

The University of Manchester School Governor Initiative

Qualification Reform and the impact and consideration for HE admissions

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Student Recruitment & Widening Participation

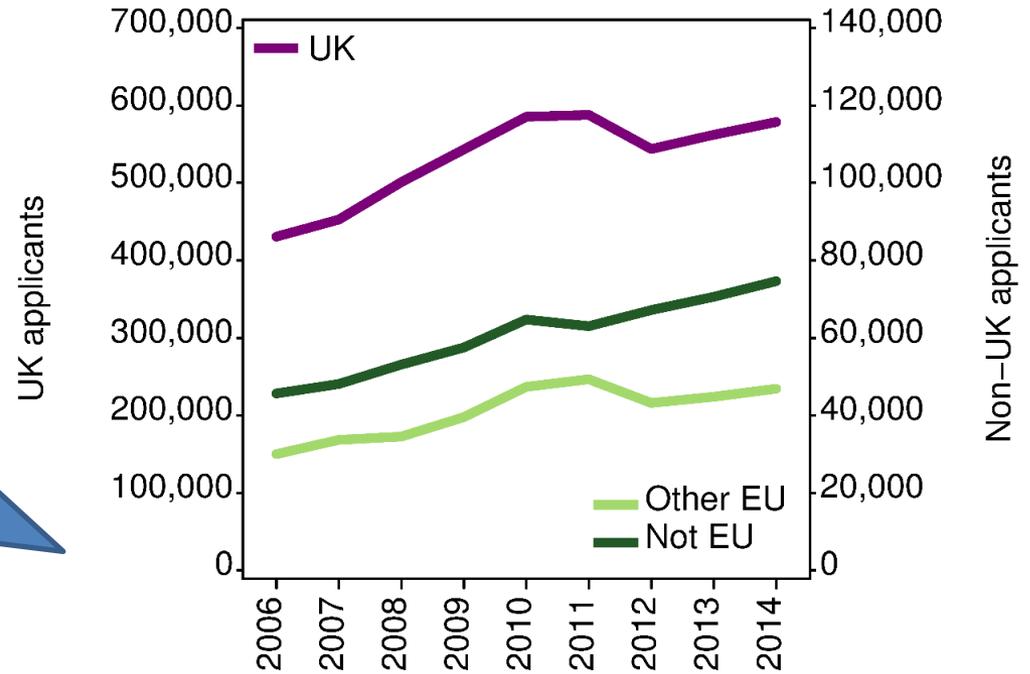
Officer (UK and EU Qualifications)

12 February, 2016

Setting the scene

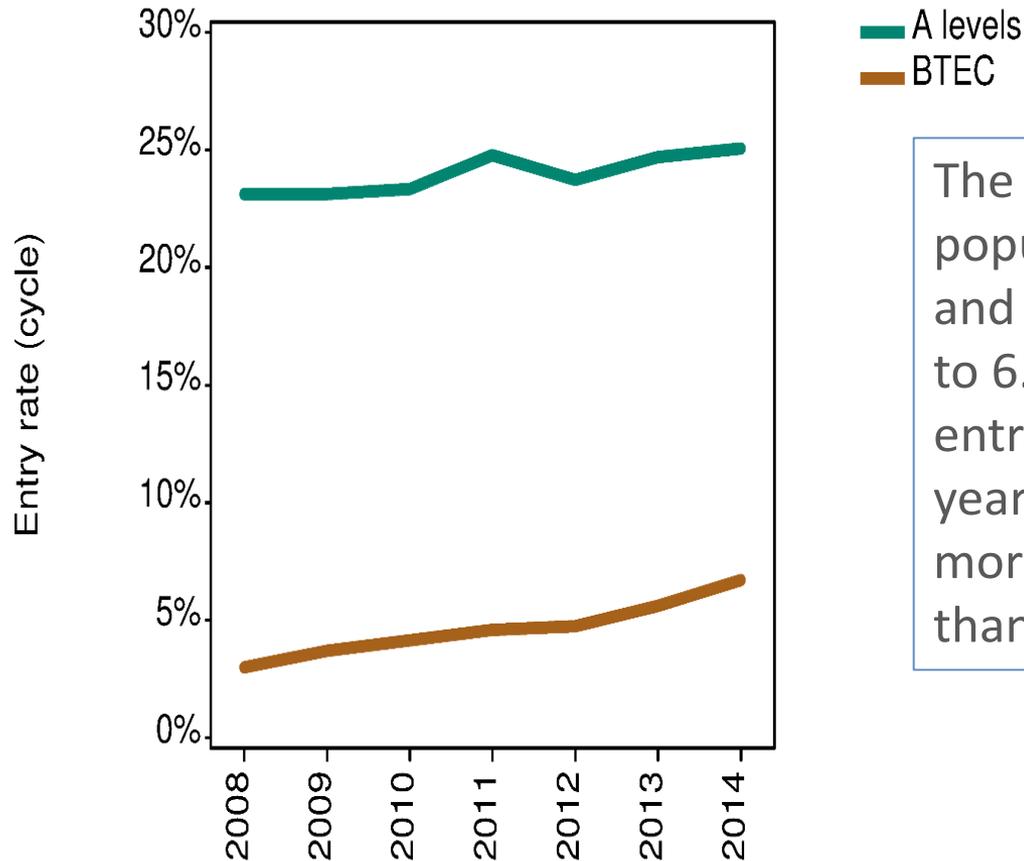
Near record demand for HE- Applicants by domicile

