

# GCE and GNVQ

## Entry, Aggregation and Certification

### Procedures and Rules

Effective from 1 September 2007 to 31 August 2008

Produced on behalf of:



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## Introduction

This document sets out the rules and principal administrative requirements for:

- GCE (General Certificate of Education) including GCE in applied subjects
- GNVQ (General National Vocational Qualification) qualifications.

It does **not** apply to GCSE or Entry Level Certificates.

It is designed for use by those responsible in schools and colleges for the administration of these examinations. The aim is to explain and provide a commentary on the main activities and terms involved, and to offer guidance on the application of the rules for these qualifications.

The first AS awards for GCEs in applied subjects were made in June 2006 and the first Advanced awards were made in June 2007. VCEs are no longer available. GNVQs are no longer available, apart from a final re-sit opportunity in January 2008.

In general students take three units for an Advanced Subsidiary GCE (AS) qualification, which is a free-standing qualification and may be awarded separately. They may choose to take a further three units to complete the full Advanced GCE (A level) qualification. There are a few subjects which comprise one-unit AS and two-unit A level qualifications or two-unit AS and four-unit A level qualifications.

The GCE in applied subjects has a similar structure, but double award qualifications are also available. A double award AS qualification consists of six units and a double award A level qualification consists of twelve units.

Students have a degree of choice over when they take the various units which make up a qualification. Decisions also have to be made about when they should claim the completed qualification. This document sets out to provide explanation and guidance on the rules, procedures and implications involved.

A list of dates for key activities is provided in **Appendix 1** for ease of reference.

## 1. Making Entries

**Key issue: Entries can lead either to unit results or to results in the qualification.**

### (i) Entries for individual units

An entry is required for each unit to be attempted in any given examination series. This is necessary so that each student is provided with the correct examination paper(s) and receives the correct result(s) at the end of the process. See **Appendix 1** for final entry dates.

Entries should be made by the student's centre for the unit(s) for which the student has been prepared. Units can be taken in any order.

When entries are made for units, there is no requirement for the student to declare the level or title of the qualification which he/she is intending to complete. Some units, for example in GCE Mathematics, are common to more than one title.

### (ii) Entries for the Qualification ('cash in')

Once the student has gained or has entered for the appropriate set of units, an entry may then be made for the qualification. This is known as 'cashing in', and is the indication to the awarding body that the student wishes to complete the qualification and receive certification.

Cashing in is not automatic. It can only be applied for when the student has entered for or gained the appropriate set of units for his/her chosen qualification.

Applying to cash in does not indicate an entry for any particular unit or combination of units. Specific entries must still be made for any units in which the student wishes to be assessed, with a separate entry for the overall qualification.

Cashing in is normally applied for at the same time that entries are made for the student's final units. It can also be applied for in the period immediately following receipt of unit results (see **Appendix 1**) or in any subsequent examination series.

For many centres and students the decision whether or not to cash in can be a difficult one although the implications will be less significant after the June 2007 examination series in view of the removal of the need to decline a subject grade in order to re-use a unit result (applicable in and after the January 2008 series). Some of the implications of cashing in or not cashing in are given in **section 5** on **page 6**.

## 2. Receiving Results

**Key issue: Unit results are reported as uniform marks and indicative grades; qualification results are reported as grades.**

For all GCE units (including Applied GCE units), and for GNVQ externally assessed units, grade boundaries are determined at awarding meetings in terms of the raw marks for the unit. These raw mark grade boundaries are then translated on to a uniform mark scale (UMS) which has fixed grade boundaries.

A student's unit results are reported as uniform marks. All Applied GCE and GNVQ units are reported on a 100-point scale. The maximum uniform mark for other GCE units depends on the weighting of the unit and normally varies between 90 and 120. The uniform mark allows a grade equivalent to be calculated for each unit, which may also be shown on the results slip. Uniform mark scales are given in **Appendix 2**.

