

News story: Help Ofqual evaluate 2018's new GCSEs, AS and A levels

We are inviting teachers from across the country to workshops to offer their perspectives on the assessment of this summer's reformed GCSEs, AS and A levels.

The workshops will be our first opportunity to gather qualitative evidence about things that have gone well and any areas of concern. Your feedback will contribute to our thinking about the effectiveness of the reform programme.

The workshops will be held in October, November and December in a central Coventry location, within walking distance of the main railway station. These are free events with a limited number of places. Your travel expenses will be reimbursed and lunch will be provided.

Ideally we would like you to have taught the qualification, in its legacy and reformed version. This is so you can comment on the changes and challenges of the new qualifications and how they have been addressed.

We hope that you are able to take advantage of this opportunity to have your say and share your experiences with us.

[Register to attend a November workshop](#)

We will email you by the end of September to tell you if you have been selected to take part in the workshop.

News story: Prospering from the energy revolution: full programme details

Government is investing in a new Prospering from the Energy Revolution Challenge. UK Research and Innovation has announced further details of its fund for research and industry to develop future smart energy systems and prove their use at scale.

The energy revolution challenge will bring together businesses working with the best research and expertise. Together they will develop and demonstrate new approaches to provide cleaner, cheaper and more resilient energy. This includes providing energy in ways that consumers want by linking low-carbon power, heating and transport systems with energy storage and advanced IT to create intelligent, local energy systems and services.

This is part of the [Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund](#).

[Register for the online briefing tomorrow 15 May 2018 to find out more about the energy revolution challenge and current funding opportunities.](#)

3 areas of investment

The funding will be available for:

Smart local energy systems demonstrators and designs

Government will invest in fast-tracking up to 3 practical local energy systems demonstrators and around 10 whole system design studies. The practical demonstrators will build supply chain capabilities, deliver positive changes for energy consumers, and inform future projects. The design studies will create a pipeline of investable projects for the future.

Innovation Accelerator Fund

The Innovation Accelerator Fund will develop and commercialise smart local energy system products and services, and engage with the best international research and innovation opportunities.

Research and Integration Services

A world-leading, inter-disciplinary research programme will be commissioned to work alongside the [Energy Systems Catapult](#). The programme will provide coordination and technical support to demonstration and design projects.

Find out more

The demonstrator and concept design competitions are open for applications.

[Find out how to apply into these competitions.](#)

Businesses and researchers can find out more about the open competitions and challenge by registering for our [briefing event webcast](#) tomorrow 15 May 2018.

Full details of the remaining competitions and funding will be announced shortly.

More about the challenge

The Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund will make sure that research and innovation is at the heart of government's Industrial Strategy. This sets out 4 grand challenges in industries in which the UK is determined to pioneer progress.

The energy revolution falls under the clean growth challenge, which will support the UK to be a world leader in low-carbon technologies, systems and services.

[Register to find out more about the energy revolution challenge.](#)

Press release: Foreign Secretary and President of Panama in sporting gesture ahead of the World Cup

Today the Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson swapped football shirts with the President of Panama, Juan Carlos Varela.

Next month, England and Panama will face off for 90 minutes at the World Cup – but today they were both on the same side as focus turned to their travelling fans during the tournament.

Governments from all 31 qualified nations have been working together to prepare for the World Cup, helping the Russian authorities improve safety and security for fans from all countries, including the UK and Panama.

After handing over the shirt that the England team will be sporting when they take to the turf in the match on the 24th June, the Foreign Secretary gratefully received a Panamanian shirt in return. This will be Panama's first ever appearance at a World Cup Finals.

The Foreign Secretary said:

Next month, England and Panama will play against one another in the World Cup, so we'll be on opposing sides for 90 minutes.

But before, during and after that game we share a top priority for the World Cup – the safety and security of our nationals.

Since our preparations began more than two years ago, our staff have visited all eleven host cities, worked closely with local authorities, met with representatives from all 31 competing nations and launched our Be On The Ball campaign, which offers fans specialist World Cup guidance and advice for being ready for Russia.

This includes ensuring you have appropriate travel insurance, necessary emergency numbers and information on the all-important FAN ID. We also of course encourage fans to be good guests in Russia and to remain mindful of

any local laws and customs.

An estimated 4,000-10,000 England fans will travel to Russia, where the FCO has permanent representation in three of the 11 world cup host cities (Moscow, Ekaterinburg, St Petersburg), and will have a mobile team in the cities where England play.

The Foreign Office have been advising travelling fans through the Be On The Ball Campaign, which can be found by visiting [here](#).

The England v Panama game will take place on 24 June in Nizhny Novgorod.

Further information

- Follow the Foreign Office on Twitter [@foreignoffice](#) and [Facebook](#)
- Follow the Foreign Office on [Instagram](#), [YouTube](#) and [LinkedIn](#)

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[Press release: New gold-standard GCSEs prepare pupils for careers Britain needs](#)

Updated: Now with comments from the CBI

- This week marks the start of exam season, where a further 20 new GCSEs will be sat for the first time

Hundreds of thousands of pupils are preparing to take new, more rigorous GCSE exams this week, which are on a par with the best performing education systems in the world, the School Standards Minister announced today.

The gold-standard qualifications for 20 new GCSEs – including the sciences, French, German, Spanish, history and geography – have been designed with employers in mind. These qualifications are underpinned by more rigorous

content, preparing pupils for future careers in the industries that Britain needs. The new science GCSEs now include space physics and the human genome and the new Computer Science GCSE now includes a greater focus on programming.

