

Developing new GCSE, A level and AS qualifications for first teaching in 2016

covering:

GCSE

Art and design
Computer science
Dance
Music
Physical education

A level and AS qualifications

Ancient languages
Dance
Geography
Mathematics
Further mathematics
Modern foreign languages
Music
Physical education



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1. Introduction

The scope of this consultation

- 1.1 As most readers will know, changes are being made to GCSE, A level and AS qualifications taken by students in England. The new qualifications will be introduced in a phased way, with the first being taught from September 2015. We have previously consulted on and announced our decisions on the structure and assessment of the first new qualifications to be taught and on some that will be taught from September 2016. This consultation is about a number of additional subjects planned for first teaching in September 2016.
- 1.2 In this consultation we are seeking views on the design, assessment arrangements and assessment objectives of new qualifications in the subjects detailed in the table below. We use this table to set out both those subjects that are part of this consultation and, where we have already consulted on arrangements for that subject for GCSE or A level and AS qualifications, the status of the development of the subject.

Subject	GCSE – covered in this consultation?	A level and AS qualifications – covered in this consultation?
Ancient languages	No. We have already consulted and the new qualifications are due to be taught from September 2016.	Yes
Art and design	Yes	No. We have already consulted and the new qualifications are due to be taught from September 2015.
Computer science	Yes	No. We have already consulted and the new qualifications are due to be taught from September 2015.
Dance	Yes	Yes
Geography	No. We have already consulted and the new qualifications are due to be taught from September 2016.	Yes

Mathematics	No. We have already consulted and the new qualifications are due to be taught from September 2015.	Yes
Further mathematics	Not offered at GCSE	Yes
Modern foreign languages	No. We have already consulted and the new qualifications are due to be taught from September 2016.	Yes
Music	Yes	Yes
Physical education	Yes	Yes

- 1.3 The Department for Education (DfE) is consulting¹ in parallel on the subject content for the subjects included in this consultation. If you wish to comment on the proposed content for any of the subjects please respond to that consultation.
- 1.4 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.
- 1.5 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 2016.² The exam boards' specifications, to be taught from that date, should be available to schools and colleges from autumn 2015.
- 1.6 The subject content for further subjects is being developed to a slightly different timescale with a further consultation³ towards the end of the summer 2014, in time for first teaching of the new qualifications from September 2016. These additional subjects are:
- Citizenship studies

¹ www.gov.uk/government/consultations/gcse-and-a-level-reform

² New GCSEs in biology, chemistry, physics and double award science, history, geography, modern foreign and ancient languages 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.

³ As for these subjects, the DfE will consult on the proposed content and we will consult on assessment arrangements and assessment objectives.

- Design and technology
- Drama
- Religious studies.

1.7 We have summarised below the key features of all new GCSE, A level and AS qualifications. We do not repeat here the reasons why GCSE, A level 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.⁴ We also set out in Appendix 1 some of the documents relating to the background to these important reforms and progress so far.

GCSEs – purpose and key features

- 1.8 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.
- 1.9 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.
- 1.10 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.
- 1.11 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.

⁴ www.ofqual.gov.uk/qualifications-and-assessments/qualification-reform

A level and AS qualifications – purpose and key features

1.12 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.

1.13 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.

1.14 The higher education sector has a keen interest in A level 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. For some subjects⁵ higher education representatives have, through the A level Content Advisory Board (ALCAB), taken the lead on reviewing current content requirements and on identifying changes that should be made to facilitate students' progression from A level to higher education. The DfE has reflected ALCAB's advice in drafting the content on which the DfE is consulting. Where appropriate we have included links to ALCAB's documents.

⁵ Ancient languages, modern foreign languages, mathematics, further mathematics and geography.

The structure of A level and AS qualifications

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

How to respond to this consultation

- 1.18 If you have an interest in GCSE, A level 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.
- 1.19 We acknowledge that we are launching this at the end of term. The closing date for responses is 22nd September 2014 enabling schools to finalise their feedback at the start of the new school year.
- 1.20 Please respond to this consultation in one of three ways:
- Complete the online response at surveys.ofqual.gov.uk/s3/developing-new-qualifications-for-first-teaching-in-2016-july-2014.
 - Email your response to consultations@ofqual.gov.uk – please include 'GCSE and A level 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, Coventry Business Park, Herald Avenue, Coventry, CV5 6UB.

Evaluating the responses

- 1.21 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 information page.

- 1.22 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.
- 1.23 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.

2. Assessing new GCSE, A level and AS qualifications

- 2.1 Assessments can take many forms, which can broadly be divided into exams, which 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 dance or music, 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 GCSE, A level and AS qualifications

- 2.4 GCSE, A level 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 physical education or 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 GCSE, A level and AS qualifications

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

- (b) Non-exam assessment must strike a balance between valid assessment of essential knowledge and skills, sound assessment practice and manageability.
 - (c) 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.
 - (d) Non-exam assessment must be designed so that the qualification is not easily distorted by external pressures from the wider system.
- 2.6 Where subject content can be validly assessed by exams, set and marked by exam boards, this should be the default method of assessment. But we recognise that other forms of assessment have their place.
- 2.7 When they were designed, current GCSEs had a limited set of pre-determined proportions for non-exam assessment. We have not taken this approach. Instead, in making our proposals for GCSE, A level and AS qualifications, we have taken advice from experts in each subject and considered the requirements of the new proposed subject content. 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.
- 2.8 We do not in all cases propose the same assessment approach for GCSEs, A level and AS qualifications in a given subject. Subject requirements at different levels vary and, in line with our principles, the amount of non-exam assessment we propose reflects that. In addition, in our experience, the use of GCSEs in accountability measures puts them greater pressure than A level and AS qualifications.
- 2.9 In general, we believe that non-exam assessment causes greater difficulty in GCSEs than in A level and AS qualifications because:
- the GCSE cohort is larger, which can create logistical difficulties in organising, moderating and standardising non-exam assessment and the cohort is younger so typically requires more support to carry out these assessments;
 - GCSEs are subject to greater pressures as a result of their use in accountability arrangements; and

- GCSEs are smaller qualifications for which there is less available teaching time in each subject, adding to the logistical pressures of any non-exam assessment.
- 2.10 For certain A levels, some practical or performance-based subject skills are required for progression to higher education, making it more important that these are assessed, where possible.
- 2.11 Nevertheless, having considered each subject individually we are proposing that for one subject – dance – there should be a slightly higher proportion of non-exam assessment in the GCSE than there is in the corresponding A level and AS qualifications. As we set out below, this reflects the particular requirements of this subject.
- 2.12 Some students will take both an A level and an AS qualification in a subject. We do not want students who take both qualifications in a subject to duplicate non-exam assessments covering the same or similar skills. This would be both inefficient and disruptive to teaching and learning. This is why in most subjects to be reformed, we have not proposed any non-exam assessment in AS qualifications. However, practical skills and/or performance are so integral to some subjects that non-exam assessment will be needed for both A level and AS qualifications.
- 2.13 There is a view that subject content and other requirements that will not be assessed will not be taught. There is no doubt that the assessment structure of a qualification can lead teachers to deliver the curriculum in a way that will help their students to get the best marks. However, it is not possible to design qualifications that will assess validly and reliably all the knowledge and skills needed for a broad and deep study of each subject, so if teaching is focused narrowly on the test, the quality of education is likely to suffer. The design of assessments should not be compromised in order to regulate the delivery of the curriculum.
- 2.14 In order to strike a better balance between exam and non-exam assessment we are proposing three main changes to the way in which qualifications in the subjects on which we are consulting are assessed. We propose, in summary, to:
- (a) define the percentage of marks to be allocated to exam and non-exam assessment, removing or reducing any current flexibility and promoting comparability between exam boards;
 - (b) reduce the proportion of non-exam assessment we have permitted in GCSE, A level and AS qualifications in physical education, music and dance; in A level and AS qualifications in mathematics, further

mathematics and modern foreign languages; and in GCSEs in computer science;

- (c) introduce non-exam assessment in A levels in geography so that accounts of fieldwork and data collection can be assessed more appropriately than is possible in a centrally set and marked exam.

2.15 Where non-exam assessments are used, we will work with the exam boards to make sure appropriate and robust arrangements are put in place, including the introduction of external marking where practical, strengthening the moderation of teacher marking where that is used and other measures aimed at reducing incidents of malpractice. We will take into account the feedback we receive from our survey on exam strategies⁶ when we determine the safeguards to valid and reliable assessments that are needed.

Our proposals

2.16 Table 1 overleaf summarises current and proposed assessment arrangements for the subjects in this consultation, which are explained in more detail in the relevant subject sections.

2.17 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.

⁶ www.ofqual.gov.uk/news/survey-launched-gather-teachers-view-experiences-exam-strategies

Table 1

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
Ancient languages	N/A		None	None	None	None
Art and design	100%	100%	N/A		N/A	
Computer science	25–60%	20%	N/A		N/A	
Dance	80%	60%	55%	50%	60%	50%
Further mathematics	N/A		0–20% ⁷	None	0–20% ⁷	None
Geography	N/A		None	20%	None	None
Mathematics	N/A		0–20% ⁷	None	0–20% ⁷	None
Modern foreign languages	N/A		30–40% ⁸	30%	30–40% ⁸	30%
Music	60–80%	60%	60–70%	60%	60–70%	60%
Physical education	60%	30%	35–50%	30%	35–50%	30%

⁷ Although up to 20 per cent non-exam assessment can be used for A level mathematics and further mathematics, only two qualifications include any non-exam assessment and a maximum of 10 per cent of non-exam assessment is seen in these qualifications.

⁸ The current subject content for modern foreign languages expects students to demonstrate speaking and/or listening skills. There is, however, a provision for these requirements not to be applied to particular languages. Where this occurs, the amount of non-exam assessment in these qualifications is lower.

