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Brighter Thinking

Curriculum 2015

Your guide to the new qualifications landscape

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A Cambridge University Press Professional Development Guide
For teachers, curriculum and pastoral managers, and school and college leaders



This Cambridge University Press Professional Development Guide is designed to be used, on or offline, as a quick reference text for busy education professionals seeking to make sense of recent and emerging changes to the 14–19 qualifications and curriculum landscape. Whether you're a newly qualified teacher leading a GCSE, AS or A level group for the first time, an experienced and perhaps innovation-weary middle manager or a senior leader in a school or college setting, we want to enable you to:

- make sense of a fast-changing qualifications landscape
- understand the drivers behind what we have defined as 'Curriculum 2015'
- position these qualification-focused changes against the backdrop of other reforms and specific challenges, for instance, teacher shortages in some of the curriculum areas at the heart of the reforms
- sift through these changes and identify those most important to your area of practice
- address a number of essentially factual questions about the changes
- raise additional questions and issues that we think might be valuable for you to reflect on, independently or with colleagues, in light of the Curriculum 2015 changes as well as related or contemporaneous changes in areas such as inspection, funding and the measurement of school and college performance.

We have framed the narrative that follows through a simple and accessible 'question and issue' format, indicating which questions might be of particular importance to those with specific responsibilities.

While we intend this guide to be accessible to any professional working in a school or college setting, we also want you to be able to easily locate the issues that you're particularly concerned about and we know that your priorities will be defined by the specific responsibilities that you hold.

Thus, while we'd like every teacher and manager to read the full guide, we are well aware that busy professionals rarely have the time to do. With this in mind, we have arranged the content in this guide into **eight** sections:

1. Reforms to GCSE
2. New school performance measures
3. Reforms to AS level
4. Reforms to A level
5. The emerging post-16 funding model
6. The new inspection framework
7. Trends and tensions across and between these reforms
8. The readiness of schools, colleges, teachers and organisational leaders to deliver these reforms

We have deliberately sought to frame the discussion of what might, at first glance, be seen as purely qualification and curriculum issues against the backdrop of a series of contextual changes: new school performance measures, revised post-16 funding arrangements and a new Ofsted framework – live from September 2015 – in which judgments will be made against **four** criteria:

1. Effectiveness of leadership and management
2. Quality of teaching, learning and assessment
3. Personal development, behaviour and welfare
4. Outcomes for children and other learners

By considering these contextual changes we hope to position qualification and curriculum reform in a wider landscape. In particular, we want to focus on:

- (a) informing professional practice 'on the ground', such that teachers, curriculum managers and school and college leaders are clear about the key challenges, tensions and opportunities posed by these changes in different settings
- (b) stimulating professional debate about both policy and practice
- (c) building practitioners' confidence, such that professionals can more effectively own and drive forward a series of reforms, even though their role in their instigation, as is the case in so many areas of educational policy, has been both marginal and marginalised.

In short, we are aiming to put together the jigsaw puzzle of educational changes (to GCSE, to AS and A level, to funding structures, to the measurement of school and college performance, and to the related landscapes of employability, youth engagement and widening participation) without being given a cover picture on the box to start with. We want to help you make sense of the changes – changes that teachers, and their students, will have to successfully navigate if they are to fulfil their potential and for teachers to prosper professionally.

This guide is designed to complement a set of two associated guides produced for students, also published by Cambridge University Press, that seek to answer the questions posed by young people – and their parents or carers – at two key transition points in their educational career (GCSEs and A levels).

The content of the first guide, *Starting GCSEs*, is summarised in Appendix A, and the content of the second guide, *Starting A levels*, is summarised in Appendix B. Appendices C and D set out the planned timescales for the introduction of the new specifications at GCSE and A level, and Appendix E lists those subjects that are set to disappear as GCSE, AS and A level.

In producing the guide we have been grateful for the support of the team at Cambridge University Press, at a time when they have been launching the biggest single suite of resources, designed to support the teaching of the new GCSE and A level specifications, in the Press's illustrious history. They have been a pleasure to work with.

We are also indebted to the members of an Expert Panel that has included Lucy Grayson, Head of Sixth Form at The Astley Cooper School, Hemel Hempstead, Neil Hassell, Principal at Oasis Academy Enfield, Paul Kassapian, Headteacher at Salvatorian College, Harrow, Dave Pearce, Director at Welwyn Hatfield Sixth Form Consortium, Jay Trivedy, Principal at Wyke Sixth Form College, and Graham Tuck, Director of Academy Improvement at Oasis Community Learning. Their insights have been invaluable and we trust that we have captured them sufficiently. Any errors or omissions, of course, remain our own.

We would welcome your feedback on the success of our efforts and will use this to inform future editions of this guide, the professional development and student support offer from Cambridge University Press, and our broader work in this field. We believe that the information that we have provided is factually correct at the time of publication.

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Appendices

- A. Contents: *Starting GCSEs: your guide to exam success*
- B. Contents: *Starting A levels: your guide to exam success*
- C. Timescales for the introduction of new format GCSEs, subject by subject
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- E. GCSE, AS and A level examinations that are set to be discontinued

About the authors

About Breslin Public Policy

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1. Reforms to GCSE

Background

The government is introducing a range of reforms to the GCSE examination, including a shift from an eight point letter-based grading framework (A*–G) to a nine point number grading framework (9–1), where 9 is the highest grade. The new specifications will ‘arrive’ in three phases for first teaching from September 2015, 2016 and 2017 and first examination from 2017, 2018 and 2019.

Very broadly, these reforms reflect the influence of the American educationalist E.D. Hirsch on the former Secretary of State for Education, Michael Gove.

Hirsch focuses on the need for individuals to grasp a body of ‘core knowledge’ if they are to achieve ‘cultural literacy’ in any given society. This translates into a focus on ‘deep knowledge’, a traditional hierarchy of subjects reflected in curricular and performance measure frameworks, a focus on extended writing and high-level numeracy skills, a further shift away from coursework and ‘modular’ examinations, and finally a concentration on national narratives in subjects such as English Literature and History, as these are viewed as key to the development of the ‘cultural literacy’ that Hirsch sees as so important.

Questions, answers and issues

Question	Answer or issue to explore	Personnel	Ofsted criteria
1. Which subjects are being revised first?	The new English Language, English Literature and Mathematics specifications are already being delivered in classrooms and will be examined for the first time in May 2017.	Senior Leadership Team Head of English Head of Mathematics Examinations Officer	Not applicable
2. What is the broader timescale for the reforms?	New specifications in all GCSE subjects will be introduced in two further phases for first teaching from September 2016 and September 2017.	Senior Leadership Team Curriculum Managers	Not applicable
3. What is the single biggest challenge posed by the GCSE reforms?	We’d suggest that three issues are especially pertinent: (a) The focus on what has been called ‘deep’ or ‘core’ knowledge – which in terms of exam specifications translates into ‘depth’, ‘mastery’ (for instance, of mathematical concepts) and ‘extended’ writing – will be challenging for teachers and students, especially given the reality of teacher shortages in a number of key subjects, notably English, mathematics and science.	Senior Leadership Team Curriculum Managers Pastoral Managers	Leadership/Management Quality of TLA Learner Outcomes

Question	Answer or issue to explore	Personnel	Ofsted criteria
	<p>(b) There is the stress of students having to sit virtually all of their examinations in a single period of two or three weeks after two years of study, and the organisational demands that this places on schools, a challenge accentuated by the fact that relatively few in the current teaching force will have had experience of teaching or sitting examinations that are arranged in a single block at the end of two years study.</p> <p>(c) The risk that the revised GCSE qualifications will 'exclude' a significant number of students, not just those with 'learning difficulties' or special educational needs, however defined. Those who might have achieved through 'grafting' under the out-going regime may also struggle with the new specifications – and this may translate into behavioural issues at classroom level. This is likely, in turn, to impact on factors such as teacher motivation and retention.</p>		
4. What is the single biggest opportunity opened up by the GCSE reforms?	The chance for schools to review their curriculum offer, across specifications and awarding bodies.	Senior Leadership Team	Leadership/Management Quality of TLA Learner Outcomes
5. Will the shift from 'letters' to 'numbers' in GCSE grading have any impact?	<p>There are four issues here:</p> <p>(a) The change is likely to have a significant impact on the number of students achieving 'top' grades with a '4' aligned to the bottom of a current grade 'C', a '7' aligned to the bottom of a current grade 'A', and a '1' aligned to the bottom of a current grade 'G'.</p> <p>(b) The numerical model allows policy makers to continually raise the bar by adding additional higher grades, most obviously a '10', and, in the longer term, an '11' and '12'.</p> <p>(c) Modelling by the Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL) suggests that the increased segmentation of the grading structure (from seven lettered to nine numerical ones) will mean that significantly fewer students are likely to gain a grade '9' than currently gain an 'A*'. (d) The fact that no such change is planned for AS or A level means that there will be an inconsistency between GCSE and A level grading (and, indeed, between, GCSEs and degrees where a '1' or a 'First' is the top grade) – this risks confusing employers, parents and others.</p>	Curriculum Managers	Leadership/Management Quality of TLA Learner Outcomes

