
<b>12<sup>th</sup> October</b>	<p>Ofqual published an Extended Extraordinary Regulatory Framework (ERF), which detailed the regulatory arrangements and statutory guidance that awarding organisations had to follow when they adapted their qualifications.</p> <p>(Ofqual, 2020j)</p>

<b>Date</b>	<b>Details</b>
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> December</b>	Gavin Williamson, the Education Secretary, announced that there would be adaptations to vocational and technical qualifications so that there was parity with the way that general qualifications were being adapted. He did not state what the adaptations to vocational and technical qualifications would be, but the adaptations to general qualifications were that grade boundaries would be in line with 2020's grade boundaries, topics would be published in advance, and students would receive additional exam aids to reduce the need for memorisation.  (Department for Education & Williamson, 2020a)
<b>4<sup>th</sup> January</b>	The Prime Minister announced that schools and colleges would be closed from the following day and that there would be a national lockdown.  (Prime Minister's Office & Johnson, 2021)
<b>6<sup>th</sup> January</b>	The Education Secretary, Gavin Williamson, announced that vocational and technical qualifications could continue to be assessed in January where schools and colleges thought it was right to offer them; however, no school or college would be forced to offer them (Department for Education & Williamson, 2021b). He also said that Ofqual and the Department for Education were working on plans for assessments taking place from February onwards, and for students who were not able to take their January assessments (Department for Education & Williamson, 2021a).
<b>25<sup>th</sup> February</b>	The Education Secretary, Gavin Williamson, announced the details of the assessment arrangements for vocational and technical qualifications. Students studying qualifications that were used for entrance to higher and further education would receive teacher assessed grades. Qualifications assessing professional competence would still be assessed by exams and assessments.  (Department for Education & Williamson, 2021c)
<b>4<sup>th</sup> May</b>	Ofqual announced that learners who had received teacher assessed grades for vocational and technical qualifications would be able to sit assessments between September and January to improve their grade, provided that the awarding organisation usually provided assessments at that time.  (Ofqual, 2021b)

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## 4. Changes to GCSE prior to reform programme

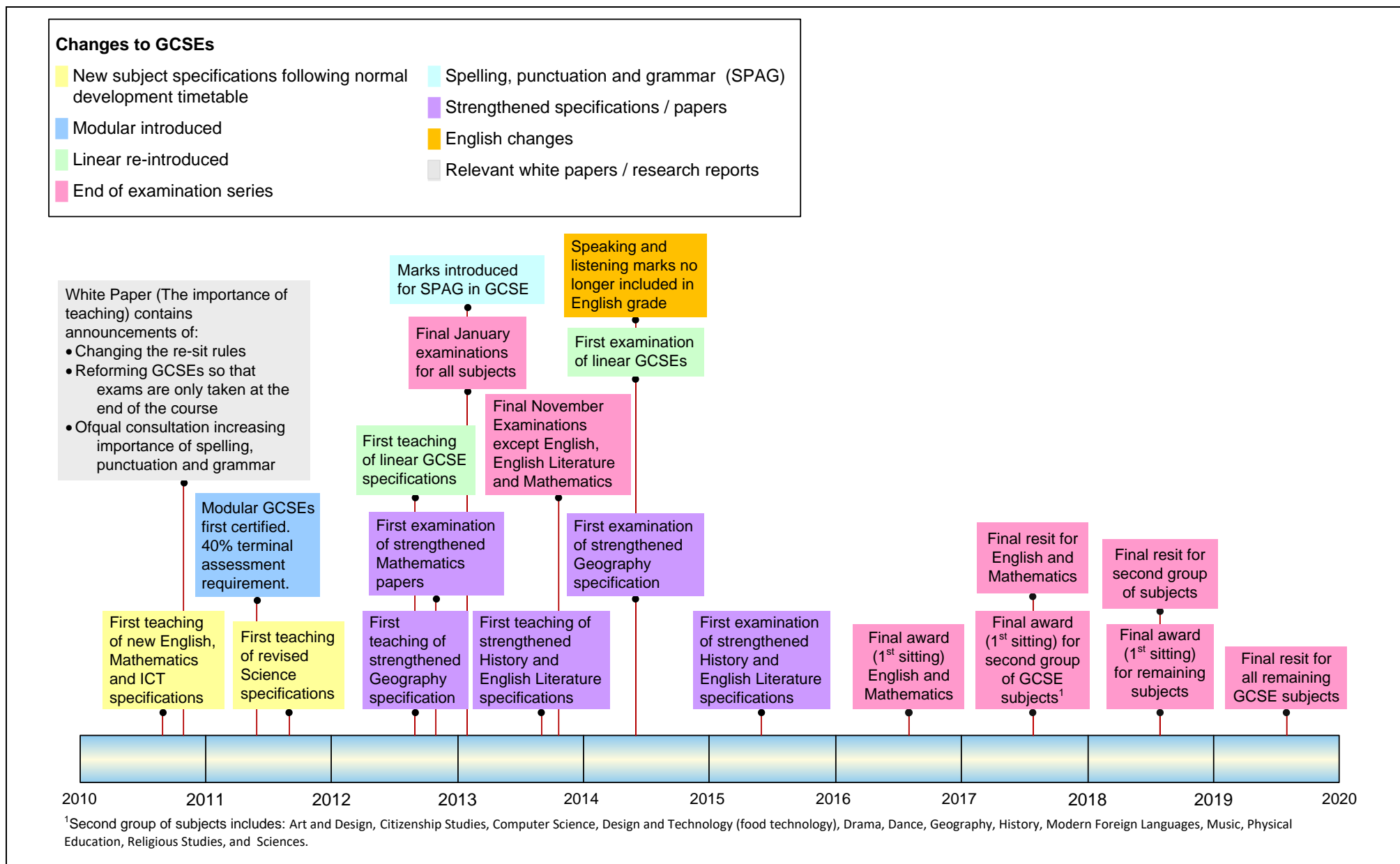


Figure 5. Changes to GCSEs since 2010.

There have been many changes to GCSEs since 2010. These have included the introduction of new specifications, the change to linear specifications and revisions to specifications following recommendations arising from Ofqual's qualification monitoring programme. (The proposed replacement of GCSEs with English Baccalaureate Certificates (EBCs) and subsequent GCSE redevelopment process is considered separately in section 3 to avoid potential confusion arising from the overlap between their development and the implementation of other changes to GCSEs.) Generally, changes to individual GCSE subjects have not been detailed; where individual changes have been noted it is because they have arisen and caused subjects to be revised outside of the normal timetable for updates.

Table 5. Details of GCSE changes.

<i>Year</i>	<i>Subject</i>	<i>Details</i>
<b>2010</b>	English, Mathematics and ICT	First teaching of new specifications for English, Mathematics and ICT. (QCA, 2009)
<b>2010</b>	N/A	In November, the White Paper 'The Importance of Teaching' (Department for Education, 2010b) was published. It contained the coalition policies for education. Of importance to GCSE were announcements that the re-sit rules would change; linear exams would be re-introduced; and spelling, punctuation and grammar would be given more importance <sup>7</sup> .
<b>2011</b>	Most subjects	The first certification of the new modular GCSEs with a 40% terminal requirement and controlled assessment instead of coursework. (QCA, 2009)
<b>2011</b>	Science	The first teaching of the new Science GCSEs, altered in response to the Ofqual (2009) comparability report <sup>8</sup> . (Ofqual, 2011c)
<b>2011</b>	N/A	The Daily Telegraph published their report into the exam seminars run by the Awarding Organisations. (The Telegraph, 2011)
<b>2012</b>	All subjects	First teaching of linear GCSE specifications in September 2012. (OCR, 2012a)
<b>2012</b>	Geography, English Literature, History and Mathematics	After the 2011 Daily Telegraph investigation into examination seminars (The Telegraph, 2011), Ofqual announced that these four subjects would be strengthened. Changes were announced for the papers in Mathematics and the specifications of the other subjects (Ofqual, 2012c).

<sup>7</sup> The history of spelling, punctuation and grammar in GCSEs is explored in more detail in the section below.

<sup>8</sup> The Ofqual report had identified concerns about reliability and validity. As a result, the criteria were redeveloped and new specifications drawn up in response to this.

<i>Year</i>	<i>Subject</i>	<i>Details</i>
<b>2012</b>	Geography	First teaching of the strengthened Geography specification from September 2012. (Ofqual, 2012a)
<b>2012</b>	Mathematics	First examination of the strengthened Mathematics papers in the November session (the specification remained unchanged from 2010). (Ofqual, 2012a)
<b>2013</b>	All subjects	Final January GCSE session. January examinations will only be available to candidates who will certificate in 2013. (Ofqual, 2012e)
<b>2013</b>	English, English Literature, Geography, History and RE	Increased emphasis on spelling, punctuation and grammar with extra marks awarded for this from the January examination session onwards. (Ofqual, 2012e)
<b>2013</b>	English Literature and History	Projected first teaching date for strengthened specifications from September 2013. (Ofqual, 2012a)
<b>2013</b>	English and English language	In August 2013, Ofqual announced that from summer 2014 speaking and listening assessments would no longer contribute to the final grades. Instead, the marks would be reported separately on certificates. They also announced that the balance between controlled assessment and examinations would be changed so that controlled assessment would be worth 40% of the final marks and examinations would be worth 60%. (Ofqual, 2013a)
<b>2013</b>	Most subjects	Final November session for most subjects. November examinations will only be available to students who will certificate in 2013. Future November sessions will only be available for English, English Language and Mathematics, and students will have to re-take the whole qualification rather than individual units/examinations. (Stacey, 2013b)
<b>2014</b>	All subjects	First certification of linear GCSEs in the summer examination session. (Stacey, 2013b)
<b>2014</b>	English and English language	Speaking and listening will no longer contribute to the GCSE grade. Results will be reported separately on the certificate. The weighting of components will change so that exams count for 60% of the final mark. (Ofqual, 2013a)
<b>2015</b>	English, English Language, Geography and History	First examination of strengthened papers. (Ofqual, 2015f)



<i>Year</i>	<i>Subject</i>	<i>Details</i>
<b>2016</b>	English, English Language, English Literature and Mathematics	Final award (1 <sup>st</sup> sitting) of unreformed GCSEs in English and Mathematics in the summer session. (Ofqual, 2015f)  Final November resit for these unreformed GCSEs, except English Literature <sup>9</sup> . The exams will be restricted to students who are resitting them, students who were unable to sit them in June 2016 and students who were aged 16 before 31 <sup>st</sup> August 2016. (Ofqual, 2016c)
<b>2017</b>	English, English Language, English Literature and Mathematics	Final summer resit for these unreformed GCSEs. The exams will be restricted to students who are resitting them, students who were unable to sit them in June 2016 and students who were aged 16 before 31 <sup>st</sup> August 2016. (Ofqual, 2016c)
<b>2017</b>	Geography, History, Sciences, Modern Foreign Languages, Religious Studies, Design and Technology (food technology), Art and Design, Drama, Dance, Music, Physical Education, Computer Science and Citizenship Studies.	Final award (1 <sup>st</sup> sitting) of these unreformed GCSEs in these subjects. (Ofqual, 2015f)
<b>2018</b>	Additional Science, Biology, Chemistry, Further Additional Science, Physics and Science.	Final summer resit for these unreformed GCSEs. The exams will be restricted to students who are resitting them, students who were unable to sit them in June 2017 and students who were aged 16 before 31 <sup>st</sup> August 2017. (Ofqual, 2016c)

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<sup>9</sup> Ofqual **requires** awarding organisations to offer November resits in English, English Language and Mathematics. Awarding organisations **may choose** to offer a single resit opportunity for English Literature in the 2017 summer session.