Schools Standards Minister Nick Gibb said:

These more rigorous, gold-standard GCSEs are helping to nurture the next generation of scientists, linguists and historians. Whatever pupils want to do with their lives, these qualifications will prepare them for future success and help deliver the skills Britain needs to be fit for the future.

Thanks to our reforms and the hard work of teachers, education standards are rising in our schools and last year, teachers and pupils responded well to the new English and maths exams. I wish pupils all the very best as they prepare to sit these exams and I look forward to celebrating their success in the summer.

CBI Managing Director for People and Skills policy Neil Carberry said:

A world-class education has the power to give young people the knowledge and character needed to navigate a rapidly changing world. CBI members welcome the Government's commitment to high educational standards in schools, of which the new GCSEs are part.

Just doing well in exams isn't enough though – firms want to see all young people leave education as well-rounded individuals. They appreciate what teachers and leaders are doing in schools to develop great people – and are ready to step up and do more themselves. As part of today's important focus on knowledge, this partnership must also ensure we are prioritising teaching that encourages critical thinking, creativity, and teamwork.

The start of these exams follows the recent news of funding to train up to 8000 existing computing teachers to teach the new GCSE – that is enough to ensure every secondary school in England has a teacher who can support pupils to succeed.

The new GCSEs will be graded 9 to 1, with 9 being the top grade to allow more differentiation between the highest performing pupils and so that employers can identify the new, more rigorous qualifications.

It builds on the success of last year's changes to GCSE maths and English which saw 59.1 per cent of pupils achieving a grade 4 or above.

Standards are rising in schools thanks to these reforms and the hard work of teachers, which has resulted in 1.9 million more children in good or outstanding schools than 2010.

The government's Industrial Strategy highlighted a shortage of STEM skills. There is a need to increase number of people able to study for STEM degrees to support the current economy and its growth. The reforms to GCSEs and A levels, as well as these teaching programmes are just two of the ways this is being achieved.

Press release: Custodial sentence for operating illegal waste site

Mr Bruce had pleaded guilty to these offences on an earlier occasion, and was referred to Worcester Crown Court for sentencing.

Mr Bruce received an immediate custodial sentence of 26 months. No order for costs was made at this stage, pending the outcome of confiscation proceedings under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002, which will be resolved in due course.

The charges were brought by the Environment Agency under Regulations 38(1)(a) and 12(1)(a) of the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2010; Section 33(1)(c) of the Environmental Protection Act 1990; Section 161D (1) of the Water Resources Act 1991; and Regulation 10 of the Water Resources (Control of Pollution) (Silage, Slurry and Agriculture Fuel Oil) (England) Regulations 2010.

Mr Bruce ran a waste disposal operation centred on a site at Ridgeway Park Farm, Throckmorton Airfield, near Pershore, for 3 and a half years, between 2011 and 2014 without any permit. He brought waste onto the site and either dumped it, buried it or burned it.

Responding to complaints from local residents, Environment Agency officers met with Mr Bruce on a number of occasions, conducting site inspections and enforcing environmental regulations. Warnings were issued following evidence that burning had been taking place on the site.

Throughout March and April 2013, Mr Bruce treated and disposed of waste by burning large quantities of it at Ridgeway Park Farm. For several weeks fires were continually burning at the site causing misery for local residents, endangering health and polluting the air in the area. There was a major impact on the quality of life for local residents, as Mr Bruce burnt a large amount of plastic waste, causing plumes of putrid black smoke across the nearby village.

In April 2013, a fire at the site was attended by Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service and the Environment Agency, yet Mr Bruce repeatedly ignored the interventions of the Environment Agency and the Fire Service.

The waste on site consisted mainly of construction and demolition waste, some

of which included aluminium waste products, which is classified as a hazardous waste. In total, approximately 26,000 cubic metres of waste was brought onto the site by Mr Bruce during the offending period.

Mr Bruce kept his herd of cattle on site grazing amongst the waste and in conditions where polluting effluent was not contained. Environment Agency officers also noticed that waste gypsum powder was being used as animal bedding and advised Bruce that this practice was unlawful. They also noted that the cattle bedding also contained mixed waste, electric cables, drink cans and plumbing parts.

Brown liquid was seen seeping from storage areas, pooling and flowing in the direction of a small watercourse, approximately 100m away. Officers reported evidence of hazardous waste buried and the potential for discharge substances to enter the groundwater and the Piddle Brook.

In sentencing, the Judge commented that this was serious environmental offending and that there was a clear need for a deterrent sentence. Mr Bruce was given some credit by way of a discount on his sentence as he had pleaded guilty and avoided the need for a trial.

Speaking after the case, an Environment Agency officer in charge of the investigation said:

Waste crime is a serious offence with tough penalties. It can damage the environment, blight local communities and undermine those who operate legally.

Mr Bruce has shown a blatant disregard for the environment and local community, subjecting local residents to months of misery by bringing on large quantities of waste and burning it on the site.

Everyone who disposes of waste has a duty of care to ensure their waste is handled correctly. Whether you are a business, local authority or householder you must make sure you know where your waste goes so it doesn't end up in the hands of illegal operators.

You can help disrupt and prevent waste crime activity by reporting. The Environment Agency urges people to report waste crime on their incident hotline 0800 80 70 60 or anonymously to Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.