Question	Answer or issue to explore	Personnel	Ofsted criteria
6. What counts as a 'good' GCSE in the new grading framework?	<p>There isn't a direct read across but Ofqual are suggesting that a '4' or '5' will be broadly equivalent to a 'C', with a '4' counting as a C-equivalent for performance table purposes in 2017 and a '5' counting as a C-equivalent thereafter – thus, in the longer term, the benchmark grade for schools will be a '5' not a '4' and we expect this to become the public definition of a 'good' grade. Further, this may rise to a '6' if a '10' is added at the top of the scale.</p> <p>Tellingly, Ofqual observe that if students achieve a grade '5', this will put them:</p> <p><i>"Broadly in line with what would be required to match the average performance of 16-year-olds in England with the PISA performances of countries such as Finland, Canada, the Netherlands and Switzerland"</i></p>	Curriculum Managers	<p>Quality of TLA</p> <p>Learner Outcomes</p>
7. What preparations do Curriculum Leaders need to make in individual subjects?	This will depend on the subject concerned but we'd advise that the early lessons from colleagues teaching English and Mathematics are shared across curriculum managers and subject teachers in other areas.	Curriculum Managers	Leadership/Management
8. How will the changes impact on students with Special Educational Needs, and what can schools do to mediate this?	<p>Here, there are three issues:</p> <p>(a) The shift to a stronger focus on 'deep' learning, 'mastery', 'extended' writing and 'core' knowledge, and the greater emphasis on 'Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar' ('SPAG') – or what, in the new specifications, is termed 'Quality of Written Communication' (QWC) – does suggest a tougher examination regime.</p> <p>(b) Schools will need to monitor how this impacts on those with Special Educational Needs especially those with Education, Health and Care Plans,, and may need to look at targeted interventions to support their inclusion.</p> <p>(c) Exactly how schools 'sell' the prospect of grades '1' and '2' to students with Special Educational Needs remains unclear.</p>	SEN Coordinator	<p>Leadership/Management</p> <p>Quality of TLA</p> <p>PD/behaviour/welfare</p> <p>Learner Outcomes</p>
9. Will the changes to GCSE encourage the trend towards a three-year Key Stage 4?	This could go either way: it might lead to a longer Key Stage 4, not least because the new specifications are more likely to be content-heavy rather than content-light. On the other hand, maintaining a 'long' Key Stage 3 but giving this a stronger numeracy and literacy development focus (see below) might be a way of giving students the transferable skills that they will need across a range of GCSE courses as the new model is rolled out across all subjects.	Senior Leadership Team	Leadership/Management

Question	Answer or issue to explore	Personnel	Ofsted criteria
10. Are there likely to be any unintended outcomes from these reforms, for schools, courses, or students?	<p>We think that there may be several unintended outcomes:</p> <p>(a) We suspect that the Key Stage 4 curriculum will become more focused around English, Mathematics and the other English Baccalaureate subjects, in spite of continued calls for greater curriculum breadth and the arguable counter-pressure driven by new school performance measures – notably Progress 8, which we discuss later.</p> <p>(b) We expect that schools will need to put extra resources into developing literacy and numeracy skills at Key Stage 3 if students are to cope with the extended writing requirements and the ‘mastery’ of mathematical concepts that will be expected in the new examinations.</p> <p>(c) There is the risk of the relative ‘over-paying’ of English and mathematics teachers and their promotion into roles such as Assistant Headship so as to ensure their retention, which may impact on the financial ability of schools to reward the performance of other teachers. It may also limit promotion opportunities for teachers from other subject backgrounds, narrowing the pool from which senior leaders are drawn.</p>	Senior Leadership Team Governing Body	Leadership/Management Quality of TLA PD/behaviour/welfare Learner Outcomes

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2. New school performance measures

Background

The government is introducing a new set of secondary school performance measures through which all schools will be judged. These new measures apply to examinations taken by Year 11 students in summer 2016 and performance tables published thereafter, and may consign the established reliance on the achievement of 5 A*–C grades, including English and Mathematics, to the past.

In particular, the reforms are likely to encourage a shift away from focusing on the performance of students at or close to the C–D borderline and towards the progress of *all* learners.

While many have welcomed the new importance given to progress in assessing institutional and student performance, there is a certain irony that this is being preceded by the abolition of assessing pupils against a set of national levels at the end of Key Stage 2. Arguably, this is likely to make the benchmark, on which progress (and notably the new Progress 8 measure) is based, a much fuzzier starting point.

Questions, answers and issues

Question	Answer or issue to explore	Personnel	Ofsted criteria
1. Against which performance measures will schools be judged in the future?	<p>The government has announced a set of four new performance measures. These are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Basics • The English Baccalaureate • Attainment 8 • Progress 8 <p>These are set to replace the ubiquitous 5 A*–C performance measure that has been used previously.</p>	<p>Senior Leadership Team</p> <p>Curriculum Managers</p> <p>All teaching staff</p>	<p>Leadership/Management</p> <p>Quality of TLA</p> <p>Learner Outcomes</p>
2. When will this new performance regime be in place?	<p>Although the full set of new measures will be used in all secondary schools from summer 2016, schools can opt-in to have their performance measured in terms of Progress 8 from September 2015.</p>	<p>Senior Leadership Team</p>	<p>Leadership/Management</p> <p>Learner Outcomes</p>
3. What is the 'Basics'?	<p>The 'Basics' measure refers to the percentage of students in a school that achieve a grade C (or a 4 in the new GCSE grading framework) in the 'threshold' subjects, English and Mathematics.</p>	<p>Senior Leadership Team</p> <p>Curriculum Managers</p>	<p>Leadership/Management</p> <p>Learner Outcomes</p>

Question	Answer or issue to explore	Personnel	Ofsted criteria
4. What is the English Baccalaureate?	<p>Commonly referred to as the Ebacc, it may be 'English' but it isn't a qualification in its own right or a 'baccalaureate' in the understood sense of the term, as made popular through the International Baccalaureate (IB). It is, though, one of the government's core school performance measures. A student who gets a grade C or a grade 4 (in 2017) or a grade 5 (from 2018) or above at GCSE (or an AS grade) in English Language or English Literature, Mathematics, History or Geography, a language, and Core and Additional Science (or Double Award Science or two distinct sciences drawn from Biology, Chemistry, Computer Science or Physics) is likely to be seen as having achieved the EBacc. Further, in what is seen as a recommitment to the EBacc, which was first announced towards the close of 2010, the government has declared that <i>"...all pupils who start Year 7 in September 2015 (should) take the EBacc subjects when they reach their GCSEs in 2020"</i>.</p> <p>This would suggest that, it is not sufficient for students to simply be able to access the EBacc if they opt to follow a certain combination of GCSE courses at the beginning of Key Stage 4; they must do so.</p> <p>In this context, it has been suggested that Ofsted will only judge a school as 'Outstanding' if all Year 10 and 11 students follow a curriculum that leads to the EBacc – although this is not explicitly stated in the most recent inspection framework in use since September 2015; rather, there is a reassertion of the importance of a 'broad and balanced' curriculum that 'inspires pupils to learn', and the Chief Inspector has been critical of the idea that the EBacc can meet the needs of all students.</p>	Senior Leadership Team Curriculum Managers	Leadership/Management Learner Outcomes

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Question	Answer or issue to explore	Personnel	Ofsted criteria
5. What is Attainment 8?	<p>Attainment 8 measures the mean average grade achieved by a student at the school across qualifications in eight subjects spread across three 'buckets' (or groups) of courses. These are:</p> <p>These English Language or English Literature, and Mathematics</p> <p>These Three other EBacc subjects</p> <p>These Three additional qualifications</p> <p>It is worth making three further remarks about Bucket 3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bucket 3 subjects do not need to be EBacc subjects and they do not have to lead to a GCSE examination. • Bucket 3 courses do have to lead to 'high value arts, academic or vocational qualifications' approved for delivery to those aged 19 or under in maintained schools, academies and post-16 institutions. • Bucket 3 subjects may include English Language or English Literature where the student is following both courses, and one of these (the one in which they have scored the higher grade) has already been allocated to Bucket 1. This led one member of our Expert Panel to remark: <i>"in this new school performance regime, English Literature becomes a key subject"</i>. 	Senior Leadership Team Curriculum Managers	Leadership/Management Learner Outcomes
6. How is Attainment 8 calculated and presented?	<p>For both the student and the school, Attainment 8 is presented as a single numerical score – as noted above, a mean average grade across 8 subjects. This is calculated through awarding points for the grades achieved in each of eight subjects, with higher grades scoring more points and with grades in English (language and literature) and Mathematics 'double weighted'. Therefore, performance in these subjects will have a profound impact on a school's overall publicly recorded performance – this may drive additional teaching and financial resources to these areas at Key Stages 3 and 4.</p>	Senior Leadership Team Curriculum Managers	Leadership/Management Learner Outcomes

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Question	Answer or issue to explore	Personnel	Ofsted criteria
	<p>The Attainment 8 score for an individual student is calculated by dividing a student's total score by ten. If a student does not sit eight examinations, the vacant slots are valued at zero. If a student sits more than eight examinations, their best scores for the three additional (Bucket 3) qualifications are counted. Although Attainment 8 is intended as a school rather than a pupil performance measure, calculating the Attainment 8 performance of individual students and particular cohorts is likely to inform curriculum interventions and provide feedback on the impact of, for instance, Pupil Premium funding. In time, it is possible that, in spite of the policy intention, employers and admissions tutors will ask for individual student scores as well as, or instead of, examination grades.</p> <p>A school's Attainment 8 score is derived from the mean average Attainment 8 score achieved by its students across all three 'Buckets' and is calculated by adding together the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The points score resulting from the higher average grade achieved across the school by students in either English language or English literature, and the average grade achieved across the school by students in mathematics, a figure that, to reiterate, is then double weighted (Bucket 1). <p>Plus</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The points score resulting from the average grade achieved across the school by students in the three EBacc subjects (Bucket 2). <p>Plus</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The points score resulting from the average grade achieved across the school by students in the non-EBacc subjects (Bucket 3). <p>In terms of presentation, a school's Attainment 8 score will be presented alongside the average Attainment 8 score achieved by schools nationally and any government benchmark that is in place at the time.</p> <p>Attainment 8 seeks to square a classic educational circle: promoting curriculum breadth while recognizing the special importance of English (language or literature) and mathematics.</p>		

