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1. What does a GCE examination mean?

- Advanced level exams are known as GCE (General Certification of Education) subjects and are now examined in 2 parts and in units or modules.
- Advanced Subsidiary (AS) unit exams are generally taken in Year 12 and then the remaining A2 unit exams are completed in Year 13 with a final certificate being obtained.

2. What are unit/modular examinations?

- Modular AS/A2 level examinations involve the written examinations on sections of the syllabus being taken at intervals throughout the course rather than all at the end.
- Units or Modules contribute towards a full qualification either at AS or A2 level.
- The number of units that need to be completed are subject dependent and vary from one to three at AS level, and two to six for a full A2 qualification.

Below are units applicable to GCE subjects for Sixth Form Students.

Exam Board	Subject	Full A2 Qualification
Edexcel	Arabic	2 units
Edexcel	Art	4 units
Edexcel	Biology	6 units
AQA	Business Studies	4 units
Edexcel	Chemistry	6 units
Edexcel	Design & Technology Graphic Products	4 units
Edexcel	Design & Technology Resistant Material	4 units
Edexcel	Drama & Theatre	4 units
AQA	Economics	4 units
AQA	English Literature B	4 units
Edexcel	French/German	4 units
CIE	Geography	2 units (2 papers in 2 nd unit)
Edexcel	History	4 units
AQA	Information and Communication Technology	4 units
Edexcel	Maths & Further Maths	6 units
AQA	Media Studies	4 units
Edexcel	Music	6 units
Edexcel	Philosophy	4 units
Edexcel	Physical Education	4 units
Edexcel	Physics	6 units
AQA	Psychology A	4 units

3. What is certification?

- Unit marks are “banked” or stored with Examination Boards until certification [cashing in] is requested by the School, normally in the Year 13.
- All the completed units will then count towards the final AS or A Level grade.
- Students may drop a subject at AS level but must remember to certify or cash-in in order to obtain a certificate. Certification is NOT done automatically; you need to request this through your subject departmental head or the Examinations Officer. This will ensure that you receive a certificate at the end of Year 13 and it will also avoid penalty fees for late cash-ins. AS certification may be requested for the January or June sessions.

- Most unit sessions are in November, January and June according to the Exam Board used. At St Christopher's we currently utilise AQA, CIE and Edexcel for all of our examinations.

4. What are raw marks and ums marks?

- Exam papers are assessed out of so many marks as shown on the exam paper.
- Marks vary from subject to subject and from paper to paper which caused a problem when modular exams were first introduced. These marks are called "raw marks". Exam Boards implemented a system where "raw marks" are converted to what is called a uniform mark scheme (UMS). The common unified scale ensures that whilst, for example, the question paper for Economics unit 2 will be different each time, the value of the paper will be consistent from year to year.

Each module is out of x amount of UMS points. A scale relates the UMS score to a grade. The scale follows a standard pattern:

	GCE Max 90 UMS	GCE Max 100 UMS	GCE Max 120 UMS	GCE Max 150 UMS	GCE Max 180 UMS	GCE Max 200 UMS	GCE Max 300 UMS
A = 80% of UMS Total	72	80	96	120	144	160	240
B = 70% of UMS Total	63	70	84	105	126	140	210
C = 60% of UMS Total	54	60	72	90	108	120	180
D = 50% of UMS Total	45	50	60	75	90	100	150
E = 40% of UMS Total	36	40	48	60	72	80	120

From your results slip, you can see not only if you did better in some units and not so well in others, but also how close you were to an overall grade boundary.

TIP: Remember that units may not carry equal weight: a unified mark of 80 may be excellent if out of 90, but less so if out of 120.

- Totalled UMS are then converted to grades.

The following maximum uniform marks were agreed for each qualification i.e.