Changes to assessment objectives

2.18 The assessment objectives for each subject describe the principal abilities that candidates taking that qualification must be given the opportunity to develop and demonstrate. The assessment objectives have a key regulatory role in ensuring that:

- candidates are assessed on the relevant abilities for the subject and on an appropriate balance of those abilities;
- requirements are comparable between different exam boards' qualifications, and over time.

2.19 Assessment objectives are included within the current subject criteria for GCSE, A level and AS qualifications. Exam boards must design qualifications so that students are given opportunities to demonstrate they have met the assessment objectives in the context of the subject content.

2.20 Exam boards use the assessment objectives 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.

2.21 We have worked with subject and assessment experts to develop and improve the current assessment objectives. In revising these, we have aimed to make sure they are as clear as possible and that they:

- fulfil their core purpose of describing the abilities that a candidate taking the relevant qualification should be required to demonstrate;
- specify only the abilities that candidates should be required to demonstrate, not the content itself;
- relate to each qualification as a whole, and so address the full range and balance of abilities that are relevant;
- are sufficiently precise and detailed that they can be used consistently for setting and evaluating assessments;
- provide a degree of flexibility in their application to enable alternative approaches where these are legitimate.

- 2.22 We have also developed the proposed assessment objectives so that they reflect and help promote progression between GCSE, A level and AS qualifications.
- 2.23 Following this consultation we will finalise the assessment objectives on which we are consulting. We will make it a regulatory requirement that exam boards design their qualifications and their live assessments in accordance with these objectives.
- 2.24 The draft assessment objectives on which we are consulting are set below. We have also included the current assessment objectives so that the proposed changes are clear. In each case, we have developed the proposed set of assessment objectives to be coherent with the content proposals on which the DfE is consulting

The structure of GCSEs

- 2.25 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.⁹ In summary, in some subjects, students of all abilities can understand and answer the same exam questions or complete the same assessment tasks. The level of their answers will, of course, vary in accordance with their abilities. In other subjects, common questions can be too easy for some students and inaccessible to others. For this latter type of subject, common assessment must include a sufficient number and range of questions/tasks to allow both the most able and the least able students to demonstrate their abilities. Such assessment can be long and potentially demotivating for students at both ends of the ability range.
- 2.26 When a GCSE is tiered a student enters for either the higher- or the foundation-tier assessments. This allows the assessment to be targeted to narrower ability ranges, with the higher tier stretching the most able and the foundation tier being accessible and rewarding for students who find the subject more difficult.
- 2.27 Students entered for the foundation tier cannot achieve the highest grades, however well they perform in their assessments. This creates a risk that some students who are entered for that tier will not have their full abilities recognised and rewarded.

⁹ comment.ofqual.gov.uk/gcse-reform-june-2013

2.28 We have decided that tiering should be used in new GCSEs only when essential.

2.29 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

Ancient languages

GCSE

3.1 The content for GCSEs in ancient languages has already been developed and published by the DfE.¹⁰ Our consultation on the structure and assessment of GCSEs in ancient languages closed on 23rd May 2014.¹¹ We will be announcing our decisions in the coming months.

A level and AS qualifications

3.2 The DfE is consulting on the content for A level and AS qualifications in ancient languages.¹² The proposed content has been developed in line with the recommendations made by ALCAB.¹³

Proposed assessment arrangements

3.3 A level and AS qualifications in ancient languages are currently assessed wholly by exam. The draft content includes only knowledge, understanding and skills that could be validly assessed by exam. We therefore propose that reformed A level and AS qualifications in ancient languages should also be assessed by exam only.

Proposed assessment objectives

3.4 The proposed assessment objectives specify more clearly than the current ones the core abilities for the subject. The proposed weighting ranges are narrower and more specific, which should enhance comparability between different qualifications in this subject.

¹⁰

www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/302153/GCSE_ancient_languages.pdf

¹¹ comment.ofqual.gov.uk/modern-foreign-and-ancient-languages

¹² www.gov.uk/government/consultations/gcse-and-a-level-reform

¹³ alcab.org.uk

	Assessment objectives	AS	A level
AO1	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the language including through translation	50%	50%
AO2	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of literature	25–30%	20–25%
AO3	Critically analyse, evaluate and respond to literature	20–25%	25–30%

Current assessment objectives

	Assessment objectives	Weighting		
		AS	A2	A level
AO1	Recall and deploy relevant knowledge and understanding of literary, cultural, material or historical sources or linguistic forms in their appropriate contexts	45–55%	35–45%	40–50%
AO2a	Analyse, evaluate and respond to classical sources (literary, cultural, material, historical or linguistic) as appropriate	45–55%	55–65%	50–60%
AO2b	Select, organise and present relevant information and argument in a clear, logical, accurate and appropriate form			

Consultation Question 1: To what extent do you agree or disagree that AS qualifications in ancient languages should be assessed entirely by exams?

Consultation Question 2: To what extent do you agree or disagree that A levels in ancient languages should be assessed entirely by exams?

Consultation Question 3: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate for A level and AS qualifications in ancient languages?

Consultation Question 4: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for AS qualifications in ancient languages?

Consultation Question 5: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for A levels in ancient languages?

Consultation Question 6: Do you have any further comments relating to the assessment of this subject?

Art and design

GCSE

3.5 The DfE is consulting on the content for GCSE qualifications in art and design.¹⁴

Proposed assessment arrangements

3.6 Current GCSEs in art and design do not include any exam assessment. We do not propose to change this position. We have been advised by subject experts that students' abilities to demonstrate their creativity over an extended period of time, with the opportunity to use a wide range of different materials and contexts, is an inherent feature of the subject. This is reflected in the proposed subject content and is not a skill that could be directly assessed in an exam. We propose that the new GCSEs in art and design should be assessed using non-exam assessment only.

Tiering

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

Proposed assessment objectives

3.8 The proposed assessment objectives specify more clearly than the current ones the core abilities for the subject. We propose that the current permitted weighting ranges should be replaced with an absolute weighting, to enhance comparability between different qualifications in this subject.

	Assessment objectives	Weighting
AO1	Develop ideas through investigations, demonstrating critical understanding of sources	25%
AO2	Refine work by exploring ideas, selecting and experimenting with appropriate media, materials, techniques and processes	25%
AO3	Make and record ideas, observations and judgements relevant to intentions as work progresses	25%
AO4	Present a personal and meaningful response that realises intentions and demonstrates critical understanding of visual language	25%

¹⁴ www.gov.uk/government/consultations/gcse-and-a-level-reform

Current assessment objectives

	Assessment objectives	Weighting
AO1	Develop their ideas through investigations informed by contextual and other sources, demonstrating analytical and cultural understanding	20–30%
AO2	Refine their ideas through experimenting and selecting appropriate resources, media, materials, techniques and processes	20–30%
AO3	Record ideas, observations and insights relevant to their intentions in visual and/or other forms	20–30%
AO4	Present a personal, informed and meaningful response demonstrating analytical and critical understanding, realising intentions and, where appropriate, making connections between visual, written, oral or other elements	20–30%

Consultation Question 7: To what extent do you agree or disagree that GCSEs in art and design should be assessed entirely by non-exam assessment?

Consultation Question 8: To what extent do you agree or disagree that GCSEs in art and design should not be tiered?

Consultation Question 9: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate for GCSEs in art and design?

Consultation Question 10: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for GCSEs in art and design?

Consultation Question 11: Do you have any further comments relating to the assessment of this subject?

A level and AS qualifications

3.9 The content for A level and AS qualifications in art and design has already been developed and published by the DfE.¹⁵ We have previously consulted on the

¹⁵

www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/302101/A_level_art_and_design_subject_content.pdf

assessment arrangement and assessment objectives for these qualifications which are due to be taught from September 2015.

Computer science

GCSE

3.10 The DfE is consulting on the content for GCSE qualifications in computer science.¹⁶

Proposed assessment arrangements

- 3.11 This is the first time that core content has been developed for GCSEs in computer science. Previously exam boards had greater freedom to determine the content and balance of exam and non-exam assessment in this subject, with 25–60 per cent assessed other than by exam.
- 3.12 We have considered the requirements set out in the new draft content, the small amount of evidence that exists relating to current practice in the assessment of these qualifications and the limitations that exist in current non-exam assessment. We have also considered the context in which the qualification will be assessed, particularly the fact that GCSEs will now count in the EBacc performance measure. We believe that the amount of non-exam assessment permitted in computer science should be significantly reduced, but that it is important to retain a proportion of non-exam assessment in this subject.
- 3.13 We propose that 20 per cent of assessment in new GCSE computer science should be by non-exam assessment. This will provide sufficient opportunity for students to demonstrate their subject skills in a context that is more reflective of real-life contexts than would be possible in exams alone. In particular, it will require assessment of the end-to-end iterative process of programming, allow for the use of a range of programming languages and be based on complex problems. Defining the percentage of marks to be allocated to exam and non-exam assessment, thereby removing the current flexibility in this area, will also enhance comparability between different qualifications.

Tiering

3.14 Currently GCSEs in computer science are not tiered. We propose that the new GCSEs in computer science should not be tiered either.

¹⁶ www.gov.uk/government/consultations/gcse-and-a-level-reform

Proposed assessment objectives

- 3.15 Since this is the first time that core content has been developed in this subject we have not previously specified the use of a particular set of assessment objectives. However exam boards have all chosen to use the same assessment objectives in their current qualifications but implement a variety of weightings.
- 3.16 The proposed assessment objectives specify more clearly than the ones currently used by exam boards the core abilities for the subject. We propose that the current permitted weighting ranges should be replaced with absolute weightings, to enhance comparability between different qualifications in this subject.

	Assessment objectives	Weighting
AO1	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the key concepts and principles of computer science	30%
AO2	Apply knowledge and understanding of key concepts and principles of computer science	40%
AO3	Analyse problems in computational terms: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ to make reasoned judgements ■ to design, program, evaluate and refine solutions 	30%

Current assessment objectives used by exam boards

	Assessment objectives	Weighting
AO1	Recall, select and communicate their knowledge and understanding of computer technology	25–60%
AO2	Apply knowledge, understanding and skills to solve computing or programming problems	
AO3	Analyse, evaluate, make reasoned judgements and present conclusions	

Consultation Question 12: To what extent do you agree or disagree that for GCSEs in computer science 80 per cent of the available marks should be allocated to exams, and 20 per cent to non-exam assessment?

