

- Subject departments
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**Qualifications  
and Curriculum  
Development  
Agency**



**2010  
GCSE  
controlled  
assessment**

## **Managing GCSE controlled assessment**

### **A centre-wide approach**

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# Introduction

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GCSEs have been revised in three phases starting from September 2009. These GCSEs offer schools and colleges significant new opportunities for enhanced teaching and learning.

They also raise issues in three areas that need careful planning and coordination in every school and college:

- controlled assessment
- terminal assessment
- unitisation.

Although these areas are interdependent, this guidance concentrates on controlled assessment which replaces coursework in the revised GCSEs.

Many centres are in the early stages of planning for the revised GCSEs. Given the number of subjects delivered and assessed in any school or college, controlled assessment requires a centre-wide approach and close collaboration between different members of staff.

This guidance provides advice on managing, planning and coordinating controlled assessment. It contains information and advice about:

- controlled assessment in different subjects
- managing controlled assessment successfully in schools and colleges
- the responsibilities of different members of staff for controlled assessment
- creating a centre-wide policy for managing controlled assessment
- creating a centre-wide plan to help plan and coordinate controlled assessment.

Teachers and subject leaders will need to plan for controlled assessment as part of the teaching and learning programme, but it is vital that the overall strategy for controlled assessment is managed and fully supported by the senior leadership team. Planning for controlled assessment will involve staff from across the centre: not just teachers and exams office staff, but also administrative and site staff who manage the facilities which may be needed for controlled assessment.



By managing and coordinating controlled assessment, centres can ensure that:

- teachers and exams officers understand what is involved for each assessment task and have obtained the necessary information from awarding organisations well in advance
- students have been suitably prepared for controlled assessment tasks through schemes of work that take account of the nature and timing of the assessment from the outset of the course
- the necessary accommodation, resources, equipment and facilities will be available, for example sufficient laptops and suitable arrangements for candidates with particular requirements
- timings are coordinated so that, for example, assessments do not clash with each other or with events and activities such as school trips or concert rehearsals.

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## Controlled assessment in the Diploma and in project qualifications

Diploma principal learning and project qualifications also include controlled assessment (which is different from controlled assessment in GCSEs). Schools and colleges need to be familiar with the requirements for controlled assessment for these qualifications for different awarding organisation specifications. Guidance from QCDA is available in *Controlled assessment in Diploma principal learning: A consortium guide* (QCA/09/4150).

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# GCSEs from September 2009

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GCSEs, incorporating controlled assessment, are being introduced from September 2009. These GCSEs are part of the government's reform of 14–19 learning. Their content has been updated and they employ more varied types of questions.

These GCSEs support the revised secondary curriculum and incorporate key elements of the 14–19 reforms. They are consistent with the new Diplomas in terms of demand and address functional skills and personal, learning and thinking skills.

## Timetable for introduction

Revised GCSEs are being introduced over a number of years.

➤ **In September 2009** revised specifications for most subjects became available for teaching. Single and double award GCSEs will be awarded from summer 2011. Short course GCSEs will be awarded from summer 2010.

➤ **In September 2010** revised specifications in English, English language, English literature, mathematics and ICT will be available for teaching. These GCSEs will be awarded from summer 2012, with short courses in these subjects awarded from summer 2011.

➤ **In September 2011** revised specifications in science subjects will be available for teaching, replacing the current science specifications introduced in 2006. Specifications will be available from autumn 2010 and the majority of these GCSEs will be awarded from summer 2013. Single science GCSEs will be awarded from summer 2012 for those who choose to do the course in one year.

Students starting one-year GCSE courses in September 2009 should take the existing GCSE specification. Students starting one-year GCSE courses in English, mathematics or ICT in September 2010 should also take the existing GCSE specifications, which will be examined in summer 2011.



For a full list of available GCSEs see the National Database of Accredited Qualifications [www.accreditedqualifications.org.uk](http://www.accreditedqualifications.org.uk). Further details on specifications are available from the awarding organisation websites listed at the end of this document.

## Unitisation

Awarding bodies have increased the number of unitised GCSEs available. Many of the new GCSEs are divided into units which are separately assessed. Typically, there are four units in a single award GCSE, eight in a double award GCSE and two in a short course GCSE. The first date for unit examinations for GCSEs introduced in September 2009 is January 2010.

