

Developing new GCSEs, A levels and AS qualifications for first teaching in 2016 – Part 2

covering:

GCSEs

Citizenship studies
Cooking and nutrition
Design and technology
Drama

A levels and AS qualifications

Drama and theatre



September 2014

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Foreword

We are pleased to introduce this important consultation document.

We want students' achievements to be assessed in ways that are most likely to produce sufficiently valid and reliable outcomes. Current GCSE, AS and A level assessment arrangements fall short in some respects, and our proposals are designed to improve on those arrangements in the new qualifications.

Assessment validity is important, but not enough. We are aiming for qualifications that provide the greatest overall benefit for users, students and the wider education system – in short, arrangements that are most likely to produce the best educational outcomes. In our view, assessment arrangements should be sufficiently manageable, and robust. They should also enable sufficient discrimination between students. And they should encourage and stimulate the teaching and learning of the whole of the subject curriculum, and as far as possible they should not detract from enjoyment and love of the subject.

These are demanding expectations to set for any assessment system, and inevitably there are trade-offs and judgements to be made. That is why we describe this consultation as important. We aim to make the best possible judgements, subject by subject, informed by evidence and by stakeholders' views and experience.

We have agreed some principles to aid decision-making, and we set them out in this consultation document. One of our principles is that assessment arrangements should suit the requirements of the subject and the content of the qualification. The Government will determine the content of the qualifications, and is running a parallel consultation on draft content.

To understand the totality of what is proposed, it is important then to read both this consultation and the Government's parallel consultation on content. However, to assist readers we summarise here those aspects of the Government's content proposals that lead us to make the qualification structure and assessment propositions we make in each subject.

We look forward to receiving your response to our proposals.



Glenys Stacey
Chief Regulator



Amanda Spielman
Chair

Executive summary

New GCSEs, A levels and AS qualifications are being introduced in England. The new qualifications are being introduced in three phases, with the first new qualifications being taught from September 2015.¹ This consultation covers some of the qualifications that will be taught from September 2016:²

GCSEs

Citizenship studies
Cooking and nutrition
Design and technology
Drama

A levels and AS qualifications

Drama and theatre

Balance of exam and non-exam assessment

We are applying a common set of principles to all GCSEs, A levels and AS qualifications as they are reformed. Where subject content can be validly assessed by exams, set and marked by exam boards, this should be the default method of assessment. Where other forms of assessment must be used to assess essential subject skills or knowledge, the non-exam assessment must:

- (a) strike a balance between valid assessment of essential knowledge and skills, sound assessment practice and manageability;
- (b) be designed to fit the requirements of the particular subject, including the relative weighting of exams and other components assigned to it;
- (c) be designed so that the qualification is not easily distorted by external pressures from the wider system.

The proportions of exam and non-exam assessment in current qualifications are not necessarily in line with these principles, subject by subject. Having considered the proposed subject content for the qualifications covered in this consultation and

¹ New GCSEs to be taught from 2015 – English language, English literature, mathematics. New A levels and AS qualifications to be taught from 2015 – English language and literature, English language, English literature, physics, chemistry, biology, art and design, computer science, sociology, economics, history, business, psychology.

² New GCSEs to be taught from 2016 – French, German, Spanish, ancient languages, history, geography, science, biology, chemistry, physics, art and design, dance, music, computer science, physical education, drama, religious studies, citizenship studies, design and technology, cooking and nutrition. New A levels and AS qualifications to be taught from 2016 modern foreign languages, ancient languages, mathematics, further maths, geography, dance, music, physical education, drama and theatre and religious studies. The Department for Education is expecting to consult on religious studies content later this year, and we will run a parallel consultation on the assessment arrangements at the same time.

applied our principles, we are proposing reductions in the proportion of non-exam assessment currently permitted in GCSEs in citizenship studies, design and technology and in some GCSEs, A levels and AS qualifications in drama.³

Currently, qualifications in any one subject can generally be developed with differing proportions of exam and non-exam assessment, as between one exam board and another. We are proposing to define the percentage of marks to be allocated to exam and non-exam assessment, removing or reducing any current flexibility. We suggest this so as to promote comparability between exam boards. We think it important that specifications are sufficiently comparable, and as there will be common (core) content it is reasonable to have common assessment proportions.

Table 1 summarises the current and our proposed balance of exam and non-exam assessment for the qualifications on which we are now consulting.

Table 1⁴

Subject	GCSE		A level		AS qualification	
	Current weighting of non-exam assessment	Proposed weighting of non-exam assessment	Current weighting of non-exam assessment	Proposed weighting of non-exam assessment	Current weighting of non-exam assessment	Proposed weighting of non-exam assessment
Citizenship studies	60%	0%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Cooking and nutrition	N/A ⁵	50%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Design and technology	60%	50%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Drama⁶	60–100%	60%	40–70%	60%	40–100%	60%

³ The A level and AS qualification are titled 'Drama and theatre'.

⁴ The existing regulatory requirements for assessment in these subjects were not designed to our current definition of non-exam assessment. Instead they were determined by the amount of 'internal' and 'external' assessment permitted. Therefore in this consultation, when we describe the current weighting of non-exam assessment, we include the amount of assessment that is seen or could be permitted in current qualifications and which falls under our definition of non-exam assessment.

⁵ Cooking and nutrition is a new qualification. Details of the current weighting of non-exam assessment are therefore not available.

⁶ The A level and AS qualification are titled 'Drama and theatre'.

Tiering

We have previously confirmed that new GCSEs should only be tiered where a single set of assessments cannot in a valid and manageable way assess students across the full ability range. We propose that all of the GCSE qualifications that are covered by this consultation should be untiered.

Assessment objectives

We have worked with subject and assessment experts to develop better assessment objectives for the new qualifications, so as to make sure they are as clear, specific and as precise as possible, cover the full range of abilities and yet allow for alternative assessment approaches where these are legitimate. We are seeking feedback on the proposed assessment objectives and their weightings.

How to respond

If you have an interest in GCSEs, A levels and AS qualifications we hope you will respond to this consultation. You do not have to respond to all questions; you might prefer to answer those related to a specific subject only. The closing date for responses to this consultation is **19th November 2014**.

You can respond to this consultation in one of the following ways:

- Complete the online response at: <http://surveys.ofqual.gov.uk/s3/developing-new-qualifications-for-first-teaching-in-2016-part-2> .
- Email your response to consultations@ofqual.gov.uk .
Please include the consultation title (GCSE, A level and AS qualification subject requirements) in the subject line of the email and make clear who you are and in what capacity you are responding.
- Post your response to: GCSE, A level and AS Qualification Subject Requirements, Ofqual, Spring Place, Herald Avenue, Coventry, CV5 6UB.

Evaluating the responses

To evaluate responses properly, we need to know who is responding to the consultation and in what capacity. We will only consider your response if you complete the information page.

A third party will evaluate the responses on our behalf. Any personal data (such as your name, address and any other identifying information) will be processed in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and our standard terms and conditions.

We will publish the evaluation of responses. Please note that we may publish all or part of your response unless you tell us (in your answer to the confidentiality question) that you want us to treat your response as confidential. If you tell us you wish your response to be treated as confidential, we will not include your details in any published list of respondents, although we may quote from your response anonymously.