Consultation Question 13: To what extent do you agree or disagree that GCSEs in computer science should not be tiered?

Consultation Question 14: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate for GCSEs in computer science?

Consultation Question 15: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for GCSEs in computer science?

Consultation Question 16: Do you have any further comments relating to the assessment of this subject?

A level and AS qualifications

3.17 The content for A level and AS qualifications in computer science has already been developed and published by the DfE.¹⁷ We have previously consulted on the assessment arrangements and assessment objectives for these qualifications which are due to be taught from September 2015.

Dance

GCSE

3.18 The DfE is consulting on the content for GCSE qualifications in dance.¹⁸

Proposed assessment arrangements

3.19 In current GCSEs in dance 80 per cent of the assessment is non-exam assessment. Having considered the draft content, which sets out the knowledge, understanding and the performance required for the subject, we believe the amount of non-exam assessment should be reduced. This will enable content that can be validly assessed by exam to be assessed in that way and make sure sufficient weight is given to all aspects of the content. Nonetheless, creative and performance elements are clearly essential features of the subject content. Non-exam assessments allow for the direct assessment of the practical skills of performance and the application of the creative process in the form of choreography. Non-exam assessment must therefore remain an important feature of the subject. We propose that non-exam assessment should account for 60 per cent of the marks for new GCSEs in dance.

Tiering

3.20 Currently GCSEs in dance are not tiered. We propose that the new GCSEs in dance should not be tiered either.

¹⁷

www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/302105/A_level_computer_science_subject_content.pdf

¹⁸ www.gov.uk/government/consultations/gcse-and-a-level-reform

Proposed assessment objectives

3.21 The proposed assessment objectives are clearer than the current ones for the subject. We propose that the current permitted weighting ranges should be replaced with an absolute weighting to enhance comparability between different qualifications in this subject.

	Assessment objectives	Weighting
AO1	Perform dance, reflecting choreographic and artistic intent through physical, technical and expressive skills	30%
AO2	Create dance, including movement, material and aural setting, to communicate choreographic intention	30%
AO3	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of choreographic processes and performing skills	15%
AO4	Critically appreciate own works and professional works, through making analytical, interpretative and evaluative judgements	25%

Current assessment objectives

	Assessment objectives	Weighting
AO1	Recall, select and communicate their knowledge, understanding and appreciation of dance performance and choreography.	20–30%
AO2	Apply skills, knowledge and understanding to communicate choreographic/artistic intention through dance performance.	45–55%
AO3	Analyse and evaluate dance to bring about improvement.	20–30%

<p>Consultation Question 17: To what extent do you agree or disagree that for GCSEs in dance 40 per cent of the available marks should be allocated to exams and 60 per cent to non-exam assessment?</p> <p>Consultation Question 18: To what extent do you agree or disagree that GCSEs in dance should not be tiered?</p> <p>Consultation Question 19: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate for GCSEs in dance?</p> <p>Consultation Question 20: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for GCSEs in dance?</p>

A level and AS qualifications

3.22 The DfE is consulting on the content for A level and AS qualifications in dance.¹⁹

Proposed assessment arrangements

3.23 This is the first time that core content has been developed for A level and AS qualifications in dance. Only one exam board currently awards this qualification and they permit 60 per cent of the marks for their AS in dance to be allocated to non-exam assessment. The figure for A level is 55 per cent. The draft content for A level and AS qualifications in dance on which the DfE is consulting, while retaining a significant element that requires the direct assessment of practical skills, places greater emphasis than the current qualification on knowledge of genres and periods of dance. This focus distinguishes the A level and AS content from the draft GCSE content.

3.24 To reflect the new focus on knowledge of genres and periods of dance we propose that the marks for A level and AS qualifications in dance should be equally distributed between exam and non-exam assessment – that is, 50 per cent to each form of assessment.

Proposed assessment objectives

3.25 Since this is the first time that core content has been developed in this subject, we have not previously specified the use of a particular set of assessment objectives. The only exam board which currently awards this qualification uses its own set of assessment objectives.

3.26 The proposed assessment objectives specify more clearly than the ones currently used by the exam board the core abilities for the subject. The proposed ranges permit a small degree of variation in weighting to allow for minor differences of emphasis in the skills being assessed in different qualifications, while also being narrow enough to promote comparability.

¹⁹ www.gov.uk/government/consultations/gcse-and-a-level-reform

	Assessment objectives	Weighting	
		AS	A level
AO1	Perform dance through the application of physical, technical, interpretative and performance skills	25–30%	25–30%
AO2	Create dance, applying choreographic skills, to communicate artistic intention effectively	25–30%	25–30%
AO3	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of performance and choreography from different periods and genres	25–30%	20–25%
AO4	Critically appreciate and assess performance and choreography, through making analytical, interpretative and evaluative judgements.	20–25%	25–30%

Current assessment objectives

	Assessment objectives	Weighting	
		AS	A level
AO1	Create imaginative dances with an understanding of current practice, whilst drawing on the conventions and traditions of the past	20%	20%
AO2	Perform and interpret dance ideas through solo performance and with other dancers, demonstrating an understanding of appropriate technical and expressive skills, of sensitivity and awareness within group performance, and of safe practice	40%	40%
AO3	Communicate clearly through writing the knowledge, understanding and insight appropriate to dance study	10%	10%
AO4	Show detailed knowledge and understanding, in written form, of choreographic and performance process either in own work and/or professional repertoire	15%	15%
AO5	Show detailed knowledge and understanding, in written form, of the significance of dance, either in own work and/or professional repertoire	15%	15%

Consultation Question 21: To what extent do you agree or disagree that for AS qualifications in dance 50 per cent of the available marks should be allocated to exams and 50 per cent to non-exam assessment?

Consultation Question 22: To what extent do you agree or disagree that for A levels in dance 50 per cent of the available marks should be allocated to exams and 50 per cent to non-exam assessment?

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

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

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

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

Geography

GCSE

3.27 We have already announced our decisions on the design and assessment of new GCSE geography, following consultation in summer 2013. The new qualifications are due to be taught from September 2016.

A level and AS qualifications

3.28 We consulted in late 2013 on proposed assessment arrangements for A level and AS qualifications in geography and on new assessment objectives for these qualifications.²⁰ We proposed that 20 per cent of the marks should be allocated to assessing fieldwork skills in a non-exam assessment.

3.29 It was intended that the reformed qualifications should be taught from September 2015. However, the responses to the separate consultation, hosted by the DfE, highlighted the need for a further review of the proposed content. This led to a decision to defer the introduction of new A level and AS qualifications in geography until September 2016.

3.30 Views on the revised content are now being sought as part of the consultation being hosted by the DfE.²¹ That content has been informed by advice from

²⁰ comment.ofqual.gov.uk/a-level-regulatory-requirements-october-2013

²¹ www.gov.uk/government/consultations/gcse-and-a-level-reform

ALCAB.²² We have reconsidered our proposals for the balance of assessment in the light of the draft revised content and have decided that our original proposals remain appropriate. However, as the draft content has changed, we repeat our proposals here and invite views on them. In addition, in response to the new subject content, we have made some changes to the assessment objectives on which we previously consulted. We set out our rationale for our revised proposals below.

Proposed assessment arrangements

- 3.31 Currently students are expected to undertake fieldwork to develop their skills and understanding of the subject; however, there is no direct assessment of fieldwork skills. We have received representations from the subject community arguing in support of a separate assessment of fieldwork skills and raising concerns about the effectiveness of the assessment of these skills by examination. In our review of the current qualifications, we also identified concerns about whether all relevant geographical skills were being effectively assessed in exams, and suggested that it was important to consider whether non-exam assessment should be included in reformed A level qualifications.²³
- 3.32 Given the importance of fieldwork to students' understanding of the subject and for progression to study geography in higher education, we are proposing that fieldwork skills should be assessed through non-exam assessment at A level. We propose that 20 per cent of the marks should be allocated to this assessment.²⁴
- 3.33 In contrast to our decisions on A level science practical assessments we propose that the outcome for A level geography fieldwork assessment should contribute to the overall A level grade. The geography fieldwork assessment will take place over a period of time, and it can be more student-led than science practical assessments. It will draw on different aspects of the course and will

²² alcab.org.uk

²³ webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+http://www.ofqual.gov.uk/files/2012-04-27-review-of-standards-in-gce-a-level-geography.pdf

²⁴ We have taken a different view at GCSE. We have decided, following consultation, that the new GCSEs in geography will be assessed by exam only, with some exam questions being designed to assess the knowledge and skills students learn from fieldwork. There will be no non-exam assessment, but schools must confirm in a written statement that students have carried out two pieces of fieldwork.

The GCSE geography cohort is, of course, much larger than that for A level geography (in 2012 in England 163,604 students were awarded a GCSE in geography, and 27,604 an A level in the subject). Our decisions for GCSE geography took into account the logistical issues created by a compulsory fieldwork requirement for GCSE students and the challenges of making sure all students entered for GCSE geography have undertaken their fieldwork assessment. The writing of the fieldwork assessment in the classroom under controlled conditions diverts time away from teaching and learning, which can be significant in a small qualification such as a GCSE. There are also concerns about the authenticity and marking of some controlled assessments.

not result in direct assessment of the fieldwork skills but will result in a written report, the marking of which can be moderated by exam boards.

