



Subject:

**APPROVAL OF QUALIFICATIONS FOR EXAMINATION IN
SUMMER 2006**

**Circular Number:
2004/8**

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Audience:

- Principals and Boards of Governors of all grant-aided post-primary schools and special schools with secondary departments;
- Education and Library Boards;
- Council for Catholic Maintained Schools; and
- Northern Ireland Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment.

Summary of Contents:

This Circular is concerned with the approval of qualifications for which pupils of compulsory school age will be prepared in grant-aided schools from September 2004.

Enquiries:

Any enquiries about the contents of this Circular should be addressed to:

Mrs Jean Coulter
Curriculum and Qualifications Branch
Department of Education
Rathgael House
43 Balloo Road
BANGOR
Co Down
BT19 7PR

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Essential

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Tel: 028 9127 9406
Fax: 028 9127 9100

Additional Copies:

Tel: 028 9127 9636

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INTRODUCTION

1. Under the provisions of the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 (the 1998 Order), the Department must approve all courses leading to an external qualification provided for pupils of compulsory school age in grant-aided schools in Northern Ireland. This Circular sets out in its appendices the approved qualifications from September 2004. **Any school wishing to provide a course that is not listed in the Appendices should write to Curriculum and Qualifications Branch at the address below without delay.**

2. For ease of reference Appendix 1 (Part 1) sets out the statutory curricular requirements for Key Stage 4. These are, briefly, that pupils must take one subject from each Area of Study and must follow an approved course in that subject. Appendix 1 (Part 2) lists the subjects in which Programmes of Study are in place.

FLEXIBILITY INITIATIVE IN THE CURRICULUM AT KEY STAGE 4

3. The Department's Circular 2004/02 (10 February 2004) offers schools the opportunity to apply to the Department for approval to discontinue aspects of the statutory curriculum at Key Stage 4, for a cohort of pupils, subject to certain conditions, in favour of a 2-year work-related programme. **Schools are reminded that should they wish to offer pupils a course as part of a programme within these arrangements, and the course does not appear in this circular, it should be highlighted within their application for consideration by the Department.**

GCSE COURSES

Subjects for which Programmes of Study are in place

4. Where a Programme of Study is in force for a subject, schools offering the subject must follow a course which, if it leads to GCSE, conforms to the requirements of the Programme of Study. Part 1 of Appendix 2 lists the GCSE courses which meet the requirements of the relevant Northern Ireland Programmes of Study.

5. The Department has, exceptionally, approved a number of GCSE courses in subject areas for which Programmes of Study are in force, which do not meet the requirements of the Programmes of Study: these courses are listed in Part 2 of Appendix 2. These courses cover only a limited part of the subject concerned and they may **only** be offered to a pupil who is already fulfilling the Area of Study requirements by taking a different subject within that Area of Study.

Subjects for which there is no Programme of Study

6. Part 3 of Appendix 2 lists GCSE courses in subjects for which there is no Northern Ireland Programme of Study and which are approved for use in Northern Ireland schools.

Edexcel GCSE Provision

7. Edexcel had informed centres here that it did not intend to offer GCSE examinations in Northern Ireland from September 2002, and a re-sit only facility would be available in 2004. However, Edexcel will, however, continue to offer courses for Astronomy, Business & Communications Systems, Italian, Japanese, Modern Greek and Russian, which are approved for use in Northern Ireland. **Entries for these GCSE examinations should be made through CCEA.**

GCSE SHORT COURSES

8. The Northern Ireland Curriculum does not make any provision for short courses in subjects for which there are Programmes of Study: GCSE Short Courses in such subjects are therefore **not** approved. However, as an exception, and in response to anomalies in the current provision, approval **has** been given for a number of short courses in GCSE Modern Languages, these are listed at Appendix 7. There are no Programmes of Study for Religious Education or Information and Communication Technology and therefore GCSE Short Courses in either subject may be approved. In relation to Religious Education schools wishing to provide an approved GCSE Short Course should take account of the notes in paragraph 19 below.

GCSE COURSES IN VOCATIONAL SUBJECTS

9. GCSEs in vocational subjects were introduced for first teaching from September 2002. Approved GCSE courses in vocational subjects are listed at Appendix 2 – Part 4.