Results slips will include for each unit, as a minimum, the unit title, the candidate's UMS mark for the unit and the examination series in which the unit was taken. Information enabling UMS marks to be equated to GCE or GNVQ grades will also be provided.

If a student has applied to cash in, a qualification result will also be issued. The result will be reported as a grade which is calculated by adding up the uniform mark for each unit gained. If the student re-sat any unit, it is the best mark gained in the attempts made that is used.

Qualification certificates will include for each subject, as a minimum, the subject title, the subject grade and the examination series in which the award was made.

### 3. Re-sits

**Key issue: Any unit can be re-sat before the qualification is cashed in.**

For A-level this includes the AS units, even when AS certification has been claimed.

Figure 1 shows the possibilities from January 2008.

**Figure 1 – re-sits and aggregation (from January 2008)**

January 2007	June 2007	January 2008	June 2008
Unit 1	Unit 1	Unit 1	Unit 1
	Unit 2	Unit 2	Unit 4
	Unit 3	Unit 4	Unit 5
	AS award claimed		Unit 6
			A-level award claimed

The table above depicts a student who completes a six-unit GCE qualification over four examination series.

The student takes Unit 1 in January and June 2007, and although disappointed with the results claims the AS award in June 2007.

The student enters Unit 1 again in January and June 2008.

When the A level award is claimed in June 2008, the best of the attempts at each unit will be considered, and the award will be made up as follows:

- Unit 1 – the best result from the four attempts
- Unit 2 – the better result from the two attempts
- Unit 3 – June 2007
- Unit 4 – the better result from the two attempts
- Unit 5 – June 2008
- Unit 6 – June 2008

The student may claim a new AS award in January 2008 or in June 2008, as unit results obtained prior to the previous certification will be available for re-use. If the student claims a new AS award in June 2008, it will be made up as follows:

- Unit 1 – the best result from the four attempts
- Unit 2 – the better result from the two attempts
- Unit 3 – June 2007

It will not be necessary to have declined the AS award claimed in June 2007, although the student may do so (before 20 September 2007) if he/she wishes.

If the student is not satisfied with the A-level award claimed in June 2008, he/she can re-sit one or more units and request A-level certification again. **It will not be possible to decline any grades obtained in January or June 2008.**

## 4. Cashing in awards – the options and actions

This section considers the options and actions available to a student who wishes to finish his/her qualification or intends to take the qualification further.

### (i) Options and actions for the student intending to finish the qualification

This information applies to a student who has completed the units for a GCE AS or Advanced qualification and who has no intention of proceeding to a further award.

- If the student is satisfied with his/her aggregated grade and cashing in was applied for at the time the entry was made, no further action is necessary. If cashing in was not applied for at the time of entry, it can be applied for retrospectively after the issue of results and by the published date (e.g. 20 September 2007 for the June 2007 examination).
- If the student is not satisfied with the aggregated grade and wishes to improve it, and cashing in was applied for at the time the entry was made, the award may be declined by 20 September 2007, although it is not necessary to do so. One or more of the units may be re-sat and certification requested again. After 20 September 2007 it will no longer be possible to decline a grade and all unit scores will be re-usable.

