

Frequently Asked Questions for international centres

Edexcel GCE A levels

1. -What changes are happening to GCE A level?

The UK government and Ofqual (the regulator of qualifications, examinations and assessments in England) announced the following change to GCE A levels for examination boards in England:

From 2013 onwards

- Immediate **removal of the January examination series** from all regulated A levels. Edexcel GCE A levels are regulated by Ofqual, therefore we have had to remove the January examination series from this qualification. Edexcel GCE A level examinations can now only be taken in June of each year.

From 2015 onwards

- **New A levels are to be developed for first teaching in September 2015.** These A levels will be linear, with examinations taken at the end of the two-year course.

The A level subjects to be redeveloped for September 2015 will be:

- English (Language, Literature and Language & Literature) -
 - Mathematics and Further Mathematics -
 - Physics -
 - Biology -
 - Chemistry -
 - History -
 - Geography -
 - Psychology -
 - Art & Design -
 - Sociology -
 - Business Studies -
 - Economics -
 - Computing -
- **AS levels to be stand-alone qualifications from September 2015 onwards.** AS levels will be stand-alone qualifications and will no longer contribute to an A level grade. Their purpose will be to encourage curriculum breadth and they will remain broadly at their current standard.

2. -Does the removal of GCE January examinations affect international centres?

Yes. The UK Government has asked for all awarding bodies in England to remove the January examinations window for all subjects. We have been advised by Ofqual (the regulator for

Qualifications, Examinations and Assessment in England) that the removal of January examinations applies to all centres teaching Ofqual-regulated A level qualifications, wherever they are in the world.

3. What does the removal of January examinations mean for my centre and students?

The decision to remove January examinations is with immediate effect. Therefore, there will be no Edexcel GCE A level examinations in January 2014 onwards. 2012 students taking the current Edexcel GCE A levels will now only be able to sit examinations in June 2013 and June 2014 only. (For information on how this affects students who started their GCE A level course in 2012, please see question 4.) In response to the Government announcement we have developed a new suite of A level qualifications called Edexcel International Advanced Levels, specifically for our international centres, which do contain both January and June examinations. Please refer to *the International Advanced Level* section later in the document.

4. My 2012 students need to complete their Edexcel GCE A level course in January 2014. Do these changes mean they can no longer complete their course in January 2014?

Not necessarily. Students who are currently studying the Edexcel GCE A level subjects below, will be able to sit examinations in January 2014, to enable them to cash in and complete their course as planned in January 2014.

The units available in January 2014 are as follows:

- Business Studies*
- Economics*
- Mathematics*
- Accounting*
- Biology, Chemistry, Physics* (Written alternative to coursework only)
- Psychology, Unit 3
- Religious Studies, Unit 2 (1A: The study of Religion)
- English Literature, Units 3 & 4

** Edexcel GCE A level units currently available in January will be available in January 2014, in the subjects mentioned above.*

If this option is taken, the following important points should be noted:

- The specification and assessment remain unchanged; therefore you should continue to prepare your students for their final January examinations in 2014 in the usual way.
- Students will be awarded an *Edexcel International Advanced Level*, regulated by Pearson, instead of an *Edexcel GCE A level*. This is because Ofqual has asked all awarding bodies to remove the January examination window from all A level qualifications.
- All entries for January 2014 must be accompanied by a cash-in code.

5. My 2012 students are supposed to complete their course in June 2014. What do these changes mean for them?

Students who are due to complete their Edexcel GCE A level in June 2014, will still be able to do so. The only change for these students is that they will no longer be able to sit examinations in January 2014.

6. Will my students be awarded an Edexcel GCE A level if they sit their final examinations in June 2014?

Yes, in most subjects providing they do not sit IAL exams in January 2014. Ofqual has tightened their rules and, as a result, all qualifications not regulated by Ofqual can no longer be called Edexcel GCE A levels. Students sitting examinations in the subjects listed below will be awarded an *Edexcel International Advanced Level* qualification instead of an *Edexcel GCE A level*.

- Accounting
- Law
- Biology, Chemistry, Physics (Written alternative to coursework courses only)

7. Can students who sat Edexcel GCE unit exams in June 2013 switch to an International Advanced Level qualification in order to sit exams in January and June 2014?

Yes, if the student is studying one of the International Advanced Level subjects:

Mathematics

Business Studies

Economics

Accounting

Biology, Chemistry, Physics (100% written exam instead of practical coursework)

Students who have banked completed GCE units until June 2013 will be able to combine these with IAL units in January 2014 and June 2014. The student will be awarded an International Advanced Level.