- 3.34 In A level, the science practical assessment directly assesses a wide range of practical skills. Our expectation is that by the end of a two-year course of study in a science subject most students should have developed those skills and should therefore be expected to pass the practical assessment. As we have seen from the current science practical assessments, it is difficult to differentiate between students' performances in such assessments. There is greater potential to differentiate between students' fieldwork reports.
- 3.35 We will work with the exam boards to consider how authenticity of the work and the quality of teacher marking and its moderation can be secured. We will keep the effectiveness of any new geography fieldwork assessment under close review.
- 3.36 We propose that AS qualifications in geography should be assessed by exam only. If there was a non-exam assessment in the AS qualification, a student who chose to take both an AS and an A level would have to complete two non-exam assessments. This could be disruptive to teaching and learning and add little value. A student intending to study geography in higher education could be expected to undertake an A level in the subject and therefore undertake the fieldwork assessment.

Proposed assessment objectives

- 3.37 The proposed assessment objectives specify more clearly than the current ones the abilities required in the subject. The proposed permitted ranges are narrower than those in the current assessment objectives. This should promote greater comparability in the way the abilities are targeted in different qualifications.

	Assessment objectives	Weighting	
		AS	A level
AO1	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of places, environments, concepts, processes, interactions and change at a variety of scales	30–40%	30–40%
AO2	Apply knowledge and understanding in different contexts to analyse, interpret and evaluate key concepts, information and issues	30-40%	30-40%
AO3	Use a variety of relevant methods and techniques to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ investigate questions and issues ■ interpret, analyse and evaluate data and resources 	20–30%	20–30%

	■ communicate findings		
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Current assessment objectives

	Assessment objectives	Weighting	
		AS	A level
AO1	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the content, concepts and processes	30–55%	30–55%
AO2	Analyse, interpret and evaluate geographical information, issues and viewpoints and apply understanding in unfamiliar contexts	20–40%	20–40%
AO3	Select and use a variety of methods, skills and techniques (including the use of new technologies) to investigate questions and issues, reach conclusions and communicate findings	25–45%	25–45%

Consultation Question 27: To what extent do you agree or disagree that AS qualifications in geography should be assessed entirely by exam?

Consultation Question 28: To what extent do you agree or disagree that for A levels in geography 80 per cent of the available marks should be allocated to exams, and 20 per cent to non-exam assessment?

Consultation Question 29: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate for A level and AS qualifications in geography?

Consultation Question 30: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for AS qualifications in geography?

Consultation Question 31: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for A levels in geography?

Consultation Question 32: Do you have any further comments relating to the assessment of this subject?

Mathematics

GCSE

3.38 We have already announced our decisions on the design and assessment of new GCSEs in mathematics. The new qualifications are due to be taught from September 2015.

A level and AS qualifications

3.39 The DfE is hosting the consultation on the content of A level and AS mathematics. This content has been informed by the review of current content and recommendations put forward by ALCAB.²⁵

Proposed assessment arrangements

3.40 A level and AS qualifications in mathematics can currently be assessed by a mixture of exam and non-exam assessment. Up to 20 per cent of the marks can be allocated to non-exam assessments. In practice, only two qualifications in mathematics offer the opportunity for students to complete non-exam assessment. This means that for the majority of students, assessments for mathematics and further mathematics are carried out by exams only. There is a risk to comparability if different assessment models are used.

3.41 We have reviewed the mathematics content against our non-exam assessment principles and do not believe there are any essential skills which cannot be assessed by examinations alone. We propose that in future A level and AS qualifications in mathematics must be assessed by exam only.

Proposed assessment objectives

3.42 The proposed wording specifies more clearly than the current wording the core abilities for the subject. This is partly achieved by reducing the number of assessment objectives from five currently to three. Also, discrete assessment objectives are proposed for each of the key abilities:

- application of standard techniques (AO1);
- reasoning, interpreting and communicating mathematically (AO2); and
- solving problems (AO3).

3.43 The proposed objectives also emphasise the clarity needed where tasks address these assessment objectives in combination. The proposed ranges permit a small degree of flexibility, accommodating different approaches and reducing predictability, while also promoting comparability between qualifications. The approach will also support differentiation between A level and AS qualifications. The proposed approach gives each assessment objective a significant weighting within the subject.

²⁵ alcab.org.uk

	Assessment objectives	Weighting	
		AS	A level
AO1	<p>Use and apply standard techniques</p> <p>Students should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ accurately recall facts, terminology, definitions and proofs ■ use and interpret notation correctly ■ accurately carry out routine procedures or set tasks requiring multi-step solutions 	35–45%	30–40%
AO2	<p>Reason, interpret and communicate mathematically</p> <p>Students should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ independently construct a rigorous, non-standard proof or mathematical argument ■ construct extended chains of reasoning to achieve a given result ■ assess, critique and improve the validity of a mathematical argument, making deductions and inferences, finding and correcting errors in reasoning and evaluating evidence <p><i>Where problems require candidates to ‘use and apply standard techniques’ or to ‘solve problems’ independently a proportion of those marks should be attributed to the corresponding assessment objective</i></p>	30–40%	30–40%
AO3	<p>Solve problems within mathematics and in other contexts</p> <p>Students should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ translate problems in mathematical or non-mathematical contexts into a process or a series of mathematical processes, identifying important features or variables and using appropriate techniques ■ make and use connections between different parts of mathematics ■ evaluate methods used and solutions obtained, recognising limitations and sources of error ■ construct, select and refine mathematical models ■ interpret the outcomes of a modelling process in real world terms and recognise the limitations of a model 	25–35%	30–40%

	<i>Where problems require candidates to ‘use and apply standard techniques’ or to ‘reason, interpret and communicate mathematically’ a proportion of those marks should be attributed to the corresponding assessment objective</i>		
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Current assessment objectives

	Assessment objectives	Weighting	
		AS	A level
AO1	Recall, select and use their knowledge of mathematical facts, concepts and techniques in a variety of contexts	30%	30%
AO2	Construct rigorous mathematical arguments and proofs through use of precise statements, logical deduction and inference and by the manipulation of mathematical expressions, including the construction of extended arguments for handling substantial problems presented in unstructured form	30%	30%
AO3	Recall, select and use their knowledge of standard mathematical models to represent situations in the real world; recognise and understand given representations involving standard models; and present and interpret results from such models in terms of the original situation, including discussion of the assumptions made and refinement of such models	10%	10%
AO4	Comprehend translations of common realistic contexts into mathematics; use the results of calculations to make predictions, or comment on the context; and, where appropriate, read critically and comprehend longer mathematical arguments or examples of applications	5%	5%
AO5	Use contemporary calculator technology and other permitted resources (such as formulae booklets or statistical tables) accurately and efficiently; and understand when not to use such technology, and its limitations. Give answers to appropriate accuracy	5%	5%

Consultation Question 33: To what extent do you agree or disagree that AS qualifications in mathematics should be assessed entirely by exam?

Consultation Question 34: To what extent do you agree or disagree that A levels in mathematics should be assessed entirely by exam?

Consultation Question 35: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate for A level and AS qualifications in mathematics?

Consultation Question 36: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for AS qualifications in mathematics?

Consultation Question 37: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for A levels in mathematics?

Consultation Question 38: Do you have any further comments relating to the assessment of this subject?

Further mathematics

A level and AS qualifications

3.44 The DfE is hosting the consultation on the content of A level and AS qualifications in further mathematics. This content has been informed by the review of current content and recommendations put forward by ALCAB.²⁶

Proposed assessment arrangements

3.45 As for mathematics, A level and AS qualifications in further mathematics can currently be assessed by a mixture of exam and non-exam assessment. Up to 20 per cent of the marks can be allocated to non-exam assessments. In practice, only two qualifications in further mathematics offer the opportunity for students to complete non-exam assessment. This means that for the majority of students, assessments in further mathematics are carried out by exams only. There is a risk to comparability if different assessment models are used.

3.46 We have reviewed the proposed further mathematics content against our non-exam assessment principles and do not believe there are any essential skills which cannot be assessed by examinations alone. We propose that in future

²⁶ alcab.org.uk

A level and AS qualifications in further mathematics are assessed by exam only.

Proposed assessment objectives

3.47 The proposed assessment objectives for A level and AS qualifications in further mathematics are the same as for mathematics. This is because further mathematics requires the exercise of the same skills as mathematics, albeit on different and sometimes more challenging content.

3.48 The proposed wording specifies more clearly than the current wording the core abilities for the subject. This is partly achieved by reducing the number of assessment objectives from five currently to three. Also, discrete assessment objectives are proposed for all the key abilities:

- application of standard techniques (AO1);
- reasoning, interpreting and communicating mathematically (AO2); and
- solving problems (AO3).

3.49 The proposed assessment objectives emphasise the clarity needed where tasks address these assessment objectives in combination. 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 and A level. Similarly, they give each assessment objective a significant weighting within the subject.