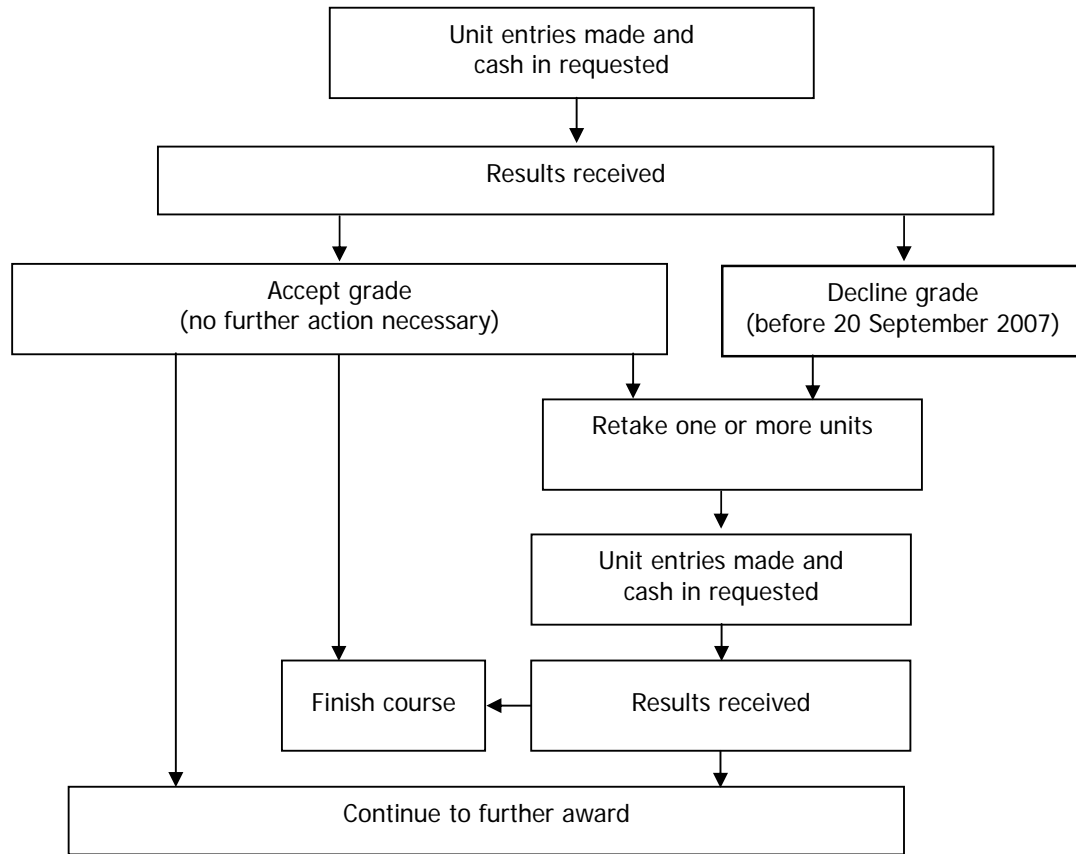
### (ii) Options and actions for the student wishing to take the qualification further

This information applies to a student who has completed the units for a GCE AS or Advanced qualification and who wishes to take that qualification further.

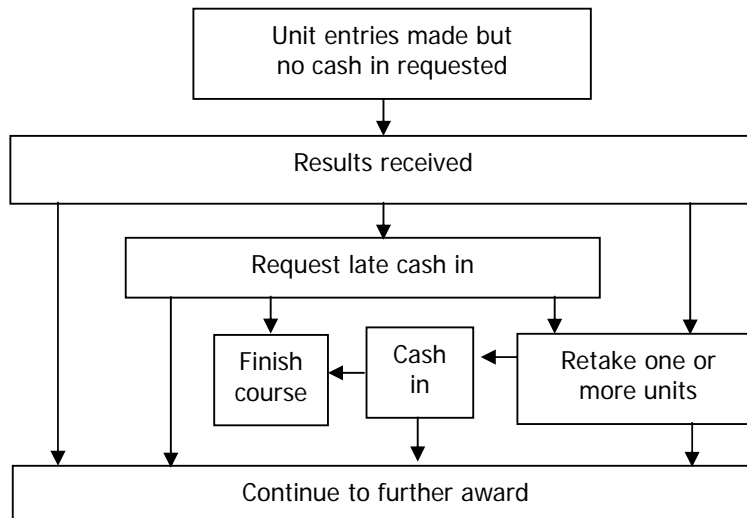
- The student can proceed to a further qualification whether or not the first award is cashed in. Individual units may be re-sat at a future date and count towards the further qualification.
- If the student is satisfied with the aggregated grade and wishes to have it certificated, and cashing in was applied for at the time the entry was made, no further action is necessary. If cashing in was not applied for at the time of entry, it can be applied for retrospectively after the issue of results and by the published date for late awards.
- If the student does not wish to have the grade certificated and cashing in was applied for at the time the entry was made, the award must be declined by 20 September 2007. However, it is not necessary to decline a grade, since unit scores will be available for re-use in a subsequent award claim. For grades obtained in the January 2008 series and subsequently, it will not be possible to decline.
- If the student applied to cash in the result and does not decline the award, the grade for that qualification can be improved in January or June 2008 by entering for and taking the assessment for at least one contributing unit. In and after January 2008, the student's best result for each unit will count towards a new award, whether or not the original award was declined, and the student will not need to take every unit again.

