

News story: Foreign Secretary to visit Russia

The Foreign Secretary has accepted an invitation from Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov to visit Moscow in the coming weeks.

The Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary have made clear that our policy towards Russia is to 'engage but beware' and the visit is entirely consistent with this approach.

Discussions will focus on the UK-Russia relationship and current international issues including Syria and Ukraine, where we continue to have significant differences. This is not a return to business as usual and the Foreign Secretary will continue to be robust on those issues where we differ.

We have always been clear that the UK will engage with Russia where it is in our national interest to do so.

Details of precise timings will be confirmed in due course. A potential visit has been in the pipeline for some time, with the Prime Minister and President Putin discussing this when they met in China in September 2016.

GCSE 9 to 1 grades



The new 9 to 1 GCSE grades

The vast majority of students taking GCSEs in England in 2019 will receive grades from 9 to 1. Students taking 5 lesser-taught GCSE subjects (Biblical Hebrew, Gujarati, Persian, Portuguese and Turkish) will receive letter grades in 2019 before they become numerical (9 to 1) in 2020.

9 things to know about the new GCSE grades

1. GCSEs in England have been reformed and are graded with from 9 to 1, with 9 being the highest grade.
2. GCSE content is more challenging.
3. Fewer grade 9s are be awarded than A*s.
4. The new grades are being brought in to signal that GCSEs have been reformed and to better differentiate between students of different abilities.
5. In the first year each new GCSE subject has been introduced, broadly the same proportion of students get a grade 4 or above as would have got a grade C or above in the old system.
6. These changes are only happening in England. Wales and Northern Ireland are not introducing the new 9 to 1 grading scale as part of their changes to GCSEs.
7. English language, English literature and maths were the first to be graded from 9 to 1 in 2017.
8. Another 20 subjects had 9 to 1 grading in 2018, with most others following in 2019. During this transition, students received a mixture of letter and number grades.
9. You can see how the 9 to 1 grades compare with the A* to G scale in our [GCSE grading postcard](#).

GCSE science

GCSEs for science have changed in England. Students taking separate science GCSEs now get a grade from 9 to 1 in each subject. Combined science draws content from all three subjects and students receive an award worth two GCSEs, consisting of two equal or adjacent grades.

5 things to know about combined science GCSEs

1. Students taking separate science GCSEs get a grade from 9 to 1 for each subject, with 9 being the highest grade.
2. Students studying combined science receive an award worth two GCSEs, consisting of two equal or adjacent grades from 9 to 1 (9-9, 9-8, 8-8, 8-7, 7-7...to 1-1).
3. If the numbers are different, the highest number will always be reported on the left.
4. Students do at least 8 practical activities (16 for combined science) covering specific apparatus and techniques.
5. Exam questions about practical work make up at least 15% of the total marks for the qualification.

More information

We've got lots of information to help students, parents, teachers and businesses understand the changes. You can:

And if you've got any questions, drop us an email at

public.enquiries@ofqual.gov.uk or give us a call on 0300 303 3344.

Published 3 March 2017

Last updated 6 August 2019 [+ show all updates](#)

1. 6 August 2019 Updated to reflect that we are in the third year of GCSE reforms.
2. 22 December 2017 Article now shows the updated video.
3. 23 August 2017 Added results day guides for students and parents.
4. 3 March 2017 First published.

[News story: Ofqual conference 2017 – presentations from the day](#)

The annual Ofqual conference is for awarding organisations we regulate, these are the presentations from the day.

Don't include personal or financial information like your National Insurance number or credit card details.

What you were doing What went wrong

Send

[News story: Avian flu near Redgrave, Suffolk](#)

Avian Influenza H5N8 virus has been identified on a premises near Redgrave during investigations following a recent nearby case.

Defra's routine investigations following a confirmed case of H5N8 near Redgrave in Suffolk have led to the detection of the virus at a further separate premises.

Due to the unacceptable high risk and to contain the possible spread of avian flu, the UK's Deputy Chief Veterinary Officer has today (3 March) confirmed that proactive culling of around 55,000 birds will take place.

The premises will then be cleansed and disinfected, further reducing the risk to other birds. [A 3km Protection Zone and a 10km Surveillance Zone](#) are already in place following the previous case in the area. Our investigations will continue and the restrictions already placed on the site will remain in force until cleansing and disinfection is finished and the investigation is complete.

Public Health England advises that the risk to public health from the virus is very low and the Food Standards Agency is clear that bird flu does not pose a food safety risk for UK consumers.

Read the [latest advice and information on avian flu in the UK](#), including actions to reduce the risk of the disease spreading, advice for anyone who keeps poultry or captive birds and details of previous cases. You can use our [interactive map](#) to check if you are affected by restrictions around any premises. Journalists with queries should contact Defra press office on 02082257318.

[News story: Open Rights Group campaign](#)

A large number of emails have been received about government plans to equalise the maximum sentence for online and physical copyright infringement at 10 years. This measure is contained within the [Digital Economy Bill 2016](#) which is in its final stage of the Parliamentary scrutiny process.

The Open Rights Group (ORG) campaign focuses on two areas. Firstly that an increased sentence may result in an increase of so called 'copyright trolls' threatening court action. Secondly, that the copyright clause within the Bill criminalises minor copyright infringement.

Infringement of another person's copyright in the circumstances covered by the redrafted criminal offences is already covered by existing criminal offences. The proposed measures in the Digital Economy Bill clarify the existing offences and take into account concerns that the ORG raised with government during consultation. The revised offence is designed to deter and deal with deliberate infringement, while protecting innocent or unwitting infringers.

Copyright trolls

Copyright owners are entitled to enforce their rights. On occasion this may include contacting members of the public who are alleged to have infringed their rights. Such approaches are entirely legal. However if done in a threatening or harassing way, members of the public can report the solicitors in question to the Solicitor's Regulatory Authority (SRA). The SRA has taken action in previous such cases.

It is important to note that the criminal offences apply to making material available to others, not to those just downloading material to their computers. Anyone seeking to enforce their rights for the downloading of material would be unlikely to refer to this legislation.

The Intellectual Property Office has published [guidance](#) for members of the public who have received such approaches.

The risk of an increase of 'trolling' is considered to be low but the government will periodically review and respond to any concerns.

Minor infringement

The criminal offences penalise communicating a copyright work to the public and infringing a performer's 'making available' right. Both of these acts are considered criminal where a person knows, or has reason to believe, that they are infringing the right and either intends to make a monetary gain, or knows or has reason to believe that they will cause loss or expose the rights holder to a risk of loss in money. These offences focus on those causing harm either for monetary gain or a monetary loss or risk of loss to the rights holder. A mental element has been introduced which requires an intention to make a gain or knowledge or reason to believe that the copyright owner will suffer loss or be exposed to a risk of loss.

Ten year sentences would only be applied in the most serious of criminal circumstances. It is highly unlikely that small, unintentional infringement would be caught by this offence. A person who believed that their acts fell within a copyright exception, such as that relating to criticism or review or quotation, would not be guilty of an offence.

It would not be practical for the government to set a specific level of loss or gain at which infringement becomes a criminal offence. This is because the circumstances of each infringement needs to be taken into account.