<i>Year</i>	<i>Subject</i>	<i>Details</i>
<b>2018</b>	Geography, History, Modern Foreign Languages, Religious Studies, Design and Technology (food technology), Art and Design, Drama, Dance, Music, Physical Education, Computer Science and Citizenship Studies.)	Awarding organisations <b>may</b> provide a final resit opportunity for these unreformed GCSEs in the summer examination session, but they are not required to do so. The exams will be restricted to students who are resitting them, students who were unable to sit them in June 2017 and students who were aged 16 before 31 <sup>st</sup> August 2017. (Ofqual, 2016c)
<b>2018</b>	All remaining subjects <sup>10</sup>	Final award (1 <sup>st</sup> sitting) for all remaining unreformed GCSEs. (Ofqual, 2016c)
<b>2019</b>	All remaining subjects <sup>10</sup>	Awarding organisations <b>may</b> provide a final resit opportunity for the remaining unreformed GCSEs in the summer examination session, but they are not required to do so. The exams will be restricted to students who are resitting them, students who were unable to sit them in June 2018 and students who were aged 16 before 31 <sup>st</sup> August 2018. (Ofqual, 2016c)

## Spelling, punctuation and grammar in GCSEs

During the lifetime of the GCSE qualifications, the importance of spelling, punctuation and grammar (SPaG) in the assessments has changed several times. The changes are difficult to follow, and the evidence about the dates when changes were made is often contradictory. Therefore, it was considered appropriate to explore this particular issue in its own subsection.

The requirement for SPaG to be assessed was removed from GCSEs in 2003 (Massey & Dexter, 2002). SPaG was replaced by a requirement to assess the quality of written communication (QWC). This was assessed wherever students were required to “produce extended written material” (QCA, 2000, p. 13). There is some confusion surrounding the introduction of the QWC requirement. Whilst it is clearly stated in the 2000 regulatory criteria (QCA, 2000) that QWC should be included in GCSE assessments, correspondence from Ofqual (2011b) suggests that it

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<sup>10</sup> These subjects are: Ancient History; Applied Business; Applied Information and communication technology; Astronomy; Business and Communication Systems; Business Communications; Business Studies; Business Studies and Economics; Classical Civilisation; Design and Technology (all other routes); Economics; Electronics; Engineering; Environmental & Land-based Science; Environmental Science; Film Studies; General Studies; Geology; Health & Social Care; Home Economics: Child Development; Home Economics: Textiles; Hospitality; Information and Communication Technology; Law; Leisure and Tourism; Manufacturing; Media Studies; Psychology; Sociology; Statistics

was only introduced into the requirements for GCSEs in 2009. Examination papers in subjects such as Geography show that QWC was already being assessed in GCSEs by 2006.

SPaG was only one part of the quality of written communication criteria, which also required students to select an appropriate writing style and organise their writing. In some subjects, e.g. History, students were told which questions would examine quality of written communication, whilst in others QCA's wording was repeated, telling students that written communication would be examined on questions requiring continuous writing.

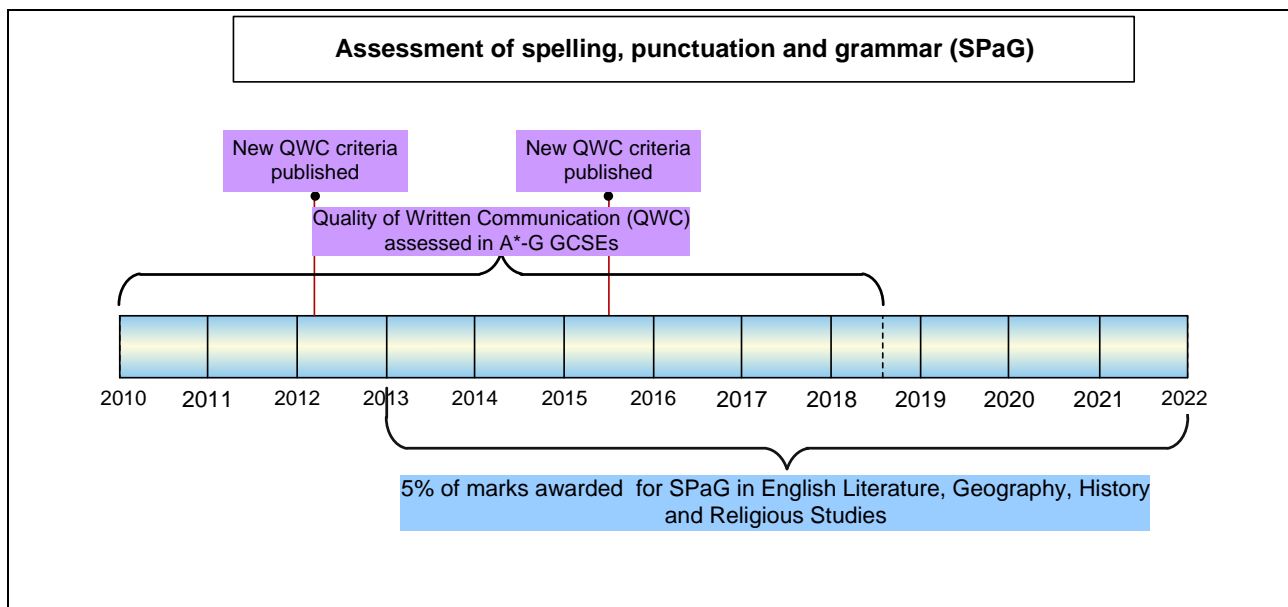


Figure 6. Spelling, punctuation and grammar in GCSEs since 2010.

Table 6. Details of changes to spelling, punctuation and grammar in GCSEs.

<i>Year</i>	<i>Details</i>
<b>2012</b>	Ofqual published new criteria for the assessment of quality of written communication (QWC) (Ofqual, 2012d). It restated the desire for consistency, but recognised that individual subjects may apply QWC differently. It included three performance descriptors for threshold, intermediate and high level performance that overlapped considerably with, but were not identical to, the descriptors from 1994 that were published in Massey and Dexter (2002).
<b>2013</b>	From 2013 onwards, 5% of the marks for English Literature, Geography, History and Religious Studies were allocated to SPaG (Ofqual, 2014f). This was in addition to the marks already available for QWC. (WJEC, 2013)

- 2015** Ofqual published new criteria for the assessment of the quality of written communication. The new criteria were intended to remove inconsistencies that had arisen from the 2012 criteria. They only applied to the A\*-G GCSEs and unreformed A levels. (Ofqual, 2015e)
- The reformed 9-1 GCSEs continued to require 5% of the marks to be allocated to SPaG in English Literature, Geography and History (Ofqual, 2014h) but the term *quality of written communication* was no longer used. However, students were still assessed on their ability to “construct and develop a sustained line of reasoning which is coherent, relevant, substantiated and logically structured” (Ofqual, 2021a, p. 12) on extended response questions.
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## 5. Development of, and changes to, reformed GCSEs

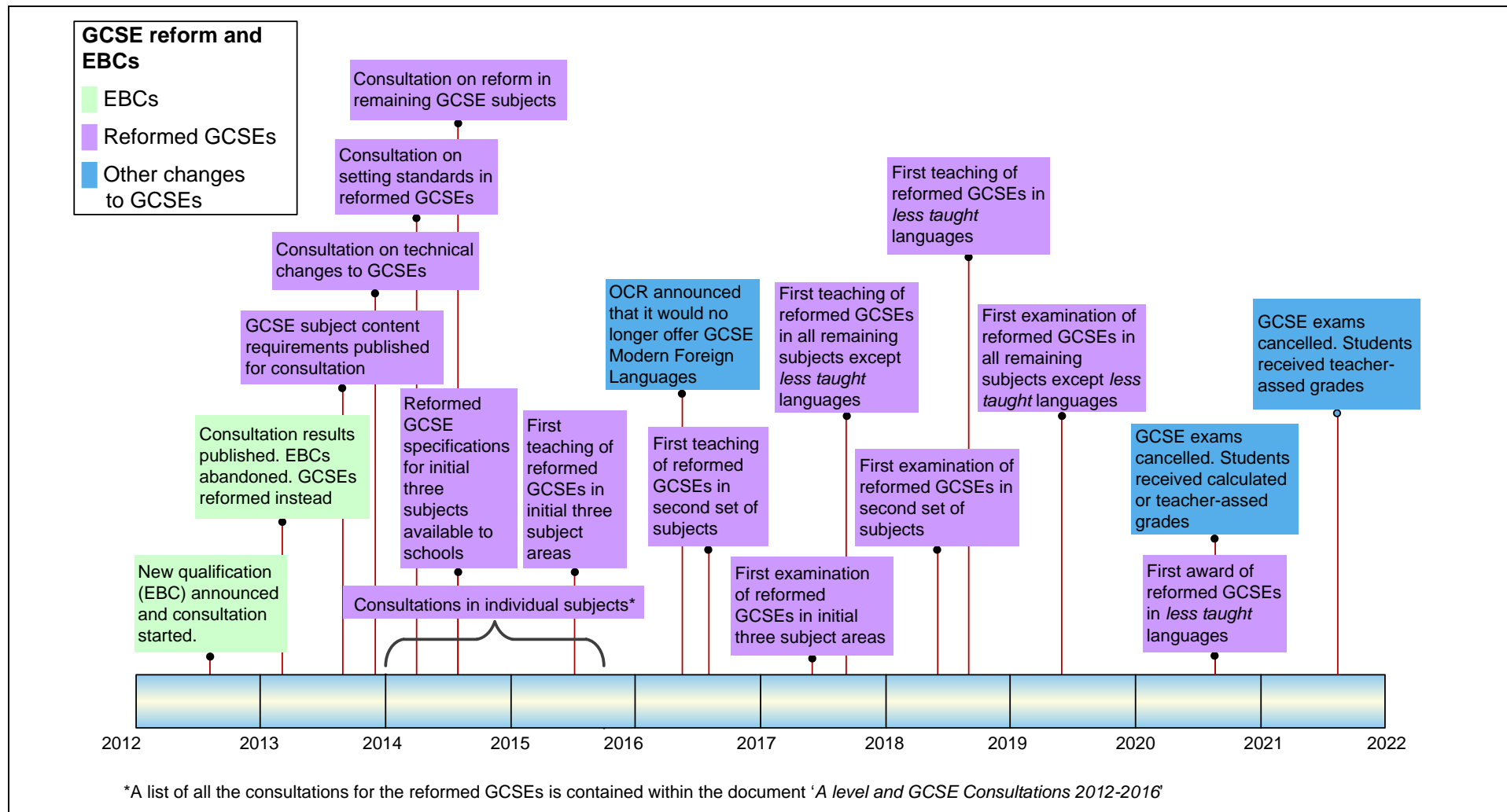


Figure 7. Key dates for reformed GCSEs.

This section details the changes to GCSEs since 2010, which originated from a proposal to replace GCSEs with new qualifications, English Baccalaureate Certificates (EBCs). Following a consultation process, it was decided to abandon the proposed EBCs and to reform existing GCSEs instead. Since the start of the reform process, numerous consultations have been held about proposed changes. This document only lists the consultations that affect multiple subjects. A separate document contains a complete list of all the consultations that have been held as part of the GCSE reform programme (see Rushton, 2017).

Table 7. Details about the reform of GCSEs.