GNVQ PART 1

10. Part One GNVQ are being phased out and replaced with GCSE courses in applied subjects.

GNVQ LANGUAGE UNITS

11. GNVQ Language Units may be taken to satisfy the Area of Study requirements for Modern Languages. However, the Programme of Study requires pupils in Key Stage 4 to study Contexts 1, 2 and 3 in greater depth and also to study Contexts 4 and 5. To meet the requirements of the Programme of Study schools must ensure that pupils are covering the contexts specified.

ENTRY LEVEL QUALIFICATIONS

12. Most pupils at the end of compulsory schooling will be entered for a GCSE. Certain courses below GCSE level are approved by the Department for use with pupils for whom entry for a GCSE would not be appropriate, generally those who are working at or below level 3 of the Northern Ireland Curriculum. Approved Entry Level courses are listed at Appendix 3.

OTHER NON-GCSE COURSES

13. Some non-GCSE courses have also been approved by the Department on the basis that they augment or supplement the school curriculum for pupils following approved courses listed in Appendices 2 and 3. Appendix 4 lists a range of those courses most commonly used in schools in Northern Ireland. **The list is not exhaustive and any school wishing to offer a course of this type, which is not included in the list, should contact the Department as a matter of urgency at the address below.**

KEY SKILLS

14. Schools may use individual Key Skills qualifications covering *communication and application of number and IT* to accredit pupils' achievements. Schools must continue to provide the full Northern Ireland Programmes of Study in English and Mathematics. Approved Key Skills qualifications are listed at Appendix 5.

NVQs

15. For schools wishing to offer NVQ units and who are not discontinuing aspects of the statutory curriculum requirements mentioned in paragraph 3 above, the Department will consider approval of NVQ units for pupils in Key Stage 4 where joint arrangements have been or will be made with a College of Further Education for this purpose. Schools are reminded that approval of their Education and Library Board is required when Further Education Colleges are involved. Any school which is currently considering making such arrangements for commencement of study in September 2004 should send details as a matter of urgency to Curriculum and Qualifications Branch in the Department for consideration under the terms of Article 81 of the Education (NI) Order 1998.

ACCREDITATION OF QUALIFICATIONS WITHIN THE NATIONAL FRAMEWORK (NQF)

16. The NQF is managed by the regulatory authorities for England (QCA), Wales (ACCAC) and Northern Ireland (CCEA). Qualifications are accredited to the NQF where the regulatory authorities judge that specifications submitted by awarding bodies meet the requirements of relevant criteria. With GCSEs this means common criteria, GCSE general and, for most specifications, subject specific criteria.

The GCSE subject specification criteria have been written to take into account curricular requirements in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, and, as such, accreditation for most specifications also carries with it approval for a specification to be used within schools at Key Stage 4. However, for a number of subjects, it has been necessary to add to the criteria particular Northern Ireland requirements in order that the distinctive nature of the curriculum here is taken into account. Subjects in this category are: Art and Design, Business Studies, English Literature, Home Economics and Technology and Design.

It is therefore important that reference is made to the Department's approved list before beginning to teach any GCSE specification at Key Stage 4. In particular, care is needed where the subjects above are taken with Awarding Bodies other than CCEA.

It should be noted that the specification for OCR Art and Design 1910-1915 does not fully cover the requirements of the Northern Ireland Programme of Study for Art and Design, and does not have the Department's approval for use in schools in Northern Ireland.

GENERAL APPROVALS

17. The 1998 Order allows the Department to give approval generally as well as in relation to particular cases. In addition to the qualifications listed in Appendices 2-6, the Department will approve:

- Any qualification from which approval has now been withdrawn, **provided the pupils undertaking the relevant course have previously entered the examination, and their undertaking of the course is only for the purpose of enabling them to re-enter the examination;**
- Any qualification, regardless of the subject or the listing in Appendices 2-6, if the associated course of study is provided:
 - wholly outside school timetabled hours; and/or
 - for a teaching group the majority of whom are in a school year after that in which they reached the upper limit of compulsory school age.
- All non-GCSE community service awards, such as the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, Youth awards and Enterprise schemes, First Aid Schemes and road safety/traffic education schemes;
- All non-GCSE sports qualifications awarded by national sports associations;
- All GCE AS/A level qualifications;
- All vocational AS/A level qualifications.