1. Introduction

1.1 In this consultation we are seeking views on the design, assessment arrangements and assessment objectives of the following qualifications:

GCSEs

Citizenship studies
Cooking and nutrition
Design and technology
Drama

A levels and AS qualifications⁷

Drama and theatre

1.2 The Department for Education (DfE) is consulting in parallel on the subject content for the qualifications. If you wish to comment on the proposed content for any of the subjects please respond to that consultation.⁸ We encourage you to read the proposed content before you respond to this consultation on assessment arrangements, as our proposals relate to qualifications designed to support the teaching and assessment of that content.

1.3 We will make decisions on the structure and assessment of these subjects in light of responses to this consultation. We will then consult on the technical regulatory requirements that exam boards wishing to design, deliver and award the qualifications must meet.

1.4 It is intended that the exam boards will develop new qualifications in the subjects listed above ready for first teaching by schools and colleges from September 2016.⁹ The exam boards' specifications, to be taught from that date, should be available to schools and colleges from autumn 2015.

1.5 We do not repeat here the reasons why GCSEs, A levels and AS qualifications are being reformed, the options about the qualifications' structure and assessments we have considered, or the full range of decisions we have already taken. This information can be found on our website.¹⁰ We also set out

⁷ DfE has chosen not to reform A levels and AS qualifications in citizenship studies and design and technology at this time. Any future reform of A levels and AS qualifications will be subject to the process specified following the outcome of the completing GCSE, AS and A level Reform consultation <http://comment.ofqual.gov.uk/completing-gcse-as-and-a-level-reform>. DfE has chosen not to identify content for A levels and AS qualifications in cooking and nutrition.

⁸ www.education.gov.uk/consultations

⁹ New GCSEs in French, German, Spanish, ancient languages, history, geography, science, biology, chemistry, physics, art and design, dance, music, computer science and physical education, and new A levels and AS qualifications in modern foreign languages, ancient languages, mathematics, further maths, geography, dance, music and physical education will also be taught first from 2016. Full details of the structure and assessment arrangements for these qualifications can be found at:

www.ofqual.gov.uk/documents/update-on-the-reforms-being-made-to-gcse and

www.ofqual.gov.uk/documents/update-on-the-reforms-being-made-to-as-qualifications-a-levels

¹⁰ www.ofqual.gov.uk/qualifications-and-assessments/qualification-reform

in in Appendix 1 some of the documents relating to the background to these important reforms, including the purpose and key features of reformed GCSEs, A levels and AS qualifications and an update on progress so far,

2. Assessing new GCSEs, A levels and AS qualifications

- 2.1 Assessments can take many forms, which can broadly be divided into exams that are taken by all students at once, under formal supervision, and are set and marked by exam boards; and other forms of assessment.
- 2.2 Exams are traditionally used to assess knowledge and understanding. Many practical skills, such as those used to create an artefact or to create or perform a piece of drama, are assessed in other ways.
- 2.3 The term ‘non-exam assessment’ covers a range of different forms of assessment. Non-exam assessments are not necessarily ‘internally’ or teacher-marked nor undertaken over an extended period of time. A performance may, for example, be undertaken under timed conditions and marked by a visiting exam board assessor, but because not all students will be assessed simultaneously it does not fall within our definition of ‘assessment by exam’.

Assessment in current GCSEs, A levels and AS qualifications

- 2.4 GCSEs, A levels and AS qualifications are currently assessed in several ways:
- Exams set and marked by the exam boards.
 - Written assessments completed under non-exam conditions in which students complete written assessment tasks, set either by the exam board or by the teacher. The tasks are usually marked by a teacher, with samples of marked work being checked by exam board moderators, who can adjust the marks to bring them in line with national standards. For some subjects exam boards mark the tasks directly.
 - Practical assessments, such as performance in drama, usually marked by a teacher. In some cases, marks for these can be adjusted in a similar way to those for written non-exam assessment. In other cases, there is no evidence of each candidate’s performance available for moderators to check. Some exam boards visit schools and colleges to mark performances directly.

Assessment in new GCSEs, A levels and AS qualifications

- 2.5 When considering whether a qualification in a subject should include non-exam assessment, we have applied the principles we have already adopted for other reformed qualifications. These are:
- Non-exam assessment must be used when it is the only valid way to assess essential elements of the subject.

- Non-exam assessment must strike a balance between valid assessment of essential knowledge and skills, sound assessment practice and manageability.
- Any non-exam assessment arrangements must be designed to fit the requirements of the particular subject, including the relative weighting of exams and other components assigned to it.
- Non-exam assessment must be designed so that the qualification is not easily distorted by external pressures from the wider system.

2.6 In making our proposals for the assessment of new GCSEs, A levels and AS qualifications, we have taken advice from experts in each subject. We have considered the requirements of the new proposed subject content and the potential impact on both teaching and the educational outcomes for students. We have also considered how well the current assessments are working, for example the extent to which they are validly assessing the skills, knowledge and understanding they are intended to assess and the effectiveness and fairness with which the assessments discriminate between students.

2.7 We have considered the assessment approach for GCSEs, A levels and AS qualifications in a given subject. We do not assume they need to be the same. Subject requirements at different levels vary and, in line with our principles, the amount of non-exam assessment we propose reflects that. GCSEs are used to measure school accountability. This is recognised as a purpose of the qualifications and places GCSEs under greater pressure than A levels and AS qualifications. We have taken this into account.

2.8 Where non-exam assessments are used, we will specify the forms these will take and put in place appropriate and robust arrangements to secure their validity and reliability. This may include the introduction of external marking where practical and strengthening the moderation of teacher marking where that is used.

Changes to assessment objectives

2.9 The assessment objectives for each subject describe the principal abilities that candidates should develop and demonstrate, and the balance of those abilities.

2.10 Exam boards refer to them when they are designing and setting their assessments, to ensure that the key abilities for the subject are targeted consistently, appropriately and proportionately. We use assessment objectives when considering whether exam boards' proposed qualifications meet our expectations through our accreditation process and when we monitor the design and delivery of assessments throughout the life of the qualification.

- 2.11 The current assessment objectives allow exam boards to decide on their respective weightings from a prescribed range. We proposed that in future, the weighting of the assessment objectives for GCSEs should be expressed in absolute figures, for the following reasons.
- 2.12 First, GCSEs in subjects that embody the national curriculum should in our view be designed to a common requirement for the balance of skills and knowledge to be taught and assessed. Secondly, all GCSEs are eligible for inclusion in school accountability measures, and so should be sufficiently comparable in any one subject as between one exam board and another. Lastly, GCSEs are of a size that does not lend itself to significant variations in weightings within any one subject.
- 2.13 We take a different view about AS qualifications and A levels. They do not embody the national curriculum, they are not subject to the same performance pressures and they are of a size where some legitimate variation in weighting is appropriate. In some A levels and AS qualifications students may wish to focus more one aspect of the content than others, for example to reflect a specialisation within a particular university course they aim to pursue. Where this is the case, ranges can support such specialisation while ensuring that qualifications remain comparable.
- 2.14 The draft assessment objectives on which we are consulting, are set out below. We have also included the current assessment objectives so that the proposed changes are clear. If you wish to comment on the proposed assessment objectives we encourage you first to consider the proposed content on which the Government is consulting, as the assessment objectives should be understood in the context of the subject content.