Question	Answer or issue to explore	Personnel	Ofsted criteria
7. What is Progress 8?	Progress 8 is a new value-added based measure that aims to capture the progress students make during the course of their secondary education in comparison with students with the same prior attainment. Progress 8 is designed to 'encourage schools to offer a broad and balanced curriculum at Key Stage 4' and is measured across performance in eight qualifications.	Senior Leadership Team Curriculum Managers	Leadership/Management Learner Outcomes
8. How is Progress 8 calculated and presented?	A student's Progress 8 score is calculated through taking their estimated Attainment 8 score (derived from the average Attainment 8 score achieved nationally by students with similar prior attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 as judged by their performance in English and Mathematics) away from their actual Attainment 8 score. A school's Progress 8 score is the average Progress 8 score achieved by its students, which is in turn compared with a national average of zero. A positive Progress 8 score indicates that a school's performance is above average while a negative one indicates that it is below average.	Senior Leadership Team Curriculum Managers All teaching staff	Leadership/Management Learner Outcomes
9. What is the likely broader impact of a shift from recording 'attainment' to recording 'progress' in performance tables?	We will see a shift away from C–D 'border-lining' and an over-focus on those who might clamber up from a D to a C, to a broader focus on the progress of all students.	Senior Leadership Team	Learner Outcomes
10. Where does this leave established measures such as 5 A*–C grades including English and Mathematics (or 5ACEM)?	5ACEM has one advantage over everything above except the Basics: it does not need explanation (as with the EBacc) or a grasp of how statistics work; it will have no official status in performance tables after 2015 but it may live on because students, parents and employers understand and recognise it. We would advise schools to keep providing information about their 5ACEM performance, at least for an interim period.	Senior Leadership Team Curriculum Managers	Learner Outcomes

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3. Reforms to AS level

Background

A new suite of AS and A level specifications is being progressively introduced over a three year period, with first teaching from 2015, 2016 and 2017, first AS level examination in 2016, 2017 and 2018, and first A level examination in 2017, 2018 and 2019. As with the GCSE reforms, these are partly inspired by the thinking of American educationalist E.D. Hirsch and his focus on the importance of core knowledge and deep learning if individuals are to develop cultural literacy.

The AS reforms will see AS level separated (or decoupled) from A level such that both become distinct qualifications, albeit ones that share some content and which might be co-taught. In the new A and AS level model, AS performance does not contribute to the final A level grade. Many commentators have suggested that this decoupling casts a shadow over the future of the AS level as a mass qualification.

Questions, answers and issues

Question	Answer or issue to explore	Personnel	Ofsted criteria
1. How will schools and students deal with a mixed economy of 'old' and 'new' style AS levels over the next three years or so?	While the new A levels are widely expected to be 'tougher' than the specifications that they replace, this is not expected to be the case at AS level, and so the 'mixed economy' question is less pertinent than at A level, but teachers will need to prepare students for examinations that differ in style across subjects – and approaches to induction, schemes of work and revision will need to reflect this.	Senior Leadership Team Curriculum Managers	Leadership/Management Quality of TLA Learner Outcomes
2. What is the future of the AS level as a curriculum-widening 4th course in the first year of A level study?	Given the possible narrowing of the post-16 curriculum resulting from the changes in school performance measures that we discuss elsewhere, the place of the '4th AS' could take on a new importance – it will offer evidence of curriculum breadth and student performance in a 'real' examination at this level. However, a driver here will be whether or not universities are seen to genuinely value the fourth course in their response to UCAS applications – a Curriculum 2000 innovation about which many admissions tutors have been at best ambivalent. Further, in an 'austere' funding environment and prevailing teacher shortages, the cost (both in terms of timetabling and examination entry fees) may prove a major disincentive to schools and colleges.	Senior Leadership Team Curriculum Managers	Quality of TLA Learner Outcomes

Question	Answer or issue to explore	Personnel	Ofsted criteria
3. What is the future of the AS level as an end-of-lower sixth exam for A level students?	<p>Our initial enquiries suggest that many schools and colleges will not require A level students to sit the equivalent AS level course at the mid-point of a two year course for three reasons:</p> <p>(a) The AS no longer directly contributes to the A level grade.</p> <p>(b) Sitting the AS papers as early as May in the first year will lead to rushed coverage and distort the two year teaching programme.</p> <p>(c) There is insufficient return for the school or the student in terms of the examination fee paid.</p> <p>If this proves to be the case, the end of the AS as a mid-point examination may open up the space for greater depth and breadth in Year 12 A level teaching programmes, enabling Schemes of Work to 'breathe'.</p>	Curriculum Managers	Quality of TLA Learner Outcomes
4. If, as seems likely, the AS is no longer taken by A level students at the mid-point of their course, what will schools and colleges (and admissions tutors) use as a predictive measure in the UCAS process?	<p>Teacher statements and marks gained in internal mock examinations will be important but it should be noted that admissions tutors across the HE sector are unhappy with the separation of AS and A level because they regard AS performance at 17 to be a good predictor of A level performance at 18. For this reason, AS could make a 'comeback' if admissions tutors continue to express a preference for 'real' AS grades at the time of application. Alternatively, and in the interim, schools and colleges will need to return to internally developed 'mock' examinations at the end of Year 12 and, critically, stronger tracking and monitoring systems, combined with the capacity to intervene where evidence suggests this is required.</p> <p>Some might argue that it is ironic that AS level is under threat at precisely the time that Ofsted is requiring schools and colleges to have stronger in-year and in-course data on student progress.</p>	Senior Leadership Team UCAS Coordinators Curriculum Managers Examination Officers	Leadership/Management Quality of TLA PD/behaviour/welfare Learner Outcomes
5. What is the future of the AS level as an examination for weaker students, either co-taught alongside A level or taught separately?	<p>Here the AS course may have an important place, especially if it is taught over two years, but there are question marks over its market value, given that (in terms of UCAS points) it is only worth 40% of the equivalent A level qualification.</p>	Curriculum Managers	Quality of TLA Learner Outcomes

Question	Answer or issue to explore	Personnel	Ofsted criteria
6. What will be the impact of the reduced weighting placed on AS level grades in the UCAS tariff?	The reduction of the value of the AS level to 40% of an A level in the revised UCAS tariff is one of the set of factors stacking up against the future of the AS examination as a mass post-16 qualification.	UCAS Coordinators	Leadership/Management Learner Outcomes
7. Will the shift to 'tougher', non-modular A levels produce a boost in the numbers taking vocational options?	It may well do, especially if these qualifications are demonstrably valuable to employers, or to admissions tutors at non-Russell Group universities; the danger is that weaker students will simply 'fall' onto a default vocational curriculum.	Senior Leadership Team Vocational Ed. Co-ord.	Leadership/Management Quality of TLA Learner Outcomes
8. What is the single biggest challenge posed by the AS level reforms?	<p>The biggest challenge is finding a viable place for the AS level in the emerging post-16 curriculum. The old AS level fulfilled a straightforward and obvious six-fold function. It provided:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An effective predictor of 'A2' performance. 2. A formalised 'real' examination at the end of one year of study, rather than a 'mock'. 3. An exit point that offered a public examination grade at that point. 4. A direct contribution to the final A level grade achieved. 5. Pro-rata equity with A level on the UCAS tariff. 6. The first rungs of a 'ladder' through which weaker students could 'reach' A level. <p>Some would argue that the new AS level offers none of the above while the continued practice of placing AS papers before A level papers, rather than after them, in the examination season unnecessarily constrains teaching and revision time for what is likely to be a weaker cohort of students.</p> <p>However, few schools will have the capacity to support separate AS and A level groups, suggesting a level of 'streaming' not common in Sixth Form settings.</p>	Senior Leadership Team	Leadership/Management

Question	Answer or issue to explore	Personnel	Ofsted criteria
9. What is the single biggest opportunity opened up by the changes to AS level?	<p>Here, we think that three issues are pertinent:</p> <p>(a) The little noticed incorporation of the relevant AS level specifications into the English Baccalaureate performance measure may mean that the AS becomes a 'stretch and challenge' device and an A level preparation and induction programme for able/gifted/talented students especially if they are working within a three year Key Stage 4 programme, rather than simply a 'post-16' examination. This might be a strategy that schools could use as a device to recruit their more able students into their sixth form, in the face of competition from colleges.</p> <p>(b) Within the framework of a three-year Sixth Form, the reforms may also mean that the AS level becomes a 'bridging' qualification between GCSE and A level. This, however, has funding implications in terms of examination fees, the lower per student funding level for a third year of sixth form study, and staffing.</p> <p>(c) The removal of the AS-A2 ladder may encourage a larger cohort of students towards professional and vocational qualifications, and enhance the status of the latter in the process, as noted above.</p>	Senior Leadership Team	Leadership/Management
10. How will or might the reforms to AS levels impact on the wider life of the sixth form or college student, including their capacity or inclination to engage in extra-curricular activities?	Sitting more than one additional AS level alongside 'tougher' A levels risks 'crowding out' those extra-curricular activities that are vital to broadening minds, building character and developing resilience, and schools and colleges should caution against this. As we have noted earlier, one unintended consequence of the decline of the AS as a mid-point examination might be a resurgence in extra-curricular activity in Year 12.	Post-16 Team Student Voice Co-ord. Extra-curricular Co-ord.	PD/behaviour/welfare Learner Outcomes

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Sitting more than one additional AS level alongside 'tougher' A levels risks 'crowding out' those extra-curricular activities that are vital to broadening minds, building character and developing resilience, and schools and colleges should caution against this.

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4. Reforms to A level

Background

The reforms to A level, progressively introduced across three years with first teaching from 2015, 2016 and 2017 and first examination from 2017, 2018 and 2019, reflect those at GCSE and AS level. As with the reforms to these qualifications, the changes to A level also reflect the influence of American educationalist E.D. Hirsch on former Secretary of State for Education, Michael Gove.