Figures 2a and 2b on page 5 summarise, respectively, the courses of action available to a student who applied to cash in when entries were made and to a student who did not apply to cash in at that stage. Each box represents a stage of the process, and each arrow represents a choice that can be made at that stage.

**Figure 2a Options for those who have requested to cash in – follow any route through**



**Figure 2b Options for those who have not requested to cash in – follow any route through**



## 5. To cash in or not to cash in?

The decision on whether or not to cash in should be taken in the light of an individual student's requirements. There are implications for either course of action, and these are outlined below.

### (i) If the student requests to cash in the qualification

- He/she will receive a grade and certificate.
- Awarding bodies will report the qualification grade and the corresponding contributing unit grades to UCAS, and the qualification grade must be declared on UCAS forms.
- Individual units can still be re-sat and count towards the next level of award.
- The student may attempt to improve the grade by re-taking one or more units (and applying to cash in again).

### (ii) If the student does not cash in the qualification

- No grade or certificate is issued.
- He/she can choose what to tell UCAS – information about results can be included in the student's personal statement or in the referee's report if desired.
- The individual unit results can be improved.
- The unit results remain in the 'bank'. This means he/she can have a change of mind and cash in at a later date to claim the grade to which he/she is entitled. Claims must be made within the stipulated period following an examination series. There is no requirement to sit any further units.

After 20 September 2007, it will not be necessary or possible to decline a grade if the cash in has been requested. It will also no longer be necessary or possible to request a late decline from an earlier series.

## 6. Enquiries about results

If there is concern about the result of a unit, the centre can make an enquiry to the awarding body. Dates by which applications have to be made are given in **Appendix 1**, and full details of the services available are given in the JCQ publication *GCSE, GCE, GNVQ and AEA Post Results Services*.

It should be noted that an enquiry can only be made about a unit by the date specified following the examination series in which that unit was taken. It is not possible to make an enquiry about a unit taken in a previous series, and any enquiry made in relation to an overall qualification grade is limited to a check that the aggregation of the unit marks has been correctly carried out.

The outcome of an enquiry into an externally assessed unit or an internally assessed unit can lead to the uniform mark being confirmed, raised or lowered. If cash-in has been requested, the qualification grade may be confirmed, raised or lowered. However, the qualification grade (for awards entered in the same series) is protected in the case of internally-assessed units.

## 7. Special arrangements for candidates who transfer centres

If a student transfers to another school or college part way through a course, and his/her new centre teaches to a different specification, it may be possible to transfer credit already gained for a whole AS qualification. The decision will depend on the compatibility of the two specifications involved.

For further information please refer to the Transfer of Credit notice on the JCQ website (September 2007) ([www.jcq.org.uk/](http://www.jcq.org.uk/)).

## 8. Awarding body documentation

Please refer to the documentation supplied by each awarding body for further details about specific procedures.