## Resits and terminal assessment

Resitting controlled assessments is technically possible, but presents significant manageability issues for centres.

For the revised GCSEs, units can be retaken once, and normally the better result counts towards the overall grade. At least 40 per cent of the assessment (which could include controlled assessment and external examinations) must be taken at the end of the course. This is the *terminal assessment rule*. The end of the course is the examination series in which the qualification is certificated (when the units are *cash in* for the qualification to be awarded).

Most students will cash in their units at the end of the second year of teaching. However, some candidates might choose not to cash in at this point and resit in November or January. If they were to do so, the resit results would constitute terminal assessment and would count towards the overall grade, regardless of whether or not they were the better results. Schools and colleges will need to ensure that these students meet the terminal assessment rule and resit at least 40 per cent of the assessment.

## Grading

Single award GCSEs and short course GCSEs will be graded A\*–G. Double award GCSEs will have double grades, for example A\*A\*, or A\*A, or BC.

## More information

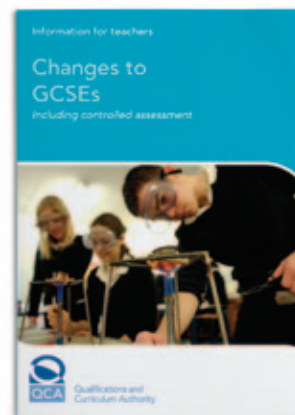


More information on changes to GCSE is available from the QCDA website [www.qcda.gov.uk](http://www.qcda.gov.uk).

QCDA has produced guidance on:

- *Changes to GCSEs, including controlled assessment: Information for teachers* (QCA/09/4174)
- *Changes to GCSEs and the introduction of controlled assessment for GCSEs (for exams office staff)* (QCDA/09/4363).

Further information and guidance are listed at the end of this document.



# GCSE controlled assessment explained

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## The purpose of controlled assessment

Controlled assessment is internal assessment and replaces coursework in GCSEs. It is used for those aspects of a subject which cannot be readily assessed by an external examination, for example:

- undertaking research and gathering, selecting and organising materials and information
- planning investigations
- carrying out investigations and/or tasks
- performance and production skills
- working with others and devising creative approaches
- extracting and interpreting information from a range of different sources
- selecting and applying tactics, strategies and compositional ideas
- taking informed and responsible action
- analysis and evaluation of processes and products
- presenting ideas and arguments supported by evidence.

## Subjects with controlled assessment

Different GCSE subjects require different amounts of controlled assessment.

All GCSE subjects are in one of three categories.

- Subjects with 60 per cent controlled assessment
- Subjects with 25 per cent controlled assessment
- Subjects with no controlled assessment.

Subjects with no controlled assessment are assessed entirely by external examination.

## Stages and levels of control

There are three stages in controlled assessment:

- task-setting
- task-taking
- task-marking.

The 'level of control' for each stage of assessment is specified – as high, medium or low – to ensure reliability and authenticity and to make assessments more manageable for teachers and students. The levels of control determine who sets the assessment, the conditions for carrying out the assessment and who marks the assessment. Centres should



60% controlled assessment/  
40% external examination25% controlled assessment/  
75% external examination0% controlled assessment/  
100% external examination

Additional applied science  
Applied business  
Art and design  
Citizenship studies  
Construction and the built environment  
Dance  
Design and technology  
Drama  
Engineering  
English  
English language  
Expressive arts  
Health and social care  
Home economics  
Information and communication technology  
Leisure and tourism  
Manufacturing  
Media studies  
Modern foreign languages  
Music  
Physical education

Additional science  
Biology  
Business studies  
Chemistry  
Classical civilisation  
English literature  
Geography  
History  
Humanities  
Physics  
Science  
Statistics

Classical Greek  
Economics  
Latin  
Law  
Mathematics  
Psychology  
Religious studies  
Sociology

consult awarding organisation specifications to find out the details of each controlled assessment and how the controls are applied.

## Task-setting

Depending on the subject, tasks may be set by the centre or the awarding organisation. In some subjects, the awarding organisation sets the task, but the centre may be able to select from a number of comparable examples or adapt a task to its own circumstances. For other subjects, centres can set the task with guidance from the awarding organisation.