The 'new' A levels are, for the most part, completely linear, with assessment taking place through a single block of papers after two years of study and with most – or all – of this assessment being delivered through conventional written examinations rather than 'coursework'.

Critically, as discussed in the previous section, in the new model, any grade achieved at AS level does not contribute to the final A level grade. The courses may share some common content and be co-teachable but they lead to completely separate qualifications.

Questions, answers and issues

Question	Answer or issue to explore	Personnel	Ofsted criteria
1. How will schools and students deal with a mixed economy of 'old' and 'new' style A levels over the next three years or so?	Examination preparation and skills development programmes will need to reflect the mix of courses that individual students are taking. However, unlike at GCSE, the AS and A level grading framework is not changing, so grades will not be differently valued, even if those following only the new linear courses will feel that they are sitting tougher exams than those taking only the old, modular courses, which will continue to have AS accreditation built in at the close of the first year.	Senior Leadership Team Curriculum Managers	Leadership/Management Quality of TLA Learner Outcomes

Question	Answer or issue to explore	Personnel	Ofsted criteria
2. How many AS and A levels will students typically start out with in the new model, and how many A level courses will they complete?	Other than the reduced value accorded to AS level grades, we see no evidence that the current UCAS tariff will change – university offers are likely to be based on three substantive A level grades, with any AS level accreditation seen as additional to this, offering some predictive evidence of future A level performance and of curriculum breadth. We sense that post 16 providers are likely to stick with a ‘four into three’ course model in the first instance, but that the currency of the ‘fourth’ course, especially in terms of UCAS applications, will be closely monitored over the next two or three years.	Senior Leadership Team	Leadership/Management Quality of TLA Learner Outcomes
3. How will schools and colleges enable students to negotiate the apparently steeper ramp between GCSE and A level, especially if students do not sit the AS level en route to A level?	The new GCSE examinations are also likely to be ‘tougher’ than their predecessors but the removal of the AS level as a mid-point examination for A level students will make the ramp steeper, unless AS is used in Year 11 for able and prospective A level students, probably at the close of a three year Key Stage 4. Schools will need to focus on the developing extended writing and higher-end numeracy skills throughout the pre-16 years if students are to prosper in their A level studies; they will also need to give students plenty of opportunities to practice on examination questions across the course of the two year programme.	Senior Leadership Team Curriculum Managers	Leadership/Management Quality of TLA PD/behaviour/welfare Learner Outcomes
4. Is there a special place for work on student induction at the start of the new A level courses?	The combination of separating (or ‘decoupling’) AS and A level examinations and examining A level courses through a set of end-of-course papers at the close of two years of study, opens up the need and space for a stronger focus on induction at the start of A level courses. Some aspects of an A level induction programme will need to be subject specific, but significant elements are also generic and might best be delivered through a core induction programme delivered during the first half term, or in the space immediately after the completion of GCSEs towards the close of Year 11.	Senior Leadership Team Post-16 Team Curriculum Managers	Leadership/Management PD/behaviour/welfare Learner Outcomes

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Other than the reduced value accorded to AS level grades, we see no evidence that the current UCAS tariff will change – university offers are likely to be based on three substantive A level grades, with any AS level accreditation seen as additional to this.

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Question	Answer or issue to explore	Personnel	Ofsted criteria
	'Taster' days, parental engagement activities, a focus on study skills from the start and really good and enduring Information/Careers Advice and Guidance (IAG/CEG) are likely to be keys to success in terms of retention, progress and attainment. The Cambridge University Press Transition Guide, Starting A levels: your guide to exam success, (CUP, 2015), has been published to support such an approach.		
5. How will the A level reforms play out with middle ability students (those with 5 B or C grades at GCSE rather than 8 A or B grades)?	As a cohort, this group may need targeted intervention to ensure that students have the required skills of literacy and numeracy. Some may follow an alternative AS level programme, or – if funding will facilitate this – a three year programme where AS study precedes A level study. In settings where course numbers are sufficient we may see the emergence of setting in A level groups. In the longer term, schools will need to place much more emphasis on developing extended writing and high-end numeracy skills during Key Stages 3 and 4.	Curriculum Managers	Quality of TLA PD/behaviour/welfare Learner Outcomes
6. How will schools and colleges enable students to deal with the stronger synoptic component and the focus on 'core' and 'deeper' knowledge in the new A level model?	We suspect that the answer lies in identifying and focusing on the 'core' knowledge that underpins each subject, combined with intensive practice on exam-style questions that demand extended answers. An interesting exercise for subject teams might be to identify just what this 'core' knowledge is in individual subjects and on particular specifications.	Curriculum Managers	Quality of TLA PD/behaviour/welfare Learner Outcomes
7. How will schools and colleges enable teachers (especially non-specialist teachers) to deal with the stronger synoptic component and the focus on 'core' and 'deeper' knowledge in the new A level model?	This is one of the pinch points for schools, especially given national teacher shortages in areas such as Mathematics and the sciences. We think that six steps might be valuable: (a) Carrying out a skills audit of teaching staff – teachers often have long-hidden specialisms. (b) Offering whole staff CPD to raise awareness of the switch in emphasis towards core knowledge, deeper learning and synoptic assessment. (c) Offering targeted CPD to non-specialists tasked with teaching 'new' subjects at AS and/or A level.	Senior Leadership Team Curriculum Managers Subject Teachers	Leadership/Management Quality of TLA Learner Outcomes

Question	Answer or issue to explore	Personnel	Ofsted criteria
	<p>(d) Buddying-up specialists with non-specialists and new/recently qualified teachers to ensure in-school support is formalised.</p> <p>(e) Ensuring that teachers and departments are involved in subject associations and social networks that support the development of subject expertise.</p> <p>(f) Ensuring that a subject specialist in every major area is an examiner, so that the 'look and feel' of the new qualifications is hard-wired into the school's or college's approach to teaching, learning and assessment.</p>		
8. Will the new linear and core knowledge focused A level model place a new premium on skills such as factual recall?	Yes, and revision and examination preparation strategies will need to place a premium on this, but 'deeper' learning is not just about 'facts' and 'Knowledge and Understanding'; it is about being able to work with that knowledge – to analyse and interpret it, to apply the lessons from it in a given situation, and to evaluate any claims made as a result of any evidence presented.	Post-16 Team Curriculum Managers	Quality of TLA PD/behaviour/welfare Learner Outcomes
9. If students do not sit an AS level at the midpoint of an A level course, what will the new staging points be on a new two year A level?	We think that any two-year programme will need to be 'topped and tailed' with an induction and examination preparation element in the first and final weeks of the course. There will also need to be the opportunity for frequent examination practice, partly delivered through end-of-theme assessments and/or some form of 'mock' examination. Finally, where AS and A level specifications are co-teachable and similar in core content, it might be smart to build in some kind of course transfer opportunity at the close of the first year of study, whereby AS students can transfer to the A level programme.	Senior Leadership Team Post-16 Team Curriculum Managers	Quality of TLA Learner Outcomes
10. What about the retention of the AS examination as an alternative or mid-point exit option for a student who is finding an A level programme too 'tough'?	The content cross-over of the new AS and A level specifications and, therefore, the opportunity to co-teach the two qualifications may mean that those who are struggling within an A level specification can be offered the opportunity to sit the relevant AS level examination as either a mid-point course exit strategy (after one year of study) or as a less demanding end of course examination (after two years of study). If a midpoint exit via the route of an AS level examination is offered, this will impact on the sequence through which specification topics are addressed, as those that appear in the AS level specification will need to be taught to AS and A level students in the first year of study.	Senior Leadership Team Post-16 Team Curriculum Managers	Quality of TLA Learner Outcomes

Question	Answer or issue to explore	Personnel	Ofsted criteria
11. Will the shift to tougher, non-modular A levels produce a boost in the numbers taking vocational options?	They may well do; here, the key task for schools and colleges is to offer vocational programmes that have a real market value with employers and/or university admissions tutors; in the past too many 'vocational' programmes have not provided a viable introduction to work or to Higher Education, or one that the student is interested in pursuing. The new stand-alone AS level may offer an alternative option for those who are put off by the new A level model.	Senior Leadership Team Post-16 Team Vocational Ed. Co-ord.	Quality of TLA PD/behaviour/welfare Learner Outcomes
12. If so, how will this impact on the provision for and status of vocational routes?	Arguably, the re-casting of A and AS levels offers a space that vocational courses might fill. However, if unsuccessful students simply 'fall' onto vocational programmes they would not have chosen, the status of the vocational route will be further diminished.	Senior Leadership Team Post-16 Team Vocational Ed. Co-ord.	Leadership/Management Quality of TLA PD/behaviour/welfare Learner Outcomes
13. What is the single biggest challenge posed by the A level reforms?	The biggest challenge is to square a set of apparently 'tougher' examinations with an ever growing and widening post-16 cohort, a cohort of all abilities and of students who are now obliged to be there.	Senior Leadership Team	Leadership/Management
14. What is the single biggest opportunity opened up by the A level reforms?	If there is an opportunity it is to re-engage teachers with their subjects, within a culture where the demonstration, analysis, interpretation, application and evaluation of subject knowledge will be celebrated in a way that some would argue, at present, it is not.	Senior Leadership Team Senior Leadership Team	Leadership/Management
15. How will or might the changes to A level impact on the wider life of the sixth form or college student, including their capacity or inclination to engage in extra-curricular activities?	As we have said in our discussion of the reform of AS level, there is a risk that the new 'tougher' A level framework risks 'crowding out' those extra-curricular activities that are vital to broadening minds, building character and developing resilience; to reiterate, schools and colleges should caution against this, and not simply because the current Secretary of State for Education, Nicky Morgan, says that these qualities are important or because they are central to UCAS Personal Statements or successful performance in an employment interview. They have merit in themselves, and they do much to distinguish post-16 study from pre-16 schooling.	Post-16 Team Student Voice Co-ord. Extra-curricular Co-ord.	Leadership/Management

5. The emerging post-16 funding model

Background

The emerging post-16 model reflects and supports the range of curricular and qualifications reforms summarized in this document and will impact on precisely how schools, colleges and other institutions respond to these reforms.