KEY STAGE 4 QUALIFICATIONS PILOTS

18. CCEA is undertaking a number of pilots of specifications designed to support the proposals for revision to the curriculum at Key Stage 4 including the Flexibility Initiative. These qualifications are listed in Appendix 6. These pilots are accredited and, therefore the certification achieved will have National recognition. In view of the introduction of these accredited pilots, particularly in the areas of Citizenship and Employability, the Department will consider specifications from other awarding bodies that schools would wish to introduce to cover these new aspects of the curriculum for 14-16 year olds.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

19. The Education Reform (Northern Ireland) Order 1989 requires the curriculum for every grant-aided school to include provision for Religious Education for **all registered pupils** at the school. Religious Education is not a listed contributory subject nor is there a Programme of Study for it. **Schools are reminded that the Department has specified a core syllabus for the teaching of Religious Education in grant-aided schools and that they are required to include that core syllabus in their teaching of Religious Education.** Where a syllabus for a qualification does not cover the core syllabus requirements schools must still ensure that the core requirements are met.

CANCELLED CIRCULARS

20. Circulars 2003/6 and 2003/18 are hereby cancelled but continue to apply in respect of pupils in years 11 and 12 in the 2003/04 school year and those in year 12 in the 2004/05 school year i.e. those taking examinations in summer 2004 and 2005.

ADDITIONAL COPIES AND ENQUIRIES

21. Additional copies of this circular may be obtained from Curriculum and Qualifications Branch (Tel: 028 9127 9636). The circular is also available on the Department's website (www.deni.gov.uk).

Any enquiries about the content of this Circular should be addressed to:

Mrs Jean Coulter
Curriculum and Qualifications Branch
Department of Education
Rathgael House
43 Balloo Road
BANGOR
BT19 7PR

Telephone: 028 9127 9406

DAVID MANN
Curriculum and Qualifications Branch

APPENDIX 1 – PART 1

CURRICULAR REQUIREMENTS AT KEY STAGE 4

AREA OF STUDY	MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS
English	A full course in English Pupils who have taken GCSE English at the end of Year 11 may drop the subject and take a cognate subject e.g. English Literature.
Mathematics	A full course in mathematics Pupils who have taken GCSE mathematics at the end of Year 11 may drop the subject and take a cognate subject eg additional mathematics, statistics.
Science and Technology	A full course in balanced (single award) science
The Environment and Society	A course in one of: History Geography Business studies Economics Home economics Political studies Social and environmental studies
Creative and Expressive Studies	A course in physical education
Language	A course in one of: French German Italian Spanish Irish

CROSS-CURRICULAR THEMES

In developing schemes of work for, and in delivering, a course leading to a qualification in a contributory subject, teachers must fulfil the statutory requirement to promote the objectives of the educational (cross-curricular) themes.

APPENDIX 1 – PART 2

SUBJECTS FOR WHICH PROGRAMMES OF STUDY ARE IN PLACE IN YEARS 11 AND 12

English

Mathematics

Science

Technology and Design

History

Geography

Business Studies

Economics

Home Economics

Political Studies

Social and Environmental Studies

Modern Languages

Art and Design

Drama

Music

Physical Education

APPENDIX 2 - PART 1

APPROVED GCSE COURSES THAT MEET THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE RELEVANT NORTHERN IRELAND PROGRAMME OF STUDY

SUBJECT TITLE	AWARDING BODY	ASSOCIATED SPECIFICATION
Art and Design	AQA	Art and Design
	CCEA	Art and Design
	WJEC	Art and Design
Business Studies	CCEA	Business Studies A
Drama	AQA	Drama
	CCEA	Drama
	OCR	Drama
	WJEC	Drama
Economics	AQA	Economics
	CCEA	Economics
	OCR	Economics
English	AQA	English A
	AQA	English B
	CCEA	English
	OCR	English
	WJEC	English
Geography	AQA	Geography A
	AQA	Geography B
	AQA	Geography C
	CCEA	Geography
	OCR	Geography A
	OCR	Geography B
	OCR	Geography C
	WJEC	Geography A
History	AQA	History A
	AQA	History B
	AQA	History C
	CCEA	History
	OCR	History A
	OCR	History B
	OCR	History C
	WJEC	History A
	WJEC	History B
Home Economics	AQA	Home Economics - Child Development
	AQA	Home Economics - Food and Nutrition
	CCEA	Home Economics - Child Development
	CCEA	Home Economics