## Task-taking

There may be different stages to the task with separate levels of control in each. For example, a research stage might allow students to work unsupervised outside the classroom, an analysis stage may require informal supervision, and a final stage of writing up findings and conclusions is likely to take place in a supervised classroom environment.

## Task-marking

Students' controlled assessment work is usually assessed internally by teachers, according to mark schemes or criteria provided by the awarding organisation, before internal standardisation by the centre and external moderation of the marking by the awarding organisation. In a small number of cases, the awarding organisation will mark the controlled assessment.

# Managing controlled assessment

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Every school and college must ensure that controlled assessment is managed effectively and operates smoothly to benefit students and comply with the regulations. Schools and colleges should introduce a centre-wide approach to controlled assessment from the start of teaching the revised GCSEs.

Managing controlled assessment involves:

- choosing an awarding organisation specification for each subject
- familiarisation with the requirements for controlled assessment for different specifications
- the scheduling of controlled assessment, taking into account:
  - how the controlled assessment will best fit into the teacher's scheme of work to produce a coherent sequence of teaching and learning
  - providing opportunities for resitting units
  - the requirement for 40 per cent terminal assessment
  - the centre-wide timetable (what other assessments students may be taking at the same time and what other events or activities such as educational trips, sports days, concert rehearsals, may be taking place at the same time)
- the scope for a second, alternative, date for the controlled assessment in case of any major problems on the first occasion, for example staff or candidate absence
- establishing requirements for accommodation (classrooms, computer suites, workshops, studios, hall), facilities (laptops, equipment, science apparatus) and secure storage for candidates' work
- obtaining, well in advance, any accommodation, facilities or storage that is not currently available
- obtaining information or set tasks needed for controlled assessments from awarding organisations
- sending information to awarding organisations about candidate entries and 'cash-in' codes for each unit
- ensuring teachers and students prepare appropriately for controlled assessment (that a suitable scheme of work is followed and that students complete the requirements)
- ensuring controlled assessment is carried out by the students and correctly supervised by the teacher, with students and supervising teachers signing authentication forms on completion of the assessment
- storing candidates' work securely
- arranging for internally assessed components to be marked using mark schemes provided by awarding organisations
- arranging for internal standardisation of marking by all teachers involved in assessing an internally assessed component
- submitting marks to awarding organisations.



Many of these activities involve multiple members of staff across the school or college. For example:

- the timing of controlled assessment is affected by school or college policy on re-sitting units
- knowing whether specific accommodation and facilities will be available on certain days requires booking information to be available
- exams office staff can only send 'cash in' codes to awarding organisations if teachers understand what they are and have submitted them to the exams officer.

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## Managing controlled assessment requires schools and colleges to:

- allocate roles and responsibilities to different members of staff
- develop and implement a controlled assessment policy
- create a centre-wide plan to coordinate controlled assessment activities
- monitor the progress of controlled assessment.