There were 699,700 applicants in the 2014 cycle, 22,300 more than in the 2013 cycle, an increase of 3.3 %.



Setting the scene

Growth in BTECs – Entry rate by qualification held

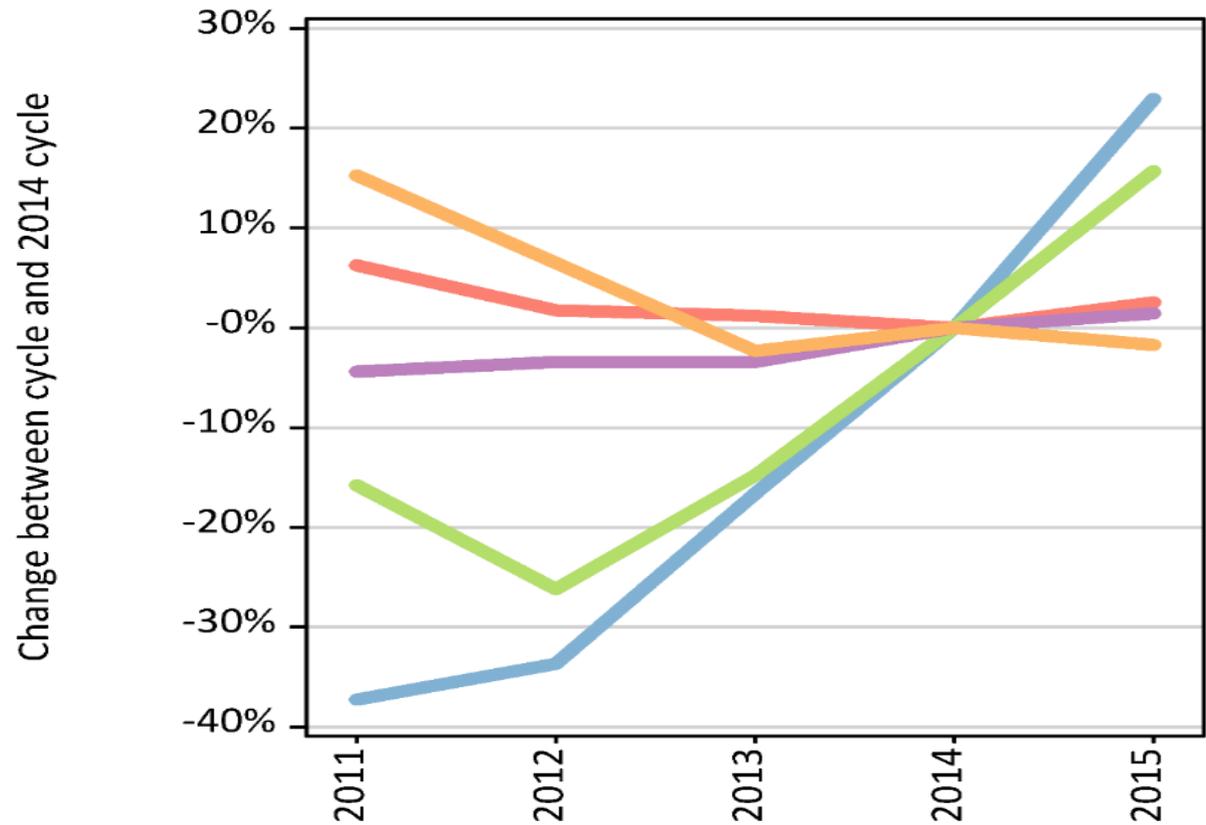


The proportion of the 18 year old population in England who entered HE and held a BTEC qualification increased to 6.7% in 2014. This is the highest entry rate holding BTECs recorded; 18 year olds in England are around 120% more likely to enter HE holding a BTEC than they were in 2006.