Questions, answers and issues

Question	Answer or issue to explore	Personnel	Ofsted criteria
1. How is post-16 study for 16-19 year olds funded?	Post 16 education is funded by a government body, the Education Funding Agency (EFA). Funding is allocated primarily on a per student basis, with weightings and adjustments that take into account issues like the higher cost of delivering certain courses, the successful retention of learners and the level of socio-economic disadvantage with which particular schools or colleges have to deal.	Senior Leadership Team Post-16 Team	Leadership/Management
2. How much, in funding terms, is the typical post-16 student worth?	At the time of writing (September 2015), the typical full-time funding rate for a post-16 student is set at £4000 per annum for those aged 16 and 17 at the start of the academic year and £3300 for those aged 18 but, in all cases, funding is dependent on students having – or continuing to study for – the equivalent of what is currently a GCSE grade C in English and Mathematics (see below). Those students deemed to be suffering from socio-economic disadvantage attract additional funding of £480.	Senior Leadership Team Post-16 Team	Leadership/Management
3. Why is it important to have this information?	In practical terms, an institution that attracts between 15 and 20 additional post-16 students has the resources to hire two newly qualified teachers or one senior member of staff, inclusive of on-costs.		
4. What will be the impact on school and college budgets of the new examination arrangements?	The separation (or 'decoupling') of AS and A level in the new model is likely to reduce the overall cost of examination entry fees to schools and colleges in the medium term.	Senior Leadership Team Bursar Examinations Officer	

Question	Answer or issue to explore	Personnel	Ofsted criteria
5. Is there any mileage in the three year sixth model (i.e. AS in Year 12 and A across Years 13 and 14) or does the funding framework effectively forbid this?	The funding framework does not appear to forbid it, but the reduced level of funding available to those aged 18 at the start of the academic year is something that schools and colleges will need to factor in.	Senior Leadership Team Post-16 Team	Leadership/Management Quality of TLA Learner Outcomes
6. What are Planned Hours and how do they relate to the funding framework?	For funding purposes, students on full-time courses must have a minimum of 540 hours of timetabled (or planned) learning in an academic year. Activities that can be 'counted' towards Planned Hours (previously referred to as "Guided Learning Hours") fall into two categories: 'qualification' hours (conventional subject focused 'lessons' and other activities devoted to students securing approved qualifications) and 'non-qualification' or EEP hours (where EEP stands employability, enrichment and pastoral). The latter might include timetabled pastoral support, engagement in community volunteering and activities such as work experience and work related learning. It is critical that if an activity is deemed to be "Planned" for funding purposes, it must be timetabled and a register kept.	Senior Leadership Team Post-16 Team	Leadership/Management
7. What do the new funding arrangements say about re-sits, and is there a need for a school or college-wide policy on re-sits?	Generally, tuition for those preparing for re-sits is not eligible for funding as the Education Funding Agency regards the activity leading to the re-sit examination as having already been funded. Exceptions are made for English and Mathematics (see below) and in special circumstances, for instance where the student has had a serious illness. A school or college-wide policy may help to level the playing field between subjects, ensure fairness, and send a clear message to students and their parents.	Senior Leadership Team Post-16 Team	Leadership/Management Learner Outcomes

Question	Answer or issue to explore	Personnel	Ofsted criteria
8. What is the funding position on the re-sitting of GCSEs in English and Mathematics?	GCSEs, or equivalent approved qualifications, in English and Maths, where the student has not previously achieved a grade C (or grade 5 from 2017 and grade 4 thereafter), are not counted as 're-sits' for funding purposes, as it is a national policy objective that all young people should achieve this level in these subjects. This is recognized in the revised funding arrangements. Remember, it is a condition of the funding of any post-16 programme of study that a post-16 student who does not have the equivalent of what is currently a GCSE grade C in English and/or Mathematics must continue to study for either or both.	Senior Leadership Team Curriculum Managers	Learner Outcomes
9. How might schools economize on the cost of sustaining sixth form provision?	Consortiums, formally or informally, may have something to offer here, and certainly schools should collaborate on CPD.	Senior Leadership Team Director of Sixth Curriculum Leaders	Leadership/Management Learner Outcomes
10. How will schools make savings within the emerging 14-19 landscape?	One possible saving is in working with fewer AS level students, given the risk that the new AS has demonstrably less marketable value.	Senior Leadership Team Director of Sixth Curriculum Leaders	Learner Outcomes

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It is a condition of the funding of any post-16 programme of study that a post-16 student who does not have the equivalent of what is currently a GCSE grade C in English and/or Mathematics must continue to study for either or both.

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6. The new inspection framework

Background

Frequent revisions to the inspection framework for schools and for provision for those aged 16 to 19 in other settings have become a commonplace in recent years. The reforms being introduced from September 2015 represent an evolution of the previous framework, rather than a radical change. However, they give schools, in particular, a strong 'nudge' towards the new suite of performance measures, curricular priorities and qualifications reforms set out in this document.

They also have a stronger focus on the impact of effective leadership and on two other things: progress (as opposed to simply attainment) and student wellbeing. Finally, inspections will be delivered by inspectors directly contracted by Ofsted, rather than through the large outsourcing companies employed in recent years and there is set to be a renewed push to encourage senior leaders at 'Good' and 'Outstanding' schools to qualify as inspectors, such that over time inspection will take on a stronger peer-to-peer dimension.

Questions, answers and issues

Question	Answer or issue to explore	Personnel	Ofsted criteria
1. How does the revised inspection framework differ from the one it replaces?	<p>There are five substantive changes:</p> <p>(a) There is a much stronger focus on leadership, on the vision that leaders hold for their schools and colleges, on how they shape organizational culture, on how they seek to narrow the gaps between 'advantaged' and 'disadvantaged' learners, on how aware they are of any issues that need to be addressed, and on their capacity to address these.</p> <p>(b) The four criteria that schools and colleges are assessed against have been recast as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effectiveness of leadership and management. • Quality of teaching, learning and assessment. • Personal development, behaviour and welfare. • Outcomes for children and learners. <p>(c) Schools and other settings judged as being 'Good' at their last inspection will be inspected within three years and, when they are, they will be subject to a short one day 'Section 8' inspection. This will trigger a full 'Section 5' inspection if the school is thought to be either slipping back or moving towards "Outstanding".</p>	<p>Senior Leadership Team</p> <p>All staff</p>	Leadership/Management

Question	Answer or issue to explore	Personnel	Ofsted criteria
	<p>Schools with 'Outstanding' status will only be re-inspected if and when there is a significant change in key performance indicators, as illustrated through RAISEonline and including an apparent change in behaviour data or an increase in the number of parental complaints.</p> <p>(d) Inspection will be based much more strongly on 'peer-to-peer' principles with 7 out of 10 inspectors being current practitioners leading 'Good' or 'Outstanding' institutions, all short inspections being HMI-led, and all inspectors directly contracted by Ofsted.</p> <p>(e) There will be a new emphasis on progress rather than just attainment, on the provision of a broad and balanced curriculum, on safeguarding, and on student wellbeing and self-confidence.</p> <p>(f) Finally, in terms of progress, there is also a big emphasis on inspectors judging current rates of progress rather than hanging their judgement on historic data. In preparing for the inspections of schools previously deemed 'Good', HMI are not required to scrutinize the school's RAISEonline report – as an experienced inspector who spoke to us remarked 'Quite a shift!'.</p>		
2. Is it any more difficult to gain an 'Outstanding' judgment in the new framework?	<p>The inspectorate would contest that it is not, but schools and colleges will need to pick up the nuances of the new framework and the new ways in which an inspection might be triggered. In particular, the Chief Inspector has been vocal about the need for schools to resist the temptation to 'coast'. Inspectors are also likely to be especially interested in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How schools and colleges are coping with the shift away from 'attainment' and towards 'progress', as reflected in the new Progress 8 performance measure discussed earlier in this document. • The quality, in post 16 settings, of Programmes of Study rather than just the packages of courses taken by students. • Student attendance and the efforts that schools and colleges are taking to maximise this. • Any action being taken to promote 'British Values' and challenge radicalisation. 		
3. When does the new framework become live?	The new framework went live from September 2015.	Senior Leadership Team All staff	Leadership/Management

Question	Answer or issue to explore	Personnel	Ofsted criteria
4. Are there any particular issues that the inspectors are likely to be interested in at Key Stage 4?	Inspectors will remain interested in the steps that schools are taking to "close the gap" between 'advantaged' and 'disadvantaged' students and the specific ways in which Pupil Premium funding is being used to this end. They will also be interested in the level of access that students gain to EBacc pathways.	Senior Leadership Team All staff Key Stage 4 Team Curriculum Managers	Quality of TLA Learner Outcomes
5. Are there any particular issues that the inspectors will be interested in post-16 settings such as the sixth form or a sixth form or FE college?	There are no specific changes to report on for the post-16 phase but Ofsted will judge performance against the four main criteria by which they judge performance across Key Stages 1-4. Post-16, they are likely to be especially interested in: (a) The appropriateness of the curriculum offer. (b) The value-for-money returned through this offer. (c) Evidence that any gap between 'advantaged' and 'disadvantaged' students is closing. (d) Strong outcomes data in terms of qualifications gain and student destinations. (e) High quality enrichment activities that raise horizons and broaden student experiences, with particular emphasis on how these enhance a young person's "employability". (f) the school's or college's attempts to pre-empt and counter 'radicalisation' and its attempts to promote 'British values'.	Senior Leadership Team All staff Post-16 Team Curriculum Managers	Quality of TLA Learner Outcomes
6. To what extent does the new inspection framework square with the pronouncements of the Department for Education?	Our appraisal suggests that there is considerable convergence between the Department and the inspectorate. In particular, we note: 1. A shared concern for progress and an intolerance of 'coasting' schools, which may mean that some schools that may previously have considered themselves safe from a 'harsh' inspection may need to think again. 2. A shift by the Department from 'attainment' to 'progress', as reflected in new progress based Floor Targets, in line with a direction that the inspectorate has been taking for some time now. 3. A continued focus on "closing the gap" between the progress and achievement of disadvantaged students and their more advantaged peers.	Senior Leadership Team	Leadership/Management Quality of TLA PD/behaviour/welfare Learner Outcomes