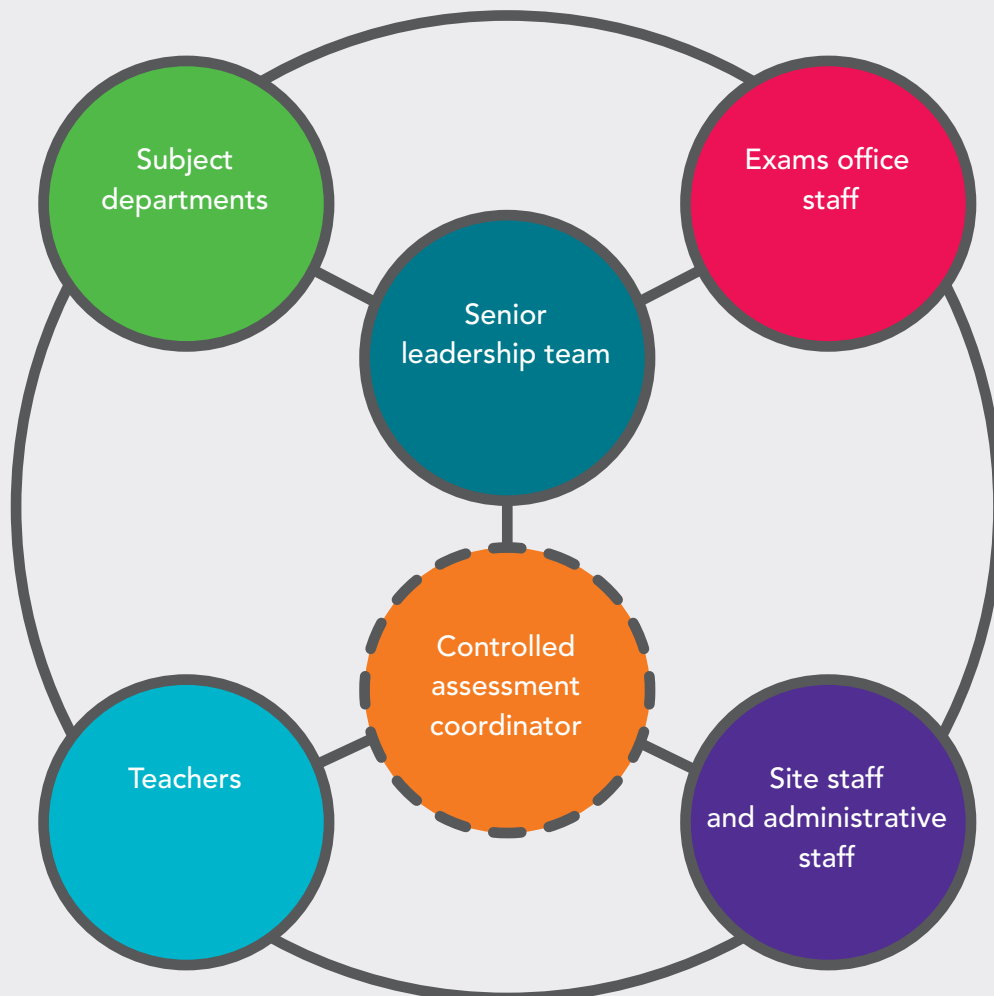
The following sections look at each of these areas in more detail.

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# Sharing the responsibilities

Staff from different parts of the school or college all have different roles to play in managing controlled assessment.

## Who does what?



## Senior leadership team

The senior leadership team has overall responsibility for ensuring controlled assessment operates successfully, which involves:

- establishing centre policy on controlled assessment
- assigning responsibilities to specific members of staff
- ensuring that all staff understand their roles and responsibilities – for example using professional development sessions
- dealing with issues arising – for example resolving timetable clashes, obtaining additional facilities
- monitoring the operation of controlled assessment – for example receiving reports from subject departments and/or the exams office.

## Controlled assessment coordinator

The senior leadership team may wish to appoint a member of staff as a coordinator for controlled assessment. The coordinator could:

- consult with subject departments
- draw up policy and plans for the senior leadership team to consider
- act as a central point of administration, dealing on behalf of the senior leadership team with the detail of managing controlled assessment
- make periodic reports to the senior leadership team to enable them to monitor arrangements for controlled assessment.

## Subject departments

Every subject department will need to:

- select awarding organisations and GCSE specifications
- decide on timings of assessment to meet requirements of terminal assessment
- arrange internal standardisation of marking by all teachers involved in assessing an internally assessed component
- ensure that all teachers understand their roles and responsibilities in controlled assessment and are familiar with the requirements of the GCSE specification – for example through departmental meetings and professional development
- ensure schemes of work incorporate controlled assessment appropriately
- consult with the special educational needs coordinator (SENCO) on additional arrangements, which might be needed for particular candidates
- make contingency arrangements for the event of absences by candidates or teacher – for example a second, alternative date for the controlled assessment
- arrange for secure storage of candidates' work.

## Teachers

Individual teachers will need to:

- contribute to decisions about the selection of the awarding organisation and specification
- decide how the controlled assessment should be incorporated into the scheme of work to provide a coherent sequence of learning and ensure students are well-prepared for the controlled assessment – for example in developing linguistic or practical skills or carrying out fieldwork or research

- provide information as necessary to the subject department (on planning of teaching) and to the exams office (individual unit codes, planned dates of assessment)
- book facilities, resources and any specialist requirements needed for the controlled assessment
- obtain confidential materials and tasks set by the awarding organisation
- supervise assessments, applying the specified level of control, and ensuring authentication forms are signed by candidates and the supervising teacher
- store candidates' work securely.