The structure of GCSEs

- 2.15 We have previously confirmed that new GCSEs should only be tiered where a single set of assessments cannot in a valid and manageable way assess students across the full ability range. We set out the technical issues and arguments for and against tiering in our June 2013 consultation on new GCSEs.¹¹
- 2.16 We have decided that tiering should be used in new GCSEs only when essential.

¹¹ <http://comment.ofqual.gov.uk/gcse-reform-june-2013>

2.17 None of the GCSE subjects on which we are currently consulting are tiered and we propose that the new GCSEs in these subjects should, likewise, be untiered.

3. Subject-specific proposals

Citizenship studies

GCSE

3.1 The DfE is consulting on the content for GCSEs in citizenship studies.¹²

Proposed assessment arrangements

- 3.2 For current GCSEs in citizenship studies 40 per cent of the marks are allocated to exam assessment and 60 per cent to non-exam assessment. We believe a greater proportion of the current content could be assessed by exam.
- 3.3 The current citizenship content requires exam boards to draw on the national Key Stage 4 curriculum, however the exact requirements are not set out in detail, which gives exam boards a substantial degree of flexibility when designing their qualifications. The proposed content removes this flexibility and places greater emphasis on the knowledge and understanding requirements for the subject; it is more detailed and specific, for example in relation to knowledge and understanding of the political system, legal system and international governance.
- 3.4 The new content requires students to take citizenship action in order to develop their knowledge and understanding in a real, out-of-classroom context. We have considered how the subject content, including the requirement for citizenship action, should be assessed and the weighting it should be given according to our principles. We conclude that all essential aspects of the content, including citizenship action, can be assessed by examinations alone.
- 3.5 The requirement for students to take citizenship action is intended to ensure that they are given an opportunity to enhance their knowledge and understanding of the subject in a practical context. We consider the most valid and reliable way for students to demonstrate the knowledge and understanding gained from taking citizenship action is through questions in the examination that require them to reflect on their practical experiences. The process of taking citizenship action does not support reliable direct assessment, for example, observing students taking action.
- 3.6 Direct assessment of students taking citizenship actions also risks devaluing students' practical experiences by limiting the choice of citizenship actions to those that are most likely to lead to good assessment outcomes and are

¹² www.education.gov.uk/consultations

manageable, rather than those most likely to contribute well to their learning and development.

- 3.7 We propose that 15 per cent of the marks in the examination should be allocated to questions which assess the knowledge, understanding and skills gained through a student’s experience of taking citizenship action. This reflects the overall balance of the requirements of the subject content.
- 3.8 We have also reviewed the new subject content for short course GCSEs in citizenship studies and, in line with the expectations set out above, we are proposing that all essential aspects of the content can be assessed wholly by examination.
- 3.9 For short course GCSEs in citizenship studies, there is no requirement for students to take citizenship action. Therefore, there will be no requirement for 15 per cent of the marks in the examination to be allocated to the knowledge and understanding gained from such activity.

Tiering

- 3.10 Currently GCSEs in citizenship studies are not tiered. We propose that the new GCSEs in citizenship studies should not be tiered either.

Proposed assessment objectives

- 3.11 The proposed assessment objectives are clearer than the current ones for the subject. They apply to both the full GCSE and to the short course GCSE in citizenship studies. We propose the following assessment objectives and weightings:

Assessment objectives		Weighting
AO1	Demonstrate citizenship knowledge and understanding of key citizenship concepts, issues, themes and debates, using terminology accurately.	30%
AO2	Apply understanding of citizenship concepts and themes to issues, actions, debates and participation, demonstrating an ability to make connections and organise ideas.	30%
AO3	Analyse evidence about citizenship themes, issues, debates and actions in order to interpret different viewpoints and develop arguments.	20%
AO4	Evaluate different perspectives relating to citizenship issues, themes, debates and actions in order to make judgments and construct and sustain reasoned, coherent arguments.	20%

Current assessment objectives

Assessment objectives		Weighting
AO1	Recall, select and communicate their knowledge and understanding of citizenship concepts, issues and terminology	25–35%
AO2	Apply skills, knowledge and understanding when planning, taking and evaluation citizenship actions in a variety of contexts	40–50%
AO3	Analyse and evaluate issues and evidence including different viewpoints to construct reasoned arguments and draw conclusions.	30–40%

Consultation questions:

Question 1: To what extent do you agree or disagree that GCSEs in citizenship studies should be assessed entirely by exam?

Question 2: To what extent do you agree or disagree that GCSEs in citizenship studies should not be tiered?

Question 3: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate for GCSEs in citizenship studies?

Question 4: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for GCSE qualifications in citizenship studies?

Question 5: Do you have any further comments relating to the assessment of this subject?

Cooking and nutrition

GCSE

3.12 The DfE is consulting on the content for GCSEs in cooking and nutrition.¹³

Proposed assessment arrangements

3.13 GCSE cooking and nutrition will be a new qualification. It is designed to draw upon different elements of three existing qualifications¹⁴ and add some new

¹³ www.education.gov.uk/consultations

content, such as the scientific knowledge underpinning food preparation techniques.

- 3.14 We have considered the draft content, which sets out the knowledge, understanding and skill requirements for the subject. The subject content includes a significant practical focus on students' ability to prepare and cook food.
- 3.15 We are of the view that new GCSE qualifications in cooking and nutrition should use both exam and non-exam assessments. Non exam assessments will allow students to apply their theoretical knowledge and understanding in a practical context to plan, prepare and cook meals. We propose that 50 per cent of the marks should be allocated to non-exam assessments, reflecting the balance between the practical and theoretical elements set out in the subject content.

Tiering

- 3.16 We propose that the new GCSEs in cooking and nutrition should not be tiered.

Proposed assessment objectives

- 3.17 We propose the following assessment objectives and weightings:

Assessment objectives		Weighting
AO1	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of food, cooking and nutrition.	25%
AO2	Apply knowledge and understanding of food, cooking and nutrition, including developing and modifying recipes to meet particular requirements.	30%
AO3	Demonstrate technical skills in planning, preparing, cooking and presenting a selection of recipes.	25%
AO4	Analyse and evaluate different aspects of food, cooking and nutrition, including food made by themselves and others.	20%

¹⁴ The three existing GCSE qualifications are design and technology: food technology; home economics: food and nutrition; hospitality and catering.

Consultation questions:

Question 6: To what extent do you agree or disagree that for GCSEs in cooking and nutrition 50 per cent of the available marks should be allocated to exams, and 50 per cent to non-exam assessment?

Question 7: To what extent do you agree or disagree that GCSEs in cooking and nutrition should not be tiered?

Question 8: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate for GCSEs in cooking and nutrition?

Question 9: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for GCSEs in cooking and nutrition?

Question 10: Do you have any further comments relating to the assessment of this subject?