<i>Year</i>	<i>Details</i>
<b>2012</b>	<p>On the 17<sup>th</sup> September, the government announced the development of new qualifications, EBCs, to replace GCSEs. Initially EBCs were intended to be available for six subjects. It was proposed that English, Mathematics and the Sciences would be developed for first teaching in 2014, and that History, Geography and Languages would be developed later. It was proposed that each subject should be examined by one Awarding Organisation (market reform) following a franchised model and that all the assessment should be through examinations at the end of the course. The qualifications would be designed so that they were suitable for the full range of candidates taking GCSEs, but there would not be any tiering<sup>11</sup> used in the examination papers. It was also proposed that a new grading structure would be developed for the qualifications. (Department for Education, 2012c)</p> <p>A consultation on the proposed changes ran from the 18<sup>th</sup> September until the 10<sup>th</sup> December 2012. (Department for Education, 2012d)</p>

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<sup>11</sup> Currently, GCSE papers have two tiers: Foundation and Higher. Students can only be entered for one tier, and the range of grades that they can achieve depends upon the papers that they are entered for.



<i>Year</i>	<i>Details</i>
<b>2013</b>	<p>On the 7<sup>th</sup> February, the results of the consultation were announced. The proposed EBCs would not be developed and the market reform involving the franchising model would be abandoned. There would be major reforms to the existing GCSEs, retaining many of the changes initially proposed for EBCs. It was proposed that the reformed GCSEs would be linear, with more stretching assessments. Although students would no longer be forced to choose between the foundation and higher tier, it was suggested that core and extension papers may be allowed if all students could be entered for them. The changes would be made to the first five subject areas so that they would be ready for first teaching in 2015. (Gove, 2013, February 7)</p> <p>A second consultation on the proposed changes was run by Ofqual from June to September 2013. (Ofqual, 2013b)</p> <p>In November 2013 an updated set of proposals were published by Ofqual (2013d). The first set of subjects to be reformed for first teaching in 2015 was reduced from five to three<sup>12</sup>. The second set of subjects<sup>13</sup> was to be redeveloped for first teaching in 2016. Most subjects would be assessed by end of course examination only. The reformed English exams would be untiered, but maths would remain as a tiered subject. Grading would change so that reformed GCSEs would be graded from 1 – 9, where 9 represented the highest level of achievement. Students would only be allowed to enter the November session if they were 16 or over on the 31st August of the same year.</p> <p>A consultation on the proposed technical changes to the GCSE was run by Ofqual from December 2013 to January 2014. (Ofqual, 2013c)</p>

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<sup>12</sup> The first three subjects were: English language, English literature, maths

<sup>13</sup> The second set of subjects was originally: chemistry, biology, physics, combined double science, geography, history, modern languages and ancient languages. Nine extra subjects are also now being redeveloped to the same timescales: Art and Design, Dance, Drama, Citizenship Studies, Computer Science, Food Preparation and Nutrition, Music, Physical Education, and Religious Studies

<i>Year</i>	<i>Details</i>
<b>2014</b>	<p>From April to June 2014, Ofqual ran a consultation on setting standards in the new GCSEs (Ofqual, 2014c). As a result, it was agreed that: the proportion of students achieving a grade 4 or above would be the same as those achieving a C or above in the current GCSEs; the proportion achieving a 7 or above would be the same as those achieving an A in the current GCSEs; and a grade 5 would be in the top 1/3 of marks for a grade C and bottom 1/3 of marks for grade B, aligning it with average PISA performance in Canada, Finland, the Netherlands and Switzerland. (Ofqual, 2014e).</p> <p>From June to July 2014, Ofqual ran a consultation on reform in the remaining GCSE subjects (Ofqual, 2014a). This consultation included proposals that awarding organisations should develop a common core of content in each subject; that similar/overlapping qualifications should be discontinued; and that assessment should be by exam wherever possible.</p> <p>The reformed GCSE specifications in the initial subject areas were first available in schools from September 2014. (Stacey, 2013a)</p> <p>In 2014 and 2015 there were a number of consultations in specific subjects. These are listed in a separate document: <i>A level and GCSE redevelopment consultations 2012-2017</i>.</p>
<b>2015</b>	First teaching of reformed GCSEs in the initial three subject areas. (Ofqual, 2014h)
<b>2016</b>	<p>In May, OCR announced that it would not be offering reformed GCSEs in Modern Foreign Languages. It would continue to offer legacy GCSEs in these subjects until their last award in 2017. (OCR, 2016)</p> <p>First teaching of reformed GCSEs in the second set of subjects. (Ofqual, 2014h)</p>
<b>2017</b>	<p>First teaching of GCSEs in all the remaining subjects except <i>less taught</i> languages. (Ofqual, 2014h)</p> <p>First examination of reformed GCSEs in the first three subject areas. (Ofqual, 2014h)</p>
<b>2018</b>	<p>First examination of reformed GCSEs in the second set of subjects. (Ofqual, 2014h)</p> <p>First teaching of GCSE <i>less taught</i> languages (Gujarati, biblical Hebrew, Persian, Portuguese and Turkish). (Ofqual, 2019a)</p>
<b>2019</b>	First examination of GCSEs in all remaining subjects except <i>less taught</i> languages. (Ofqual, 2014h)
<b>2020</b>	First award of new GCSEs in <i>less taught</i> languages (Gujarati, biblical Hebrew, Persian, Portuguese and Turkish). (Ofqual, 2019a)
	<p>Due to the pandemic, GCSE examinations were cancelled in the Summer of 2020. Instead, students received calculated grades and teacher assessed grades. They were able to keep the better of these results. Students who were unhappy with their grades or who did not receive a grade were able to take examinations in autumn of 2020. (Department for Education, 2020c)</p>

Year	Details
2021	Due to the pandemic, GCSE examinations were cancelled in the Summer of 2021. Instead, students received teacher assessed grades. Students who were unhappy with their grades or who did not receive a grade were able to take examinations in autumn of 2021. (Ofqual, 2021c)

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## 6. Changes to A levels

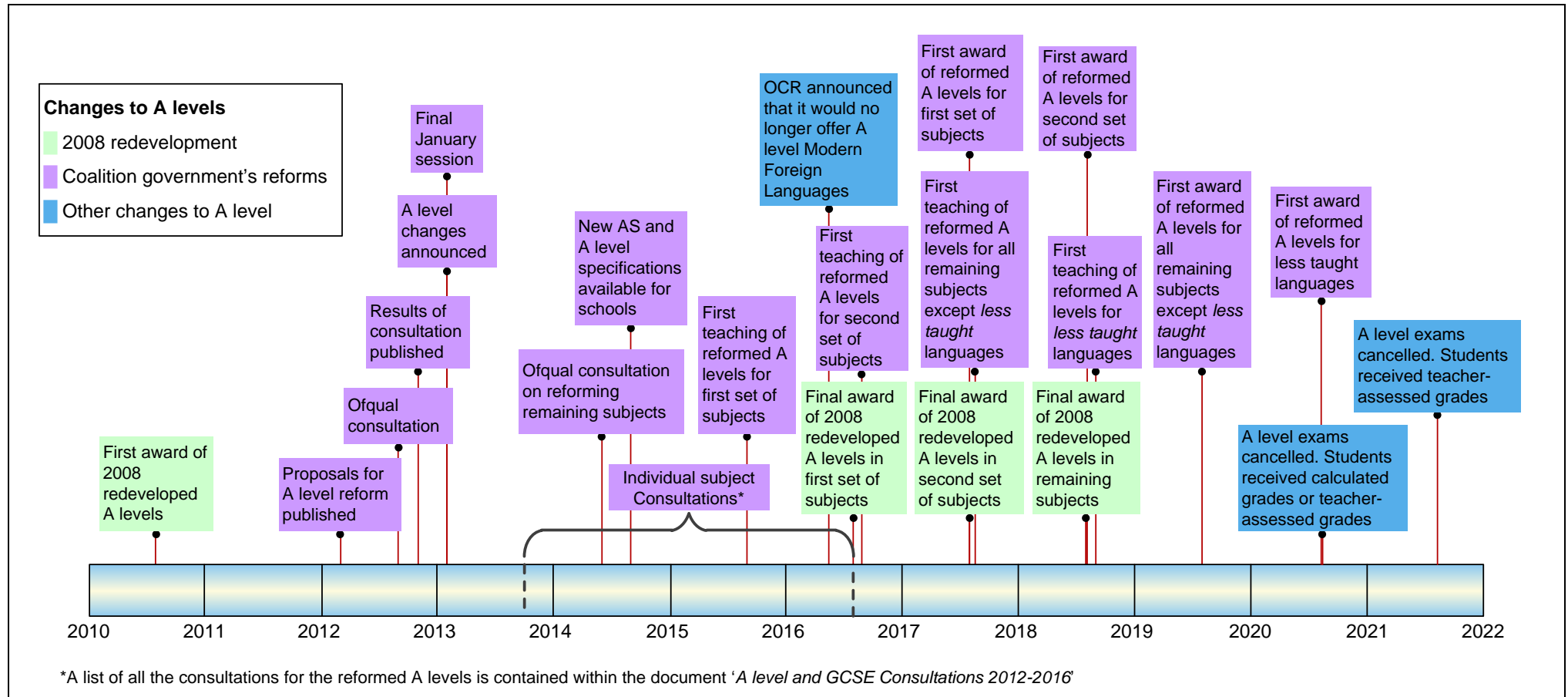


Figure 8. Changes to A levels since 2010.

A levels have undergone several changes since 2010. As with GCSEs, the changes listed here generally affect all subjects. Numerous consultations have been held about proposed changes. Only those that affect multiple subjects have been included. A separate document contains a complete list of all the consultations that have been held as part of the A level reform programme (see Rushton, 2017).

Table 8. Details of A level changes.

<i>Year</i>	<i>Details</i>
<b>2010</b>	<p>The first certification of the new A levels. The units for most subjects were reduced from six to four, with 2 units for AS and two units for A2. The Sciences, Mathematics and Music kept six units. Stretch and challenge questions and synoptic assessment were introduced in the units for A2. The A* grade was added to the A level grade (but not AS) for students who had achieved a grade A at A level and had achieved 90% or more of the UMS marks on their A2 units. (QCA, 2007)</p> <p>In November, the White Paper ‘The Importance of Teaching’ (Department for Education, 2010b) was published. It contained the coalition policies for education. Of importance to A levels were announcements that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ways of involving universities in A level development would be explored</li> <li>• Assessments would be modified to contain deep synoptic learning</li> <li>• The re-sitting rules would be evaluated and possibly changed.</li> </ul>
<b>2012</b>	<p>In April, proposals for a further reform of A level were published. The proposals arose from the government’s education White Paper (Department for Education, 2010b) and were a response to concerns that A levels were not good preparation for undergraduate study. The proposals were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For universities to be involved in the design and development of A levels</li> <li>• To consider whether the division of A levels into AS and A2 should continue</li> <li>• To consider whether January re-sits should be allowed.</li> </ul> <p>(Gove, 2012)</p> <p>Ofqual held a consultation on the proposed reforms between June and September 2012 (Smith et al., 2012). The findings from the consultation were published in November 2012 and Ofqual announced that there would be no more January examination sessions after September 2013. (Ofqual, 2012b)</p>

<i>Year</i>	<i>Details</i>
<b>2013</b>	<p>Final January A level session for all candidates. (Ofqual, 2012b).</p> <p>In late January the following changes to A levels were announced by the government (Gove, 2013):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An advisory group, consisting of representatives from the Russell Group of universities, would advise Ofqual on the content of A levels</li> <li>• AS level would be retained, but as a standalone qualification which was at the same level as A levels, rather than as a part of A levels</li> <li>• A levels would be made fully linear.</li> </ul> <p>Subsequently the changes to AS levels were revised so that AS levels would be a standalone qualification set at the standard that students could be expected to reach after studying the first half of an A level. (Ofqual, 2014g)</p> <p>In September, the findings of the advisory group were published (Ofqual, 2014h). Recommendations were made about the degree to which subject content needed to change, and the timetable for making those changes. (Smith, 2013)</p>
<b>2014</b>	<p>From June to July 2014, Ofqual ran a consultation on how the subject content should be redeveloped for A level subjects not included in the 2012 and 2013 consultations. (Ofqual, 2014a)</p> <p>In December, Ofqual announced that the reformed A level mathematics qualifications would not be available for first teaching until September 2017, to ensure that students taking the qualification would also have taken the reformed mathematics GCSE. (Stacey, 2014)</p> <p>Ofqual also announced that A levels in four subjects<sup>14</sup> would be withdrawn after the summer 2017 session as they were too similar to other reformed A levels.</p>
<b>2015</b>	<p>In May 2015, Ofqual announced that four further A level subjects would be withdrawn. By November 2015, a further 26 subjects were included on the list of withdrawn subjects, including General Studies and AS level Critical Thinking. (Ofqual, 2015a)</p> <p>September 2015 was the first teaching date for reformed AS and A levels in the first subject areas<sup>15</sup>. (Ofqual, 2014g)</p>

<sup>14</sup> The four withdrawn subjects were: applied art and design; applied business; human biology; economics and business.