Qualification	Maximum uniform marks
Advanced Subsidiary GCE (3 unit AS Level)	300
Advanced Subsidiary GCE (2 unit AS Level)	200
Advanced Subsidiary GCE (1 unit AS Level)	100
Advanced GCE (6 unit A2 Level)	600
Advanced GCE (4 unit A2 Level)	400
Advanced GCE (2 unit A2 Level)	200

The uniform mark obtained for each unit of a specification is shown on the results slip, and when added up, you obtain a total number of uniform marks for that specification which determines the grade for that subject, as follows:

For AS & A2 specifications for A Levels with 4 & 6 units:

	AS Uniform marks 2 units	A Level Uniform marks 4 units	AS Uniform marks 3 units	A Level Uniform marks 6 units
Grade A*	n/a	* See info below	n/a	* See info below
Grade A	160-200	320-400	240-300	480-600
Grade B	140-159	280-319	210-239	420-479
Grade C	120-139	240-279	180-209	360-419
Grade D	100-119	200-239	150-179	300-359
Grade E	80-99	160-199	120-149	240-299

e.g. Biology AS = 3 units totalling 300 ums & Biology A2 = 3 units totalling 300 ums = total 6 units for A Level of 600 ums. If a total of 485/600 is achieved the grade = A

* **IMPORTANT:** A new A* Grade will be awarded at A level (but not at AS) to students cashing-in from SUMMER 2010. (i.e. you can NOT achieve an A* at AS Level or on individual units)

For all subjects except mathematics and further mathematics, the new A* grade will be awarded to students who achieve a grade A overall at A level and also achieve **90% or more** of the UMS across their A2 units as an aggregate, not on each separate A2 unit (this includes pure mathematics).

E.g. Business Studies (4 unit subject) = 2 units at AS level & 2 units at A2 level. To obtain an A* you will need:

Unit 1 + unit 2 + unit 3 + unit 4 = 320 ums (i.e. an A grade across all four units) **AND**

Unit 3 + Unit 4 = 180 ums (i.e. 90% of 200)

Since some Mathematics combinations have either two or three A2 units, the A* grade will be awarded to students achieving a grade A overall (480 UMS or more) and 180 UMS or more on the total of their C3 and C4 units.

For further mathematics, the A* grade will be awarded to students achieving a grade A overall (480 UMS or more) and 270 UMS or more on their best three A2 units (whether pure or applications units)

See examples:

Examples for Mathematics and Further Mathematics:

Mathematics:

C1 = 90, C2 = 79, **C3 = 95, C4 = 94**, M1 = 87, M2 = 89 – total = 534 UMS, grade A* awarded

C1 = 70, C2 = 70, **C3 = 93, C4 = 94**, M1 = 77, S1 = 78 – total = 482 UMS, grade A* awarded

C1 = 95, C2 = 98, **C3 = 92, C4 = 87**, D1 = 87, D2 = 89 – total = 548 UMS, grade A awarded

C1 = 90, C2 = 92, **C3 = 91, C4 = 92**, M1 = 57, D1 = 58 – total = 479 UMS, grade B awarded

Further Mathematics:

FP1 = 93, **FP2 = 91**, S1 = 95, **S2 = 91**, D1 = 30, **D2 = 89** – total 489 UMS, grade A* awarded

FP1 = 80, FP2 = 86, **M2 = 94**, M3 = 85, **M4 = 88, M5 = 89** –total 512 UMS, grade A* awarded

As you can see, there will be some cases where a student with a high UMS score is awarded a grade A and a student with a relatively low UMS score is awarded a grade A* – but it's to do with recognising performance **on C3 and C4**.

5. I haven't done as well as I expected, what can I do now?

- First of all talk to your subject teacher as he/she is the person who best knows what grade you are capable of achieving.
- If you think there might be something wrong with the actual result obtained the school can apply for Post Result Services e.g. a re-mark of your examination script. The original mark can be confirmed, raised or lowered as a result of a re-mark.
- Another way of dealing with this problem is to consider re-sitting one or more units and this can be done in January (if the units are offered in this session) or alternatively during the summer session. Students must be aware that this is an individual decision and should seek advice from their subject teachers or heads of departments.

