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Dear Colleague

This summer will see the first award at qualification level of the new GCSE grading scale in Northern Ireland. As the school year draws to a close, I thought I would write to remind you of the changes the new grading scale will bring.

The alignment of the grade A\* with the grade 9 in England will mean a reduction in the number of candidates achieving this grade. It is important to bear in mind that due to changes in how the new A\* will be calculated, reductions in grade A\* outcomes may be greater in some subjects than in others.

The introduction of the grade C\* will also mean a reduction in the number of grades B and C awarded. It's important, therefore, to take this into account when considering admissions criteria for post 16 studies.

CCEA has communicated with a broad range of higher education institutes and their representative bodies, including Queen's University, University of Ulster, the Medical Schools Council and the Russell Group about the implications of the changes. CCEA Regulation produced a 'Higher Education Guide' to ensure higher education institutes are fully informed of the changes.

For further information on the changes to GCSE grading visit [www.ccea.org.uk/grading](http://www.ccea.org.uk/grading).

CCEA Regulation continues to work in close partnership with the other two

regulatory authorities, Ofqual and Qualifications Wales, to ensure standards at both GCE and GCSE remain comparable and portable in the interests of all NI candidates.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you and your staff for working with CCEA Regulation over the past two years to ensure key messages around the new grading scale were communicated to parents and other stakeholders. We are very grateful for your assistance.

Yours sincerely

Sharon King  
Head of Regulation

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