

January 2018

GCSE computer science assessment arrangements

This letter is relevant to you if you are currently taking **GCSE computer science**. It relates to the task undertaken to demonstrate your programming skills and your understanding of the programming process.

We have decided, with reluctance, that the task will now **not** contribute to your final 9 to 1 grade. We have done this because there is evidence that some students have seen solutions or online advice on how to complete their task. We do not want anyone to have an unfair advantage and we do not believe it will be possible for teachers or the exam boards to identify all students who have seen and used such materials.

While not contributing to your grade, the task will continue to be an important part of the qualification and you must complete one of the tasks set by your exam board as planned. Learning about a high-level programming language and having the opportunity to show that you can use it to solve problems is an important aspect of a computer science course of study. Completing the task will ultimately benefit you in your exam performance, indeed several students who responded to our consultation who have already completed their task made this point. Your school will therefore set aside time in the timetable for you to do so. Your teacher may mark your task and give you feedback on it, though the marks will **not** be submitted to the exam board.

Exam papers will not be changed. You will not have to learn any new topics or prepare to answer different types of question. If you have completed your task you will not have to do another one. If you have started but not yet finished your task you should complete it.

We regret that it was necessary to change the qualification at this stage and recognise that it could be unsettling for you. We read all the responses to our consultation. It is clear that many of you have strong views about the current situation. We know that not everyone will agree with our decision. However, if we do not act now, it would be impossible for us to correct any unfairness caused by rules being broken. This way, you will all have an equal chance to show your knowledge and skills in the exams.

If you have any questions about the assessment and the changes we have made, please speak to your teacher. If you want to know more about how we reached our decision you can read [our report and associated consultation analysis](#).

Yours faithfully



Julie Swan

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