Design and technology

GCSE

3.18 The DfE is consulting on the content for GCSEs in design and technology.¹⁵

Proposed assessment arrangements

3.19 In current GCSEs in design and technology 60 per cent of the assessment is non-exam assessment.

3.20 The new content, which requires students to design and make products and prototypes, could not be validly assessed by exam alone. Non-exam assessment will allow for the direct assessment of the student's ability to apply knowledge, understanding and skills as part of the iterative design process of exploring, creating and evaluating, over an extended period of time. A proportion of non-exam assessment marks will be awarded for the products and prototypes that students design and make.

3.21 The draft content places greater emphasis on the knowledge and understanding requirements for this subject than is the case currently. We therefore propose that non-exam assessment should account for 50 per cent of the marks for new GCSEs in design and technology. This is a small reduction when compared

¹⁵ www.education.gov.uk/consultations

with current qualifications that we think reflects the balance between the knowledge, understanding and skills required to design and make products and prototypes set out in the subject content.

Tiering

3.22 Currently GCSEs in design and technology are not tiered. We propose that the new GCSEs in design and technology should not be tiered either.

Proposed assessment objectives

3.23 The proposed assessment objectives are clearer than the current ones for the subject. We propose the following assessment objectives and weightings:

Assessment objectives		Weighting
AO1	Investigate design possibilities and considerations for development.	15%
AO2	Design and make products / prototypes that meet needs and solve problems.	35%
AO3	Justify design decisions and analyse and evaluate products / prototypes made by themselves and others.	20%
AO4	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of designing, making and technical principles.	30%

Assessment objectives		Weighting
AO1	Recall, select and communicate knowledge and understanding in design and technology including its wider effects.	25–35 %
AO2	Apply knowledge, understanding and skills in a variety of contexts and in designing and making products.	45–55%
AO3	Analyse and evaluate products, including their design and production.	15–25%

Consultation questions:

Question 11: To what extent do you agree or disagree that for GCSEs in design and technology 50 per cent of the available marks should be allocated to exams, and 50 per cent to non-exam assessment?

Question 12: To what extent do you agree or disagree that GCSEs in design and technology should not be tiered?

Question 13: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate for GCSEs in design and technology?

Question 14: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for GCSE qualifications in design and technology?

Question 15: Do you have any further comments relating to the assessment of this subject?

Drama

GCSE

3.24 The DfE is consulting on the content for GCSEs in drama.¹⁶

Proposed assessment arrangements

3.25 In current GCSEs in drama 60 to 100 per cent of the marks are allocated to non-exam assessments. The actual forms and balance of assessment types vary between exam boards.

3.26 We have considered the draft content, which sets out the knowledge and understanding required for the subject and the performance and skill requirements for the subject. It is more specific and detailed than before, and in particular includes a requirement to study a greater range of texts. We believe that new content can be most validly assessed using a combination of exam and non-exam assessments.

3.27 Non-exam assessments will allow for the direct assessment of students' ability to apply their theatrical skills to create and perform drama. We propose that the percentage of marks allocated to non-exam assessments should be 60 per cent, reflecting the balance between the practical and theoretical elements in the subject content. This is in line with some current specifications.

Tiering

3.28 Currently GCSEs in drama are not tiered. We propose that the new GCSEs in drama should not be tiered either.

¹⁶ www.education.gov.uk/consultations

Proposed assessment objectives

3.29 The proposed assessment objectives are clearer than the current ones for the subject. We propose the following assessment objectives and weightings:

Assessment objectives		Weighting
AO1	Create and develop ideas to communicate meaning through theatrical performance.	25%
AO2	Apply theatrical skills in live performance.	30%
AO3	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of how drama and theatre is created, developed and performed.	25%
AO4	Analyse and evaluate their own work and the work of others.	20%

Current assessment objectives

Assessment objectives		Weighting
AO1	Recall, select and communicate their knowledge and understanding of drama to generate, explore and develop ideas.	25–35%
AO2	Apply practical skills to communicate in performance.	35–45%
AO3	Analyse and evaluate their own work and that of others using appropriate terminology.	20–30%

Consultation questions:

Question 16: To what extent do you agree or disagree that for GCSEs in drama 40 per cent of the available marks should be allocated to exams, and 60 per cent to non-exam assessment?

Question 17: To what extent do you agree or disagree that GCSEs in drama should not be tiered?

Question 18: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate for GCSEs in drama?

Question 19: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for GCSEs in drama?

Question 20: Do you have any further comments relating to the assessment of this subject?

Drama and theatre

A levels and AS qualifications

3.30 The DfE is consulting on the content for A levels and AS qualifications in drama and theatre.¹⁷

Proposed assessment arrangements

3.31 Our proposals for assessment arrangements and assessment objectives for A levels and AS qualifications in drama and theatre are similar to our proposals for GCSEs in drama. This reflects the similarity of the proposed structure for these qualifications.

3.32 In current A levels in drama, 40 to 70 per cent of the marks are allocated to non-exam assessments. In AS qualifications 40 to 100 per cent of the marks are allocated to non-exam assessments. The actual forms and balance of assessment types vary between exam boards.

3.33 We have considered the draft content, which sets out with more specificity the knowledge, understanding and skills required for the subject. For example the content now requires a smaller number of whole performance texts to be studied in greater depth coupled with a requirement to study a broader range of extracts from other dramatic works. We are of the view that new A levels and AS qualifications in drama and theatre should use both exam and non-exam assessments.

3.34 Non exam assessments will allow for the direct assessment of students' ability to apply theatrical skills to create and perform drama. As with GCSEs, we propose that for both A levels and AS qualifications 60 per cent of the marks should be allocated to non-exam assessments. This weighting falls within the range of non-exam assessment on offer within current specifications. It reflects the balance between the practical and theoretical elements set out in the more tightly defined subject content and the narrower range of assessment objective weightings when compared with the current content requirements.

Proposed assessment objectives

3.35 The proposed assessment objectives are clearer and have smaller ranges than the current ones for the subject. The proposed ranges permit a small degree of legitimate variation in weighting, while also promoting comparability in this subject and helping to enable differentiation between AS qualifications and A levels. Similarly, they give each assessment objective a significant weighting

¹⁷ www.education.gov.uk/consultations

within the subject. We propose the following assessment objectives and weightings:

Assessment objectives		Weighting	
		AS	A level
AO1	Create, develop and refine ideas to communicate meaning as part of the theatre making process.	20–30%	20–30%
AO2	Apply theatrical skills to realise artistic intentions in live performance.	20–30%	20–30%
AO3	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of how drama and theatre is created, developed and performed.	20–25%	20–25%
AO4	Make critical, analytical and evaluative judgements of their own work and of the work of others.	20–25%	20–25%

Current assessment objectives

Assessment objectives		Proposed weighting		
		AS	A2	A level
AO1	Demonstrate the application of performance and/or production skills through the realisation of drama and theatre.	30–40%	30–40%	30–40%
AO2	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of practical and theoretical aspects of drama and theatre using appropriate terminology.	20–40%	20–40%	20–40%
AO3	Interpret plays from different periods and genres.	20–40%	20–40%	20–40%
AO4	Make critical and evaluative judgements of live theatre.	10–25%	10–25%	10–25%

Consultation questions:

Question 21: To what extent do you agree or disagree that for AS qualifications in drama and theatre 40 per cent of the available marks should be allocated to exams, and 60 per cent to non-exam assessment?