Setting the scene

Increasing diversity in qualifications

- A level only
- A level & BTEC
- BTEC only
- SQA only
- IB only



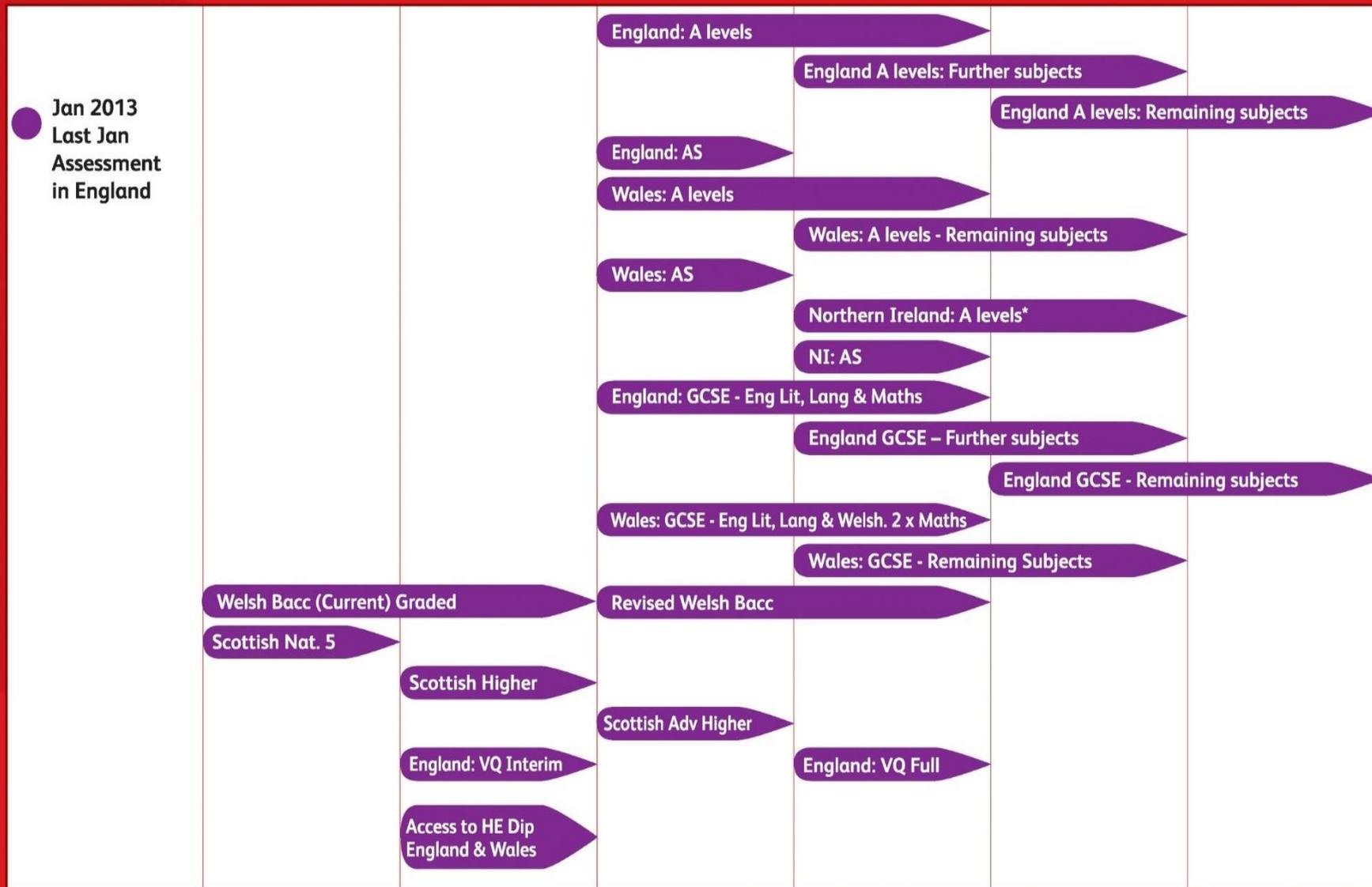
The changing landscape

2015 sees...