## Exams office staff

Exams office staff will:

- liaise as necessary with the senior leadership team, subject departments and individual teachers
- store candidates' work securely
- enter students for individual units, including controlled assessment units and externally examined units
- be responsible, as necessary, for storage and transmission of information, data and confidential materials between awarding organisations and teachers.



## Site staff and administrative staff

Depending on the resources involved site and administrative staff might have a significant role in:

- ensuring all necessary accommodation (rooms, workshops, studios, ICT suites) and facilities (equipment, laptops, apparatus, desks and chairs) are available and in place for controlled assessment tasks
- arranging any additional equipment or materials which will be needed for the controlled assessment task well in advance
- resolving any timetabling clashes for accommodation or facilities
- ensuring, in liaison as necessary with teachers and the exams office, that suitable secure storage exists for candidates' work.

# Developing a controlled assessment policy

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As with any major area of a school's or college's operation, it is important to establish what processes and procedures will operate and what principles underlie these operations.

Sometimes these principles and procedures develop over time and may not always be written down in a formal document. However, with an important new development, such as revised GCSEs involving unitised and controlled assessment, it is useful for the school or college to set down in a document the key details of how the new arrangements will operate – in short, to create a policy.

Creating a policy:

- compels the senior leadership team to think through the issues and make decisions about how controlled assessment will operate
- allows all those affected by the new developments to know what procedures to follow and the reasons for them
- helps staff, students and parents understand the issues involved in unitised and controlled assessment.

Every centre must decide the contents of their policy statement because each centre will have its own approach to unitisation and controlled assessment, reflecting its own particular needs and circumstances.



The QCDA website contains some editable policy templates for exams office staff.

## Information that could be included in a controlled assessment policy

### ➤ Introduction

Explains controlled assessment and the need for a policy statement.

### ➤ Principles

Explains the views, values and principles that underlie the centre's approach to the revised GCSEs. Issues such as resits, unitised or linear assessment, timing of controlled assessments across different subjects, selection of awarding organisations and specifications, and the involvement of students in making decisions (where choices are offered) by an awarding organisation.

### ➤ Procedures to be followed

Procedures for subject departments, teachers, the exams office, site staff and administrative staff. Needs to be sufficiently detailed for the policy to be a useful, definitive reference document, but not so detailed as to deter anyone from reading it.

The procedures need to ensure:

- controlled assessments are suitably incorporated into schemes of work
- advance planning, from the beginning of GCSE teaching, to avoid missing deadlines and compromising students' achievement in the GCSE
- the relevant staff have all the necessary information from the awarding organisation concerning the assessment task and the controls which need to be applied to it
- additional arrangements for candidates with special educational needs are clearly set out
- contingency arrangements in the event that a planned assessment cannot take place for some or all of the candidates are in place
- internal standardisation of marking for all teachers involved in assessing an internally assessed component
- suitable secure storage for candidates' work
- the necessary data records are kept and submitted to the awarding organisation by the specified dates.

### ➤ Responsibilities

Which job roles or named staff are responsible for specific aspects of managing controlled assessment.

### ➤ Internal appeals procedure

Procedures to be followed in the event of a query or complaint about controlled assessment.

### ➤ Sources of further information

So people know where to find more detailed information that is not included in the policy.

### ➤ Monitoring arrangements

How the senior leadership team will monitor how well the arrangements are functioning. This might, for example, specify an annual report to the senior leadership team from the exams officer or departmental heads or a controlled assessment coordinator.

### ➤ Dates and reviews

The date on which the policy was drawn up (useful to show if it is up to date), who created the policy (important for showing its status and authority), the date by which the policy ought to be reviewed and, if necessary, revised.



# Creating a centre-wide plan



## Implementing a centre-wide approach to controlled assessment requires cross-centre planning and coordination.

The centre-wide plan might be drawn up by the senior leadership team or the responsibility might be delegated to a controlled assessment coordinator who reports to the senior leadership team.

An effective plan should take account of the issues that need to be addressed, the different activities that will need to be completed and the interrelationships between them. Sufficient time must be allocated to each activity and they should be sequenced carefully if an activity is dependent on the outcome of another. It is important to monitor the progress of activities to make sure that the plan remains on schedule and to identify any potential problems as early as possible.

