

Changes to Latin KS4 qualifications - What will the changes mean for your school?

What's changing

- From Summer 2018 onwards the WJEC certificates will no longer receive performance points or count towards the Ebacc.
- From Summer 2018 both WJEC and OCR will offer a new GCSE that meets the DfE's new requirements.
- Currently 34% of schools offering a KS4 qualification in Latin offer the WJEC certificates. Within the non-selective state sector 62% of schools offer the WJEC certificates.

As a result of these changes, many schools currently offering the WJEC certificates will instead begin to offer either the WJEC or OCR GCSE which in content will both be similar to the current GCSE.

Required teaching time

- Currently, schools offering the OCR GCSE take on average 342 hours to deliver the content and the majority of schools spread these hours over 5 years. To teach the WJEC options that include the literature paper schools take on average 321 hours.
- By comparison, to teach the WJEC Level 2 options that do not include literature, schools take on average 207 hours.
- Our research suggests that teachers will need at least 240 hours to deliver the content of the new GCSEs **to the top 30% of the ability range** (equating to 4 years' teaching at 1.5 hours a week).

Ability range

- The current OCR GCSE is almost exclusively taught to the top 30% of the national ability range: in 63% of schools currently offering the OCR Latin GCSE, the **weakest** Latin pupils achieve A*-B grades in their other subjects.
- Teachers at the University of Cambridge conference in June 2014 almost unanimously agreed that the content of the new Latin GCSE was not accessible to the full ability range, even with 4 years' teaching time.
- Those schools teaching Latin to a wider range of abilities can therefore expect to see a reduction in uptake if switching to the new GCSEs from the WJEC Level 2 qualifications; as the increased volume of content will make it inaccessible to weaker pupils.
- Those schools teaching Latin to a wider range of abilities can expect to have need of more teaching time than the stated 240 hours to cover the new GCSE.

Grading

- The current OCR GCSE is graded more severely than other subjects, with pupils typically achieving a grade lower in Latin than their other GCSEs, research from Durham University has shown.
- The introduction of the new grading system will affect Latin particularly harshly since the majority of students taking Latin are in the top 30% of the ability range and are bunched around the top grades:
 - Within the new GCSE grading structure, roughly the same proportion of students will achieve a grade 7 and above as achieve an A and above now. Of these pupils, 20% will be awarded the top grade, grade 9.
 - Currently 44% of students entering the OCR GCSE achieve an A*, however it is projected that following the new grading system only around 14% of students will achieve a grade 9.
 - Pupils who might expect an A or a B should achieve a 7 or 8, but schools who often see a large proportion, or all, of their cohort getting an A* in Latin can expect to see a spread of 8s and 9s.
- This increased difficulty in achieving the top grade may discourage students from choosing Latin over other subjects.

Summary

- The time required to teach the new GCSEs to the top 30% of the ability range (at least 240 hours) will lead to many schools needing to increase their teaching time, and more so if teaching to a wider range of abilities.
- Those schools now not studying literature will need to make available at least 60 hours more teaching time to cover the content of the new GCSEs (1 year at 1.5 hours a week).
- The new GCSEs will be accessible by a narrow range of abilities, and schools currently teaching to a broad range of pupils may expect to see a decline in student numbers.
- Students will find it even tougher to achieve the top grade in Latin under the new grading system (whether they currently take the OCR GCSE or WJEC Level 2 qualifications), and as a result all schools are likely to see cohort sizes drop.

Further information

- You may also want to have a look at our 'Changes to Latin KS4 qualifications' overview document.
- You can find CSCP's report on the use of the existing qualifications and the impact of the proposed changes here: [link](#).¹

Get in touch

If you would like to discuss how your school will be affected by the changes, please get in touch with Laila (lt296@cam.ac.uk) or Will (rwg1000@cam.ac.uk) to see how we can help.

¹ <http://www.cambridgescp.com/Upage.php?p=ta^rsch^ks4quals>