- New A levels delivered in England and Wales
- England has the decoupled AS, whereas Wales and Northern Ireland don't
- A level Science Practical
- New vocational qualifications - BTECs
- New Welsh Baccalaureate
- Revised GCSEs in England and Wales
- Core Maths
- New UCAS Tariff

Qualifications reform timeline

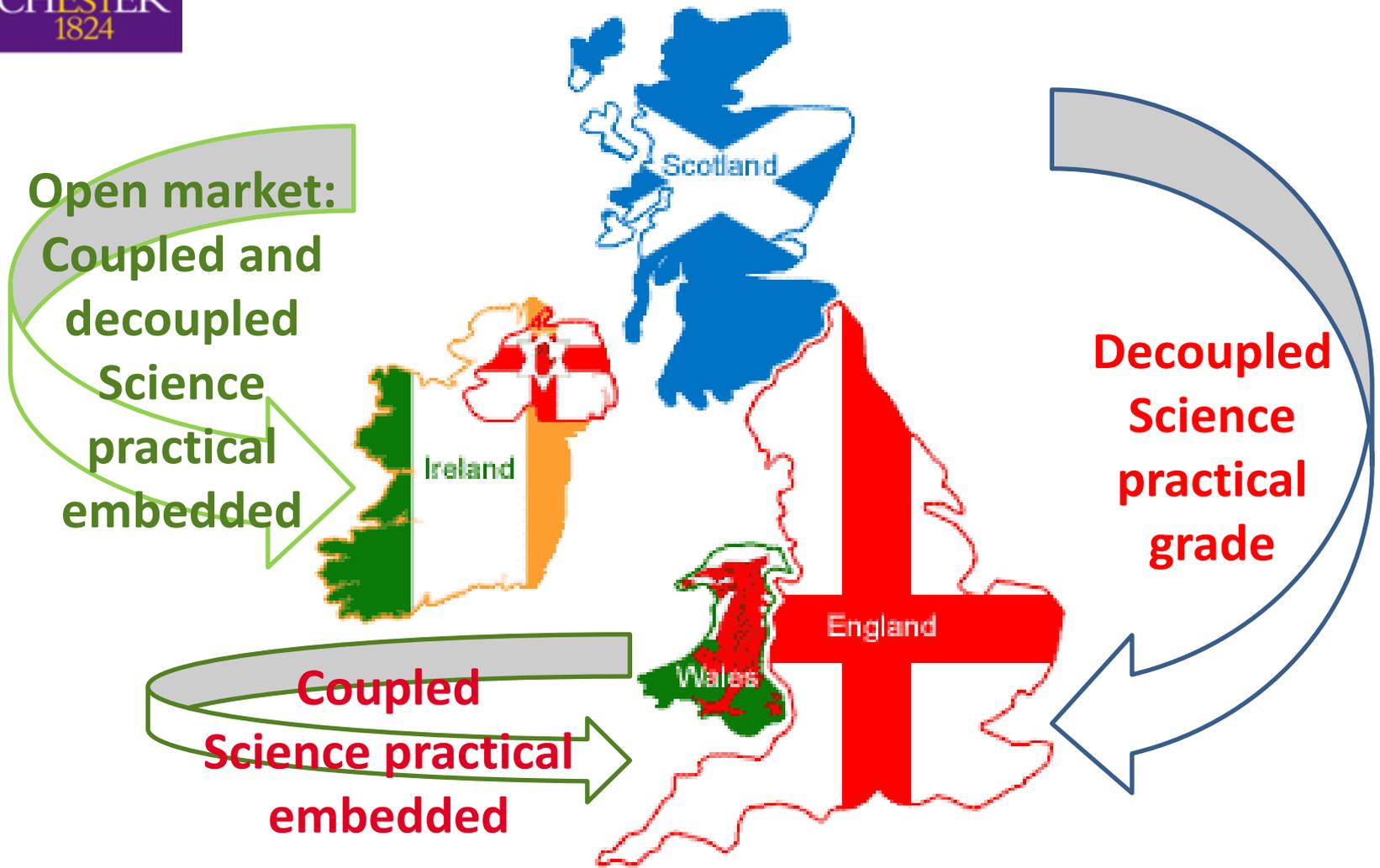
Aug/Sep 13 Aug/Sep 14 Aug/Sep 15 Aug/Sep 16 Aug/Sep 17 Aug/Sep 18