## Appendix 1

### Key dates in 2007/8

	<b>For entry and certification in JANUARY 2008</b>	<b>For entry and certification in JUNE 2008</b>
Final date for GCE entries	21 October 2007	21 March 2008
Final date for entries for last re-sit of GNVQ units and certification	21 October 2007	N/A
Final date to apply for transfer of credit arrangements (GCE examinations)	31 October 2007	31 October 2007
Final date to apply for transfer of credit arrangements (GNVQ examinations)	31 October 2007	N/A
Date of first examination on common timetable	9 January 2008	12 May 2008
Date of final examination on common timetable	1 February 2008	25 June 2008
Submission of GCE, including Applied GCE, coursework marks	10 January 2008	15 May 2008
Submission of GNVQ portfolio marks	† see below	N/A
On-line and EDI publication of GCE results	6 March 2008	13 August 2008
On-line and EDI publication of GNVQ results	6 March 2008	N/A
Hard copy paper publication of GCE results	13 March 2008	14 August 2008
Hard copy paper publication of GNVQ results	13 March 2008	N/A
Final date to apply for late cash in (GCE examinations)	14 April 2008	20 September 2008
Final date to apply for late cash in (GNVQ examinations)	14 April 2008	N/A
Final date to apply for photocopies of examination scripts (GCE examinations)	21 March 2008	22 August 2008
Final date for Priority Service 2 enquiries (GCE examinations)	N/A	22 August 2008
Final date for other enquiries	14 April 2008	20 September 2008
Final date to apply for return of original examination scripts	28 April 2008	4 October 2008
Issue of certificates	by 31 May 2008	by 31 October 2008

† Edexcel 30 November 2007  
OCR 10 January 2008

### Uniform mark scales

#### GCE UNIT RESULTS

*The minimum uniform marks required for each grade equivalent:*

Unit grade equivalent	A	B	C	D	E
Unit weighted at 30% of an AS, or 15% of an A level (maximum uniform mark = 90)	72	63	54	45	36
Unit weighted at 33.3% of an AS, or 16.7% of an A level (maximum uniform mark = 100)	80	70	60	50	40
Unit weighted at 35% of an AS, or 17.5% of an A level (maximum uniform mark = 105)	84	74	63	53	42
Unit weighted at 36.7% of an AS, or 18.3% of an A level (maximum uniform mark = 110)	88	77	66	55	44
Unit weighted at 40% of an AS, or 20% of an A level (maximum uniform mark = 120)	96	84	72	60	48
Unit weighted at 100% of an AS, or 50% of an A level (maximum uniform mark = 300)	240	210	180	150	120

#### GCE QUALIFICATION GRADES

*The maximum uniform mark for the qualification and the minimum uniform mark required for each grade:*

Qualification grade	A	B	C	D	E
GCE Advanced Subsidiary (AS) (maximum uniform mark = 300)	240	210	180	150	120
GCE Advanced (A level) (maximum uniform mark = 600)	480	420	360	300	240

#### APPLIED GCE UNIT RESULTS

*The minimum uniform marks required for each grade equivalent:*

Unit grade equivalent	A	B	C	D	E
Units equally weighted (maximum uniform mark = 100)	80	70	60	50	40

#### APPLIED GCE QUALIFICATION GRADES

*The minimum uniform mark for the qualification and the minimum uniform mark required for each grade:*

Qualification grade	A	B	C	D	E				
Applied GCE Advanced Subsidiary (AS) Single Award (maximum uniform mark = 300)	240	210	180	150	120				
Applied GCE Advanced (A level) Single Award (maximum uniform mark = 600)	480	420	360	300	240				
Qualification grade	AA	AB	BB	BC	CC	CD	DD	DE	EE
Applied GCE Advanced Subsidiary (AS) Double Award (maximum uniform mark = 600)	480	450	420	390	360	330	300	270	240
Applied GCE Advanced (A level) Double Award (maximum uniform mark = 1200)	960	900	840	780	720	660	600	540	480

**GNVQ UNIT RESULTS**

*The minimum uniform marks required for each grade equivalent:*

	<b>Unit grade equivalent</b>	<b>Distinction</b>	<b>Merit</b>	<b>Pass</b>
<b>Units equally weighted (maximum uniform mark = 100)</b>		80	60	40

**GNVQ QUALIFICATION GRADES**

*The maximum uniform mark for the qualification and the minimum uniform mark required for each grade:*

	<b>Qualification grade</b>	<b>Distinction</b>	<b>Merit</b>	<b>Pass</b>
<b>Six-unit GNVQ (maximum uniform mark = 600)</b>		480	360	240

### Examples

#### Rule

A candidate who has previously claimed a qualification award will be able to claim a subsequent award for the same subject, provided that an entry is made for at least one unit which contributes to the award.