Question	Answer or issue to explore	Personnel	Ofsted criteria
	<p>4. A continued concern for the quality of embedded learning over time and the appraisal of evidence that points to this – for instance, the quality of students’ work and the rigour and appropriateness of assessment.</p> <p>5. An increasing focus on student wellbeing, on safeguarding and on the development of qualities such as character.</p> <p>6. A renewed concern for what schools and colleges are doing to develop a range of ‘British’ values in the face, in particular, of ‘radicalisation’.</p> <p>7. A focus on curriculum breadth in inspection documentation, albeit against the backdrop of a government narrative that clearly locates some subjects as more highly valued than others, notably through the focus on English and maths, pre and post-16, the wider EBacc offer and, post-16, the emergence of ‘facilitating’ subjects. The debate about curriculum breadth has been thrown into sharp emphasis by the renewed focus placed on EBacc subjects in recent ministerial announcements and the suggestion, which we have been unable to find in Ofsted’s documentation, that only those schools that offer every student a track to securing the EBacc can secure an ‘Outstanding’ judgement. Indeed, as this booklet goes to press, Sir Michael Wilshaw, the Chief Inspector, has spoken out critically on the EBacc, contending that it does not meet the needs of all students.</p>		
7. Where can I get more information about the new framework and Ofsted’s work more broadly?	Ofsted has produced a very useful short guide to the reforms set out above: <i>The Future of Education Inspection: Understanding the Changes</i> . This, the new inspection framework and the associated inspection handbook are available online at: https://www.gov.uk/changes-to-education-inspection-from-september-2015 .	Senior Leadership Team All staff	Not applicable

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The debate about curriculum breadth has been thrown into sharp emphasis by the renewed focus placed on EBacc subjects in recent ministerial announcements.

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7. Trends and tensions across and between these reforms

Background

Education policy – and public policy in general – is never as ‘tidy’ as it is presented, and with these reforms there are some key trends and some key tensions. Recognizing and addressing these will have a significant impact on student outcomes and on the experience of teachers, curriculum and pastoral managers and school and college leaders. We identify some of these tensions below but these will differ from area to area, setting to setting and subject to subject. One useful professional development exercise might be to identify as a leadership, departmental or whole staff team just which tensions are likely to be most pertinent in the context in which you work.

Questions, answers and issues

Question	Answer or issue to explore	Personnel	Ofsted criteria
1. How coherently do the different changes around performance measures, staying-on requirements (in terms of the raised ‘participation age’) qualifications reform and funding frameworks sit together, or do they pull in different directions?	Critics have pointed out that there is a tension between requiring young people to remain in education and training beyond 16, while making many of the qualifications that they might sit ‘tougher’. In particular, the removal of the feedback offered by modularity, coursework and AS accreditation will impact on middle-ability sixth formers and those from disadvantaged backgrounds.	Senior Leadership Team Post-16 Team Curriculum Managers	Leadership/Management

Question	Answer or issue to explore	Personnel	Ofsted criteria
2. Are there any likely unintended outcomes from these reforms, for schools and colleges, courses, or students?	<p>There is likely to be pressure on three things:</p> <p>(a) Staying on and/or progression to university rates amongst disadvantaged students, given the removal of university maintenance grants for this cohort.</p> <p>(b) The development of curriculum and behaviour management models that work for middle ability students – and notably middle ability sixth formers - given the ‘toughening-up’ of GCSE, the decoupling of AS and A level and the so-called ‘toughening-up’ of the A level.</p> <p>(c) The continued teaching of ‘new’ and other non EBacc subjects, especially where these are not defined as “facilitating” subjects by the Russell Group universities.</p>	<p>Senior Leadership Team</p> <p>Curriculum Managers</p> <p>Pastoral Managers</p> <p>Post-16 Team</p>	Leadership/Management
3. Who will welcome and who might be worried by the changes (school leaders, teachers in certain subject areas, employers, admissions tutors, parents, students)?	<p>Those who believe that A levels have become ‘too easy’ may welcome the changes but many will be concerned about what looks like a significant ‘moving of the goalposts’.</p> <p>Admissions Tutors, in particular, are at best ambivalent about the decoupling of AS levels from A levels, as this removes a consistent, and they feel reliable, predictor of A level performance ahead of the UCAS application process.</p>	<p>Senior Leadership Team</p> <p>Post-16 Team</p>	Leadership/Management
4. How might the abolition of Maintenance Grants for students from disadvantaged backgrounds impact on their performance and participation at AS and A level?	<p>We cannot be sure about this but it certainly removes an incentive for students from such backgrounds to enter, or to prepare for, Higher Education. Therefore, we would expect, there to be some kind of impact, especially for middle-ability sixth formers from disadvantaged backgrounds who will also miss the feedback offered by the staging post of AS level examinations midway through their studies.</p>	<p>Senior Leadership Team</p> <p>Pupil Premium Leader</p> <p>Post-16 Team</p>	<p>Leadership/Management</p> <p>PD/behaviour/welfare</p> <p>Learner Outcomes</p>

Question	Answer or issue to explore	Personnel	Ofsted criteria
5. How will UCAS (and university admissions tutors) respond during the 3-5 year period while the new A levels settle into place, and how in particular will they deal with those students who offer mixed bags of old ('easier') and new (harder') A levels during the first few years of the reforms?	Again, we cannot be sure about this, and would suspect that UCAS (and admissions tutors) will have to treat 'old' and 'new' A level subjects as 'equals' during the period when both co-exist. Further, at the margins and where AS level points or grades are taken into account in the making of offers, one would not expect a student who has completed a course leading to an 'old' AS level grade to be disadvantaged just because it is formally worth less than a new AS level grade according to the UCAS tariff.	UCAS Coordinator	Leadership/Management Learner Outcomes
6. How does the issue of funding play out with other financial or political imperatives?	The tension between achieving financial 'viability' and meeting student needs is a real one – the risk is that students will be pushed onto the wrong courses for funding reasons.	Senior Leadership Team Director of Sixth	Learner Outcomes

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The tension between achieving financial 'viability' and meeting student needs is a real one – the risk is that students will be pushed onto the wrong courses for funding reasons.

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8. The readiness of schools, colleges, teachers and organizational leaders to deliver these reforms

Background

The success of the government's reform programme – especially its reforms to GCSEs, AS levels and A levels will depend on the readiness – and willingness – of schools and colleges – and of teachers, curriculum and pastoral managers and school leaders – to implement them. Issues around teacher supply, teachers' subject knowledge, their experience of 'linear' examination frameworks and their access to CPD are likely to be especially pertinent.

These issues are not simply operational. School and college governing bodies will need to be informed about the impact of the changes if they are to make informed strategic choices about issues like the shape of Key Stage 4 and the nature of post-16 provision. Governors can only play their proper role in providing 'support and challenge' to school and college leaders if they are up-to-speed with the reforms, the challenges of implementing them and their impact on learner outcomes.

Questions, answers and issues

Question	Answer or issue to explore	Personnel	Ofsted criteria
1. How can schools and colleges prepare their staff for the new curriculum and qualifications landscape, especially when many will never have taught linear, two year A level courses, and some are non-specialists in the areas that they teach in?	<p>There are three key issues to address here:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Awareness across the staff of the changes at GCSE, AS and A level and their timing. (b) Awareness across the staff of the possible impact of linear examinations (and, effectively a move from assessment that is at least partially formative to assessment that is entirely summative) on teaching, revision and examination preparation strategies. (c) Any shortfalls in teacher knowledge which could impact on student outcomes at GCSE or A level, given the new focus on 'deep learning' and 'core knowledge' and the use of non-specialist teachers, especially in non-traditional subjects at A level. 	<p>Senior Leadership Team All middle leaders</p>	Leadership/Management

Question	Answer or issue to explore	Personnel	Ofsted criteria
	We suspect that these issues will need to be addressed at macro and micro levels – at the level of the whole school or college and at the level of the individual faculty or department, or, indeed, the individual practitioner. Ensuring that there is at least one GCSE, AS or A level examiner in each major department is also a way of ensuring that the school or college has access to the latest intelligence on the reforms and understands their purpose.		
2. What can they do to prepare parents for the reforms, both in terms of the provision of information and the management of parental expectations?	There is a need to provide information and re-assurance in equal measure, in particular the reassurance that those behind the reforms have said that no individual student will be disadvantaged by the changes. The two Cambridge University Press 'Transition Guides' published alongside this document, Starting GCSEs: your guide to exam success and Starting A levels: your guide to exam success are designed to provide all of the necessary information and should be shared with parents. Schools and colleges might also want to think about staging dedicated parent information evenings, based around 'family learning' principles, and enabling parents to both understand the changes and to support their children through the courses they are following, new or old.	Senior Leadership Team All middle leaders	Leadership/Management
3. How do the changes at GCSE in particular impact on the Special Educational Needs and inclusion agendas?	They may do. SEND Coordinators and Curriculum Managers will need to liaise when the new specifications are being launched in particular subjects to ensure that students (especially those with Education and Healthcare Plans) are coping with the demands of the new courses. In particular, there may be a need for additional literacy and numeracy support, which - in the longer term – ought to be delivered at Key Stage 3 as part of a GCSE preparation programme.	Senior Leadership Team SEND Coordinator All middle leaders Key Stage 4 Team Governing Body	Leadership/Management Quality of TLA PD/behaviour/welfare Learner Outcomes
4. How might the changes impact on the concept of the "mixed ability sixth form"?	The combined impact of the removal of the AS level as a staging post and the apparent 'toughening up' of A level is likely to be greatest on middle ability sixth formers, a group who were once described as the 'new sixth'. Considerable thought will need to be given to the curricular needs of these students, and the role of induction, in-course support and examination preparation activities in providing them with the means to survive and thrive in the new curriculum landscape.	Senior Leadership Team All middle leaders Post-16 Team	Leadership/Management Learner Outcomes