<sup>15</sup> The first subjects for reform are: English language, English literature, English language and literature, biology, chemistry, physics, art and design, business, computer science (or computing), economics, history, sociology and psychology

<i>Year</i>	<i>Details</i>
<b>2016</b>	<p>In May, OCR announced that it would not be offering reformed A levels in Modern Foreign Languages. It would continue to offer legacy A levels in these subjects until their last award in 2017.</p> <p>Summer 2016 was the final award (1<sup>st</sup> sitting) for the unreformed AS and A levels in the first subject areas. (Ofqual, 2016b)</p> <p>September 2016 was the first teaching date for reformed AS and A levels in the second set of subjects<sup>16</sup> (Ofqual, 2014g). Mathematics, further mathematics, and design and technology were removed from this set and moved to first teaching date September 2017. (Department for Education, 2014e; Ofqual, 2014b)</p>
<b>2017</b>	<p>Summer 2017 was the first examination of reformed A levels for the first set of reformed subjects (Ofqual, 2019a). It was also the final award (1<sup>st</sup> sitting) for the unreformed AS and A levels in the second set of subject areas. It was also the final resit opportunity for unreformed AS and A levels in the first subject areas. The resits were restricted to students who were resitting them and students who were unable to sit them in June 2016. (Ofqual, 2016b)</p> <p>September 2017 was the first teaching date for the remaining subjects. (Ofqual, 2014a)</p>
<b>2018</b>	<p>Summer 2018 was the first examination of reformed A levels in the second set of reformed subjects (Ofqual, 2021b).</p> <p>It was also the final awarding date (1<sup>st</sup> sitting) for all remaining unreformed A level qualifications except <i>less taught</i> languages (Ofqual, 2014a) and the final resit opportunity for unreformed AS and A levels in the second set of subjects. The resits were restricted to students who were resitting them and students who were unable to sit them in June 2017. (Ofqual, 2016b)</p>
<b>2019</b>	<p>Summer 2019 was the first examination of reformed A levels for the third set of reformed subjects (Ofqual, 2021b). It was also the final resit opportunity for all remaining unreformed AS and A levels except <i>less taught</i> languages. These resits were restricted to students who were resitting them and students who were unable to sit them in June 2018. (Ofqual, 2016b)</p>
<b>2020</b>	<p>First award of the reformed A levels in <i>less taught</i> languages (Gujarati, biblical Hebrew, Persian, Portuguese and Turkish (Ofqual, 2021b).</p> <p>Due to the pandemic, A level examinations were cancelled in the Summer of 2020. Instead, students received calculated grades and teacher assessed grades. They were able to keep the better of these results. Students who were unhappy with their grades or who did not receive a grade were able to take examinations in autumn of 2020. (Department for Education, 2020c)</p>
<b>2021</b>	<p>Due to the pandemic, A level examinations were cancelled in the Summer of 2021. Instead, students received teacher assessed grades. Students who were unhappy with their grades or who did not receive a grade were able to take examinations in autumn of 2021. (Ofqual, 2021c)</p>

<sup>16</sup> The second set of subjects for reform is: mathematics, further mathematics, modern foreign languages, ancient languages, geography, religious studies, design and technology, drama, dance, music and physical education.



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## 7. Post-16 technical education reform

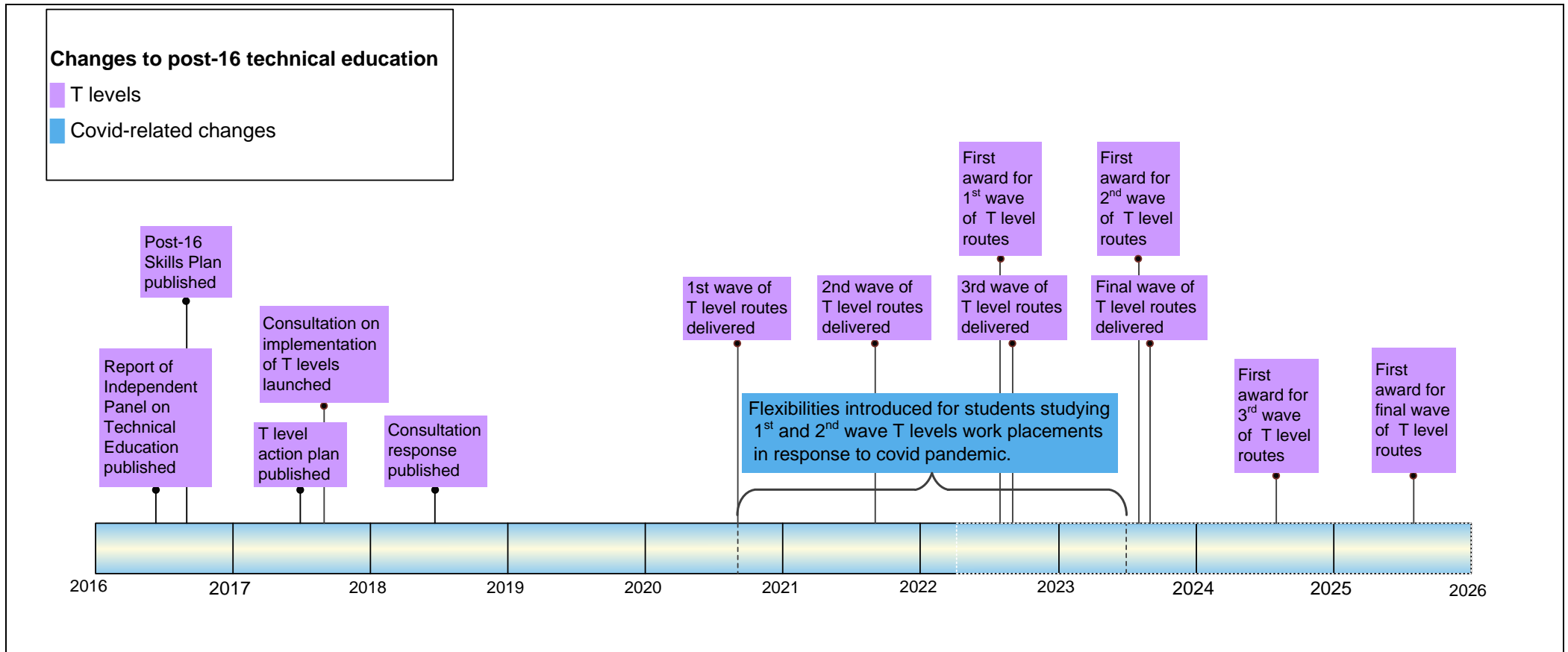


Figure 9. Introduction of, and changes to, T level qualifications.

This section details the changes to technical education. Lord Sainsbury’s report from the Independent Panel on Technical Education (Department for Education, 2016e) made recommendations for new routes to skilled employment via classroom- and work-based programmes. The recommendations sought to address the confusing and overwhelming proliferation of qualifications offered. This section concentrates on the classroom-based training known as T levels.

Table 9. Details about the reform of post-16 technical education.

<i>Year</i>	<i>Details</i>
<b>2016</b>	In April, the report of the Independent Panel on Technical Education was published (Department for Education, 2016e). The government’s response, the Post-16 Skills Plan, was published in July. This outlined plans to streamline the existing system and create a common framework of 15 routes across all technical education, both employment- and college-based. (Department for Education & Department for Business Innovation & Skills, 2016).
<b>2017</b>	The T level action plan published (Department for Education, 2017d). Consultation on the implementation of T levels launched. The consultation sought views on the proposed T level framework and routes to occupations, along with qualification content and assessment plans. There was also a section on the awarding of contracts to offer the qualifications (Department for Education, 2017b).
<b>2018</b>	Consultation response published (Department for Education, 2018a).
<b>2020</b>	<p>The first pathways within three of the T level routes to be delivered for teaching from 2020. Limited pathways in Digital (Digital Production, Design and Development T level); Construction (Design, Surveying and Planning for Construction T level); and Education and Childcare (Education &amp; Childcare T level).</p> <p>The COVID-19 pandemic affected the delivery of T-levels. Temporary flexibilities were introduced to allow students on some routes to undertake 40% of their placement hours away from an employer’s premises. Health and Science students were allowed to complete their placements at pathway level, and Education and Childcare students were allowed to complete fewer hours in their placements. (Department for Education, 2021e)</p>
<b>2021</b>	<p>Second wave of T level routes to be delivered for teaching from 2021: Digital (2 T levels: Digital Support services; and Digital Business Services); Construction (2 T levels: Building Services Engineering for Construction; and Onsite Construction); Education and Childcare; and Health and Science (3 T levels: Science; Health; Healthcare Science).</p> <p>The COVID-19 pandemic affected the delivery of T-levels. Temporary flexibilities were introduced to allow students on some routes to undertake 25% of their placement hours away from an employer’s premises. Health and Science students were allowed to complete their placements at pathway level, and Education and Childcare students were allowed to complete fewer hours in their placements. (Department for Education, 2021e)</p>

Year	Details
2022	<p>Third wave of remaining T level routes to be delivered for teaching from 2022: Legal, finance and accounting (2 T levels: Finance; and Accounting); Business and Administration (Management and Administration T level); and Engineering and Manufacturing (3 T levels: Design and Development for Engineering and Manufacturing; Maintenance, Installation and Repair for Engineering and Manufacturing; Engineering, Manufacturing, Processing and Control). (Department for Education, 2021e)</p> <p>First award of T levels for the first wave routes.</p>
2023	<p>Final T level routes to be delivered for teaching from 2023: Agriculture, Environment and Animal Care; (2 T levels: Agriculture, Land Management and Production; Animal Care and Management); Catering and Hospitality (Catering T level); Creative and Design (2 T levels: Craft and Design; Media, Broadcast and Production); Hair and Beauty (Hairdressing, Barbering and Beauty Therapy); and Legal, Finance and Accounting (Legal Services T level).</p> <p>The temporary flexibilities that were introduced for students studying the first and second wave of T levels, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, are scheduled to be withdrawn from July 2023.</p> <p>(Department for Education, 2021e)</p> <p>First award of T levels for the second wave routes.</p>
2024	<p>Government ambition for all providers to be offering T levels by 2024. (Department for Education, 2021e)</p> <p>First award of T levels for the third wave routes.</p>
2025	<p>First award of T levels for the final wave routes.</p>

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## 8. The National Curriculum and National Curriculum tests

