

AS/A Level GCE Mathematics – 3890-3892; 7890-7892 Frequently Asked Questions

What are the rules for A* in GCE Mathematics?

The A* grade was first awarded in June 2010 for Mathematics A level and Further Mathematics A level qualifications. It is not awarded for AS levels or individual units.

For A level Mathematics you need to achieve both:

- Grade A for the A level (an average of at least 80 UMS over the units)
- An average of 90 UMS on Core 3 and Core 4

For A level Further Mathematics you need to achieve both:

- Grade A for the A level (an average of at least 80 UMS over the units)
- An average of 90 UMS on your three best A2 units

Further details are available in this [leaflet](#).

What units make an A level? What about Further Maths?

The best way to find what combinations of units make up A level Maths or Further Maths is from pages 21 – 22 of the [specification](#). Exams officers could also look at the OCR 14-19 qualifications Admin guide and Entry codes located [here](#).

In brief:

- There are 3 combinations for AS Mathematics: C1, C2 plus one of M1, S1, D1.
- There are 6 combinations for A level Mathematics: C1 – C4 plus one of these 6 pairs: M1&M2, S1&S2, D1&D2, M1&S1, M1&D1, S1&D1.
- For AS Further Mathematics a candidate has to sit FP1 and two other units. The candidate must be taking or have taken AS Maths or A level Maths and none of the units can be shared.
- For A level Further Mathematics a candidate has to sit 6 units which must include FP1 and at least one from FP2 and FP3. At least 3 of the units must be A2 units. The candidate must be taking or have taken A level Maths and none of the units can be shared.

What are the rules for working out grades? Which units go in Further Maths?

Some units can count towards either Mathematics or Further Mathematics. JCQ issue [rules](#) about which units count towards which qualification.

This example illustrates the process.

If a candidate enters for 12 units and certificates for A level Mathematics and A level Further Mathematics there will usually be different combinations of the units that are valid. The rules say that of all the valid combinations of units possible the only ones considered are those that give the best possible grade for A level Maths. Of these combinations only the ones that then give the best possible grade for A level Further maths are considered. Of these combinations one is selected that gives the highest possible UMS score for A level Maths.

How do I enter for Further Maths if my A level is with another specification or exam board?

We need to know what specification the Maths qualification was entered for, and what units were used to do so. It is important that the units for Maths and Further Maths do not overlap. We ask centres to complete a [form](#) to give us this information.

Why re-certificate? Is it always the best option?

We advise candidates that when they enter for a qualification in the GCE Maths suite they should re-certificate for any qualification that they have previously entered. This can lead to an improved grade.

For example, a candidate may enter for AS Maths using C1, C2, S1 one year and then enter for A level Maths by taking C3, C4, M1 the following year. If their M1 score was higher than their S1 score, the AS score could be improved by re-certificating.

Another example would be if a candidate entered for A level Maths using C1-4, M1, S1 one year and then AS Further Maths using FP1, M2, D1 the following year. Re-certificating the A level could give an improved result from a combination like C1-4, M1, D1 or C1-4, M1, M2.

Note: Universities may sometimes make offers based on Maths unit UMS scores, for example, over 90 UMS on all A level Maths units, with Further Maths being ignored. In this case you might wish to contact someone in the Maths team to discuss what the best approach is.

Which units use printed answer booklets in the examination?

All GCE Mathematics question papers should be answered on an accompanying printed answer book. Candidates should write their answers in the spaces provided. If a student needs more than the allocated space, an additional sheet of paper should be used with the question number clearly indicated. The use of the printed answer books helps facilitate on screen marking, which has the benefit of providing centres with a breakdown of candidate performance via our online service, [activeresults](#).

Which calculators are allowed for GCE Mathematics units?

In the Core Mathematics 1 unit calculators are not allowed. In all other units a scientific or graphical calculator may be used provided it complies with the JCQ [Instructions for Conducting Examinations](#) document on the JCQ website.

Calculators must not:

- have retrievable information stored in them
- be designed or adapted to offer any of these facilities:-
 - language translators
 - symbolic algebra manipulation
 - symbolic differentiation or integration
 - communication with other machines or the internet.

We do not issue a list of approved calculators. Candidates and Centres should ensure that calculators comply with the above rules.

When are new A levels in Maths starting?

New A levels in Maths and Further Maths are being developed for first teaching from September 2017.

Following consideration by ALCAB (the A level content advisory board) and the Department for Education, new qualifications are currently being developed by awarding bodies. You can go to www.ocr.org.uk/alevelmaths to see all of the draft Specifications and Sample Assessment Material that have been submitted for accreditation.

The table below gives the date of the first assessments for the reformed AS and A levels in Maths and Further Maths:

Qualification	First Assessment
AS level in Mathematics	June 2018
A level in Mathematics	June 2018*
AS level in Further Mathematics	June 2018
A level in Further Mathematics	June 2019

*This is to accommodate centres who deliver A level Maths in one year.

When is the final assessment for the legacy specification (3890-3892; 7890-7892)?

The final assessment series for the legacy mathematics specifications is June 2018, however, there is a resit series in June 2019 in which all units and qualifications will be available.

Will I be able to use units from the legacy specification with the reformed specification?

No, all reformed AS and A level Maths qualifications are linear so cannot use results from any previous series.

Can I study Further Mathematics in the reformed specification if I already have A level Mathematics from the legacy specification?

If you finish a two year A Level Maths course in June 2018 then it will be allowable to then do the reformed Further Maths qualifications. However please note that the reformed A Level Maths will be available in June 2018 as well for those studying a one year course starting in September 2017.

For the reformed AS/A levels, there is no requirement to study A level Maths in order to take Further Mathematics because the new qualifications are linear, although the content of A level mathematics is assumed knowledge.