5a. A few things to consider before re-sitting:

- Keep a track of how close you are to your required qualification grade. See how many UMS points you need for the next grade up. Is this higher grade within reach?
- Remember not all units carry the same percentage value towards the final subject grade – lower percentage units have less impact on the final grade than higher percentage units, so first check to see how well you have achieved on units carrying more weight.
- Students must now record on UCAS forms how many re-sits they have taken. This information is also available online to Universities.
- Remember that you will more than likely be sitting some A2 units during the same session as re-sits. This puts a huge amount of additional pressure on you when trying to prepare for exams, especially in the summer session.
- If you re-sit a module your best result is used to calculate your grade – your grade won't go down.

6. Key Dates Winter 2012

January 2012 Examinations

Key Dates

Results & Post Results Services

GCE & GCSE Examinations	For entry and certification in January 2012	Costs for each Unit 2012
Final date for entries	19 October 2011	BD 21.000 6 unit GCE BD 21.000 4 unit GCE BD 42.00 2 Unit
Date of first examination on common timetable	09 January 2012	n/a
Date of final examination on common timetable	02 February 2012	n/a
Publication of Results	8 March 2012	n/a
Final date to apply for late cash-in per subject award Final date to apply for late cash-in per subject award - Edexcel AQA	17 April 2012	BD 10.000 BD 35.000
Final date to apply for priority photocopies of examination scripts	16 March 2012	BD 15.000
Final date to apply for a Remark GCE	17 April 2012	BD 35.000
Final date to apply for a Remark GCSE	17 April 2012	BD 25.000
Final date to apply for return of original examination scripts	26 April 2012	BD 15.000
Issue of certificates	by 1 June 2012	n/a

Payments must be made to exam officers at time of request.

7. Key Dates Summer 2012

June 2012 Examinations

Key Dates

Results & Post Results Services

GCE examinations	For entry and certification in JUNE 2012	Costs for each Unit 2012
Final date for entries	14 March 2012	BD 22.000 6 unit GCE BD 22.000 4 unit GCE BD 44.00 2 Unit
Date of first examination on common timetable	14 May 2012	n/a
Date of final examination on common timetable	26 June 2012	n/a
Publication of Results	16 August 2012	n/a
Final date to apply for late cash-in per subject award - Edexcel AQA	19 September 2012	BD 10.000 BD 35.000
Final date to apply for photocopies of examination scripts	24 August 2012	BD 15.000
Final date for Priority Remark	24 August 2012	BD 40.000
Final date to apply for a Remark	17 September 2012	BD 35.000
Final date to apply for return of original examination scripts	1 October 2012	BD 15.000
Issue of certificates	by 1 November 2012	n/a

GCSE examinations	For entry and certification in JUNE 2012	Costs for each Unit 2012
Final date for entries	15 February 2012	BD40.000 1 unit GCSE BD14.000 3+Unit GCSE
Publication of Results	23 August 2012	n/a
Final date to apply for a Remark	17 September 2012	BD 25.000
Final date to apply for return of original examination scripts	1 October 2012	BD 15.000
Final date to apply for late cash-in per subject award - Edexcel AQA	17 September 2012	BD 10.000 BD 35.000
Issue of certificates	by 1 November 2012	n/a

Payments must be made to exam officers at time of request.

RESULTS:

You will be issued with a letter giving you all the information pertaining to Results Day. This information is also published on the St Christopher's website under the "Examinations" section.

LEAVERS:

When you leave St Christopher's School after either Year 12 or Year 13 please make sure you supply the Examinations Office with a forwarding address should you not be in a position to collect your certificates. Certificates are only issued once and centres are only required to keep these for a period of one year before destroying them. The Examinations Office will courier these to you should you supply the relevant address details and pay the courier fee. These courier fees are currently BD6.000 worldwide.

If you have any further questions please see Mrs Dewar in the Examinations Office or call 17788107.