Question	Answer or issue to explore	Personnel	Ofsted criteria
5. What provision are schools and colleges making for additional English and Mathematics teaching for those who have not reached the appropriate standard at GCSE by the close of Year 11?	There are two reasons for addressing this issue: (a) To prepare students for those new AS and/or A level courses that will make greater demands in terms of extended writing and higher-end mathematics. (b) To meet the new statutory requirement for all post-16 students to sustain their study of English and/or mathematics until they reach the equivalent of a Grade C or 4, or the equivalent.	Senior Leadership Team Post-16 Team Head of English Head of Mathematics	Leadership/Management Quality of TLA Learner Outcomes
6. Will those taking the apparently tougher new A levels in the sciences need supplementary Mathematics teaching, at least until those students who will have taken the 'new', and apparently 'tougher' GCSE in Mathematics reach the sixth form in September 2017?	This issue arises out of the different arrival times of the new AS and A level specifications and the mismatch between the reform timelines for GCSE and AS and A level. Those taking a mix of 'new' and 'old' A level programmes may need higher order mathematical skills in some courses than in others; and students taking 'new' AS and A levels starting in 2015 and 2016 will not have studied the new 'tougher' Maths specifications at GCSE. Schools and colleges will need to decide, post 16, whether 'plug in' additional provision is required.	Senior Leadership Team Post-16 Team Head of Mathematics	Leadership/Management Quality of TLA Learner Outcomes
7. Will the focus on student progress impact on arrangements for teachers' performance management and review?	Schools and colleges will need to decide on the detail of this locally, but the issue of in-year and year-on-year progress is, we suspect, likely to become a standard feature in Performance Management discussions.	Senior Leadership Team Governing Body	Leadership/Management Learner Outcomes

Question	Answer or issue to explore	Personnel	Ofsted criteria
8. How are teacher shortages in key subjects likely to impact on the ability of schools and colleges to successfully deliver these changes?	This issue will have greater impact in some schools and colleges than others, but national shortages (especially in English, mathematics and the sciences) are likely to be an issue, especially given the focus of the reforms and the continuing influence of the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) agenda.	Senior Leadership Team Curriculum Managers	Leadership/Management Quality of TLA
9. Are there any short-term steps that schools and colleges can take to address these shortages at a local level?	A skills audit might identify a range of 'hidden' specialisms across staff teams and inform Continuing Professional Development (CPD) interventions to bring these individuals 'up-to-speed' with current practice.	Senior Leadership Team Curriculum Managers	Leadership/Management
10. Are the reforms to GCSE, AS and A level likely to have any 'trickle down' impact on provision at Key Stage 3 and even in the primary curriculum?	Over time, given the focus on 'cultural literacy' (notably British history and British writers), 'deep learning', 'extended' writing, 'mastery' and 'core knowledge', there is likely to be some impact on curriculum shape and subject content at Key Stage 3, and in particular, on literacy and numeracy provision, given the standards that young people are likely to need to reach by the close of Key Stage 3 if they are to prosper at Key Stage 4 and beyond. It should be noted, though, that changes to the primary curriculum are also creating a 'trickle-up' pressure, which also impacts on Key Stage 3, giving a new educational meaning to the phrase, the 'squeezed middle'. For instance, the abolition of nationally standardised levels at the end of Key Stage 2 may increase the focus on standardising activities in Key Stage 3 so as to benchmark subsequent progress.	Senior Leadership Team Key Stage 3 Team Curriculum Managers	Leadership/Management
11. How will the reforms impact on approaches to teaching, learning and assessment, especially given their focus on 'core' or 'deep' knowledge?	There is likely to be a particular focus on three things: (a) Identifying, understanding and evaluating knowledge. (b) Developing factual recall and memory-enhancing skills and strategies such as, for instance, mind mapping. (c) Developing the skills of extended writing and those required for solving higher-end mathematical problems.	Senior Leadership Team Curriculum Managers	Leadership/Management Quality of TLA Learner Outcomes

Question	Answer or issue to explore	Personnel	Ofsted criteria
12. Could the changes impact on the shape and length of the school or college day?	<p>They could – but the greater risk is that, especially in post-16 settings, there will be a squeeze on those kind of extra-curricular activities that develop character, confidence, resilience and social awareness, at just the time when the importance of enabling young people to develop these characteristics is beginning to re-emerge elsewhere in the educational landscape, not least in the Ofsted framework launched in September 2015 and in the recent comments of Secretary of State for Education, Nicky Morgan.</p> <p>There is also an issue about teachers' working hours, with UK teachers already viewed as being in breach of the European Union's Working Hours Directive, evidenced by several studies suggesting UK teachers work a 60 hour week or longer.</p>	Senior Leadership Team Governing Body	Leadership/Management
13. How will all of this impact on (a) subject choices at GCSE; (b) post 16 participation levels; (c) sixth form and college admission requirements; (d) student induction; (e) attainment outcomes; (f) teaching and learning strategies; (g) curriculum planning and timetabling; and (h) student wellbeing at your school or college?	Only you can answer this question because only you have the local knowledge to do so, but we would contend that, having worked through this document, these are the kind of questions that organizational and curriculum leaders should be beginning to form a view on; and they are the kind of questions that ought to be prominent in the mind of every reflective and effective educational professional.	Senior Leadership Team Post-16 Team Curriculum Managers	Leadership/Management Quality of TLA PD/behaviour/welfare Learner Outcomes

Appendix A

Starting GCSEs: your guide to exam success

A Cambridge University Press Transition Guide, by Tony Breslin and Mike Moores

Contents

Part 1: The nature of the GCSE examination

1. What does GCSE stand for and what kind of examination is it?
2. Does everybody sit the same examination paper(s) in a particular subject?
3. What is an IGCSE?
4. Is everything down to what happens in the written exam?
5. What happens if something outside my control is likely to affect my exam performance?
6. Why should I be concerned about my GCSE grades?
7. Who else is concerned about my GCSE grades?
8. Are some GCSEs more important than others?
9. How are GCSEs graded?
10. How are GCSE examination papers produced?

Part 2: How and why GCSEs vary in style across different subjects and types of subject

1. What are the new GCSEs in English Language, English Literature and Mathematics like?
2. Why have these changes been made?
3. What are the key differences and similarities across other GCSE subject areas?

Part 3: Developing your capacity to succeed as a GCSE student

1. What are the qualities of a successful GCSE student and how do I become one?
2. How can I best plan my GCSE studies?
3. How and where do I learn best?
4. How should I organise my revision?
5. What about examination practice?

Part 4: The skills and strategies that you will need for success in the examination room

1. As the GCSE exams approach, what will I need to do to make sure that I'm 'exam-ready'?
2. What should I do, and not do, in the exam room?
3. How do I best handle the challenge of having a lot of exams in a short period of time?

Part 5: Beyond GCSEs: your options in terms of employment, training and study

1. Do I have any idea about the kind of career I'm interested in when I complete my education and do I know what the possible routes into this career might be?
2. If I'm unsure about my future career destination, do I have a sense as to whether I want to start working or go to university?
3. Where can I get the advice and guidance to help me make the right decisions about life beyond GCSEs, and about the worlds of work and Higher Education?

Part 6: Success at GCSE: a quick reference guide

Appendix B

Starting A levels: your guide to exam success

A Cambridge University Press Transition Guide, by Tony Breslin and Mike Moores

Contents

Part 1: Life in the sixth form or at college

1. How is studying in the sixth form or at college different?
2. Will I get the chance to study new subjects?
3. What skills and attitudes will I need to succeed in this new environment?
4. Apart from my examination courses, what else might I be expected to get involved in?
5. Why is it important to take part in additional (or 'extra-curricular') activities?

Part 2: The nature of AS and A level qualifications

1. What is the relationship between AS and A level?
2. How many AS and/or A level courses am I likely to study?
3. What kinds of thing should influence my choice of AS and/or A level subjects?
4. Why are my AS and A level grades important?
5. Who else is concerned about my AS and A level grades?
6. Are some A level subjects considered to be more valuable than others?

7. How are AS and A levels marked and graded?
8. How are AS and A level examination papers produced?
9. Is everything down to what happens in the examination room?
10. What happens if something outside my control is likely to affect my exam performance?

Part 3: How and why AS and A levels are changing

1. How do the new AS and A level examinations differ from those they replace?
2. Why are these changes being made?
3. Which AS and A level courses are amongst the first to change, and which are not changing until later?
4. What about retakes if I don't get the grades that I'm hoping for at the first attempt?
5. Apart from A levels, are there any other changes that I should be aware of?

Part 4: Developing your capacity to succeed as an AS or A level student

1. What are the qualities of a successful AS and A level student and how do I become one?
2. What are 'assessment objectives' and how do I address these?
3. What role can I play in planning my A level studies?
4. How and where do I learn best?
5. How should I organise my revision?
6. What about examination practice?