Question 22: To what extent do you agree or disagree that for A levels in drama and theatre 40 per cent of the available marks should be allocated to exams, and 60 per cent to non-exam assessment?

Question 23: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate for A levels and AS qualifications in drama and theatre?

Question 24: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for AS qualifications in drama and theatre?

Question 25: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for A levels in drama and theatre?

Question 26: Do you have any further comments relating to the assessment of this subject?

4. Equality analysis

Ofqual's role, objectives and duties

4.1 We are subject to the public sector equality duty. We have set out in Appendix 2 how this duty interacts with our statutory objectives and other duties.

Equality impact analysis relating to proposed changes to GCSEs, A levels and AS qualifications

4.2 We have considered the potential impact on students who share protected characteristics¹⁸ of the application of the principles and features that will apply to all new GCSE, A levels and AS qualifications. Our equality impact analyses for our earlier consultations on GCSE, A level and AS qualification reform are therefore of interest and we encourage you to read them.¹⁹

4.3 We do not repeat here all of the evidence we have considered, as this can be found in our earlier reports. We focus instead on the specific issues that are relevant to the subjects on which we are now consulting.

4.4 During this consultation we will continue to seek and consider evidence and feedback to our proposals that might help us identify any potential subject-specific impacts on students who share a protected characteristic. We will also seek views from interested groups during the period of this consultation, including the Access Consultation Forum and our External Advisory Group for Equalities.

4.5 Exam boards and other awarding organisations are required to consider the accessibility of their qualifications at design stage and to remove any unjustifiable barriers.

Assessment arrangements

GCSE in citizenship studies

4.6 Within the proposed subject content for citizenship studies developed by DfE, there is a requirement for students to take 'citizenship action'. 'Taking citizenship action' requires students to practise a range of citizenship skills including: research and enquiry, advocacy and campaigning outside of the classroom with the aim of bringing about a change or benefit for the wider

¹⁸ The protected characteristics are disability, racial group, age, religion or belief, pregnancy or maternity, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment.

¹⁹ www.ofqual.gov.uk/documents/equality-analysis-report-on-reforms-to-gcse-from-2015
www.ofqual.gov.uk/files/2012-06-18-equality-analysis-of-the-a-level-reform-consultation.pdf
<http://comment.ofqual.gov.uk/developing-new-qualifications-for-2016>

community. Certain types of ‘taking citizenship action’ could impact on students with particular disabilities who may not be able to take part in certain chosen citizenship actions (for example, students with hearing or speaking difficulties may find it difficult to take part in citizenship action involving advocacy skills). However, the decision to include taking citizenship action within the subject content was DfE’s.

- 4.7 We have not identified that our proposal that GCSE citizenship studies should be assessed by exam only or our proposed assessment objectives, will have a negative impact on students because of their disability, racial group, age, religion or belief, pregnancy or maternity, sexual orientation or as a result of gender reassignment.

GCSE in cooking and nutrition

- 4.8 Cooking and nutrition is a subject that contains a practical element. We are proposing the subject should be assessed by combination of exam and non-exam assessment, with 50 per cent of the marks allocated to each form of assessment.
- 4.9 Some disabled students might not be able to undertake elements of the non-exam assessment because of their disability. We have specified, using our powers under the Equality Act 2010, that a disabled student can be exempt from a maximum of 40 per cent of the marks available for a GCSE, A level or AS qualification and have their marks from the assessments they are able to take scaled up. However, students can only be exempted from whole components, and then only when they cannot access any part of the components in question.
- 4.10 If, within a specification, there was a discrete component which assessed the student’s practical skills in the subject, worth no more than 40 per cent of the marks, an exemption could be given for that assessment. The student would take the remaining components. This would allow a disabled student who was unable to undertake the practical assessment to be granted an exemption from the assessment and to have their marks from the remaining aspects of the qualification scaled up.
- 4.11 Exam boards will decide how to design the qualifications they offer, within the rules we put in place. If the non-exam assessment formed one whole component, comprising 50 per cent of the marks, a student could not be exempted from it, because of the 40 per cent exemption limit. Exam boards could distribute the 50 per cent non-exam assessment marks between two components, allowing an exemption to be given from one component. However,

a student who could not access, and therefore gain any marks from, the remaining non-exam assessment component would be disadvantaged.

- 4.12 We have considered whether we should set the percentage of marks available for non-exam assessment in cooking and nutrition at 40 per cent or less or allow a student to be exempted from aspects of the overall assessment worth a higher percentage of the marks. We do not believe either of these options would be appropriate, because the practical aspect of the subject, to be assessed by non-exam assessment, is a fundamental part of the qualification.
- 4.13 We have not identified anything about the proposed assessment arrangements that would have an adverse impact on students because of their racial group, age, religion or belief, pregnancy or maternity, sexual orientation or as a result of gender reassignment. The DfE will consider whether any aspects of the proposed content might have an impact on students because of their protected characteristics.

GCSEs, A levels and AS qualifications in design and technology

- 4.14 Design and technology is a subject that contains a practical element. We are proposing the subject should be assessed by combination of exam and non-exam assessment, with 50 per cent of the marks allocated to each form of assessment.
- 4.15 Some disabled students might not be able to undertake elements of the non-exam assessment because of their disability. We have specified, using our powers under the Equality Act 2010, that a disabled student can be exempt from a maximum of 40 per cent of the marks available for a GCSE, A level or AS qualification and have their marks from the assessments they are able to take scaled up. However, students can only be exempted from whole components, and then only when they cannot access any part of the components in question.
- 4.16 If, within a specification, there was a discrete component which assessed the student's practical skills in the subject, worth no more than 40 per cent of the marks, an exemption could be given for that assessment. The student would take the remaining components. This would allow a disabled student who was unable to undertake the practical assessment to be granted an exemption from the assessment and to have their marks from the remaining aspects of the qualification scaled up.
- 4.17 Exam boards will decide how to design the qualifications they offer, within the rules we put in place. If the non-exam assessment formed one whole component, comprising 50 per cent of the marks, a student could not be exempted from it, because of the 40 per cent exemption limit. Exam boards

could distribute the 50 per cent non-exam assessment marks between two components, allowing an exemption to be given from one component. However, a student who could not access, and therefore gain any marks from, the remaining non-exam assessment component would be disadvantaged.

- 4.18 We have considered whether we should set the percentage of marks available for non-exam assessment in design and technology at 40 per cent or less or allow a student to be exempted from aspects of the overall assessment worth a higher percentage of the marks. We do not believe either of these options would be appropriate, because the practical aspect of the subject, to be assessed by non-exam assessment, is a fundamental part of the qualification.
- 4.19 We have not identified anything about the proposed changes that would have an adverse impact on students because of their racial group, age, religion or belief, pregnancy or maternity, sexual orientation or as a result of gender reassignment.