#### Example 1

An AS qualification consists of Units 1-3. The corresponding A level qualification consists of Units 1-6.

- (a) Candidate P certificated AS and A level in June 2007. He/she did not decline either award. He/she re-takes Unit 4 in June 2008. A new AS award cannot be claimed, but a new A level award can be claimed as Unit 4 contributes to the A level only.
- (b) Candidate Q certificated AS and A level in June 2007 and declined both awards. He/she re-takes Unit 4 in June 2008. A new AS award can be claimed as well as a new A level (although the AS grade will necessarily be the same as that awarded in June 2007).
- (c) Candidate R certificated AS and A level in June 2007 and did not decline either award. He/she re-takes Unit 2 in June 2008. A new AS award can be claimed as well as a new A level (because Unit 2 contributes to both).

#### Example 2

An AS qualification consists of Units 1, 2a or 2b and 3. The corresponding A level consists additionally of Units 4, 5a or 5b and 6.

A candidate may certificate AS with either of the following combinations of units:

- 1, 2a, 3
- or 1, 2b, 3

A candidate may certificate A level with any one of the following combinations of units:

- 1, 2a, 3, 4, 5a, 6
- 1, 2a, 3, 4, 5b, 6
- 1, 2b, 3, 4, 5a, 6
- 1, 2b, 3, 4, 5b, 6

(Where a candidate has results for both options of a unit, i.e. one result for Unit 2a and one result for unit 2b, the better result counts towards certification.)

Candidate P certificated AS and A level in June 2007 having taken Units 1, 2a, 3, 4, 5a and 6 and did not decline either award. He/she then takes Unit 5b in June 2008. Although the candidate has not re-taken a unit, he/she has taken the other option in Unit 5 and is therefore eligible to claim a new A level award. The better result, from the (previous) attempt at Unit 5a and the (new) attempt at Unit 5b, will count towards certification. A new AS award cannot be claimed since no AS units have been retaken.

### Example 3

A Biology / Human Biology specification contains the following units:

1, 2B, 2H, 3, 4, 5B, 5H, 6

Biology and Human Biology qualifications are available with the following combinations of units:

AS Biology	1, 2B, 3
A level Biology	1, 2B, 3, 4, 5B, 6
AS Human Biology	1, 2H, 3
A level Human Biology	1, 2H, 3, 4, 5H, 6

- (a) Candidate P certificated AS Biology in June 2007 and did not decline the award. He/she re-takes Unit 2B in June 2008. A new AS Biology award can be claimed.
- (b) Candidate Q certificated AS Biology in June 2007 and did not decline the award. He/she then takes Unit 2H in June 2008. An AS Human Biology award cannot be claimed because unit results (for Units 1 and 3) which have counted towards an AS Biology award cannot be re-used to count towards an AS Human Biology award. In order to certificate AS Human Biology, the candidate would need to re-take Units 1 and 3 as well as taking Unit 2H. Please note that results for Units 1 and 3 can count towards Human Biology only if they are obtained *after* Biology was certificated (see Examples (c) and (d) below).
- (c) Candidate R took Unit 1 in January 2007 and again in June 2007, Unit 2B in June 2007 and Unit 3 in June 2007. He/she certificated AS Biology in June 2007 and did not decline the award. The candidate then takes Unit 2H, and re-takes Unit 3, in June 2008. An AS Human Biology award cannot be claimed because both attempts at Unit 1 were made before certification of AS Biology.
- (d) Candidate S took Unit 2H in January 2007. He/she took Units 1, 2B and 3 in June 2007, certificated AS Biology and did not decline. He/she re-takes Units 1 and 3 in June 2008. An AS Human Biology award can be claimed because both Unit 1 and Unit 3 have been re-taken after certification of AS Biology (although only the new results for these units will be eligible to count). It does not matter that Unit 2H was taken before certification of AS Biology, as this unit is not used in the Biology award.
- (e) Candidate T certificated AS Biology in June 2007 and declined the award. He/she then takes Unit 2H in June 2008. An award in either AS Biology or AS Human Biology (but not both) can be claimed.
- (f) Candidate U certificated AS Biology in June 2007 and did not decline the award. He/she then takes Units 2H, 4, 5H and 6 in June 2008. No new AS award can be claimed, because the results for Units 1 and 3, which were taken in or before June 2007, have been used to count towards AS Biology and cannot subsequently be used to count towards a different title at the same level. In order to be eligible for an award in AS Human Biology, the candidate would need to re-take Units 1 and 3. However, the candidate *is* eligible for an award in A level Human Biology.