Key

First teaching Reach HE

* Based on current recommendations
Last updated: April 2014



The UK picture – A levels

The impact of A level changes

- Will be challenging to manage mixed model of old and new qualifications, and differences between England, Wales and NI
- Unclear if/how practical sciences will feature in offers across universities in the UK

University of Manchester statement on practical sciences

‘Some of our courses ask for A-levels in science subjects. Where this is the case, there will be a requirement to pass the practical assessment in the newly reformed science A-levels in England’.

- Concerns about accuracy of predicted grades

The impact of AS level changes in England

- Use of AS in admissions is variable; not used widely in entry requirements and this is unlikely to change
- Loss of AS results could lead to greater reliance on subjective information e.g. predicted grades, personal statement, reference – and/or greater reliance on GCSEs
- BUT also concern about accuracy of predicted grades
- Increase in admissions tests unlikely (however ...Cambridge)
- Concern about impacts on widening participation



Cambridge's colleges may bring back entrance test for first time in 30 years to sift out the best pupils



Cambridge University entrance tests 'potential barrier to disadvantaged'

Alan Milburn says introduction of written tests will result in wealthier pupils using private tutors to gain admission

In the letter Dr Lucy said the new tests would provide "valuable additional evidence of our applicants' academic abilities, knowledge base and potential to succeed in the Cambridge course for which they have applied".

"This move is a result of responding to teacher and student feedback, a desire to harmonise and simplify our existing use of written assessments and a need to develop new ways to maintain the effectiveness and fairness of our admissions system during ongoing qualification reform," Dr Lucy said.

The letter says no advance preparation will be needed, "other than revision of relevant recent subject knowledge where appropriate".

UCAS Survey – ‘Unpacking qualification reform – Jan 2016 update’

Unpacking qualification reform – Jan 2016 update

- Update on AS and A-level provision being offered by Schools and Colleges in England.
- Follows previous report released in January 2015

Further information on:

<https://www.ucas.com/advisers/guides-and-resources/qualification-reform>

Key Findings

- 59% of centres will offer the AS in all subjects in 2015 (up from 52% in the previous survey). 74% will offer the AS in some form, whether that be for particular subjects or cohorts of learners.
- Independent schools were less likely to offer the AS qualification than state schools and academies.
- 64% of respondents intend to revisit their decision about AS provision in 2017, once all A level subjects are reformed.

Recommendations

- Universities and colleges should continue to produce and review qualification reform statements, detailing how they are adapting to the changing qualification landscape.
- Schools and colleges should produce a web page detailing their qualification offer and the rationale behind this. The link to this can be included within the reference.

What were the key drivers in your decisions?

Useful progress measure and allows students to drop one of their four subjects and still gain a qualification.

Lack of co-teachability in certain subjects such as drama and English language.

Helps with predicted grades.

Need for students to experience advanced level assessment.

15% of our year 12 students leave after one year – we want them to leave with a recognisable qualification.

Freeing time from exam preparation to implement enrichment programme.