GCSEs, A levels and AS qualifications in drama and drama and theatre

- 4.20 Drama²⁰ is a subject that contains a practical element. We are proposing the subject should be assessed by combination of exam and non-exam assessment, with 60 per cent of the marks allocated to each form of assessment for GCSEs, A levels and AS qualifications.
- 4.21 Some disabled students might not be able to undertake elements of the non-exam assessment because of their disability. We have specified, using our powers under the Equality Act 2010, that a disabled student can be exempt from a maximum of 40 per cent of the marks available for a GCSE, A level or AS qualification and have their marks from the assessments they are able to take scaled up. However, students can only be exempted from whole components, and then only when they cannot access any part of the components in question.
- 4.22 If, within a specification, there was a discrete component which assessed the student's practical skills in the subject, worth no more than 40 per cent of the marks, an exemption could be given for that assessment. The student would take the remaining components. This would allow a disabled student who was unable to undertake the practical assessment to be granted an exemption from the assessment and to have their marks from the remaining aspects of the qualification scaled up.

²⁰ A levels and AS qualifications are titled 'drama and theatre'.

- 4.23 Exam boards will decide how to design the qualifications they offer, within the rules we put in place. If the non-exam assessment formed one whole component, comprising 60 per cent of the marks, a student could not be exempted from it, because of the 40 per cent exemption limit. Exam boards could distribute the 60 per cent non-exam assessment marks between two components, allowing an exemption to be given from one component. However, a student who could not access, and therefore gain any marks from, the remaining non-exam assessment component would be disadvantaged.
- 4.24 We have considered whether we should set the percentage of marks available for non-exam assessment in drama at 40 per cent or less or allow a student to be exempted from aspects of the overall assessment worth a higher percentage of the marks. We do not believe either of these options would be appropriate, because the practical aspect of the subject, to be assessed by non-exam assessment, is a fundamental part of the qualification.
- 4.25 We have not identified anything about the proposed changes that would have an adverse impact on students because of their racial group, age, religion or belief, pregnancy or maternity, sexual orientation or as a result of gender reassignment.

Consultation questions

Question 27: We have identified a number of ways the proposed requirements for reformed GCSEs, A levels and AS qualifications may impact (positively or negatively) on persons who share a protected characteristic. Are there any other potential impacts we have not identified? If so, what are they?

Question 28: Are there any additional steps we could take to mitigate any negative impact from resulting from these proposals on persons who share a protected characteristic? If so, please comment on the additional steps we could take to mitigate negative impacts.

Question 29: Have you any other comments on the impacts of the proposals on persons who share a protected characteristic?

Responding to the consultation

Your details

To evaluate responses properly, we need to know who is responding to the consultation and in what capacity. We will therefore only consider your response if you complete the following information section.

We will publish our evaluation of responses. Please note that we may publish all or part of your response unless you tell us (in your answer to the confidentiality question) that you want us to treat your response as confidential. If you tell us you wish your response to be treated as confidential, we will not include your details in any published list of respondents, although we may quote from your response anonymously.

Please answer all questions marked with a star*

Name*

Position*

Organisation name (if applicable)*

Address

Email

Telephone

Would you like us to treat your response as confidential?*

If you answer yes, we will not include your details in any list of people or organisations that responded to the consultation.

Yes No

Is this a personal response or an official response on behalf of your organisation?*

Personal response (Please answer the question 'If you ticked 'Personal views'...')

Official response (Please answer the question 'Type of responding organisation')

If you ticked 'Personal views' which of the following are you?

Student

Parent or carer

Teacher (but responding in a personal capacity)

Other, including general public (Please state below)

If you ticked "Official response from an organisation/group", please respond accordingly:

Type of responding organisation*

Awarding organisation

Local authority

School or college (please answer the question below)

Academy chain

Private training provider

University or other higher education institution

Employer

Other representative or interest group (please answer the question below)

School or college type

- Comprehensive or non-selective academy
 - State selective or selective academy
 - Independent
 - Special school
 - Further education college
 - Sixth form college
 - Other (please state below)
-

Type of representative group or interest group

- Group of awarding organisations
 - Union
 - Employer or business representative group
 - Subject association or learned society
 - Equality organisation or group
 - School, college or teacher representative group
 - Other (please state below)
-

Nation*

- England
- Wales
- Northern Ireland
- Scotland
- Other EU country: _____
- Non-EU country: _____

How did you find out about this consultation?

Our newsletter or another one of our communications

Our website

Internet search

Other

May we contact you for further information?

Yes No

Questions

GCSE in citizenship studies

Question 1: To what extent do you agree or disagree that GCSEs in citizenship studies should be assessed entirely by exam?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Please give reasons for your answer

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Question 2: To what extent do you agree or disagree that GCSEs in citizenship studies should not be tiered?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Please give reasons for your answer

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Question 3: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate for GCSEs in citizenship studies?

- Strongly agree

- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Please give reasons for your answer

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Question 4: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for GCSEs in citizenship studies?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Please give reasons for your answer

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Question 5: Do you have any further comments relating to the assessment of this subject?

- Yes No

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GCSE in cooking and nutrition

Question 6: To what extent do you agree or disagree that for GCSEs in cooking and nutrition 50 per cent of the available marks should be allocated to exams, and 50 per cent to non-exam assessment?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Please give reasons for your answer

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Question 7: To what extent do you agree or disagree that GCSEs in cooking and nutrition should not be tiered?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Please give reasons for your answer

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Question 8: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate for GCSEs in cooking and nutrition?

- Strongly agree
- Agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

Please give reasons for your answer

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Question 9: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for GCSEs in cooking and nutrition?

Strongly agree

Agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

Please give reasons for your answer

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Question 10: Do you have any further comments relating to the assessment of this subject?

Yes No

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GCSE in design and technology

Question 11: To what extent do you agree or disagree that for GCSEs in design and technology 50 per cent of the available marks should be allocated to exams, and 50 per cent to non-exam assessment?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Please give reasons for your answer

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Question 12: To what extent do you agree or disagree that GCSEs in design and technology should not be tiered?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Please give reasons for your answer

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Question 13: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate for GCSEs in design and technology?

- Strongly agree
- Agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

Please give reasons for your answer

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Question 14: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for GCSE qualifications in design and technology?

Strongly agree

Agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

Please give reasons for your answer

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Question 15: Do you have any further comments relating to the assessment of this subject?

Yes No

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GCSEs, A levels and AS qualifications in drama and drama and theatre

Question 16: To what extent do you agree or disagree that for GCSEs in drama 40 per cent of the available marks should be allocated to exams, and 60 per cent to non-exam assessment?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Please give reasons for your answer

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Question 17: To what extent do you agree or disagree that GCSEs in drama should not be tiered?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Please give reasons for your answer

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Question 18: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate for GCSEs in drama?

- Strongly agree

- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Please give reasons for your answer

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Question 19: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for GCSEs in drama?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Please give reasons for your answer

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Question 20: Do you have any further comments relating to the assessment of this subject?

- Yes No

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Question 21: To what extent do you agree or disagree that for AS qualifications in drama and theatre 40 per cent of the available marks should be allocated to exams, and 60 per cent to non-exam assessment?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Please give reasons for your answer

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Question 22: To what extent do you agree or disagree that for A levels in drama and theatre 40 per cent of the available marks should be allocated to exams, and 60 per cent to non-exam assessment?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Please give reasons for your answer

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Question 23: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate for A levels and AS qualifications in drama and theatre?