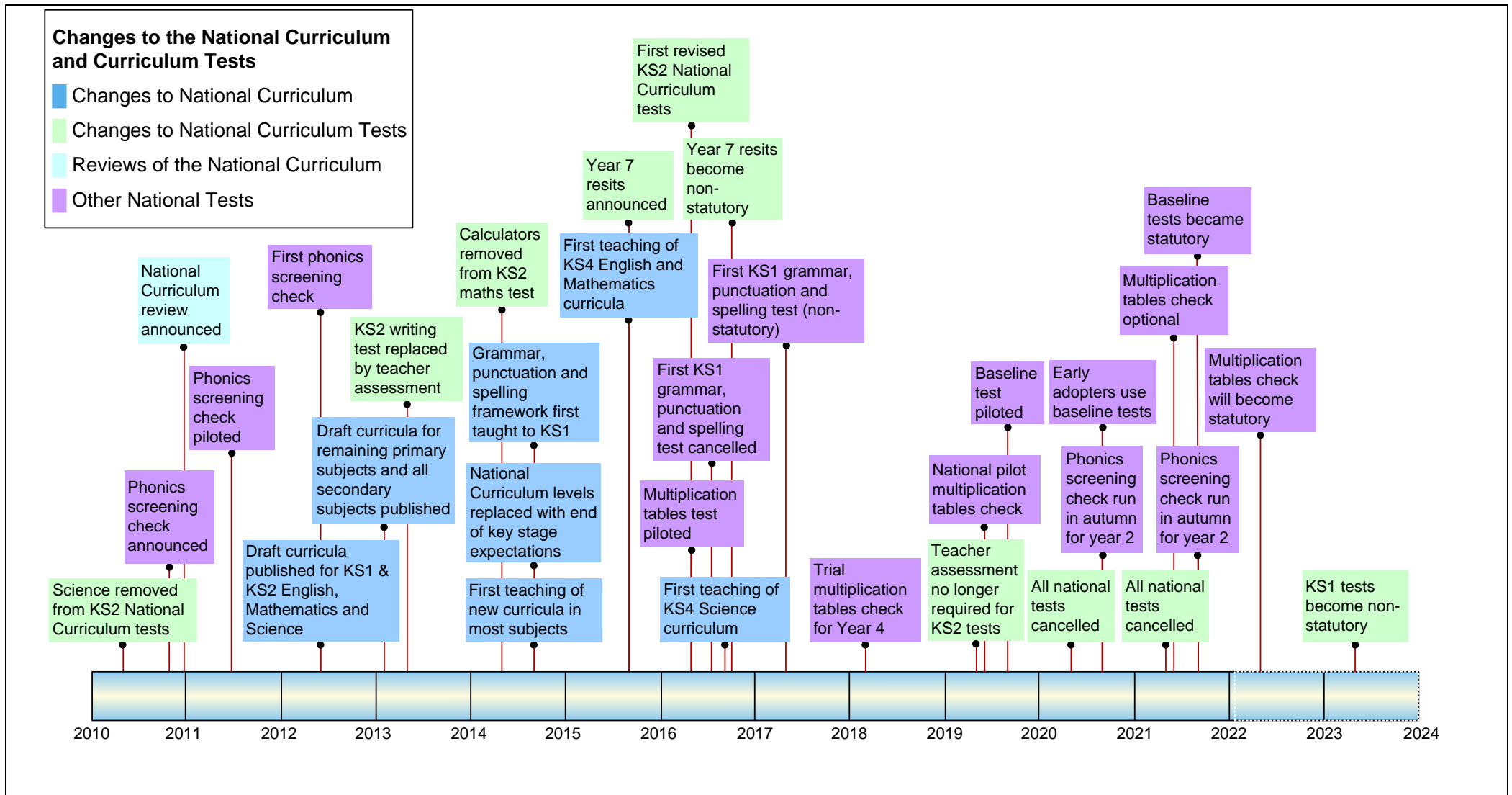


Figure 10. Changes to the National Curriculum and National Curriculum tests.

This section of the report covers the reviews and revisions to the National Curriculum since 2010. It also includes dates for the National Curriculum tests and other screening tests introduced by the government as well as reports relating to reviews of the curriculum.

Table 10. Details of National Curriculum changes.

<i>Year</i>	<i>Summary</i>
<b>2010</b>	<p>From 2010, the Key Stage 2 Science tests were discontinued. The government removed them in response to a report on assessment, and replaced them with statutory sampling. (Isaacs, 2010)</p> <p>In November, the government announced that a new phonics-based progress check would be introduced for all students in year 1. (Department for Education &amp; Gove, 2010)</p>
<b>2011</b>	<p>In January, the government announced a review of the National Curriculum for both primary and secondary schools. The changes to the primary curriculum that were due to be implemented from the Rose review were withdrawn and schools were instructed to continue using the existing curriculum until the review was concluded. (Roberts, 2014)</p> <p>In July the government announced changes to the Key Stage 2 National Curriculum tests, following a review by Lord Bew (see Bew, 2011). They announced that the writing test would be replaced by teacher’s assessment of their students’ writing. This would be trialled in 2012 and implemented in 2013. (Department for Education, 2011a)</p> <p>In the summer, the phonics screening check was piloted in 300 schools. (Walker et al., 2014)</p>
<b>2012</b>	<p>From June, the phonics screening check was held annually for all year 1 students. (Walker et al., 2014)</p> <p>The draft Primary Curriculum Programmes of Study for English, Mathematics and Science were published in June 2012. It was intended that the new curriculum would be used in primary schools from September 2014. (Department for Education, 2012a)</p>



<i>Year</i>	<i>Summary</i>
<b>2013</b>	<p>In February, the government published the draft Curriculum Programmes of Study for the remaining subjects in primary schools, and for all subjects in secondary schools except Key Stage 4 English, Mathematics and Science. Whilst the Key Stage 4 programmes of study for English, Mathematics and Science were published at the same time, they did not form part of the consultation. (Department for Education, 2013d)</p> <p>In July, the government announced that the National Curriculum tests for 11 year olds would be updated. The tests would be available in maths, reading, spelling, punctuation and grammar. A new scaled score would be implemented which represented the level at which students were considered 'secondary ready'. The existing levels would be removed. (Department for Education, 2013c)</p> <p>From September 2013, the existing National Curriculum was disapplied in primary schools, except English, maths and science for years 1, 2, 5 and 6. (Department for Education, 2014g)</p>
<b>2014</b>	<p>From 2014, the calculator paper was removed from Key Stage 2 mathematics tests (Department for Education, 2012e)</p> <p>The new National Curriculum was first taught in September 2014 in all subjects except Key Stage 4 English, Mathematics and Science. (Department for Education, 2013d). Students in years 2 and 6 still followed the previous curriculum for English, Mathematics and Science. (Department for Education, 2014g).</p> <p>A grammar, punctuation and spelling test framework was introduced for KS1, which was first taught from September 2014 for first assessment in September 2016. (Standards and Testing Agency, 2014)</p> <p>From September 2014, the levels for reporting attainment and progress were removed from the National Curriculum. They were replaced by expectations for each subject at the end of each key stage. (Department for Education, 2014c)</p>
<b>2015</b>	<p>The new National Curriculum was first taught in September 2015 in Key Stage 4 English and Mathematics. (Department for Education, 2014c)</p> <p>From September 2015, all primary school students followed the new National Curriculum. (Department for Education, 2014g)</p> <p>In November, the government announced that it was considering reintroducing the National Curriculum tests in year 2. They also announced that year 7 resit tests would be introduced for students who had not met the required standards in year 6. (Department for Education, 2015c)</p>

<i>Year</i>	<i>Summary</i>
<b>2016</b>	<p>In January, the government announced that all 11-year-olds would be tested on their multiplication tables up to 12x12. A pilot was held in 2016, and the first tests would be held in 2017. (Department for Education, 2016c) In October 2016, the government stated that no new national tests or assessments would be introduced until the 2018-19 academic year; this included the multiplication tables test. (Greening, 2016, October 19)</p> <p>The revised National Curriculum tests for KS2 were first held in May 2016. They expected higher standards and tested all curriculum topics within the subjects. Students were given a scaled score instead of a level. (Department for Education, 2016d).</p> <p>The KS1 grammar, punctuation and spelling test framework should have been assessed for the first time in May 2016. However, the test was cancelled due to the papers accidentally being published on the Department for Education website. (Department for Education, 2016g). In October 2016, the government announced that the test would be run in 2017, but it would not be statutory for schools. (Greening, 2016, October 19)</p> <p>The new National Curriculum in Key Stage 4 Science was first taught in September 2016. (Department for Education, 2014c)</p> <p>In October, the government announced that it had abandoned plans to require students who do not achieve the required standards in the year 6 tests to resit the national tests in year 7. They stated that resit papers would still be produced, but they would be voluntary. (Greening, 2016, October 19)</p>
<b>2017</b>	<p>In September, the government announced several changes to assessments in Key Stages 1 and 2. A new baseline assessment would be established for reception students to be piloted in 2019 and become statutory from the autumn of 2020 onwards. The pupils who had taken the new baseline assessment would not be expected to sit key stage 1 tests, so these would become non-statutory from 2023 onwards. The Key Stage 1 grammar, punctuation and grammar test would remain non-statutory. The multiplication tables check would be taken by students in year 4 rather than year 6. Schools would no longer be required to report their teacher assessment judgements for reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2 from 2019 onwards. (Department for Education, 2017e)</p>
<b>2018</b>	<p>Trial of Year 4 multiplication tables check undertaken in March (Department for Education, 2018b).</p>
<b>2019</b>	<p>National pilot of the new reception baseline tests (Standards and Testing Agency, 2021a).</p> <p>National trial of the multiplication tables check in June (Department for Education &amp; Gibb, 2019).</p>

<i>Year</i>	<i>Summary</i>
<b>2020</b>	<p>All the key stage 1 and 2 assessments from March onwards were cancelled because of COVID-19 (Department for Education &amp; Williamson, 2020e). The Standards and Testing Agency later announced that the phonics screening check should be held for year 2 pupils in the autumn term (Whittaker, 2020).</p> <p>Reception baseline tests were intended to become statutory in September 2020. However, this was delayed due to COVID-19, and schools were invited to become early adopters instead. (Standards and Testing Agency, 2021a)</p>
<b>2021</b>	<p>The reception baseline test became statutory for students starting school in September 2021 onwards.</p> <p>All key stage 1 and 2 national tests were cancelled because of COVID-19 (Department for Education &amp; Williamson, 2021a). The 2021 phonics screening check was also cancelled, but schools were required to administer the check to the year 2 students in the autumn term instead (Department for Education, 2021a).</p> <p>Although national tests were cancelled, the multiplication tables check was available to schools that wanted to become familiar with the check; there was no statutory requirement for pupils to sit the test (Standards and Testing Agency, 2021b).</p>
<b>2022</b>	<p>The multiplication tables check will become statutory for year 4 pupils in June (Standards and Testing Agency, 2021b).</p>
<b>2023</b>	<p>Projected date for the Key Stage 1 tests to become non-statutory. (Department for Education, 2017e).</p>
<b>2028</b>	<p>Projected date for first publication of measures showing progress made from reception until the end of key stage 2 (when children who entered reception in autumn 2020 will have reached the end of key stage 2) (Standards and Testing Agency, 2021a).</p>

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# 9. Government papers and commissioned research