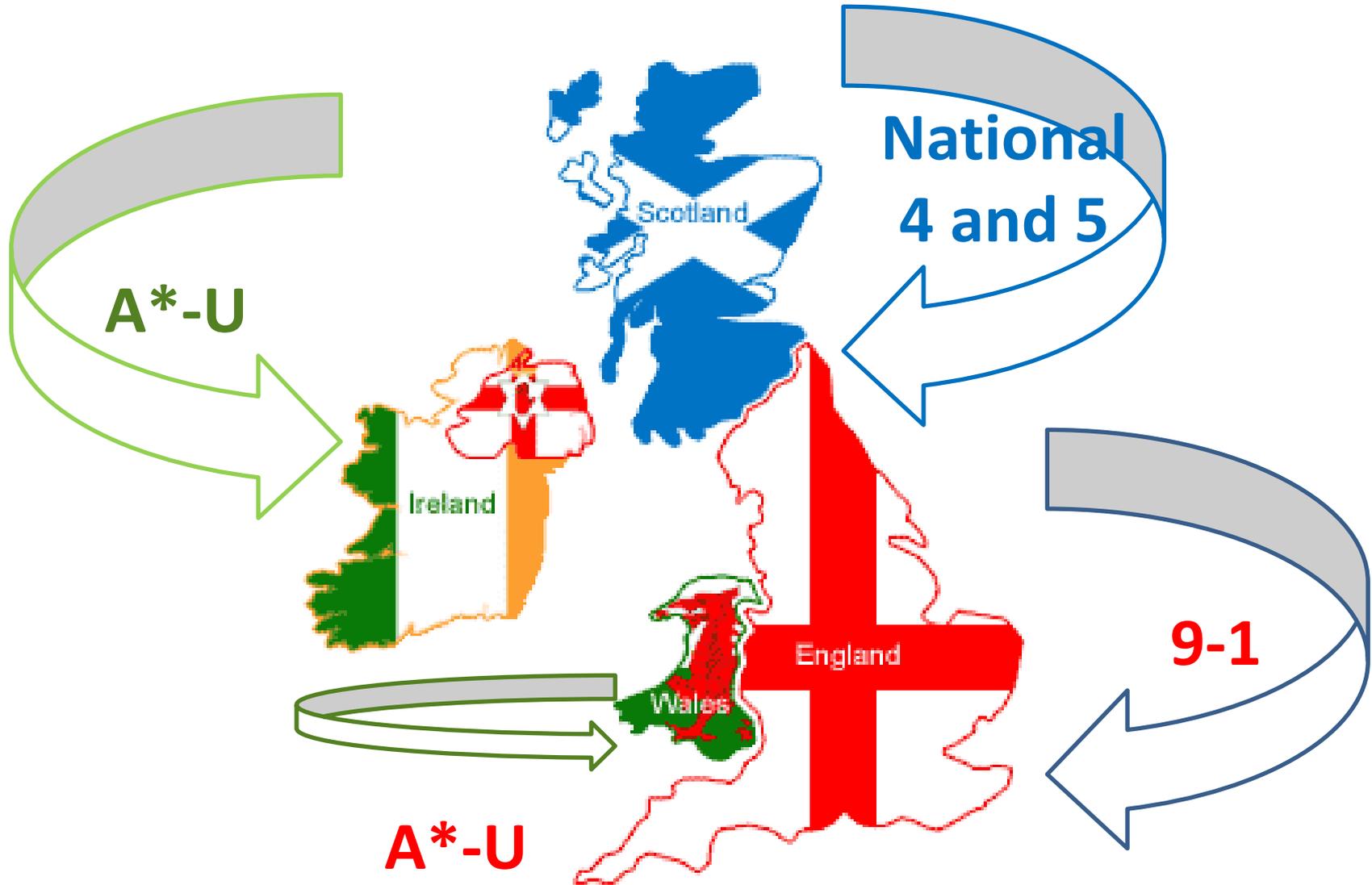
We did not want a mixed economy when it came to exam leave.

Vocational qualifications at Level 3

- Reform to vocational qualifications in England driven by criteria set by the DfE in order to count towards school performance tables
- Meaning 91% of Level 3 qualifications that previously counted towards performances tables will be removed from tables from 2016
- Vocational qualifications now classed as:
 - Applied General qualifications
 - Tech Level qualifications
- Introduction of external assessment:
 - Applied General – 40%
 - Tech level – 30%

Students will be given one opportunity to resit
- ...and synoptic assessment.
- Grading - three grading points or more, such as Distinction/Merit/Pass.

The UK picture – GCSEs



NEW GCSE GRADING STRUCTURE

CURRENT GCSE GRADING STRUCTURE

9

A*

8

7

A

6

GOOD PASS (DfE)

B

5 and above = top of C and above

5

AWARDING

4

4 and above = bottom of C and above

C

The UK picture – GCSEs

Year entering HE	England	Wales	Northern Ireland
2016	A*-G	A*-G	A*-G
2017	A*-G	A*-G	A*-G
2018	A*-G	A*-G	A*-G
2019	A*-G and 9-1 (English language, English literature and mathematics)	A*-G	A*-G
2020	A*-G and 9-1 (Additional subjects)	A*-G	A*-G
2021	9-1 (All subjects reformed)	A*-G	A*-G

Reformed GCSEs

University of Manchester statement on GCSEs

‘The University **does not have a blanket policy on preferred subjects at GCSE**, aside from **English Language and Maths** which are **required at a minimum of Grade C or above (Grade 4 for applicants holding newly reformed GCSEs in England)**. Some of our courses require additional GCSEs, sometimes in specific subjects and/or with higher grades.