- Strongly agree
- Agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

Please give reasons for your answer

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Question 24: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for AS qualifications in drama and theatre?

Strongly agree

Agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

Please give reasons for your answer

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Question 25: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for A levels in drama and theatre?

Strongly agree

Agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

Please give reasons for your answer

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Question 26: Do you have any further comments relating to the assessment of this subject?

Yes No

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Equality impact

Question 27: We have identified a number of ways the proposed requirements for reformed GCSEs, A levels and AS qualifications may impact (positively or negatively) on persons who share a protected characteristic. Are there any other potential impacts we have not identified? If so, what are they?

Yes No

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Question 28: Are there any additional steps we could take to mitigate any negative impact from resulting from these proposals on persons who share a protected characteristic? If so, please comment on the additional steps we could take to mitigate negative impacts.

Yes No

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Question 29: Have you any other comments on the impacts of the proposals on persons who share a protected characteristic?

Yes No

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Accessibility of our consultations

We are looking at how we provide accessible versions of our consultations and would appreciate it if you could spare a few moments to answer the following questions.

Your answers to these questions will not be considered as part of the consultation and will not be released to any third-parties.

Do you have any special requirements to enable you to read our consultations? (For example screen reader, large text, and so on)

Yes No

Which of the following do you currently use to access our consultation documents? (Select all that apply)

- Screen reader / text-to-speech software
- Braille reader
- Screen magnifier
- Speech to text software
- Motor assistance (blow-suck tube, mouth stick, etc.)
- Other

Which of the following document formats would meet your needs for accessing our consultations? (Select all that apply)

- A standard PDF
- Accessible web pages
- Large type PDF (16 point text)
- Large-type word document (16 point text)
- eBook (Kindle, iBooks or similar format)
- Braille document
- Spoken document
- Other

How many of our consultations have you read in the last 12 months?

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- More than 5

Appendix 1: Background to the reforms

GCSE

Purpose and key features

The primary purpose of new GCSEs is to provide evidence of students' achievements against demanding and fulfilling content, and a strong foundation for further academic and vocational study and for employment. If required, they should be able to provide a basis for schools and colleges to be held accountable for the performance of all their students. New GCSEs should be accessible, with good teaching, to the range of students who take current GCSEs.

GCSEs will be linear qualifications, with exams taken in one period at the end of the course. The qualifications will use new and more demanding subject content than is now the case. Students' performance will be reported with a grade from a new scale; the grades will be 9 to 1 with 9 being the highest grade. As now, students' performance may be unclassified (U) in which case they will not receive a certificate.

Most new GCSEs will be untiered, meaning that all students will study the same content, take the same assessments and have access to the full range of grades. GCSEs will be tiered only where, because of the nature of the subject, an untiered qualification cannot both stretch the most able students and be accessible and rewarding for less able students, whilst also being manageable in terms of the length and costs of assessments. We propose that the GCSEs on which we are seeking views in this consultation should all be untiered.

Where possible, subjects will be assessed mainly by exam. Other forms of assessment will be used when essential subject content cannot be assessed in this way.

Government policy

The Secretary of State set out on 6th February 2013 in a letter to Ofqual the Government's policy intentions for new GCSEs.²¹

In summary, the intention was that new GCSEs in England should remain accessible, with good teaching, to the same proportion of students who currently take them; there must be an increase in demand at the level of what is widely considered to be a pass (currently indicated by a grade C) to reflect that of high-performing jurisdictions; there was a strong case for the new GCSEs to have a new grading scale.

²¹ www.ofqual.gov.uk/files/2013-02-07-letter-from-michael-gove-reform-of-ks4-qualifications.pdf

Controlled assessment

In June 2013 we published a report on the use of controlled assessments in GCSEs. The report was largely informed by feedback from teachers. It highlighted a number of weaknesses with the current controlled assessment arrangements.²²

Consultation on new GCSEs

In June 2013 we published a consultation on the principles that should apply to all new GCSEs and on proposals for the new qualifications in English language, English literature, mathematics, geography, history and the sciences.²³

YouGov report on responses to the consultation

In November 2013 we published a summary of responses to the consultation.²⁴

Our equality impact assessment

In November 2013 we published our equality analysis of the impact of the reforms on students who share protected characteristics.²⁵

November 2013 announcement

In November we published our decisions on the features of all GCSEs, and on specific arrangements for English language, English literature and mathematics.²⁶

Grading consultation

In April 2014 we published a consultation on setting the grade standards for new GCSEs. In September 2014 we published a summary of responses and our decisions in relation to the consultation.²⁷

Subject content

The Government published the content for a number of new GCSEs.²⁸

²² www.ofqual.gov.uk/files/2013-06-11-review-of-controlled-assessment-in-GCSEs.pdf

²³ comment.ofqual.gov.uk/gcse-reform-june-2013

²⁴ www.ofqual.gov.uk/documents/yougov-analysis-of-responses-to-the-2013-gcse-reform-consultation

²⁵ www.ofqual.gov.uk/documents/equality-analysis-report-on-reforms-to-gcse-from-2015

²⁶ www.ofqual.gov.uk/news/design-details-of-new-gcse-in-england

²⁷ comment.ofqual.gov.uk/setting-the-grade-standards-of-new-gcse-april-2014

²⁸ Maths: www.gov.uk/government/publications/gcse-mathematics-subject-content-and-assessment-objectives

English language and English literature: www.gov.uk/government/publications/gcse-english-language-and-gcse-english-literature-new-content

GCSE Modern Foreign Language / Ancient Language consultation

In April 2014 we published a consultation on reforming GCSEs in modern foreign and ancient languages. In September 2014 we published a summary of responses and our decisions in relation to the consultation.²⁹

First 2016 subjects consultation

In July 2014 we published a consultation on developing new GCSEs, A levels and AS qualifications for first teaching in 2016.³⁰

GCSE English language – spoken language consultation

In July 2014 we published a consultation on the conduct, marking and grading of spoken language skills in GCSE English language.³¹

A levels and AS qualifications

Purpose and key features

The objectives of A levels are to:

- define and assess achievement of the knowledge, skills and understanding which will be needed by students planning to progress to undergraduate study at a UK higher education establishment, particularly (although not only) in the same subject area and provide a strong foundation for further academic and vocational study and for employment;
- set out a robust and internationally comparable post-16 academic course of study to develop that knowledge, skills and understanding;
- permit UK universities to accurately identify the level of attainment of students;
- provide a basis for school and college accountability measures at age 18; and
- provide a benchmark of academic ability for employers.

The objectives of AS qualifications are to:

- provide evidence of students' achievements in a robust and internationally comparable post-16 course of study that is a sub-set of A level content; and
- enable students to broaden the range of subjects they study.

²⁹ <http://comment.ofqual.gov.uk/modern-foreign-and-ancient-languages>

³⁰ <http://comment.ofqual.gov.uk/developing-new-qualifications-for-2016>

³¹ <http://comment.ofqual.gov.uk/spoken-language-skills-in-gcse-english-language>

The higher education sector has a keen interest in A levels and AS qualifications and that sector's views have been taken into account as subject content and assessment arrangements have been developed. The qualifications will be based on new subject content.

