

[Press release: Northern Ireland Assembly election](#)

Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP said:

This election has demonstrated the clear desire by the overwhelming majority of people in Northern Ireland for inclusive devolved government. I congratulate all of those who have been elected.

Everyone now has a shared responsibility to engage intensively in the short period of time that is available to us, to ensure that a strong and stable administration is established.

Northern Ireland has made great strides forward over the past two decades. All of us must continue the work of building a stable, peaceful and prosperous Northern Ireland that works for everyone, based on the strong foundations of the Belfast Agreement and its successors.

It is with this positive intent that the UK Government approaches the days ahead. I will be speaking to party leaders during the course of today and remaining in contact with the Irish Government.

[News story: Foreign Secretary to visit Russia](#)

The Foreign Secretary has accepted an invitation from Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov to visit Moscow in the coming weeks.

The Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary have made clear that our policy towards Russia is to 'engage but beware' and the visit is entirely consistent with this approach.

Discussions will focus on the UK-Russia relationship and current international issues including Syria and Ukraine, where we continue to have significant differences. This is not a return to business as usual and the

Foreign Secretary will continue to be robust on those issues where we differ.

We have always been clear that the UK will engage with Russia where it is in our national interest to do so.

Details of precise timings will be confirmed in due course. A potential visit has been in the pipeline for some time, with the Prime Minister and President Putin discussing this when they met in China in September 2016.

GCSE 9 to 1 grades



The new 9 to 1 GCSE grades

The vast majority of students taking GCSEs in England in 2019 will receive grades from 9 to 1. Students taking 5 lesser-taught GCSE subjects (Biblical Hebrew, Gujarati, Persian, Portuguese and Turkish) will receive letter grades in 2019 before they become numerical (9 to 1) in 2020.

9 things to know about the new GCSE grades

1. GCSEs in England have been reformed and are graded with from 9 to 1, with 9 being the highest grade.
2. GCSE content is more challenging.
3. Fewer grade 9s are awarded than A*s.
4. The new grades are being brought in to signal that GCSEs have been reformed and to better differentiate between students of different abilities.
5. In the first year each new GCSE subject has been introduced, broadly the same proportion of students get a grade 4 or above as would have got a grade C or above in the old system.
6. These changes are only happening in England. Wales and Northern Ireland are not introducing the new 9 to 1 grading scale as part of their changes to GCSEs.
7. English language, English literature and maths were the first to be graded from 9 to 1 in 2017.
8. Another 20 subjects had 9 to 1 grading in 2018, with most others

following in 2019. During this transition, students received a mixture of letter and number grades.

9. You can see how the 9 to 1 grades compare with the A* to G scale in our [GCSE grading postcard](#).

GCSE science

GCSEs for science have changed in England. Students taking separate science GCSEs now get a grade from 9 to 1 in each subject. Combined science draws content from all three subjects and students receive an award worth two GCSEs, consisting of two equal or adjacent grades.

5 things to know about combined science GCSEs

1. Students taking separate science GCSEs get a grade from 9 to 1 for each subject, with 9 being the highest grade.
2. Students studying combined science receive an award worth two GCSEs, consisting of two equal or adjacent grades from 9 to 1 (9-9, 9-8, 8-8, 8-7, 7-7...to 1-1).
3. If the numbers are different, the highest number will always be reported on the left.
4. Students do at least 8 practical activities (16 for combined science) covering specific apparatus and techniques.
5. Exam questions about practical work make up at least 15% of the total marks for the qualification.

More information

We've got lots of information to help students, parents, teachers and businesses understand the changes. You can:

And if you've got any questions, drop us an email at public.enquiries@ofqual.gov.uk or give us a call on 0300 303 3344.

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Last updated 6 August 2019 [+ show all updates](#)

1. 6 August 2019 Updated to reflect that we are in the third year of GCSE reforms.
2. 22 December 2017 Article now shows the updated video.
3. 23 August 2017 Added results day guides for students and parents.
4. 3 March 2017 First published.

[News story: Ofqual conference 2017 –](#)

presentations from the day

The annual Ofqual conference is for awarding organisations we regulate, these are the presentations from the day.

Don't include personal or financial information like your National Insurance number or credit card details.

What you were doing What went wrong

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News story: Avian flu near Redgrave, Suffolk

Avian Influenza H5N8 virus has been identified on a premises near Redgrave during investigations following a recent nearby case.

Defra's routine investigations following a confirmed case of H5N8 near Redgrave in Suffolk have led to the detection of the virus at a further separate premises.

Due to the unacceptable high risk and to contain the possible spread of avian flu, the UK's Deputy Chief Veterinary Officer has today (3 March) confirmed that proactive culling of around 55,000 birds will take place.

The premises will then be cleansed and disinfected, further reducing the risk to other birds. [A 3km Protection Zone and a 10km Surveillance Zone](#) are already in place following the previous case in the area. Our investigations will continue and the restrictions already placed on the site will remain in force until cleansing and disinfection is finished and the investigation is complete.

Public Health England advises that the risk to public health from the virus is very low and the Food Standards Agency is clear that bird flu does not pose a food safety risk for UK consumers.

Read the [latest advice and information on avian flu in the UK](#), including actions to reduce the risk of the disease spreading, advice for anyone who keeps poultry or captive birds and details of previous cases. You can use our [interactive map](#) to check if you are affected by restrictions around any premises. Journalists with queries should contact Defra press office on

02082257318.