For all other subjects, students will need to complete their Edexcel GCE A level by sitting their A2 examinations in June 2014. As previously mentioned, students will not be able to sit any Edexcel GCE A level examinations in January 2014. If students need to finish their course in January 2014, please see question 4.

8. Will Edexcel GCE A level Biology, Chemistry and Physics continue to have practical coursework?

Yes. These qualifications will continue to have practical coursework and will now only have examinations in June of each year.

Edexcel GCE A levels in Biology, Chemistry and Physics with 100% written examination instead of coursework, are being renamed International Advanced Level qualifications. These will have exams in January and June of each year.

Edexcel International Advanced Levels

9. What are Edexcel International Advanced Levels?

Edexcel International Advanced Levels is a new suite of A level qualifications developed for international centres. With a modular structure, our new suite of International Advanced Levels have examination windows in January and June of each year, allowing students to finish their course in January if they need to, for entry to local and international universities. Please note Law will continue to be examined in June of each year only.

10. What are the differences between GCE A levels and International Advanced Levels?

	Edexcel GCE A levels	International Advanced Levels
Structure	Modular structure (moving to a linear structure in 2015. All exams will be taken at the end of the two-year A level course)	Modular structure
Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coursework • June examinations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No coursework (100% exam) • January and June examinations
Recognised by universities	Yes	Yes (Universities see the IALs and GCE A levels as similar. See question)
Regulator	Regulated by Ofqual	Regulated by Pearson

11. Which subjects will have an International Advanced Level qualification available?

Mathematics, Economics, Business Studies, Accounting, Law, Biology, Chemistry, Physics.

12. Will there be new specifications for each of these subjects?

Business Studies, Mathematics and Economics

New International AS/Advanced Level specifications will be available for Mathematics, Economics and Business Studies. Final specifications will be available to download from the [IAL Home Page](#) in August, ahead of first teaching in September 2013.

We have produced mapping documents for Business Studies, Economics and Mathematics to outline where the changes occur between the Edexcel GCE specification and the IAL specification. Mapping Guides can be found on each of the IAL subject pages from the [IAL Home Page](#) under *Teacher Support Materials*.

Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Law and Accounting

The existing Edexcel GCE Science specifications (with 100% written examination instead of

coursework), Law and Accounting are being moved into our new suite of Edexcel International Advanced Levels. There is no change to the content or assessment of these specifications, only the name of the qualification will change. The specifications are exactly the same. We will be updating the covers of the specifications to reflect the change of qualification title during summer 2013. They will now be called Edexcel International AS/Advanced Level in Biology/Chemistry/Physics/Law/Accounting.

13. Are the International Advanced Level Qualifications recognised by universities?

Edexcel International Advanced level qualifications are already recognised by many leading universities in the UK and internationally. The qualifications have been written to the same rigorous standard as all Edexcel qualifications. The feedback we have received from universities is that they see Edexcel GCE A levels and Edexcel International Advanced Level qualifications as similar qualifications. Our Recognition team is in regular communication with university admission teams around the world to ensure both Edexcel GCE A levels and Edexcel International Advanced Level qualifications are treated equally with the same progression opportunities.

Keep track of the latest universities accepting IALs by clicking on the document '*International Advanced Levels: Find out where they can take you!*' found on the [Degree Course Finder](#) website.

14. Will my centre/students be disadvantaged in any way by taking Edexcel International Advanced Level qualifications if they are not regulated by Ofqual?

Not at all. As mentioned in question 13, Edexcel International Advanced Level qualifications have been written to the same high standards as our Edexcel GCEs and are seen as equivalent qualifications at the same level.

15. How many re-sit opportunities will my students have with the International Advanced Level qualifications?

Students can re-sit each unit once before certification.

Please note, from September 2015 Edexcel GCE A levels will also only have one opportunity for a re-sit and the examinations will only be available in June.

16. Is AS available for International Advanced Level and will it count towards an Advanced Level?

Yes. The new International Advanced Level will have an AS/A2 split, therefore AS can either be taken as a stand alone qualification or used as a stage on the way to completing an Advanced Level.

17. Can students in the UK take International Advanced level qualifications?

No. IAL qualifications are only available to students and centres outside the UK.

18. What textbooks should I use for International Advanced Levels?

Textbooks used for the current Edexcel GCE A levels can be used for International Advanced Levels. There is no need to purchase additional textbooks.