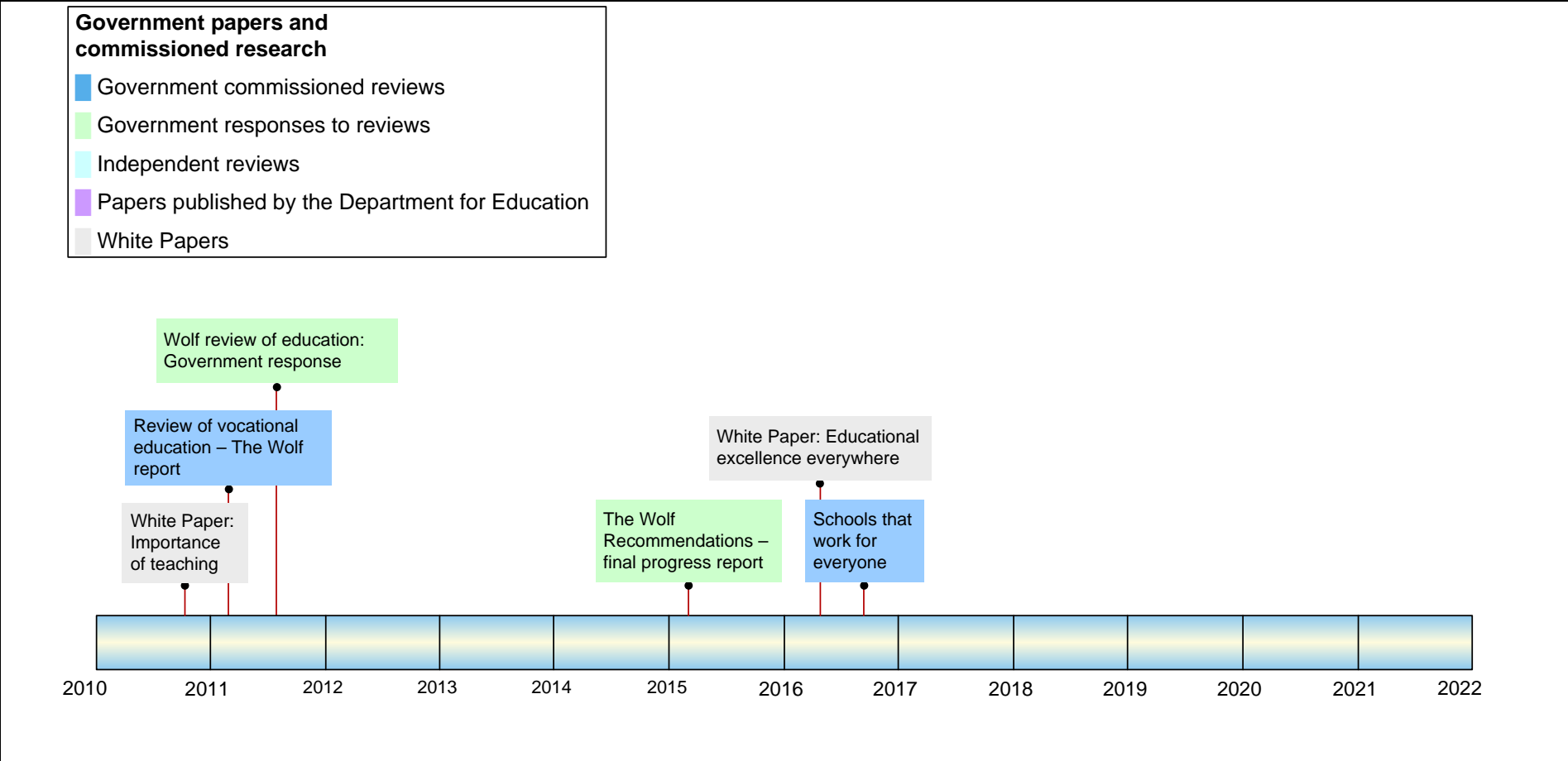


Figure 11. Government reports and commissioned research.

Several government papers and reports have been published on education since 2010. The main governmental reports are the White Papers, which contain details of educational policy decisions. All the White Papers published since 2010 have been included in this section, although the review of content has focused on key changes to 14-19 education, particularly changes to assessment. Other key policy announcements made in these papers may have been omitted.

This section also contains the details of other relevant papers, including Green Papers and government commissioned reviews of particular areas of education.

Table 11. Summaries of government reports and commissioned research.

<i>Year</i>	<i>Report</i>	<i>Relevant Content</i>
<b>2010</b>	Importance of teaching (Department for Education, 2010b)	<p>This was the first White Paper produced by the new coalition government and it set out the following changes in education policy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A review of the national curriculum was announced.</li> <li>• The government's commitment to ensure assessment at each transitional stage in education was confirmed.</li> <li>• The introduction of the English Baccalaureate for students achieving GCSE or IGCSE passes at grades A*-C in English, Mathematics, the Sciences, a Modern or Ancient Foreign Language and either History or Geography.</li> <li>• A reform of vocational education to ensure that qualifications enabled progression to further and higher education, and employment.</li> <li>• The raising of the leaving age to 17 by 2013 and 18 by 2015 was confirmed.</li> <li>• An increase in the information that is published about schools' performances, and the inclusion of new measures in performance tables to show the achievement of students from deprived backgrounds.</li> <li>• An investigation of whether linear A levels provide enough synoptic learning for universities.</li> <li>• A change to the rules for A level re-sits to prevent students re-sitting exams multiple times.</li> <li>• Changing GCSEs so that all the exams are taken at the end of the course</li> <li>• Increasing the importance of spelling, punctuation and grammar in GCSE mark schemes.</li> </ul>



<i>Year</i>	<i>Report</i>	<i>Relevant Content</i>
<b>2011</b>	Review of Vocational Education – The Wolf Report (Wolf, 2011)	<p>This paper was the result of a review of vocational education for 14 to 19 year-olds. Many recommendations were made in the report, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Qualifications should only be included in performance tables if they are of good enough quality.</li> <li>• Qualifications that are not approved for performance tables should still be available to schools.</li> <li>• Low ability students should study for qualifications that are recognised by employers or accepted by colleges for progression.</li> <li>• Vocational qualifications should only form 20% of a Key Stage 4 student’s timetable.</li> <li>• Students should continue studying English and Mathematics post 16 at an appropriate level if they do not have A*-C at GCSE.</li> <li>• Awarding organisations should be able to develop new vocational qualifications.</li> <li>• Students should continue to have no restriction upon level or type of qualification they follow.</li> <li>• Ofqual should change from regulating individual qualifications to regulating awarding organisations.</li> </ul>

<i>Year</i>	<i>Report</i>	<i>Relevant Content</i>
<b>2011</b>	Wolf Review of Education – Government Response (Department for Education, 2011c)	<p>The government’s response to the Wolf Report showed that they had accepted many of its recommendations. In particular the government stated that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students should continue studying Mathematics &amp; English until they are 19, or have achieved GCSEs at grades A*-C in the respective subjects.</li> <li>• GCSEs should be reformed so that they assess basic skills more reliably.</li> <li>• Performance tables should be changed so that only vocational qualifications with good content, assessment and progression are included.</li> <li>• Performance tables should be amended so that they record the achievement of low and high attaining students alongside the current indicators.</li> <li>• It should be made easier for employers to offer Apprenticeships.</li> <li>• Key Skills should be removed from Apprenticeships by September 2012 and replaced with Functional Skills and/or GCSEs.</li> <li>• The law should be changed to allow Qualified Teacher, Learning and Skills holders to be allowed to teach their subject in schools as well as colleges.</li> </ul> <p>In addition, vocational qualifications should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Included rigorous assessment, with a certain proportion assessed externally</li> <li>• Enable students to progress to Level 3</li> <li>• Be offered in subjects that employers and higher education recognise</li> <li>• Be rigorous and contain both breadth and depth in their subject content</li> <li>• Take up an appropriate amount of time in comparison to academic qualifications, so that they complement the academic qualifications.</li> </ul>
<b>2015</b>	The Wolf Report: recommendations final progress report (Department for Education, 2015d)	<p>The government’s progress on meeting the 27 recommendations contained within the Wolf report. Key progress points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Redesign of apprenticeships</li> <li>• List of approved vocational qualifications for use in performance tables</li> <li>• 16 to 19 year old students’ study programmes are based on previous achievement and their employment and education goals</li> <li>• Students without an A*-C grade at GCSE in Mathematics and English must continue studying these subjects</li> <li>• Further Education Colleges and Sixth forms are now funded in the same way</li> <li>• Performance tables, progress measures and Ofsted inspections have been changed in line with other reforms resulting from Professor Wolf’s recommendations.</li> </ul>

<i>Year</i>	<i>Report</i>	<i>Relevant Content</i>
2016	Educational Excellence Everywhere (Department for Education, 2016b)	This White Paper set out the following changes in educational policy: An increased number of free schools A commitment to ensure the majority of students (approximately 90%) study the English Baccalaureate at GCSE Reform primary assessment The introduction of the KS2 Multiplication tables test A requirement for students with results below the expected standard at KS2 to resit their tests in year 7.
	Schools that work for everyone (Department for Education, 2016f)	This Green Paper set out the governments' consultation about: Existing selective schools should be able to expand Non-selective schools being able to become selective Faith schools opened as free schools being able to take larger proportions of their intake by faith (it is currently limited to 50%) Independent schools having to help state schools to maintain their charitable status Universities having a greater role in the quality of schools

## References for government reports and research papers

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# 10. School Performance Tables

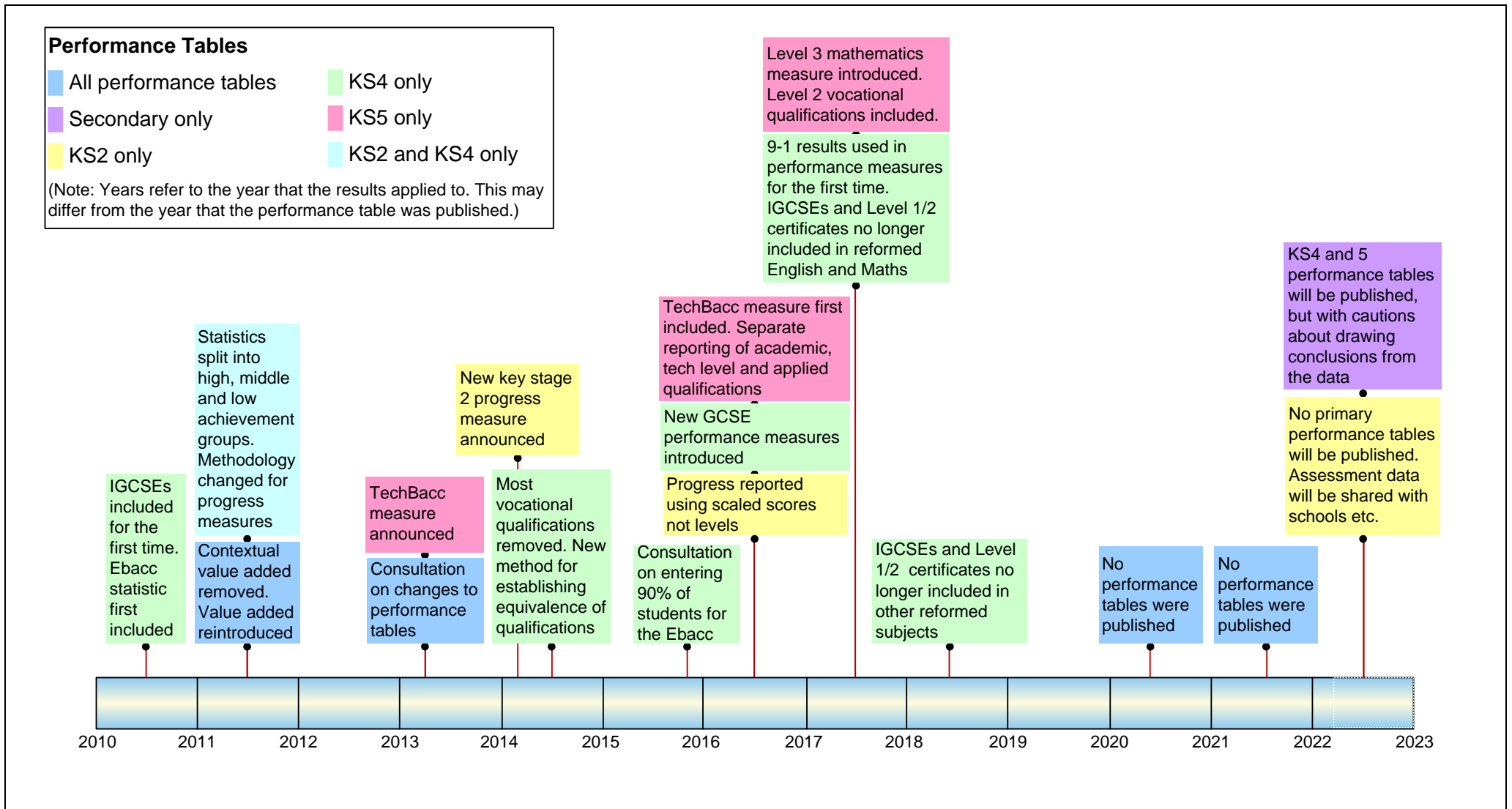


Figure 12. Major changes to performance tables since 2010.