	Assessment objectives	Weighting	
		AS	A level
AO1	<p>Use and apply standard techniques</p> <p>Students should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ accurately recall facts, terminology, definitions and proofs ■ use and interpret notation correctly ■ accurately carry out routine procedures or set tasks requiring multi-step solutions 	35–45%	30–40%
AO2	<p>Reason, interpret and communicate mathematically</p> <p>Students should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ independently construct a rigorous, non-standard proof or mathematical argument ■ construct extended chains of reasoning to achieve a given result ■ assess, critique and improve the validity of a 	30–40%	30–40%

	<p>mathematical argument, making deductions and inferences, finding and correcting errors in reasoning and evaluating evidence</p> <p><i>Where problems require candidates to ‘use and apply standard techniques’ or to ‘solve problems’ independently a proportion of those marks should be attributed to the corresponding assessment objective</i></p>		
AO3	<p>Solve problems within mathematics and in other contexts</p> <p>Students should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ translate problems in mathematical or non-mathematical contexts into a process or a series of mathematical processes, identifying important features or variables and using appropriate techniques ■ make and use connections between different parts of mathematics ■ evaluate methods used and solutions obtained, recognising limitations and sources of error ■ construct, select and refine mathematical models ■ Interpret the outcomes of a modelling process in real world terms and recognise the limitations of a model <p><i>Where problems require candidates to ‘use and apply standard techniques’ or to ‘reason, interpret and communicate mathematically’ a proportion of those marks should be attributed to the corresponding assessment objective</i></p>	25–35%	30–40%

Current assessment objectives

	Assessment objectives	Weighting	
		AS	A level
AO1	Recall, select and use their knowledge of mathematical facts, concepts and techniques in a variety of contexts	30%	30%
AO2	Construct rigorous mathematical arguments and proofs through use of precise statements, logical deduction and inference and by the manipulation of mathematical expressions,	30%	30%

	including the construction of extended arguments for handling substantial problems presented in unstructured form		
AO3	Recall, select and use their knowledge of standard mathematical models to represent situations in the real world; recognise and understand given representations involving standard models; and present and interpret results from such models in terms of the original situation, including discussion of the assumptions made and refinement of such models	10%	10%
AO4	Comprehend translations of common realistic contexts into mathematics; use the results of calculations to make predictions, or comment on the context; and, where appropriate, read critically and comprehend longer mathematical arguments or examples of applications	5%	5%
AO5	Use contemporary calculator technology and other permitted resources (such as formulae booklets or statistical tables) accurately and efficiently; and understand when not to use such technology, and its limitations. Give answers to appropriate accuracy	5%	5%

Consultation Question 39: To what extent do you agree or disagree that AS qualifications in further mathematics should be assessed entirely by exam?

Consultation Question 40: To what extent do you agree or disagree that A levels in further mathematics should be assessed entirely by exam?

Consultation Question 41: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate for A level and AS qualifications in further mathematics?

Consultation Question 42: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for AS qualifications in further mathematics?

Consultation Question 43: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for A levels in further mathematics?

Consultation Question 44: Do you have any further comments relating to the assessment of this subject?

Modern foreign languages

GCSE

3.50 The content for GCSE modern foreign languages has already been developed and published by the DfE.²⁷ Our consultation on the structure and assessment of modern foreign language GCSEs closed on 23rd May 2014.²⁸ We will be announcing our decisions in the coming months.

A level and AS qualifications

3.51 The DfE is consulting on the content for A level and AS qualifications in modern foreign languages²⁹. The proposed content has been developed in line with the recommendations made by ALCAB³⁰.

Proposed assessment arrangements

3.52 A level and AS qualifications in modern foreign languages are currently assessed by a mixture of exam and non-exam assessment. Up to 40 per cent of the marks can be allocated to non-exam assessments. We have considered the requirements set out in the new draft content and we propose that 30 per cent of the assessment in the new A level and AS qualifications in modern foreign languages should be by non-exam assessment.

3.53 We have proposed non-exam assessment in this subject because the new A level and AS subject content requires students to develop their spoken skills by presenting, discussing and responding spontaneously to different themes. In addition, the content requires students to initiate face-to-face interactions in the target language. We believe these skills can only be directly assessed outside examinations, and we will undertake further work with exam boards about the form such assessments should take. This proposal is in line with current A level and AS qualifications which include non-exam assessment in the form of an oral exam which is weighted at a minimum of 30 per cent. We propose the current flexibility should be removed to enhance comparability between different qualifications in this subject.

²⁷

[www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/302152/GCSE_modern_languages.p
df](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/302152/GCSE_modern_languages.pdf)

²⁸ comment.ofqual.gov.uk/modern-foreign-and-ancient-languages

²⁹ www.gov.uk/government/consultations/gcse-and-a-level-reform

³⁰ alcab.org.uk

3.54 Currently there is, provision for speaking and/or listening content not to be applied to particular languages. Where this occurs, the amount of non-exam assessment in the qualifications is lower. This flexibility is not included in the proposed draft content. This means all qualifications must be required to have the same assessment structure. This fits with our expectation that the amount of non-exam assessment in a particular subject must be consistent across different qualifications in that subject.

Proposed assessment objectives

3.55 The assessment objectives for modern foreign languages have been developed to be coherent with the draft content proposed for this subject. They include a new emphasis on the culture and society of the country or countries where the language is spoken, and a requirement for critical analysis and evaluation.

3.56 The weightings of the assessment objectives reflect the raised profile in the subject content of these aspects of the subject, as well as an emphasis on grammar and a requirement for integrated skill assessment. Absolute weightings have been assigned to these assessment objectives rather than the ranges often used for A level and AS qualifications. This is to promote, so far as is possible, comparability of requirements, given the nature of the abilities that these assessment objectives represent.

	Assessment objectives	Weighting	
		AS	A level
AO1	Understand and respond, in speech and writing, to spoken language drawn from a variety of sources, including face-to-face interaction	20%	20%
AO2	Understand and respond, in speech and writing, to written language drawn from a variety of sources	30%	30%
AO3	Manipulate the language accurately and appropriately, in spoken and written forms, using a range of lexis and structure	30%	30%
AO4	Show knowledge and understanding of the culture and society of countries and communities where the language is spoken and demonstrate critical analysis and evaluation of works created in the language studied	20%	20%

- The language referred to in AO1–AO4 is the target language.
- Up to one-fifth (10% overall) of the total marks available across AO1 and AO2 may be used for responses in English, including translation into English.
- At A level, half of the marks available for AO4 must be used for candidates demonstrating these skills through responses written in English.

- Questions and rubrics must be written in the expected language of response.

Current assessment objectives

	Assessment objectives	Weighting		
		AS	A2	A level
AO1	Understand and respond, in speech and writing, to spoken language	35–40%	25–30%	30–35%
AO2	Understand and respond, in speech and writing, to written language	35–40%	45–50%	40–45%
AO3	Show knowledge of and apply accurately the grammar and syntax prescribed in the specification	25%	25%	25%

Consultation Question 45: To what extent do you agree or disagree that for AS qualifications in modern foreign languages 70 per cent of the available marks should be allocated to exams and 30 per cent to non-exam assessment?

Consultation Question 46: To what extent do you agree or disagree that for A levels in modern foreign languages 70 per cent of the available marks should be allocated to exams and 30 per cent to non-exam assessment?

Consultation Question 47: To what extent do you agree or disagree that all A level and AS qualifications in modern foreign languages should have the same requirements for non-exam assessment and that no exceptions should be made for specific languages?

Consultation Question 48: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate for A level and AS qualifications in modern foreign languages?

Consultation Question 49: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for AS qualifications in modern foreign languages?

Consultation Question 50: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for A levels in modern foreign languages?

Consultation Question 51: Do you have any further comments relating to the assessment of this subject?

Music

GCSE

3.57 The DfE is consulting on the content for GCSE qualifications in music.³¹

Proposed assessment arrangements

3.58 In current GCSEs in music 60 to 80 per cent of the marks are allocated to non-exam assessments. The actual forms and balance of assessment types vary between exam boards.

3.59 We have considered the draft content, which sets out the knowledge and understanding required for the subject and the performance requirements for the subject. We believe that new GCSEs in music should continue to use both exam and non-exam assessments. Non-exam assessments will allow students' performing skills and aspects of their composing and musical appraising skills to be assessed directly. 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. Defining the percentage of marks to be allocated to exam and non-exam assessment, thereby removing the current flexibility, will also enhance comparability between different qualifications in this subject.

Tiering

3.60 Currently GCSEs in music are not tiered. We propose that the new GCSEs in music should not be tiered either.

Proposed assessment objectives

3.61 The proposed assessment objectives are clearer than the current ones. In contrast to the current assessment objectives our proposals recognise the role of knowledge and understanding in the subject. We propose that the current permitted weighting ranges should be replaced with an absolute weighting, to enhance comparability between different qualifications.

³¹ www.gov.uk/government/consultations/gcse-and-a-level-reform

	Assessment objectives	Weighting
AO1	Apply performance skills with technical control, expression and interpretation	30%
AO2	Apply composing skills to create and develop musical ideas with technical control and coherence	30%
AO3	Apply appraising skills to make evaluative and critical judgements about music	30%
AO4	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of musical elements, musical contexts and musical language	10%

Current assessment objectives

	Assessment objectives	Weighting
AO1	Performing skills: performing/realising with technical control, expression and interpretation	30–40%
AO2	Composing skills: creating and developing musical ideas with technical control and coherence	30–40%
AO3	Listening and appraising skills: analysing and evaluating music using musical terminology	30–40%

Consultation Question 52: To what extent do you agree or disagree that for GCSEs in music 40 per cent of the available marks should be allocated to exams, and 60 per cent should be allocated to non-exam assessments?

Consultation Question 53: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate for GCSEs in music?

Consultation Question 54: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for GCSEs in music?

Consultation Question 55: To what extent do you agree or disagree that new GCSEs in music should not be tiered?

A level and AS qualifications

3.62 The DfE is consulting on the content for A level and AS qualifications in music.³²

Proposed assessment arrangements

3.63 In current A level and AS qualifications 60 to 70 per cent of marks are allocated to non-exam assessments.

³² www.gov.uk/government/consultations/gcse-and-a-level-reform

3.64 We are of the view that new A level and AS qualifications in music should use both exam and non-exam assessments. Non-exam assessments will allow students' performing skills and aspects of their composing skills to be directly assessed. As with GCSEs, we propose that 60 per cent of the marks should be allocated to non-exam assessments, which reflects the balance between the practical and theoretical elements set out in the subject content. Defining the percentage of marks to be allocated to exam and non-exam assessment, thereby removing the current flexibility in this area, will also enhance comparability between different qualifications in this subject.

Proposed assessment objectives

3.65 The proposed assessment objectives are clearer than the current ones. We propose that the current permitted weighting ranges should be replaced with an absolute weighting for AS qualifications to enhance comparability between different qualifications in music. However, we propose to permit a small amount of flexibility for A level qualifications to allow for qualifications that enable students to specialise in either performing or composing. The specialism is restricted to 10 per cent of the total marks available for the qualification. This will make sure the course of study does not become too narrow, that all students develop their skills in both areas, regardless of any chosen specialism, and that the qualifications are comparable..