SUBJECT TITLE	AWARDING BODY	ASSOCIATED SPECIFICATION
Home Economics (continued)	OCR OCR WJEC WJEC	Home Economics - Child Development Home Economics - Food and Nutrition Home Economics - Child Development Home Economics - Food and Nutrition
Irish	CCEA	Irish
Irish (Gaeilge)	CCEA	Irish (Gaeilge)
Italian	AQA EDEXCEL ¹	Italian Italian
Mathematics	AQA AQA CCEA OCR OCR OCR WJEC WJEC	Mathematics A Mathematics B Mathematics Mathematics A Mathematics B Mathematics C Mathematics Mathematics (Modular)
Modern Languages: French	AQA AQA CCEA OCR WJEC	French A French B French French French
Modern Languages: German	AQA AQA CCEA OCR WJEC	German A German B German German German
Modern Languages: Spanish	AQA AQA CCEA OCR WJEC	Spanish A Spanish B Spanish Spanish Spanish
Music	AQA CCEA OCR WJEC	Music Music Music Music

¹ Refers to paragraph 7 Edexcel GCSE Provision

SUBJECT TITLE	AWARDING BODY	ASSOCIATED SPECIFICATION
Physical Education	AQA AQA CCEA OCR	Physical Education A ² Physical Education B ² Physical Education Physical Education ²
Science: Biology ³	AQA AQA CCEA OCR WJEC	Biology (Modular) A Biology Biology Biology Biology
Science: Chemistry ³	AQA AQA CCEA OCR WJEC	Chemistry Chemistry (Modular) A Chemistry Chemistry Chemistry
Science: Physics	AQA AQA CCEA OCR WJEC	Physics Physics (Modular) A Physics Physics Physics
Science: Double Award	AQA AQA CCEA CCEA OCR OCR OCR WJEC WJEC	Science: Double Award A Science: Double Award B Science: Double Award A Science: Double Award B Science: Double Award A Science: Double Award B Science: Double Award C Science: Double Award A Science: Double Award B
Science: Single Award	AQA AQA CCEA CCEA OCR OCR OCR WJEC WJEC	Science: Single Award A Science: Single Award B Science: Single Award (Modular) Science: Single Award (Non-modular) Science: Single Award A Science: Single Award B Science: Single Award C Science: Single Award A Science: Single Award B
Social and Environmental Studies	CCEA	Social and Environmental Studies (Modular)

² To fully comply with the NI Programme of Study, four activities must be selected from at least three of the activity areas stated in the AQA specification

³ entries in these subjects will only be accepted where a candidate is entering in all three subjects

SUBJECT TITLE	AWARDING BODY	ASSOCIATED SPECIFICATION
Technology and Design	AQA	Design & Technology: Electronic Products
	AQA	Design & Technology: Systems & Control Technology
	CCEA	Technology and Design
	OCR	Design & Technology: Systems & Control Technology
	OCR	Design & Technology: Industrial Production
	WJEC	Design & Technology: Industrial Technology
	WJEC	Design & Technology: Systems & Control Technology

APPENDIX 2 - PART 2

APPROVED GCSE COURSES THAT DO NOT CONFORM TO THE RELEVANT NORTHERN IRELAND PROGRAMME OF STUDY, WHICH MAY BE PROVIDED ONLY IN ADDITION TO OTHER COURSES LISTED IN APPENDIX 2 - PART 1

SUBJECT TITLE	AWARDING BODY	ASSOCIATED SPECIFICATION
Home Economics	AQA	Textiles
Science	AQA AQA WJEC	Biology: Human Human Physiology and Health Geology
Rural and Agricultural Science	OCR	

