

## Comparing the D&T GCSE Specifications

### The Exam: 50%

This summary is our one page interpretation of the accredited D&T GCSE specifications & sample exam papers. This is our opinion only & it's essential departments do their own comparisons & check the most up to date information on exam board websites.

OCR	AQA	Edexcel	Eduqas
2 hour paper	2 hour paper	1hr 45 mins paper	2 hour paper
Section A – 55 marks Focus on core principles	Section A – 20 marks Core technical principles (multiple choice/short answers)	Section A – 40 marks Core content	Section A – 75 marks Core knowledge & understanding
Section B – 45 marks Majority of the questions are focused on 'in depth' knowledge students have in one material area but there are also some broader materials questions in this section as well.	Section B – 30 marks Focus on specialist technical principles so students can focus on their material specialism. Also some general design based questions that are non material specific.  Section C – 50 marks Focus on designing & making principles through a product analysis – sample questions focus on generic non-material based design questions	Section B – 60 marks Material categories (focus on specific material areas)  There is a separate exam paper for each material area (which means schools will have paperwork to indicate which papers students will sit). Each paper starts off with identical content & then has material specialist section (questions are all on one paper for other boards).	Section B – 25 marks In depth knowledge & understanding (focus on a specific material area)  There are six separate question number 6 & students choose the question 6 that relates to their material area. This numbering system could confuse some students if they don't read the instructions carefully.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Exam could be described as a 'long &amp; thin' model with broader knowledge content where students need to know more about a wider range of materials (the long bit) but with less depth of knowledge (the thin bit). This can feel daunting but has its advantages.</li> <li>Potentially more open ended questions on knowledge common to all material areas e.g. industrial practice.</li> <li>Specification gives less detail than other boards in some areas. This could offer more freedom for how things are taught but some teachers may not like the lack of structure &amp; limited specific content.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Exam could be described as a 'long &amp; thin' model similar to OCR because it requires a broader knowledge of materials but with less depth. Note the exam has changed quite a bit since the draft &amp; this description is different to how we originally described it.</li> <li>The multi choice questions potentially make the testing of some of the broader materials content less daunting.</li> <li>Potentially more open ended questions on knowledge common to all material areas e.g. industrial practice.</li> <li>Although the exam has a 'long &amp; thin' feel the learning content is 'fatter' than OCR in depth with quite a bit of specific content listed (particularly bearing in mind that what is listed can be tested). There are both advantages &amp; disadvantages of this.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Exam could be described as 'short &amp; fat' as less generic content is tested (the short bit) with more detailed testing on a specialist material area. The depth of knowledge for the specialist material area is however deeper (the fat bit) so section B potentially requires more specialist knowledge.</li> <li>Exam offers a strong focus on a specialist material area. This could be an advantage (e.g. it allows students to develop a strong specialism) &amp; a disadvantage (potentially a lot more to teach).</li> <li>The spec gives lots of detail on the specific theory content. This gives a detailed structure for schemes of work but could increase the amount that needs teaching along with reducing freedom on how time is used.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Harder to classify but has a similar 'long and thin' approach to OCR &amp; AQA, although possibly requiring a little more in depth knowledge.</li> <li>At first glance the breakdown of the marks suggests there is less focus on a specialist material area but there are actually specialist questions in both sections of the paper.</li> <li>In Q6, which is very focused on a specialist material area, the questions are quite traditional for some material areas.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Spec is based on Designing Our Tomorrow research on authentic design practices by Cambridge University.</li> <li>Spec is divided into 8 areas with key questions which could be useful as a focus for KS3 planning.</li> <li>Spec maps maths against GCSE maths which is useful when coordinating with the maths department.</li> </ul>	The accredited version of the spec has a different feel compared to the draft spec, particularly for the NEA & format of the exam. There is more of a 'whole D&T' focus similar to OCR, particularly for the exam.	Edexcel are offering free text books for schools who enter students for their specification (note that if you later decide not to enter students for this board the books have to be paid for).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Eduqas is part of WJEC &amp; in the past their supporting resources have been good.</li> <li>Other boards have moved away from pure technical knowledge in systems &amp; electronics to a wider focus on products &amp; user needs. Electronics &amp; systems specialists may find Eduqas more appealing as the skills &amp; knowledge are more in line with traditional qualifications.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Specs focus on 'authentic real world D&amp;T' with a clearer definition of D&amp;T &amp; a better dividing line between art, craft &amp; D&amp;T.</li> <li>Maths based questions make up 15% of the exam &amp; are linked to 'real' D&amp;T situations (all maths content is already taught in maths and is high end KS3).</li> <li>There is no design question in the format of the current GCSE.</li> <li>All specs have advantages &amp; disadvantages. OCR has potentially the most radical approach, followed closely by AQA &amp; Eduqas. Some have been more forward thinking than others about what D&amp;T is and what it will be in the future. This potentially makes them feel more daunting.</li> <li>The broader material focuses for all specs is on an understanding of material properties &amp; uses rather than students becoming skilled practitioners in making products &amp; using equipment.</li> </ul>			