



# A Level A\* Frequently Asked Questions

## *Why has the A Level A\* been introduced?*

The new A\* is designed to recognise and reward exceptional performance at A Level.

## *When is the A Level A\* being introduced?*

The A\* will be awarded for A Level for the first time in August 2010 (for the June 2010 series). Legacy specifications, which will be certificated for the last time in the June 2010 series, will not have the new A\*.

## *How is the A\* awarded?*

The A\* at A Level will be awarded to candidates who achieve a grade A on the A Level overall – 80% on the uniform mark scale (UMS) – and who also achieve at least 90% or more across the A2 units. For example, in a four-unit A Level which has a total of 400 UMS, 200 UMS are available for the A2 units. To achieve an A\*, you need to achieve at least 320 UMS for the full A Level (i.e. an A overall) and 180 or more for the A2 units.

The A\* will not be awarded for individual units or for the AS Level.

## *Does the A\* affect any of the other grades?*

No, all of the other grade standards stay the same.

## *How does the A\* work for A Level Double Awards?*

Double Awards have a longer grade scale than Single Awards: A\*A\*, A\*A, AA, AB, BB, BC, CC, CD, DD, DE, EE. To achieve the A\*A\*, you need to get AA overall and then get 90% across all six of the A2 units. If you do not achieve A\*A\*, it is still possible to gain A\*A. To achieve A\*A, you need to get AA overall and then get 90% across your best three A2 units.

## *How do I know which are AS and which are A2 units?*

It should be clear from your studies which are the AS/A2 units – if you are unsure, take a look at the specifications, which can be downloaded from our website.

## *My A2 units add up to an A\* but I got a B overall.*

### *Why is this?*

Before we can award an A\*, you need to achieve an A grade across all the A Level units – both AS and A2. In this case, you may not have done as well in your AS units and you may wish to consider whether you should re-sit your AS units to improve your overall grade.

## *I got an A and someone else got an A\* but we both have the same UMS. Why is this?*

Even though you have the same UMS as another candidate, your total UMS is made up from both AS and A2 units. Therefore, you may have achieved very highly in your AS units but did not get 90% or more in your A2 units and so did not achieve the A\*.

## *How are A Level Maths and Further Maths different?*

The structure of A Level Mathematics is different from other subjects, and so uses a slightly different rule. It is currently possible to achieve A Level Mathematics with four AS and two A2 units or with three AS and three A2 units. Therefore, so that the same rule can be applied to all unit combinations, candidates must get a grade A on the A Level overall and achieve 90% of the UMS on the two mandatory A2 units combined (units C3 and C4).

It is also possible to achieve A Level Further Mathematics with more than three A2 units. In this case, the A\* is calculated in the same way as it is for all other subjects, based on the three best A2 units.

## *What happens if I don't understand my results?*

If you have any queries about your grades, please talk to your school or college, who should be able to explain your results.