APPENDIX 2 - PART 3

APPROVED GCSE COURSES IN SUBJECTS FOR WHICH THERE ARE NO NORTHERN IRELAND PROGRAMMES OF STUDY

SUBJECT TITLE	AWARDING BODY	ASSOCIATED SPECIFICATION
Accounting	AQA	Accounting
Additional Mathematics	CCEA	Additional Mathematics
Archaeology	AQA	Archaeology
Astronomy	EDEXCEL ¹	Astronomy
Business & Communications Systems	AQA EDEXCEL ¹ OCR	Business & Communications Systems Business & Communications Systems Business & Communications Systems
Catering	WJEC	Catering
Classical Civilisation	AQA OCR	Classical Civilisation Classical Civilisation
Classical Greek	AQA OCR	Classical Greek Classical Greek
Electronics	AQA WJEC	Electronics Electronics
English Literature	AQA AQA CCEA OCR WJEC WJEC	English Literature A English Literature B English Literature English Literature English Literature A English Literature B
Environmental Science	AQA	Environmental Science
Expressive Arts	AQA OCR	Expressive Arts Expressive Arts
General Studies	AQA	General Studies
Humanities	AQA OCR	Humanities Humanities

SUBJECT TITLE	AWARDING BODY	ASSOCIATED SPECIFICATION
Information & Communication	AQA	ICT (A)

¹ Refers to paragraph 7 Edexcel GCSR Provision

Technology (ICT)	AQA AQA AQA CCEA CCEA OCR OCR OCR OCR OCR WJEC WJEC	ICT (B) ICT (A) (Short Course) ICT (B) (Short Course) ICT(A) ICT(A) (Short Course) ICT A ICT (B) ICT (A) (Short Course) ICT (B) (Short Course) ICT (Short Course) ICT ICT (Short Course)
Japanese	EDEXCEL ¹	Japanese
Latin	AQA OCR	Latin Latin
Law	AQA	Law
Media Studies	AQA OCR WJEC	Media Studies Media Studies Media Studies
Modern Greek	EDEXCEL ¹	Modern Greek
Motor Vehicle and Road Users Studies	CCEA	Motor Vehicle and Road Users Studies (NI)
Performing Arts: Dance	AQA	Performing Arts: Dance
Portuguese	OCR	Portuguese
Psychology	AQA OCR	Psychology Psychology
Religious Studies	AQA AQA AQA AQA AQA AQA CCEA CCEA	Religious Studies A Religious Studies A (Short Course) Religious Studies B Religious Studies B (Short Course) Religious Studies C Religious Studies C (Short Course) Religious Studies Religious Studies (Short Course)

SUBJECT TITLE	AWARDING BODY	ASSOCIATED SPECIFICATION
Religious Studies (continued)	OCR OCR OCR OCR WJEC WJEC WJEC WJEC	Religious Studies A Religious Studies B Religious Studies B (Short Course) Religious Studies C Religious Studies A Religious Studies (Short Course) Religious Studies B Religious Studies B (Short Course)
Russian	AQA EDEXCEL ¹	Russian Russian
Social Science	AQA	Social Science
Sociology	AQA OCR WJEC	Sociology Sociology Sociology
Statistics	AQA	Statistics
Travel and Tourism	AQA	Travel and Tourism

¹ Refers to paragraph 7 Edexcel GCSE Provision

APPENDIX 2 – PART 4

APPROVED GCSE COURSES IN VOCATIONAL SUBJECTS

SUBJECT TITLE	AWARDING BODY
Applied Art and Design (Double Award)	AQA CCEA OCR WJEC
Applied Business (Double Award)	AQA CCEA OCR WJEC
Engineering (Double Award)	CCEA OCR
Health and Social Care (Double Award)	AQA CCEA OCR WJEC
Leisure and Tourism (Double Award)	AQA CCEA OCR WJEC
Applied ICT (Double Award)	AQA CCEA OCR WJEC
Manufacturing (Double Award)	CCEA OCR
Applied Science (Double Award)	AQA CCEA OCR WJEC

APPENDIX 3

ENTRY LEVEL QUALIFICATIONS

(Available at Entry 1, Entry 2 & Entry 3 unless otherwise specified)