	Assessment objectives	Weighting	
		AS	A level
AO1	Interpret musical ideas with technical and expressive control and an understanding of style and context	30%	25–35%
AO2	Create, develop and refine musical ideas with technical control and expressive understanding, making creative and coherent use of musical devices, conventions and resources	30%	25–35%
AO3	Use analytical, evaluative and reflective skills to make critical judgements about music	25%	30%
AO4	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of musical elements, musical contexts and musical language	15%	10%

Current assessment objectives

	Assessment objectives	Weighting	
		AS	A level
AO1	Interpret musical ideas with technical and expressive control and a sense of style and	20–40%	20–40%

	awareness of occasion and/or ensemble (performing/realising)		
AO2	Create and develop musical ideas with technical control and expressive understanding, making creative use of musical devices, conventions and resources (composing/arranging)	20–40%	20–40%
AO3	Demonstrate understanding of, and comment perceptively on, the structural, expressive and contextual aspects of music (appraising)	35–45%	35–45%

Consultation Question 56: To what extent do you agree or disagree that for AS qualifications in music 40 per cent of the available marks should be allocated to exams and 60 per cent to non-exam assessment?

Consultation Question 57: To what extent do you agree or disagree that for A levels in music 40 per cent of the available marks should be allocated to exams and 60 per cent to non-exam assessment?

Consultation Question 58: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate for A level and AS qualifications in music?

Consultation Question 59: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for AS qualifications in music?

Consultation Question 60: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for A levels in music?

Consultation Question 61: Do you have any further comments relating to the assessment of this subject?

Physical education

GCSE

3.66 The DfE is consulting on the content for GCSE qualifications in physical education.³³

³³ www.gov.uk/government/consultations/gcse-and-a-level-reform

Proposed assessment arrangements

- 3.67 GCSEs in physical education are currently assessed using a mixture of exam assessment and non-exam assessment. At present 40 per cent of the marks are allocated to exam assessment and 60 per cent to non-exam assessment.
- 3.68 The new draft content, on which the DfE is consulting, places greater emphasis on assessing students' theoretical knowledge and understanding of the physical, scientific and socio-cultural factors that can have an impact on physical performance. Given this change, and taking into account exam boards' experience of awarding the current qualifications, we propose that non-exam assessment should account for 30 per cent of the marks for new GCSEs in physical education.
- 3.69 This proposed approach should provide an appropriate balance between the assessment of performance and theory that reflects the expectations contained in the draft subject content. Defining the percentage of marks to be allocated to exam and non-exam assessment, thereby removing the current flexibility in this area, will also enhance comparability between different qualifications.

Tiering

- 3.70 Currently GCSEs in physical education are not tiered. We propose that the new GCSEs in physical education should not be tiered either.

Proposed assessment objectives

- 3.71 The proposed assessment objectives are clearer than the current ones for the subject. We propose that the current permitted weighting ranges should be replaced with an absolute weighting to enhance comparability between different qualifications in this subject.

	Assessment objectives	Weighting
AO1	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of scientific, socio-cultural and practical aspects of physical activity and sport, including concepts and theories	30%
AO2	Apply knowledge and understanding of scientific, socio-cultural and practical aspects of physical activity and sport, including concepts and theories, in theoretical and practical contexts	40%
AO3	Analyse and evaluate scientific, socio-cultural and practical aspects of physical activity and sport, including concepts and theories, in theoretical and practical contexts.	30%

Current assessment objectives

	Assessment objectives	Weighting
AO1	Recall, select and communicate their knowledge and understanding of physical activity	20–30%
AO2	Apply skills, knowledge and understanding in physical activity	45–55%
AO3	Analyse and evaluate physical activity, and identify action to bring about improvement	20–30%

Consultation Question 62: To what extent do you agree or disagree that for GCSEs in physical education 70 per cent of the available marks should be allocated to exams and 30 per cent to non-exam assessment?

Consultation Question 63: To what extent do you agree or disagree that new GCSEs in physical education should not be tiered?

Consultation Question 64: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate for GCSEs in physical education?

Consultation Question 65: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for GCSEs in physical education?

A level and AS qualifications

3.72 The DfE is consulting on the content for A level and AS qualifications in physical education.³⁴

Proposed assessment arrangements

3.73 A level physical education is assessed using a combination of exams and non-exam assessment of students' performance in a total of three activities from a choice of roles. The weighting varies by exam board, in the range of 35 to 50 per cent assessment by non-exam assessment.

3.74 The draft A level and AS qualification content, on which the DfE is consulting, places greater emphasis on assessing students' theoretical knowledge and understanding of the physical, scientific and socio-cultural factors that can have an impact on physical performance. Given the changed emphasis in content, and taking into account exam boards' experience of awarding the current qualifications, we propose that non-exam assessment should account for 30 per

³⁴ www.gov.uk/government/consultations/gcse-and-a-level-reform

cent of the marks for new A level and AS qualifications in physical education. This proposed approach should provide a balance between the direct assessment of performance and theory that reflects the expectations contained in the draft subject content. Defining the percentage of marks to be allocated to exam and non-exam assessment, thereby removing the current flexibility in this area, will also enhance comparability between different qualifications.

Proposed assessment objectives

3.75 The proposed assessment objectives are clearer than the current ones for the subject. The permitted weighting ranges are narrower and more specific, which should enhance comparability between different qualifications. We propose a small amount of flexibility to allow subject content to be tested through different assessment objectives to counter predictability in question papers.

	Assessment objectives	Weighting	
		AS	A level
AO1	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of scientific, socio-cultural and practical aspects of physical activity and sport, including concepts and theories	25–30%	25–30%
AO2	Apply knowledge and understanding of scientific, socio-cultural and practical aspects of physical activity and sport, including concepts and theories, in theoretical and practical contexts	35–40%	30–40%
AO3	Analyse and evaluate scientific, socio-cultural and practical aspects of physical activity and sport, including concepts and theories, in theoretical and practical contexts.	35–40%	35–40%

Current assessment objectives

	Assessment objectives	Weighting		
		AS	A2	A level
AO1	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of physical activity	35–45%	25–35%	30–40%
AO2	Demonstrate the ability to apply skills, knowledge and understanding in physical activity	40–50%	30–40%	35–45%
AO3	Demonstrate the ability to analyse and evaluate critically physical activity	10–20%	30–40%	20–30%

Consultation Question 66: To what extent do you agree or disagree that for AS qualifications in physical education 70 per cent of the available marks should be allocated to exams and 30 per cent to non-exam assessment?

Consultation Question 67: To what extent do you agree or disagree that for A levels in physical education 70 per cent of the available marks should be allocated to exams and 30 per cent to non-exam assessment?

Consultation Question 68: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate for A level and AS qualifications in physical education?

Consultation Question 69: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for AS qualifications in physical education?

Consultation Question 70: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for A levels in physical education?

Consultation Question 71: Do you have any further comments relating to the assessment of this subject?

4. Equality impact 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 GCSE, A level and AS qualifications

- 4.2 We have considered in some detail the potential impact on students who share protected characteristics³⁵ of the application of the principles and features that will apply to all new GCSE, A level and AS qualifications. We have also considered specific issues that have arisen for the subjects on which we have already consulted. 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.³⁶
- 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 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.

Assessment arrangements

A level and AS qualifications in ancient languages

- 4.5 A level and AS qualifications in ancient languages are currently assessed wholly by non-exam assessment. We are not proposing to change this position. We have not identified anything about our proposals that would 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.

³⁵ Disability, racial group, age, religion or belief, pregnancy or maternity, sexual orientation, gender reassignment.

³⁶ www.ofqual.gov.uk/documents/equality-analysis-report-on-reforms-to-gcses-from-2015
www.ofqual.gov.uk/files/2012-06-18-equality-analysis-of-the-a-level-reform-consultation.pdf

GCSE Art and design

- 4.6 GCSEs in art and design are currently assessed wholly by non-exam assessment, because of the nature of the skills being assessed. We are proposing that assessment should continue to be by non-exam assessment only. We are proposing clearer wording for the assessment objectives.
- 4.7 We have not identified anything in our planned approach to art and design that would have a negative impact on students because of their racial group, gender, age, religion or belief, pregnancy or maternity or sexual orientation. The subject requires students to demonstrate their art and design skills.
- 4.8 Some disabled students may be unable to demonstrate skills in the subject or have a more limited range of choices than others about the form in which they demonstrate their skills. Appropriate reasonable adjustments could be made to the conduct of the assessment to remove or reduce the disadvantage a disabled student would otherwise experience. A student must not, however, use a practical assistant to demonstrate the skills being assessed.
- 4.9 We are not proposing any changes to the balance of exam and non-exam assessment and we believe the subject could not be assessed in a valid way unless students had to demonstrate their art and design skills.

GCSE computer science

- 4.10 GCSEs in computer science are currently assessed by a combination of exam and non-exam assessment. We are proposing to secure greater comparability between qualifications by specifying the balance of assessment type in the future, thus removing exam boards' choice and consequent variability in assessment structure.
- 4.11 Our proposed 20:80 balance of non-exam and exam assessment would reduce the percentage of non-exam assessment that is used relative to current qualifications.
- 4.12 This proposed reduction in the percentage of non-exam assessment is in line with our general principles for GCSE reform that we have considered in detail in our previous equality impact analyses.
- 4.13 We are also proposing clearer wording for the assessment objectives.
- 4.14 We have not identified anything about our proposals that would 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, A level and AS qualifications in dance

- 4.15 Dance is a performance-based subject. The current and proposed assessment arrangements and assessment objectives reflect this. We are proposing to reduce the percentage of non-exam assessment in GCSE and A level by 10 per cent and by 5 per cent in the AS qualification.
- 4.16 The performance skills required for the subject may be difficult for some disabled students to demonstrate; however the skills can be shown in different ways, making it accessible to most disabled students, with or without the need for a reasonable adjustment. Some disabled students might not be able to undertake the performance elements 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 assessments for a GCSE, A level or AS qualification and have their marks from the assessment they are able to take scaled up. We are proposing that the percentage of marks allocated to the performance assessment objective, for GCSE, A level and AS qualifications in dance will be less than 40 per cent. This would allow a disabled student who was unable to undertake the performance 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 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.