Part 5: The skills and strategies that you will need for success in the examination room

1. As the A level exams approach, what will I need to do to make sure that I am 'exam-ready'?
2. What should I do, and not do, in the examination room?
3. How do I best handle the challenge of having a number of examinations in a short period of time?

Part 6: Beyond A level: your options in terms of employment and Higher Education

1. Do I have any idea about the kind of career that I want to follow when I complete my A levels?
2. Does this career require me to have a university degree, and if so does it require a degree in a certain subject?
3. Are some universities, or some university courses more highly thought of than others?
4. Where can I get the advice and guidance to help me make the right decisions about life beyond A levels, and about the worlds of work and Higher Education in particular, especially if I'm not clear about my response to the above questions?
5. Are there other reasons for choosing to go to university or not?

Part 7: Success at AS and A level: a quick reference guide

Appendix C

Changes to GCSE examinations, subject by subject

Phase 1

- New format GCSE courses first taught from September 2015
- All courses first examined in May 2017

English Language	Mathematics
English Literature	

Phase 2

- GCSE courses typically taught in schools and first taught from September 2016
- All courses first examined in May 2018

Ancient Languages	Food Preparation and Nutrition
Art and Design	Geography
Biology	History
Chemistry	Modern Foreign Languages
Citizenship Studies	Music
Computer Science (Formerly "Computing")	Physical Education
Dance	Physics
Double Science	Religious Studies
Drama	

Phase 3

- GCSE courses typically taught in schools and first taught from September 2017

Ancient History	Film Studies
Astronomy	Geology
Business (Formerly Business Studies)	Information and Communication Technology
Classical Civilisation	Media Studies
Design and Technology	Psychology
Economics	Sociology
Electronics	Statistics
Engineering	

All courses first examined in May 2019

Appendix D

Changes to AS and A level examinations, subject by subject

Phase 1

- AS and A level courses first taught from September 2015
- AS level first examined in May 2016
- A level first examined in June 2017

Art and Design	English Language and Lit.
Biology	English Literature
Business (Formerly known as "Business Studies")	History
Chemistry	Physics
Computer Science (Formally known as "Computing")	Psychology
Economics	Sociology
English Language	

Phase 2

- AS and A level courses first taught from September 2016
- AS level first examined in May 2017
- A level first examined in June 2018

Dance	Latin
Drama and Theatre	Music
French	Physical Education

Geography	Religious Studies
German	Spanish
Greek	

Phase 3

- AS and A level courses first taught from September 2017
- AS level first examined in May 2018
- A level first examined in June 2019

Accounting	Geology
Ancient History	Government and Politics
Archeology	History of Art
Classical Civilization	Information and Comm. Tech.
Creative Writing	Law
Design and Technology	Mathematics
Electronics	Media Studies
Environmental Science	Music Technology
Film Studies	Philosophy
Further Mathematics	Statistics
General Studies	

Appendix E

GCSE, AS and A level courses that are set to be discontinued, subject-by-subject

Over the next few years a number of subjects are likely to disappear at GCSE. Typically, these are in subjects that either Ofqual does not believe are suitable for examination at GCSE, or the awarding bodies do not see as viable commercially. In particular, question marks have been raised about the future of GCSEs in:

- Health and Social Care
- Home Economics: Child Development
- A range of community languages, including Bengali, Modern Hebrew and Urdu (on the basis that there are insufficient numbers to make these subjects viable for the examination boards)
- A range of practical subjects such as Electronics and Engineering (on the basis that these subjects are not best assessed through GCSE)

The opportunity to sit or re-sit GCSEs in English, English Language and Mathematics in November (rather than May or June) will no longer exist after November 2016.

Some old AS and A level subjects will also not reappear as new courses. Some of the subjects, including a number of community languages, that it is proposed will disappear from the AS and A level menu are listed below.

Anthropology	Modern Hebrew
Bengali	Polish
Citizenship Studies	Punjabi

It is planned that AS levels in these subjects will be examined for the last time in May 2016 and that any related A levels will be examined for the last time in 2017. However, it should be noted that, as this guide goes to press, there are currently well-supported campaigns lobbying to 'save' these subjects as AS and/or A level qualifications

About the authors

Dr Tony Breslin is an educationalist and public policy analyst. He is Director of the consultancy Breslin Public Policy Limited, Chair of the awarding body Industry Qualifications, a Visiting Fellow in the School of Education at the University of Hertfordshire and a Trustee of Adoption UK. He is also Chair of the Academy Council at Oasis Academy Enfield, Chair of Governors at Bushey and Oxhey Infant School and an associate of the Academy Improvement Team at Oasis Community Learning. A former Chair of Human Scale Education, the Association for the Teaching of the Social Sciences, and Speakers Bank, Tony is a qualified Ofsted Inspector and has served as a Chief Examiner at GCSE and a Principal Examiner and Chair of Examiners at A level.

Between September 2001 and August 2010, Tony was Chief Executive at the Citizenship Foundation, the leading education and participation charity. Prior to this, he was General Adviser, 14-19 Education, in Enfield, North London, where he led on vocational education and cross-borough sixth form arrangements, and produced the council's first lifelong learning strategy. A teacher by profession, he has taught and held management and leadership roles, including Head of Department and Director of Sixth Form Studies, at schools in Haringey and Hertfordshire.

Tony has published and spoken widely in the UK and overseas on education, participation, poverty and inclusion, and is credited, in particular, with the development of the concept of the citizenship-rich school. He is the co-editor, with Barry Dufour, of *Developing Citizens*, published by Hodder Education (2006), co-author, with Mike Moores, of *40@40: a portrait of 40 years of educational research through 40 studies*, published by the British Educational Research Association and Breslin Public Policy (2014) and co-author (with Ian Davies and a team based at the University of York) of *Creating Citizenship Communities: education, young people and the role of schools*, published by Palgrave Macmillan (2014).

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Mike Moores has extensive experience as a teacher, trainer and manager in secondary and further education in Hertfordshire and in North West London. In addition, he has worked with all of the major exam boards in various capacities, including Principal Examiner at A level, and for a range of leading educational publishers. Until August 2011, when he retired after thirty-five years in the classroom, he led on the teaching of Sociology and Politics to A level students at St. Albans Girls' School. Mike has a particular expertise in the teaching of Sociology (in which he has a national profile as a writer and speaker), in delivering CPD to teachers and in study skills and family learning. He has a special interest in equal opportunities issues, including access to Higher Education and disability awareness.

Mike was, for many years, a Vice-president of the Association for the Teaching of the Social Sciences (ATSS) and runs a consultancy that stages conferences for teachers of Sociology and Politics. For many years he organised the ATSS Annual Conference and has served as the warden of a Teachers' Centre. He is co-author, with Tony Breslin, of *40@40: a portrait of 40 years of educational research through 40 studies*, published by the British Educational Research Association and Breslin Public Policy (2014).
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About Breslin Public Policy

Breslin Public Policy Limited has worked in partnership with **Cambridge University Press** to produce this *Professional Development Guide*, one of a series of three publications – two guides for students and one for teachers, curriculum and pastoral managers, and school and college leaders. The series marks the launch of a new suite of Cambridge University Press textbooks designed specifically for the revised GCSE, AS and A level specifications launched in September 2015 and thereafter. It is published as part of Breslin's *Transform Education* project, a range of activities designed to inspire and support innovative, creative and transformative practice in educational settings

Breslin Public Policy was established in September 2010; focused on education, participation and the third sector, it works at the interface between public policy and professional practice. Current and recent clients include Adoption UK, Beyond Philanthropy, the Bridge Group, the British Educational Research Association, the British Olympic Foundation, the British Paralympic Association, Cambridge University Press, Character Scotland, CCE England, the Diana Award, East Sussex County Council, Keynote Educational, the London Organising Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games (LOCOG), Marriotts School (Stevenage), Navigation Learning, Oasis Academy Enfield, Oasis Community Learning, the Office of the Children's Commissioner, Ofqual, the Orwell Youth Prize, the RSA, the University of York Department of Education, and vInspired.
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Curriculum 2015

Your guide to the changing 14–19 qualifications and curriculum landscape

This guide sets out to enable teachers, curriculum and pastoral managers, and senior leaders in schools and colleges to navigate and make sense of the range of changes to GCSE, AS and A level examinations from September 2015. It does so by positioning these changes within a broader educational landscape that also sees reforms to school performance measures, post 16 funding arrangements and the Ofsted inspection framework.

Written by qualifications and curriculum specialists, Tony Breslin and Mike Moores, with input from an experienced expert panel of leading practitioners and school and college leaders, it is accompanied by two *Cambridge University Press Transition Guides* devised to support young people, and their parents and carers, as they start out on their GCSE and A level studies:

- *Starting GCSEs: your guide to exam success*
- *Starting A levels: your guide to exam success*

In these student guides, the authors draw on their extensive experience as secondary and further education teachers and senior examiners, and their work in parental engagement and widening participation, to focus on six things:

1. Reassurance
Providing young people with reassurance about the nature of the courses that they are about to begin
2. Induction
Ensuring that young people are appropriately and generically inducted into these courses
3. Skills and attitudes
Giving some sense of the skills and attitudes that young people will need to succeed as they make the transition from 'pupil' to 'student', both during their courses and in the exam hall
4. Exam preparation
Introducing young people to tactics and strategies for revision and examination preparation
5. Opportunities
Outlining the opportunities in the workplace and in Higher Education that success could bring
6. Reflection
Encouraging students to continually reflect on the choices before them, enabling young people to make wise, well-informed decisions

Cambridge University Press Professional Development Guides and *Cambridge University Press Transition Guides* are published in partnership with Breslin Public Policy Limited as part of their Transform Education project



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