Awarding Body	Level	Subject Title – Certificate in
AQA	Levels 2&3	Art and Design
	Levels 2&3	Design and Technology
	Levels 2&3	English A
		English B
		English Language Skills (ESOL)
	Levels 2&3	Geography A
		Geography B
	Levels 2&3	History
		Home Economics - Child Development
	Levels 2&3	Information and Communication Technology A
		Information and Communication Technology B
	Levels 2&3	Mathematics A
		Mathematics B
	Levels 2&3	French A
	Levels 2&3	French B
	Levels 2&3	German
	Levels 2&3	Spanish
		Personal, Social & Health Education (PSHE)
		Physical Education
	Levels 1&2	Preparation for Working Life
		Religious Studies
	Levels 2&3	Science A
		Science B
	Travel and Tourism	
City and Guilds	Level 3	Automotive Vehicle Maintenance
		English Language Skills (ESOL)
	Level 3	Hospitality and Catering
	Levels 2&3	Preparing for Employment

ENTRY LEVEL QUALIFICATIONS

(Available at Entry 1, Entry 2 & Entry 3 unless otherwise specified)

Awarding Body	Level	Subject Title – Certificate in
CCEA		Art Business Studies Design & Technology English Geography Graphical & Material Studies History Home Economics Information and Communications Technology Irish Life Skills Materials Technology Mathematics Mathematics For Life Media Studies Modern Languages: - French German Irish Spanish Music Physical Education Religious Studies Science – Single
EDEXCEL	Levels 1&2	Adult Literacy Adult Numeracy English History Information and Communication Technology Mathematics Modern Foreign Languages Physical Education Science (Single Award) Science (Double Award) Skills for Working Life

ENTRY LEVEL QUALIFICATIONS

(Available at Entry 1, Entry 2 & Entry 3 unless otherwise specified)

Awarding Body	Level	Subject Title – Certificate in	
OCR	Levels 2&3	Art and Design	
		Business Studies	
	Level 3	Catering	
		Child Development	
		Design and Technology	
		Drama	
		English	
		Enterprise (Young Enterprise Team Programme)	
		Geography A	
		Geography B	
		Geography C	
		Level 3	Hairdressing
	History		
	Information and Communication Technology		
	Job-Seeking Skills		
	Level 3		Learning Skills
	Level 3		Leisure and Tourism
	Level 3		Manufacturing
			Mathematics A
			Mathematics B
			Modern Foreign Languages
	Level 3	Office Practice	
	Level 3	Preparation for Employment	
		Physical Education	
		Religious Studies (Philosophy and Ethics)	
		Religious Studies (World Religions)	
	Level 3	Retail	
Science Plus			
Level 3	Using ICT		
WJEC		Personal and Social Skills	

APPENDIX 5

APPROVED KEY SKILLS QUALIFICATIONS

Awarding Body	Level	Subject Title
AQA	Certificate	Communication Application of Number Information Technology
ASDAN	Certificate	Communication Application of Number Information Technology
CCEA	Certificate	Communication Application of Number Information Technology
CITY & GUILDS	Certificate	Communication (Levels 1&2) Application of Number (Level 1&2) Information Technology (Level 1&2)
EDEXCEL	Certificate	Communication (Levels 1&2) Application of Number (Levels 1&2) Information Technology (Levels 1&2)
OCR	Certificate	Communication Application of Number Information Technology
WJEC	Certificate	Communication Application of Number Information Technology

APPENDIX 6

KEY STAGE 4 QUALIFICATIONS PILOT

Awarding body	Level	Subject Title
CCEA	Levels 1&2	Occupational Studies
CCEA	Entry Level	Learning for Life and Work
CCEA	GCSE	Learning for Life and Work
CCEA	GCSE (Single Award)	Construction Financial Services Hospitality Journalism

APPENDIX 7

APPROVED GCSE SHORT COURSES IN MODERN LANGUAGES

Awarding Body	Level	Subject Title
AQA	GCSE	French (Short Course)
	GCSE	German (Short Course)
	GCSE	Spanish (Short Course)
CCEA	GCSE	French (Short Course)
	GCSE	German (Short Course)
	GCSE	Irish (Short Course)
	GCSE	Spanish (Short Course)
WJEC	GCSE	French (Short Course)
	GCSE	German (Short Course)
	GCSE	Spanish (Short Course)