#### Example 4

All awarding bodies' specifications in Mathematics and Further Mathematics have similar structures, although there are some differences in detail. In this example, the following conventions are used.

Units C1, C2, FP1, S1, M1 and D1 are AS units.

Units C3, C4, FP2, FP3, S2, S3, M2, M3 and D2 are A2 units.

(Most awarding bodies have other units besides these).

A candidate may certificate AS Mathematics with any one of the following combinations of units:

C1, C2, S1

C1, C2, M1

C1, C2, D1

A candidate may certificate A level Mathematics with any of the following combinations of units:

C1, C2, C3, C4, S1, S2

C1, C2, C3, C4, M1, M2

C1, C2, C3, C4, D1, D2

C1, C2, C3, C4, S1, M1

C1, C2, C3, C4, S1, D1

C1, C2, C3, C4, M1, D1

A candidate may certificate AS Further Mathematics with any combination of three units which does not include C1-C4 and does include at least one of FP1, FP2, FP3.

A candidate may certificate A level Further Mathematics with any combination of six units which does not include C1-C4, does include at least two of FP1, FP2 and FP3, and includes at least three A2 units.

Certification of A level Mathematics and AS Further Mathematics requires nine different units (six units for A level Mathematics and three different units for AS Further Mathematics), even if certification of AS Further Mathematics is in a later series and a unit is re-taken.

Similarly certification of A level Mathematics and A level Further Mathematics requires twelve different units.

- (a) Candidate P took Units C1-C4, M1 and M2 and certificated A level Mathematics in June 2007, obtaining Grade B. He/she did not decline the award. The candidate takes Unit S1 in January 2008 and certificates A level Mathematics again, this time obtaining Grade A (using Units C1-C4, S1 and M1). The candidate then takes Units FP1 and S2 in June 2008, but an AS Further Mathematics award cannot be claimed for the following reason. Although the candidate has nine different units, seven of them have been locked into the title Mathematics and none of these can subsequently be used to count towards Further Mathematics. He/she should have followed the advice given by the awarding bodies and not certificated A level Mathematics until the end of the course (i.e. in June 2008, or later if he/she intends to continue to A level Further Mathematics).
- (b) Candidate Q took Units C1-C4, S1 and M1 obtaining uniform marks 95, 95, 90, 90, 95 and 95 respectively and certificated A level Mathematics in June 2007 (Total uniform mark = 560, Grade A). He/she did not decline the award. The candidate then takes Units FP1, FP2, FP3, S2, D1 and D2 obtaining uniform marks 75, 70, 70, 75, 70 and 65 respectively and certificates A level Further Mathematics in June 2008 (Grade B, total uniform mark = 425). If the candidate had followed awarding body advice and had delayed certification of A level Mathematics until the end of the course, he/she would have obtained Grade A in both A levels (Mathematics would use Units C1-C4, D1, D2 with total uniform mark 505, while Further Mathematics would use Units FP1, FP2, FP3, S1, S2, M1, with total uniform mark 480).