A level and AS qualifications in geography

- 4.18 Current subject criteria for geography require fieldwork skills to be tested using a limited series of examination questions. However, the current arrangements are inconsistent across exam boards and the assessment is considered by subject experts to provide inadequate preparation for those students wishing to study geography in higher education.
- 4.19 Higher education and learned societies agree that fieldwork should be a requirement in A level geography, although issues of the robustness of internal assessments were also noted.
- 4.20 The practical skills taught in fieldwork activities cover geographical fieldwork observation, measurement techniques, investigation approaches and analytical skills. Students are able to consider the full data-handling cycle as opposed to the analysis and manipulation of pre-collected data provided in an exam. Non-exam assessment also provides an opportunity for assessing an individual

research project, written independently by the student over a period of time. These are all skills that provide good preparation for higher education.

- 4.21 As students taking A level geography are already expected to undertake fieldwork, the re-introduction of a specific non-exam assessment of fieldwork should not introduce a new requirement to undertake fieldwork activities that is not currently in place.
- 4.22 Certain types of fieldwork (for example, in physical geography, the analysis of coastal path erosion) could impact on students with particular physical disabilities who may not be able to access the chosen fieldwork site. However, schools are already required to ensure that appropriate reasonable adjustments are made for disabled students, and they take this into account when they select the fieldwork experience.³⁷
- 4.23 Arrangements will have to be made for students who are absent when the fieldwork exercise and/or the writing of the assessment takes place to do them at another time. Such absence may occur because of a disability, pregnancy or maternity or gender reassignment. However, exams might also be missed for the same reasons.
- 4.24 Fieldwork that involves an overnight stay may affect students with certain types of disabilities that require particular care or access arrangements. Research into the impacts on students with disabilities³⁸ who have undertaken fieldwork in higher education has identified a range of possible impacts on students, including limited access to medication, the walking distances involved and the need to take notes in a non-classroom environment.
- 4.25 We are satisfied that the proposed change to the way fieldwork is assessed will not introduce new difficulties, as the A level is already designed to require students to undertake fieldwork. We are also satisfied that fieldwork is such an inherent part of the subject that it should be directly assessed.
- 4.26 We have not identified any potential impact on our planned approach for the re-introduction of non-exam assessment in geography that would have a negative impact on students because of their race, sex or age, sexual orientation, religion or belief.

³⁷ www.equalityhumanrights.com/advice-and-guidance/education-providers-schools-guidance/providing-education-and-access-to-any-benefit-service-or-facility

³⁸ Hall, T., Healey, M. & Harrison, M (2002) *Fieldwork and Disabled Students: Discourses of Exclusion and Inclusion*, Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers.

A level and AS qualification mathematics and further mathematics

- 4.27 We have not identified that our proposed changes to A level and AS qualifications in mathematics and further mathematics, whereby all assessment must be by exam, or our suggested changes to the 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.
- 4.28 Although there is currently provision for up to 20 per cent of the assessments to be non-exam assessment, only two current qualifications make use of this provision.

A level and AS qualifications in modern foreign languages

- 4.29 Speaking and understanding speech in the target language are important elements of qualifications in modern foreign languages. The current and proposed assessment arrangements and assessment objectives reflect this.
- 4.30 Currently, non-exam assessment accounts for up to 40 per cent of A level and AS qualifications in modern foreign languages. There is, however, a provision for some languages not to test spoken skills and not to have any non-exam assessment.
- 4.31 We are proposing to change two things. We propose that all A level and AS qualifications should have a fixed 30 per cent non-exam assessment, and that there should no longer be any exceptions made. This reflects the draft subject content which requires students to develop their spoken skills for presentation, discussion and responding spontaneously to different themes.
- 4.32 Students are also assessed on their understanding of spoken language. This can be assessed by exam.
- 4.33 Some disabled students may be at a disadvantage relative to other students when they take modern foreign language speaking and listening assessments. This is the case now and will remain so in the future. We have identified that deaf and hearing-impaired students are most likely to be disadvantaged.
- 4.34 To remove or reduce this disadvantage disabled students may have adjustments made to the way their assessments are conducted.³⁹ The reasonable adjustments that are currently made to the conduct of speaking and listening assessments for deaf and hearing-impaired students include:

³⁹ The Equality Act 2010 places duties on exam boards to make reasonable adjustments for disabled students, except where the regulator has lifted this duty in respect of certain reasonable adjustments.

- Students who have sufficient hearing to complete the listening assessment using the recording provided by the exam board may need the recording to be played at a higher volume than other students. They may also find it more difficult to hear the recording among any background noise in the exam room. In these cases students may undertake the assessments in a private room, away from other students, and in the presence of an invigilator only.
- Some students use speech reading to understand spoken language. In these cases, a teacher reads to the student the script of the recording to which other students listen. The student can read the teacher's lips and facial expressions. This replicates the way the student would communicate in the language being assessed outside of an assessment situation.
- A student who is unable to attempt any part of an assessment can be given an exemption from that component. This is the reasonable adjustment 'of last resort'. The marks the student gains in the remaining assessments are scaled up and the student's certificate includes an indication to show that an exemption has been given.

4.35 The first of these two forms of reasonable adjustments should continue to be available to students taking the new A level and AS qualifications in modern foreign languages. A student will be able to apply for an exemption from a component if they cannot attempt any part of the assessment.

4.36 We have the power under the provisions of the Equality Act 2010 to limit the extent to which exam boards must make reasonable adjustments for disabled students. We use this power to make sure a reasonable adjustment does not undermine the integrity of a qualification and that a qualification continues to give a reliable indication of a student's knowledge, skills and understanding.

4.37 We have used this power to limit the percentage of marks from which a student can be exempt in a given qualification. We have limited this to 40 per cent. We believe if a student is exempted from parts of the qualification that constitute more than 40 per cent of the total marks then the qualification cannot be said to give a reliable indication of a student's knowledge, skills and understanding.

4.38 We are proposing that the speaking assessment should account for 30 per cent of the marks. We have not specified a proposed weighting for the assessment of listening skills. If the combined speaking and listening weighting was more than 40 per cent a student could not be exempt from both.

4.39 We believe the current marks exemption limit of 40 per cent is appropriate and that we should not make provision for a student who has demonstrated neither

speaking or listening skills in the language to have the marks they gain in the reading and writing assessments scaled up.

- 4.40 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.

GCSE, A level and AS qualifications in music

- 4.41 We are proposing to reduce the percentage of marks allocated to non-exam assessment in GCSE, A level and AS qualifications in music.
- 4.42 Some disabled students might not be able to undertake the performance elements 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 assessments for a GCSE, A level or AS qualification and have their marks from the assessment they are able to take scaled up.
- 4.43 We are proposing that the percentage of marks allocated to the performance elements in GCSE, A level and AS qualifications in music will be less than 40 per cent. This would allow a disabled student who was unable to undertake the performance assessment to be granted an exemption from the assessment and to have their marks from the remaining aspects of the qualification scaled up. The proposed reduction in the element of performance-based assessment at GCSE could make it possible for a disabled student unable to undertake that assessment to be awarded the qualification nevertheless. The proposed reduction in the percentage of marks allocated to assessing a student's performance may therefore make the qualification more accessible to some disabled students.
- 4.44 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.

GCSE, A level and AS qualifications in physical education

- 4.45 Physical performance is an essential element of physical education. The current and proposed assessment arrangements and assessment objectives reflect this. We are proposing to reduce the percentage of non-exam assessment in GCSE from 60 per cent to 30 per cent. We are proposing that the percentage of non-exam assessment in both A level and AS qualifications in physical education should be 30 per cent.

- 4.46 The performance skills required for the qualifications can be demonstrated in different ways, making the qualification accessible to most disabled students with or without the need for a reasonable adjustment. 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 assessments for a GCSE, A level or AS qualification and have their marks from the assessment they are able to take scaled up. The proposed reduction in the element of performance-based assessment at GCSE could make it possible for a disabled student unable to undertake that assessment to nevertheless be awarded the qualification. The proposed reduction in the percentage of marks allocated to assessing a student's performance may therefore make the qualification more accessible to some disabled students.
- 4.47 Students' experience of, and performance in, different sports may vary according to their gender, racial group, religion or belief. However, the required performance skills can be demonstrated in a wide range of sports, giving choice to students.
- 4.48 We have not identified anything about the proposed changes that would have an adverse 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.

Consultation question 72: We have identified a number of ways the proposed requirements for reformed GCSEs, A level 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?

Consultation Question 73: Are there any additional steps we could take to mitigate any negative impact 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.

Consultation Question 74: Have you any other comments on the impacts of the proposals on persons who share a protected characteristic?

5. 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

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

Please give reasons for your answer

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6. Consultation questions

A level and AS qualifications in ancient languages

Consultation Question 1: To what extent do you agree or disagree that AS qualifications in ancient languages should be assessed entirely by exams?

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

Please give reasons for your answer.

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Consultation Question 2: To what extent do you agree or disagree that A levels in ancient languages should be assessed entirely by exams?

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

Please give reasons for your answer.

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Consultation Question 3: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate for A level and AS qualifications in ancient languages?

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

Please give reasons for your answer.

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Consultation Question 4: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for AS qualifications in ancient languages?

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

Please give reasons for your answer.

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Consultation Question 5: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for A levels in ancient languages?

- Strongly agree
- Agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

Please give reasons for your answer.

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Consultation Question 6: Do you have any further comments relating to the assessment of this subject?

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GCSEs in art and design

Consultation Question 7: To what extent do you agree or disagree that GCSEs in art and design should be assessed entirely by non-exam assessment?

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

Please give reasons for your answer.