The University is currently **reviewing** its requirements in respect of these ensuring that a **fair requirement is set for the three nations** of the UK using the GCSE qualifications. We’ll be updating our course entry requirements to include our requirements from the new grading structure once our review of GCSE reform is complete’.

English Baccalaureate

University of Manchester statement on EBacc

‘English Baccalaureate (EBacc) – the University welcomes applicants who have achieved the English Baccalaureate, however, we currently have no plans to make this award a requirement for students in England for entry to the University’.

New Progress8 measure

Core Maths qualification

- Core Maths qualifications are a suite of new Level 3 qualifications aimed at students who have passed GCSE mathematics at grade C or above but who are not taking A or AS level mathematics.
- The government's aim is that by 2020 the vast majority of students will continue to study some form of mathematics as part of their post 16 education. Therefore the number of students taking Core Maths is expected to grow steadily over the next few years.

Core Maths qualification

University of Manchester statement on Core Maths

‘The University **welcomes and recognises** the value of Level 3 core mathematics qualifications (e.g. AQA Certificate in Mathematical Studies). Core Mathematics is **not a compulsory element of post-16 study** and as a result we will **not normally include it in the conditions of any offer made** to you.

However, if you choose to undertake a core mathematics qualification this **may be taken into account when we consider your application, particularly for certain non-science courses with a distinct mathematical or statistical element**. We advise you to contact the academic School, who will clarify whether your specific portfolio of qualifications is acceptable for entry on to your chosen course’.

New UCAS Tariff

A review of the UCAS Tariff in 2012 highlighted a number of issues with the current system, which led to the development of a new UCAS Tariff.

A feedback exercise involving all UK secondary schools, colleges and universities helped shape the new UCAS Tariff, which was approved in June 2014.

The new UCAS Tariff will be used for courses starting from September 2017. The new UCAS Tariff points apply to learners who are currently in Year 12, who are thinking about applying in 2016/17, and start university or college from September 2017.

Further information: <https://www.ucas.com/advisers/guides-and-resources/tariff-2017>

University of Manchester does not use the UCAS Tariff

Considerations & questions for governors ...

- What are the opportunities and challenges for your school or college in light of the changes?
- What are the implications on resources and/or staffing? Are there funding implications?
- How can your school/college ensure that all teaching staff are clear about the new qualifications?
- How is your school or college ensuring that all teaching staff have the subject knowledge required for the new GCSEs/A-levels?
- Is your school or college looking into alternatives to A-levels?
- Post 16 schools and colleges – have you produced a web page detailing the qualification available to students and the rationale behind this for universities? - The link to should be included within the student's UCAS reference.

Further information and resources ...

University of Manchester statements

<http://www.manchester.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/applications/entry-requirements/uk-entry-requirements/>

UCAS resources on qualification reform

<https://wwwucas.com/advisers/guides-and-resources/qualification-reform>

Ofqual Postcards

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/your-qualification-our-regulation-gcse-as-and-a-level-reforms>

Any Questions?

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The new Advanced Welsh Baccalaureate

- The revised and more rigorous Welsh Baccalaureate is based on a Skills Challenge Certificate, which will be graded, and Supporting Qualifications such as A-levels.
- The primary aim is to enable learners to develop and demonstrate an understanding of and proficiency in essential and employability skills: Communication, Numeracy, Digital Literacy, Planning and Organisation, Creativity and Innovation, Critical Thinking and Problem Solving, and Personal Effectiveness.
- The emphasis is on applied and purposeful learning and to provide opportunities for assessment in a range of real life context through three Challenge Briefs and an Individual Project.

For entering into HE students will need to have completed the Advanced Diploma.

The new Advanced Welsh Baccalaureate

‘The Welsh Baccalaureate is central to the future of education in Wales and will offer a unique and valuable experience for learners’