A levels and AS qualifications will be linear. There will be less non-exam assessment than now in most subjects. A levels will continue to be graded A*–E and AS qualifications graded A–E. As now, students' performance may be unclassified (U) in which case they will not receive a certificate.

In line with government policy, the AS will be a stand-alone qualification. Students will not have to enter for an AS qualification in order to be awarded an A level. Students who do take an AS qualification and who progress to the A level will have to take all of the assessments for the A level. They will not be given credit towards the A level for any AS assessment they have taken.

The content for AS qualifications must be drawn from the content for the corresponding A level. Exam boards may design their A levels and AS qualifications to facilitate co-teaching, although they must not compromise the quality of their A levels in order to do so.

November 2010

In the White Paper *The Importance of Teaching*, the DfE said: “we are working with Ofqual ... to ensure universities and learned bodies can be fully involved in the development [of A levels]” (paragraph 4.47).

Spring/summer 2012

We published our research on A levels.³² For this research, we spoke to teachers, employers and other higher education representatives. We also looked at the standards and methods other jurisdictions use to assess students at this point in their education.³³

June to September 2012

We ran an open consultation³⁴ where we asked education specialists and the general public for their opinions on possible changes to A levels, including removing exams in January. This consultation was supplemented with face-to-face events across the

³² www.ofqual.gov.uk/files/2012-04-03-fit-for-purpose-a-levels.pdf

³³ www.ofqual.gov.uk/documents/international-comparisons-in-senior-secondary-assessment-full-report/all-versions

³⁴ <http://comment.ofqual.gov.uk/a-level-reform>

country with a wide range of stakeholders including higher education, teachers and representatives of disability groups.

November 2012

We confirmed that we would remove January exams. There were no A level exams this January (2014).

March 2013

The DfE confirmed that AS qualifications will be ‘decoupled’ from the new A levels.

September 2013

We published a report by Professor Mark Smith, the independent Chair of a group established by the Government to review the current curriculum requirements for some A levels and confirm whether they are fit for purpose or need to change.

We also confirmed the timetable for reform (which has since been updated). It is now:

- First teaching in 2015: English language, English literature, English language and literature, biology, chemistry, physics, psychology, art and design, business studies, computing, economics, history, sociology.
- First teaching in 2016: ancient languages, dance, design and technology, drama, geography, mathematics, further mathematics, modern foreign languages (MFL), music, physical education and religious studies.

October 2013

We launched a consultation on assessment arrangements for each subject to be introduced for first teaching in 2015. This consultation included geography, but the Government has since confirmed that this subject will be introduced in 2016. In the consultation we set out proposals for the role of non-exam assessment in each subject. The proposals are based on the principle that assessment should be by exam only, except where non-exam assessment is needed to test a skill essential to the subject (for example in art and design). This principle comes from our aims:

- to create a better balance between exam and non-exam assessment;
- to give clear reasons why non-exam assessment is needed;
- to have greater consistency across the qualifications set by different exam boards.

After this consultation, we made our decisions on assessment for subjects that will be first taught in 2015.

June 2014

In July 2014 we published a consultation on developing new GCSEs, A levels and AS qualifications for first teaching in 2016.³⁵

³⁵ <http://comment.ofqual.gov.uk/developing-new-qualifications-for-2016>

Appendix 2

Ofqual's role, objectives and duties

Our statutory objectives include the qualifications standards objective, which is to secure that the qualifications we regulate:

- (a) give a reliable indication of knowledge, skills and understanding; and
- (b) indicate
 - i. a consistent level of attainment (including over time) between comparable regulated qualifications; and
 - ii. a consistent level of attainment (but not over time) between qualifications we regulate and comparable qualifications (including those awarded outside of the UK) which we do not regulate.

We must therefore regulate so that qualifications properly differentiate between students who have demonstrated they have the knowledge, skills and understanding required to attain the qualification and those who have not.

We also have a duty under the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 to have regard to the reasonable requirements of relevant students, including those with special educational needs and disabilities, of employers and of the higher education sector, and to aspects of government policy when so directed by the Secretary of State.

As a public body we are subject to the public sector equality duty (PSED).³⁶ This duty requires us to have due regard to the need to:

- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct which is prohibited under the Equality Act 2010;
- (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

The exam boards that design, deliver and award GCSEs, A levels and AS qualifications are required by the Equality Act, among other things, to make

³⁶ Equality Act 2010, section 149

reasonable adjustments for disabled people taking their qualifications, except where we have specified that such adjustments should not be made.

When we decide whether such adjustments should not be made, we must have regard to:

- (a) the need to minimise the extent to which disabled persons are disadvantaged in attaining the qualification because of their disabilities;
- (b) the need to secure that the qualification gives a reliable indication of the knowledge, skills and understanding of a person upon whom it is conferred;
- (c) the need to maintain public confidence in the qualification.

Legislation therefore sets out a framework within which we must operate. We are subject to a number of duties and we must aim to achieve a number of objectives. These different duties and objectives can, from time to time, conflict with each other. For example, if we regulate to secure that a qualification gives a reliable indication of a student's knowledge, skills and understanding, a student who has not been able to demonstrate the required knowledge, skills and/or understanding will not be awarded the qualification. A person may find it more difficult, or impossible, to demonstrate the required knowledge, skills and/or understanding because they have a protected characteristic. This could put them at a disadvantage relative to others who have been awarded the qualification. It is not always possible for us to regulate so that we can both secure that qualifications give a reliable indication of knowledge, skills and understanding and advance equality between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. We must review all the available evidence and actively consider all the available options before coming to a final, rational decision.

Qualifications cannot be used to mitigate inequalities or unfairness in the education system or in society more widely that might affect, for example, students' preparedness to take the qualification and the assessments within it. Whilst a wide range of factors can have an impact on a student's ability to achieve a particular mark in an assessment, our influence is limited to the way the qualification is designed and assessed.

We require the exam boards to design qualifications to give a reliable indication of the knowledge, skills and understanding of those on whom they are conferred. We also require the exam boards to avoid, where possible, features of a qualification that could, without justification, make a qualification more difficult for a student to achieve because they have a particular protected characteristic. We require exam boards to monitor whether any features of their qualifications have this effect.

In setting the overall framework within which exam boards will design, assess and award the reformed GCSEs, A levels and AS qualifications, we want to understand the possible impacts of the proposals on persons who share a protected characteristic.

The protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are:

- age;
- disability;
- gender reassignment;
- marriage and civil partnerships;
- pregnancy and maternity;
- race;
- religion or belief;
- sex
- sexual orientation.

It should be noted that under section 149 of the 2010 Act, we are not required to have due regard to impacts on those who are married or in a civil partnership.

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Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at:

Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation

Spring Place	2nd Floor
Coventry Business Park	Glendinning House
Herald Avenue	6 Murray Street
Coventry CV5 6UB	Belfast BT1 6DN

Telephone 0300 303 3344

Textphone 0300 303 3345

Helpline 0300 303 3346