This section lists all the major revisions to school performance tables since 2010. It is important to note that some of these changes have been implemented following a pilot year when schools can choose whether to be included in the piloted measures. The dates for these pilots have not been included, although the pilot performance tables are available alongside all the other performance tables for that year from the [archived Department for Education website](#).

It is useful at this point to clarify the terminology that is used in this section of the report. Both performance tables and league tables are terms commonly used to describe reports of school performances, but there are important differences between the two terms. The former (performance tables) concerns the tables published by the government, listing schools' performance against key measures. They are produced by geographical area and schools are listed alphabetically. League tables are produced by the media. They use the government's information to rank schools according to one or more of the performance measures. This section of the report only contains details of the government produced performance tables.

Table 12. Details of school and college performance tables.

<i>Year<sup>17</sup></i>	<i>Summary</i>
<b>2010</b>	<p>Following the government's approval for them to be taught in state schools, accredited iGCSEs<sup>18</sup> (Level 1/Level 2 Certificates) were included in the performance tables for the first time. (Existing iGCSEs that had not been accredited were not included.) (Department for Education, 2010c)</p> <p>The government introduced the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) to the KS4 tables for the first time. This showed the number of students achieving A*-C passes at GCSE or iGCSE in English, Mathematics, two Sciences, a Language and a humanities subject (History or Geography only). (Department for Education, 2010d)</p>

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<sup>17</sup> Performance tables are not necessarily published in the year that the exams are sat, which can cause confusion about which year is being referred to. This report uses the Department for Education's convention that the year refers to the year in which the assessments are taken. Thus, '2014 performance tables' refers to the tables compiled from the 2014 exam results, although the secondary school performance tables were published in 2015.

<sup>18</sup> Note that there is some ambiguity about the way that 'iGCSEs' should be written. In this instance a lower case i has been used to match the government's description of the qualification in the performance tables. It is correct to use a capital I when referring to the Cambridge International Examinations qualifications (Cambridge IGCSEs). The Edexcel qualifications are now referred to as International GCSEs although in the past they used the term iGCSE with a small i.

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<i>Year<sup>17</sup></i>	<i>Summary</i>
<b>2011</b>	<p>The CVA measure was removed from the performance tables as it was felt to be “...difficult for the public to understand, and... a less strong predictor of success than raw attainment measures” (Department for Education, 2010b, p. 68). It was replaced with a Value Added (VA) measure that just took account of students’ results. (Department for Education, 2011b)</p> <p>For the first time students were banded into three groups (high, middle and low attainers) on the basis of the previous Key Stage test results (KS1 for students in KS2; KS2 for students in KS4). All the headline indicators (the exam results, the student progress and the average points scores) were reported by group as well as for the whole cohort in that school. (Department for Education, 2011b)</p> <p>The methodology for calculating the progress measures was revised to make it consistent with other published statistics. The main change was that the teachers’ assessments were used for students who were absent for the KS2 tests. (Department for Education, 2011b)</p>

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**2013**

In January 2013 the government announced that Computer Science would be included in the Ebacc performance measures as one of the science subjects from the 2013 performance tables onwards. (Department for Education, 2013a)

In February 2013, the government announced a consultation on changes to the performance tables from 2015 or 2016. It was proposed that:

- A data portal would be set up to enable extensive data about secondary schools to be published.
- A new measure, the percentage of students passing English and Mathematics, would contribute to the floor standard.
- Another new measure, 'average point score 8', would also contribute to the floor standard. The proposed eight subjects were: English; Mathematics; three subjects from Science, Computer Science, Geography, History and Languages; and three other qualifications taken from the list of qualifications approved for use in performance tables.
- A value added progress measure would be based upon the average point score 8 measure and students' Key Stage 2 English and Mathematics results. This would also contribute to the floor standard.
- Schools would have to meet thresholds on all these measures to be considered above the floor standards.
- National standards over time would be tracked using sample tests in Key Stage 4.

(Department for Education, 2013f)

The results of the consultation were published in October 2013. The new performance measures to be implemented were similar to those in the consultation document. The 'average point score 8' was amended so that English and mathematics were double weighted. A new floor standard, based on progress on the average 8 was also announced. All the new measures will be introduced from the 2016 GCSE results. (Department for Education, 2013e)

In April 2013, the government announced that a new performance measure, the TechBacc, would be included in the Key Stage 5 performance tables for students starting their Key Stage 5 qualifications in September 2014. It was proposed that the TechBacc measure would consist of:

- A level 3 vocational qualification from the list of vocational qualifications approved for inclusion in the Key Stage performance tables
- A level 3 Mathematics qualification
- An extended project.

(Department for Education, 2013b)

In October the government announced that a results portal would be produced to allow the public to compare all the information they hold across schools (Department for Education, 2013e). Development on this appears to have been stopped in 2014 (Linford, 2014).

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<i>Year<sup>17</sup></i>	<i>Summary</i>
<b>2014</b>	<p>From 2014, most of the vocational qualifications that currently contribute to the measures were removed from the equivalences. This was to implement recommendations made in the Wolf report. To be included, qualifications now had to meet certain criteria including being at least the same size as a GCSE and providing students with progression to other qualifications or careers. In addition, the equivalence values were amended so that each qualification now only counted as one qualification, regardless of its size. (Department for Education, 2012b)</p> <p>From the 2014 onwards, only students' first entry in Ebacc subjects contributed towards the performance table measures. Students who had completed the qualification before this change was announced on the 29<sup>th</sup> September 2013 were able to use a later resit if the result was better. (Department for Education, 2014a)</p> <p>In March 2014, the government announced changes to the primary school league tables as a result of an accountability consultation that it had held. A new progress measure was proposed to show whether students had made sufficient progress between entering reception and the ending Key Stage 2. A floor standard was proposed where either 85% of students met the expected standard, students to make sufficient progress from their reception baseline. This will be measured from 2022. Until then, students' Key Stage 1 will be used. (Department for Education, 2014f)</p>
<b>2015</b>	<p>From 2015 onwards, only students' first entry will contribute towards the performance table measures for all subjects. (Department for Education, 2014a)</p> <p>The Progress 8 and Attainment 8 measures will be included in the secondary school performance tables for the first time for schools that chose to use it (Department for Education, 2015a). For each student it consists of the following measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A double weighted mathematics score</li> <li>• A double weighted English score if the student has taken both English Language and English literature, using their highest score from the two subjects.</li> <li>• Scores from three other Ebacc qualifications</li> <li>• Highest scores from any three other subjects; these can be non-GCSEs that are on the approved list.</li> </ul> <p>The Attainment 8 measure is the sum of these scores. To calculate the Progress 8 measure each student's estimated Attainment 8 measure (the average Attainment 8 score for all students with the same Key Stage 2 attainment) is subtracted from their actual Attainment 8 score. Both measures are reported as the average of all students' scores in a particular school. (Department for Education, 2015b)</p> <p>In November, the government launched a consultation on whether at least 90% of students should be required to enter the Ebacc. (Department for Education, 2015c)</p>



<i>Year<sup>17</sup></i>	<i>Summary</i>
<b>2016</b>	<p>From 2016 onwards, the Key Stage 2 national curriculum test outcomes used in the performance tables were reported using students' scaled scores in reading, writing and mathematics. (Department for Education, 2016a)</p> <p>From 2016 onwards, the Key Stage 4 performance tables included Attainment 8 and Progress 8 measures for all schools. The Ebacc entry measure became a headline measure instead of being published as additional information. (Department for Education, 2016a)</p> <p>From 2016 onwards, the Key Stage 5 performance tables reported achievement in academic, Tech level and Applied General qualifications separately. English and mathematics progress for students not achieving a good GCSE pass were reported for the first time. The TechBacc performance measure was also be included for the first time. (Department for Education, 2016a)</p>
<b>2017</b>	<p>From 2017 onwards, Level 1/level 2 certificates (accredited IGCSEs) no longer contributed to performance tables. (Department for Education, 2014d)</p> <p>Reformed 9-1 GCSE results were included for the first time in the Key Stage 4 tables. As a result, the English and Mathematics measures used grade 5 (a strong pass) instead of grade C. The measures also included the number of students obtaining a standard pass (grade 4) or above in these subjects. (Department for Education, 2017a)</p> <p>The headline EBacc attainment measure was the percentage of pupils in a school gaining grade 5 or above in English and maths, and a grade C or above in other subjects. An additional EBacc measure reported the percentage of pupils gaining grade 4 or above in English and maths, and a grade C or above in other subjects.</p> <p>From 2017 onwards, the Key Stage 5 performance tables included level 2 vocational qualifications studied by students aged 16-18. It also included new level 3 mathematics measures reporting the number of students studying it for a second year and the number who were assessed in it.(Department for Education, 2017a)</p>
<b>2018</b>	<p>In 2018, the EBacc attainment measure changed to a school's EBacc average point score for the results of exams taken in 2018 onwards. This is calculated by adding together the EBacc average point score for all pupils at the end of key stage 4 and dividing by the number of pupils in the group. A pupil's average point score is an average of the points scored in the 5 EBacc subject areas.</p> <p>Some provision was made to reduce the impact of pupils with extremely negative progress scores on a school's average. (Department for Education, 2017c)</p>
<b>2019</b>	<p>There were no planned changes to the performance tables in 2019 (Department for Education, 2019).</p>
<b>2020</b>	<p>No performance tables were published in 2020 because all exams and assessments were cancelled (Department for Education, 2021b).</p>
<b>2021</b>	<p>No performance tables were published in 2020 because all exams and assessments were cancelled (Department for Education, 2021c).</p>

<i>Year<sup>17</sup></i>	<i>Summary</i>
<b>2022</b>	<p>The assessments and exams will run in 2022, but the results for primary will only be shared with schools, local authorities, academy trusts and Ofsted. No performance tables will be published.</p> <p>Secondary school performance tables will be published, although there will be notices to be cautious in drawing conclusions from the data.</p> <p>(Department for Education, 2021d)</p>