When creating a plan, centres should check awarding organisation information as deadlines for submitting estimated and forecast grades and submitting marks for internal assessment components vary between specifications and within awarding organisations.

An example of a centre-wide plan is included on the next page (for illustration only).

## An example of a centre-wide plan

	Senior leadership team	Controlled assessment coordinator	Subject departments	Teachers	Exam office staff	Site staff and administrative staff
September	Decide policy					
October	Consult with subject departments					
November	Appoint coordinator		Nominate dates for assessments			
December		Collect dates	Departmental meetings on controlled assessments	Identify facilities/equipment required		
January		Discuss dates and room requirements with departments and resolve clashes			Collect and submit entry data	Help teachers obtain equipment/facilities and book rooms
February				Book rooms		
March				Conduct controlled assessments		Provide support for controlled assessments
April			Internal assessment and standardisation		Collect and submit marks	
May						
June		Compile report for senior leadership team				
July	Review policy					
August						

# Monitoring progress

Schools and colleges could make use of a variety of tools to help coordinate and monitor controlled assessments effectively, and to highlight any issues and potential clashes as early as possible.

Each school or college should decide on their own monitoring methods. The examples below show how some aspects of controlled assessment could be monitored. Centres will have their own monitoring procedures.

## A centre-wide calendar of controlled assessments

Subject	Date	Time	Location	Supervising teacher

## A centre-wide list of requirements for accommodation, facilities and storage

Department	Resources required	Date	Time	Booked

## A centre-wide list of operations (for example the activities that must be completed)

Operation	Person/ Department	Date	Completed?
<i>for example CPD meeting on controlled assessment</i>	MFL	4 Dec	

# Further information and guidance

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## QCDA

Information on changes to GCSEs and guidance and support for schools, colleges and exams office staff.



The QCDA website ([www.qcda.gov.uk](http://www.qcda.gov.uk)) includes links to a range of guidance, including:

- *Changes to GCSEs, including controlled assessment: Information for teachers* (QCA/09/4174)
- *Changes to GCSEs and the introduction of controlled assessment for GCSEs (for exams office staff)* (QCDA/09/4363)
- examples of controlled assessments
- editable templates for exams office staff – risk management
- editable templates for exams office staff – staff responsibilities
- *Controlled assessment in Diploma principal learning: A consortium guide* (QCA/09/4150).

## Awarding organisations



Information on GCSE specifications and controlled assessments:

AQA [www.aqa.org.uk](http://www.aqa.org.uk)

Edexcel [www.edexcel.com](http://www.edexcel.com)

OCR [www.ocr.org.uk](http://www.ocr.org.uk)

CCEA [www.rewardinglearning.org.uk](http://www.rewardinglearning.org.uk)

WJEC [www.wjec.co.uk](http://www.wjec.co.uk)

## Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ)



Information on common administrative arrangements for schools and colleges: [www.jcq.org.uk](http://www.jcq.org.uk)

## National Database of Accredited Qualifications



Information on all accredited GCSE specifications: [www.accreditedqualifications.org.uk](http://www.accreditedqualifications.org.uk)

## Ofqual



Information on GCSE subject criteria and controlled assessment regulations: [www.ofqual.gov.uk](http://www.ofqual.gov.uk)

## Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF)



Information on 14–19 reforms: [www.dcsf.gov.uk/14-19](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/14-19)

# Notes

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## About this publication

### Who is it for?

This guidance is for everyone involved in managing GCSE controlled assessment in schools and colleges, including members of the senior leadership team, subject specialists and exams office staff.

### What is it about?

Controlled assessment is replacing coursework in GCSE. It is used for those aspects of a subject which cannot be readily assessed by an external examination.

### What is it for?

This guidance provides advice to schools and colleges on planning and implementing a centre-wide approach to GCSE controlled assessment. It contains advice on managing controlled assessment successfully in schools and colleges, and the responsibilities of different members of staff.

### Related publications

*Changes to GCSEs, including controlled assessment: Information for teachers* QCA/09/4174

*Changes to GCSEs and the introduction of controlled assessment for GCSEs (for exams office staff)* QCDA/09/4363

*Controlled assessment in Diploma principal learning: A consortium guide* QCA/09/4150

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