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Consultation Question 8: To what extent do you agree or disagree that GCSEs in art and design should not be tiered?

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

Please give reasons for your answer.

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Consultation Question 9: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate for GCSEs in art and design?

- Strongly agree
- Agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

Please give reasons for your answer.

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Consultation Question 10: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for GCSEs in art and design?

Strongly agree

Agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

Please give reasons for your answer.

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Consultation Question 11: Do you have any further comments relating to the assessment of this subject?

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GCSEs in computer science

Consultation Question 12: To what extent do you agree or disagree that for GCSEs in computer science 80 per cent of the available marks should be allocated to exams, and 20 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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Consultation Question 13: To what extent do you agree or disagree that GCSEs in computer science should not be tiered?

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

Please give reasons for your answer.

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Consultation Question 14: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate for GCSEs in computer science?

- Strongly agree

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

Please give reasons for your answer.

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Consultation Question 15: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for GCSEs in computer science?

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

Please give reasons for your answer.

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Consultation Question 16: Do you have any further comments relating to the assessment of this subject?

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GCSE, A level and AS qualifications in dance

Consultation Question 17: To what extent do you agree or disagree that for GCSEs in dance 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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Consultation Question 18: To what extent do you agree or disagree that GCSEs in dance should not be tiered?

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

Please give reasons for your answer.

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

- Strongly agree
- Agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

Please give reasons for your answer.

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Consultation Question 20: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for GCSEs in dance?

Strongly agree

Agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

Please give reasons for your answer.

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Consultation Question 21: To what extent do you agree or disagree that for AS qualifications in dance 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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Consultation Question 22: To what extent do you agree or disagree that for A levels in dance 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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Consultation Question 23: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate for A level and AS qualifications in dance?

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

Please give reasons for your answer.

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

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

Please give reasons for your answer.

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

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

Please give reasons for your answer.

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

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A level and AS qualifications in geography

Consultation Question 27: To what extent do you agree or disagree that AS qualifications in geography 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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Consultation Question 28: To what extent do you agree or disagree that for A levels in geography 80 per cent of the available marks should be allocated to exams, and 20 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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Consultation Question 29: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate for A level and AS qualifications in geography?

- Strongly agree

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

Please give reasons for your answer.

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Consultation Question 30: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for AS qualifications in geography?

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

Please give reasons for your answer.

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Consultation Question 31: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for A level geography?

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

Please give reasons for your answer.

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Consultation Question 32: Do you have any further comments relating to the assessment of this subject?

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A level and AS qualifications in mathematics

Consultation Question 33: To what extent do you agree or disagree that AS qualifications in mathematics 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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Consultation Question 34: To what extent do you agree or disagree that A level mathematics 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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Consultation Question 35: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate for A level and AS qualifications in mathematics?

- Strongly agree
- Agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

Please give reasons for your answer.

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Consultation Question 36: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for AS qualifications in mathematics?

Strongly agree

Agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

Please give reasons for your answer.

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Consultation Question 37: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for A level mathematics?

Strongly agree

Agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

Please give reasons for your answer.

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Consultation Question 38: Do you have any further comments relating to the assessment of this subject?

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A level and AS qualifications in further mathematics

Consultation Question 39: To what extent do you agree or disagree that AS qualifications in further mathematics 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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Consultation Question 40: To what extent do you agree or disagree that A level further mathematics 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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Consultation Question 41: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate for A level and AS qualifications in further mathematics?

- Strongly agree
- Agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

Please give reasons for your answer.

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Consultation Question 42: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for AS qualifications in further mathematics?

Strongly agree

Agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

Please give reasons for your answer.

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Consultation Question 43: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for A level further mathematics?

Strongly agree

Agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

Please give reasons for your answer.

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Consultation Question 44: Do you have any further comments relating to the assessment of this subject?

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A level and AS qualifications in modern foreign languages

Consultation Question 45: To what extent do you agree or disagree that for AS qualifications in modern foreign languages 70 per cent of the available marks should be allocated to exams and 30 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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Consultation Question 46: To what extent do you agree or disagree that for A levels in modern foreign languages 70 per cent of the available marks should be allocated to exams and 30 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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Consultation Question 47: To what extent do you agree or disagree that all A level and AS qualifications in modern foreign languages should have the

same requirements for non-exam assessment and that no exceptions should be made for specific languages?

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

Please give reasons for your answer.

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Consultation Question 48: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate for A level and AS qualifications in modern foreign languages?

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

Please give reasons for your answer.

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Consultation Question 49: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for AS qualifications in modern foreign languages?

- Strongly agree
- Agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

Please give reasons for your answer.

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Consultation Question 50: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for A levels in modern foreign languages?

Strongly agree

Agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

Please give reasons for your answer.

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Consultation Question 51: Do you have any further comments relating to the assessment of this subject?

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GCSE, A level and AS qualifications in music

Consultation Question 52: To what extent do you agree or disagree that for GCSEs in music 40 per cent of the available marks should be allocated to exams, and 60 per cent should be allocated to non-exam assessments?

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

Please give reasons for your answer.

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Consultation Question 53: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate for GCSEs in music?

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

Please give reasons for your answer.

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Consultation Question 54: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for GCSEs in music?

- Strongly agree

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

Please give reasons for your answer.

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Consultation Question 55: To what extent do you agree or disagree that new GCSEs in music should not be tiered?

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

Please give reasons for your answer.

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Consultation Question 56: To what extent do you agree or disagree that for AS qualifications in music 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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Consultation Question 57: To what extent do you agree or disagree that for A levels in music 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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Consultation Question 58: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate for A level and AS qualifications in music?

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

Please give reasons for your answer.

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Consultation Question 59: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for AS qualifications in music?

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

Please give reasons for your answer.

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Consultation Question 60: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for A levels in music?

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

Please give reasons for your answer.

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Consultation Question 61: Do you have any further comments relating to the assessment of this subject?

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GCSE, A level and AS qualifications in physical education

Consultation Question 62: To what extent do you agree or disagree that for GCSEs in physical education 70 per cent of the available marks should be allocated to exams and 30 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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Consultation Question 63: To what extent do you agree or disagree that new GCSEs in physical education should not be tiered?

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

Please give reasons for your answer.

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Consultation Question 64: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate for GCSEs in physical education?

- Strongly agree

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

Please give reasons for your answer.

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Consultation Question 65: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for GCSEs in physical education?

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

Please give reasons for your answer.

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Consultation Question 66: To what extent do you agree or disagree that for AS qualifications in physical education 70 per cent of the available marks should be allocated to exams and 30 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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Consultation Question 67: To what extent do you agree or disagree that for A level physical education 70 per cent of the available marks should be allocated to exams and 30 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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Consultation Question 68: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate for A level and AS qualifications in physical education?

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

Please give reasons for your answer.

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Consultation Question 69: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for AS qualifications in physical education?

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

Please give reasons for your answer.

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Consultation Question 70: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for A levels in physical education?

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

Please give reasons for your answer.

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Consultation Question 71: Do you have any further comments relating to the assessment of this subject?

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Equality impact

Consultation Question 72: We have identified a number of ways the proposed requirements for reformed GCSE, A level 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?

Yes No

If so, what are they?

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Consultation Question 73: Are there any additional steps we could take to mitigate any negative impact resulting from these proposals on persons who share a protected characteristic?

Yes No

If so, please comment on the additional steps we could take to mitigate negative impacts.

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Consultation Question 74: Have you any other comments on the impacts of the proposals on persons who share a protected characteristic?

Yes No

If so, what are they?

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Appendix 1 Background to the reforms

GCSE

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.⁴⁰

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.

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.⁴¹

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.⁴²

YouGov report on responses to the consultation

In November 2013 we published a summary of responses to the consultation.⁴³

Our equality impact assessment

In November 2013 we published our equality analysis of the impact of the reforms on students who share protected characteristics.⁴⁴

November 2013 announcement

On 1st November 2013 we published our decisions on the features of all GCSEs and on specific arrangements for English language, English literature and mathematics.⁴⁵

⁴⁰ www.ofqual.gov.uk/files/2013-02-07-letter-from-michael-gove-reform-of-ks4-qualifications.pdf

⁴¹ www.ofqual.gov.uk/files/2013-06-11-review-of-controlled-assessment-in-GCSEs.pdf

⁴² comment.ofqual.gov.uk/gcse-reform-june-2013

⁴³ www.ofqual.gov.uk/documents/yougov-analysis-of-responses-to-the-2013-gcse-reform-consultation

⁴⁴ www.ofqual.gov.uk/documents/equality-analysis-report-on-reforms-to-gcse-from-2015

⁴⁵ www.ofqual.gov.uk/news/design-details-of-new-gcse-in-england

Grading consultation

On 2nd April 2014 we published a consultation on setting the grade standards for new GCSEs.⁴⁶

Subject content

The Government published the content for a number of new GCSEs.⁴⁷

A level and AS qualifications

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.⁴⁸ For this research, we spoke to teachers, employers and other higher education representatives. We also looked at the standards and methods other countries use to assess students at this point in their education.⁴⁹

June to September 2012

We ran an open consultation⁵⁰ 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 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

⁴⁶ comment.ofqual.gov.uk/setting-the-grade-standards-of-new-gcses-april-2014

⁴⁷ 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

⁴⁸ www.ofqual.gov.uk/files/2012-04-03-fit-for-purpose-a-levels.pdf

⁴⁹ www.ofqual.gov.uk/documents/international-comparisons-in-senior-secondary-assessment-full-report/all-versions

⁵⁰ comment.ofqual.gov.uk/a-level-reform

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.

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 duties under the Apprenticeship, 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).⁵¹ 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 GCSE, A level and AS qualifications are required by the Equality Act, among other things, to make reasonable adjustments for disabled people taking their qualifications, except where we have specified that such adjustments should not be made.

⁵¹ Equality Act 2010, section 149

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 A level 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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