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# 11. The UCAS Tariff

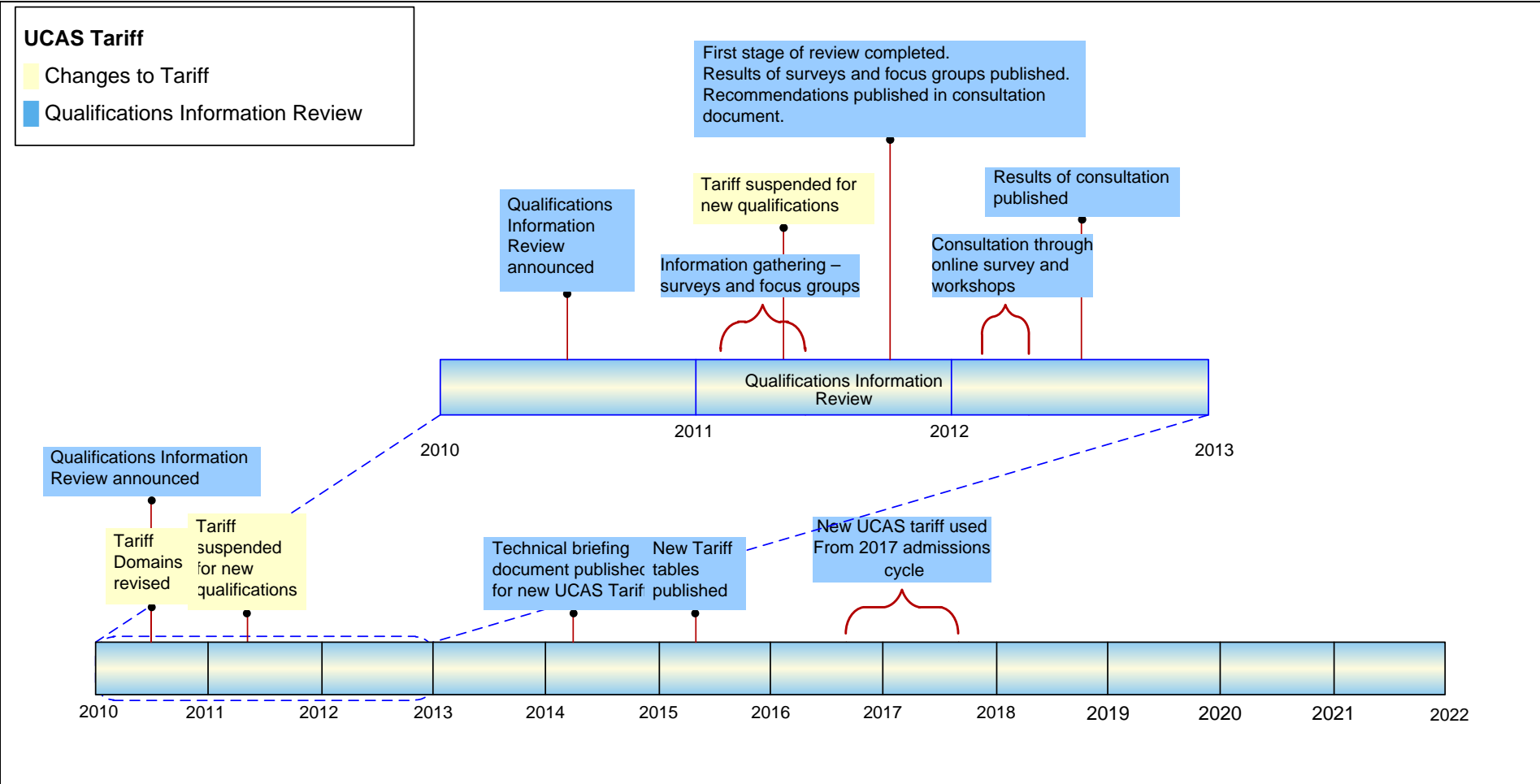


Figure 13. Changes to the UCAS Tariff since 2010.

The UCAS Tariff was originally developed to allow universities to make comparable offers for A levels and Scottish Highers. However, over time universities received more offers from students who had taken other qualifications, and the UCAS Tariff, and the method for comparing qualifications was updated as a result. This table lists all the major changes to the UCAS Tariff since 2010.

Table 13. Details of changes to the UCAS Tariff.

<i>Year</i>	<i>Summary</i>
<b>2010</b>	<p>An extra domain was added to the Tariff domains, taking the total to 10. The subsections within each domain were also amended for consistency so that each domain had three sections. (Johnson, 2011, personal correspondence 16<sup>th</sup> June)</p> <p>In July, UCAS announced a review of the Tariff. This was intended to remove some of the known issues with the existing tariff, such as it being difficult to allocate points to certain types of qualifications, and the points being too crude a measure. (Curtis, 2010)</p>
<b>2011</b>	<p>From March to May UCAS conducted online surveys (UCAS, 2011b) and from March to April they conducted focus groups (UCAS, 2011a) to ask various stakeholders about the existing UCAS Tariff, and the information they need about qualifications.</p> <p>In May UCAS announced that the Tariff would be suspended, meaning that no new qualifications would be added to the Tariff unless they met the following criteria</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They needed to be evaluated as a result of changes to qualifications frameworks.</li> <li>• They were new qualifications that were effectively the same as existing qualifications had already been allocated Tariff points.</li> <li>• Their Tariff points would be issued on a provisional basis, and would later be reviewed in the light of candidate evidence. (UCAS, 2013)</li> </ul> <p>The findings from the surveys and focus groups were published in October, at the same time as the report on the admissions process. (UCAS, 2011a, 2011b)</p>

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**2012** In February UCAS published a consultation document (UCAS, 2012a), detailing a new system for comparing qualifications.

Between February and April UCAS conducted workshops & an online survey to consult various stakeholders on six proposals. These were to:

- Develop Qualification Information Profiles
- Gradually withdraw the UCAS Tariff
- Develop a way of comparing the 'demand' of qualifications
- Develop a qualifications metric for management information
- Publish an annual report on how qualifications are used for admissions
- Provide optional admissions tools.

(UCAS, 2012b)

UCAS published the results of the consultation in July (UCAS, 2012b). In that report it was recommended that Qualifications Information Profiles would be developed, which university staff could use to find out information about qualifications. They also recommended gradually withdrawing the use of the UCAS Tariff in entry requirements and offers. The gradual withdrawal of the UCAS tariff was not popular with HE respondents to the consultation, so UCAS considered this recommendation further.

Following a UCAS board meeting in September 2012 it was decided to continue running the UCAS Tariff under the three rules agreed in 2011. (UCAS, 2013)

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**2014** In 2014, UCAS published a technical briefing document detailing the introduction of a new UCAS Tariff. As with the old UCAS Tariff, qualifications are assigned points to show their relative position. In the proposed new Tariff, points are allocated based on the size of the qualification (number of guided learning hours) multiplied by their grade band. All qualifications that already have UCAS Tariff points will be transferred to the new UCAS Tariff. (UCAS, 2014)

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**2015** In 2015, UCAS started operating the new UCAS Tariff. Tables were produced showing qualifications' tariff points that were used from the 2017 admissions cycle onwards (i.e. for students applying in 2016/17 to start university in September 2017). The points on the new tariff are based on the size of the qualification (the guided learning hours) and their grade band. Composite qualifications such as the IB only have tariff points allocated to each individual part. Only level 3 qualifications (including equivalent qualifications from outside the UK) are allocated tariff points. (UCAS, 2021)

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**2017** The new UCAS Tariff was first used for the 2017 admissions cycle onwards (i.e. for students applying in 2016/17 to start university in September 2017). (UCAS, 2021)

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## References for UCAS Tariff

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## 12. Other useful information

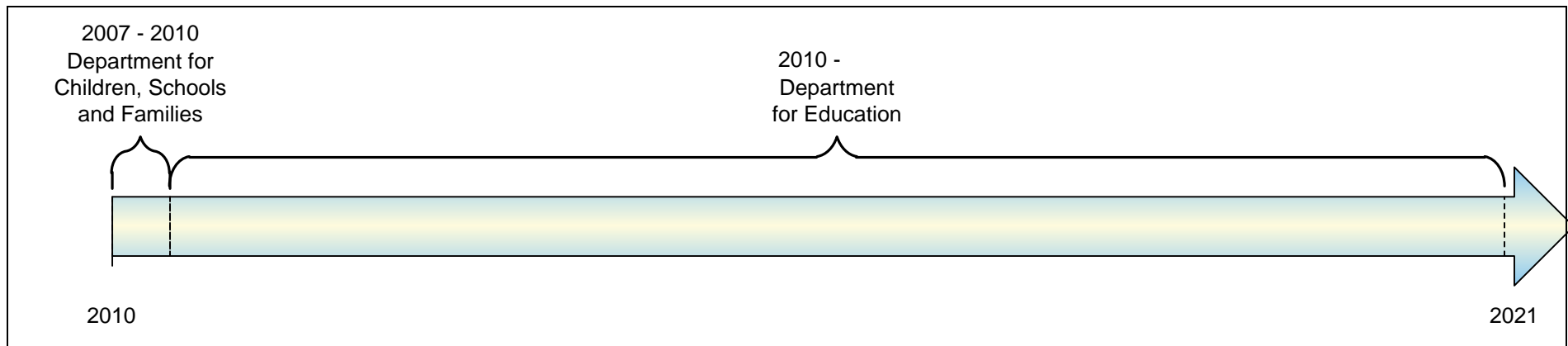


Figure 14. Names for the Department of Education 2000-2021.

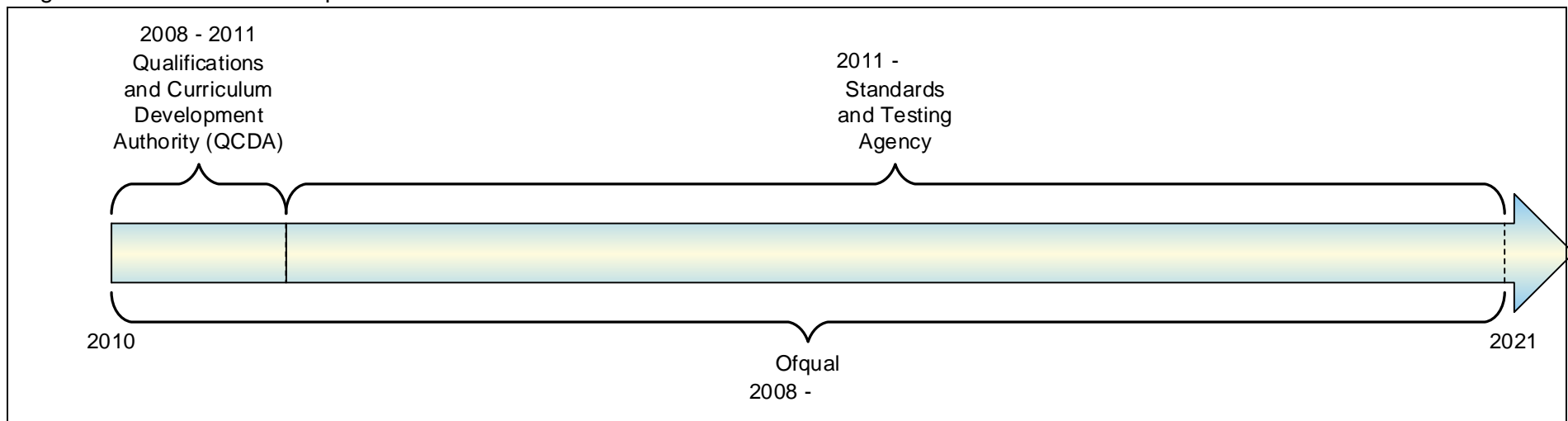


Figure 15. Advisory and regulatory bodies 2000-2021.

Information on details on advisory and regulatory bodies before 1992 can be found in Appendix 3 of Tattersall (2007).

### References for other information

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