

Ofqual Board

Paper 31/14

Date:

23 July 2014

Title:

Reform Programme Update

Report by:

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Responsible Director:

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Programme Assurance:

Tim Leslie (Director of Strategic Reform)

Paper for information

Open paper



Issue

1. This paper is to give the Board an update on the progress of the Reform Programme. Reformed GCSEs in Modern Foreign and Ancient Languages, is being presented for formal post consultation decision by the Board as a separate paper.

Recommendation

2. The Board is asked to note the update on progress of the Reform Programme.

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General Qualifications

3. The plan for this workstream is shown in Annex 1. Major milestones continue to be met and we remain on track with key activities. Key milestones achieved since the last update include :
 - the formal recognition of the exam boards (with conditions), to award reformed GCSE qualifications
 - exam board submission of GCSE, AS and A level qualifications for accreditation for FT 2015 through June and convened panels to consider the submissions on schedule
 - the publication of statutory guidance relating to FT2015 subjects covering guidance on assessment objectives for all subjects and other guidance on a subject by subject basis – e.g. minimum assessment time for the three GCSE subjects
 - the start of policy consultation for the following FT 2016 subjects
 - a) Art and Design (GCSE only)
 - b) Dance (GCSE and A/AS level)
 - c) Music (GCSE and A/AS level)
 - d) Physical Education (GCSE and A/AS level)
 - e) Computer Science (GCSE only)
 - f) Modern Foreign Languages (A/AS level only)
 - g) Ancient Languages (A/AS level only)
 - h) Maths and Further Maths (A/AS level only)
 - i) Geography (A/AS level only)

First Teaching 2015

GCSE English Language

4. The consultation on the grading of the speaking component for English Language is currently being prepared for publication.

Accreditation

5. Submissions were received from exam boards on time through June. Accreditation panels started on June 23. Annex 2 provides the schedule for receiving submissions and conducting accreditation panels by qualification and subject. Board members are receiving weekly accreditation decision updates from the Director of Regulation.

Statutory Guidance (Industry Standards)

6. Statutory Guidance to support accreditation submissions for FT 2015 was published at the end of May. Lessons learned have been captured and will be used to plan the approach to develop and publish statutory guidance required for FT2016 qualifications.

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Setting Grade Standards in GCSEs

7. The consultation on Setting Grade Standards finished on June 30. A total of 226 responses were received and an analysis of the responses is underway. A full report will be produced in advance of the August Board. The consultation was supported by events held across 6 regions in cities including Newcastle, Cambridge and Exeter. Draft proposals were discussed at the meeting of the Standards Advisory Group on 4 July. Firm proposals will be put to the Board on 19 August with the aim that announcements can be made in September about how grades will be set in summer 2017 for the reformed GCSE qualifications in Mathematics, English Language and English Literature.

National Reference Tests

8. The 'pre-procurement' draft of the ITT was issued on June 27; this enables Ofqual to gauge the response of the wider supplier community and gain further input from the Awarding Organisations. The requirement and timeline for secondary legislation has been discussed with DfE. A meeting was held with DfE and their Legal Team on July 8 to understand the requirements for the legislation and the timeline for enactment. It is expected that any secondary legislation would be in place during summer 2015. The legislation may be made under the Education Act 2002, Part 6.

First Teaching 2016

GCSE Remaining Ebacc Subjects

9. Reformed GCSEs in Modern Foreign and Ancient Languages, is being presented for formal post consultation decision from the Board as agenda item 32/14.

Remaining A Level and GCSE Subjects

10. The policy consultation was published on 15 July. Some subjects require more work on content before they can be regulated and it is planned to start a separate consultation in mid - September to allow this work to be completed. These subjects are religious studies, citizenship, drama, design and technology and cooking and nutrition. The intention is to replicate the process adopted for the July consultation and convene an electronic Board in early September to consider recommendations on content.

GCSE & A Level – Regulatory Process (for collaborative subject content development)

11. We have had a large response to the consultation to date with over 1300 responses received. The consultation will finish at the end of July and we will bring policy recommendations to Ofqual Board as soon as practicable (no later than September).

Code of Practice

12. Work to review the remaining sections of the Code is continuing. Full proposals will be taken to CRC for discussion and agreement in early

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autumn. We have written to Exam Boards setting out our plans. A technical consultation on the changes we are proposing to implement is planned to start in early November 2014. The Code in its current format is intended to be replaced by statutory guidance and conditions only where necessary and will apply to the 2015 exam series.

Enquiries About Results (EARs) and Appeals

13. This project is being overseen by Michelle Meadows. Proposals for reform arising from internal workshops were discussed with awarding organisations during June and July. Policy proposals will be developed for Ofqual Board discussion and agreement in September prior to the start of a formal consultation in October.

Regulatory Strategy

14. The consultation on lifting accreditation, including a section explaining how this sits within the wider context of how we are changing the way we regulate was published on 8 July. We plan to come to Ofqual Board in August for post consultation decision. The timing of this is important because we have high risk qualifications that awarding organisations have submitted / will submit during the consultation for accreditation where we will want to have formally lifted the accreditation condition so that they are available on the register for inclusion in the DfE's September 2014 process for inclusion in performance tables.
15. We are undertaking a validity audit for these qualifications of the processes and methodologies that awarding organisations have adopted in the design and development stage of Technical Level and Applied General qualifications for 16-19 students. The audit approach will provide a much greater level of scrutiny of the validity of these qualifications than previous accreditation processes.
16. The QCF policy consultation will be published w/c 21 July, alongside the consultation on raising the participation age & guided learning hours. We plan to come to Ofqual Board in January to communicate outcomes of the QCF consultation, prior to the removal of the QCF regulations and technical consultation on new conditions. We plan to make request to Board in September, including CRC input on draft initial recommendations, that approval of final recommendations be delegated to CRC.

Ways of Working

17. Tier 1 and 2 structure plan is on track with the 90 day consultation due to complete on August 13.
18. The Programme Board has agreed the design approach to production of new regulatory processes that will inform completion of final target operating model.

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19. The impact of the Organisation Design on CSR funding, for this financial year and subsequent years, needs understanding and planning with DfE, BIS and the Cabinet Office.

Programme Management

Funding

20. Discussions with BIS are ongoing to agree an additional £1.4m required to implement the regulatory strategy and the IT platform. The GQ programme and Reference Test project are on track to spend according to the £4.0m funding provided from DfE.

Programme Risks

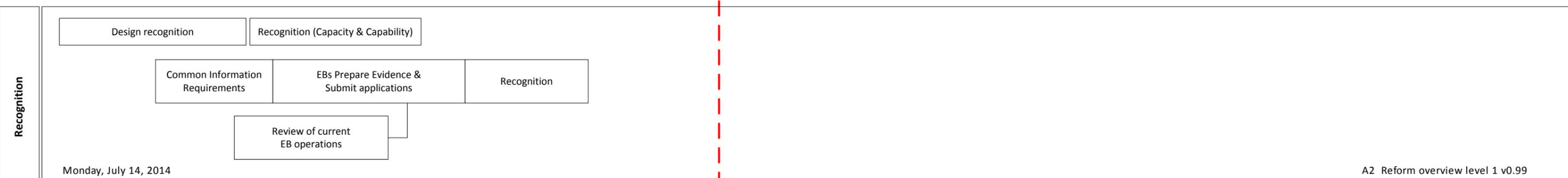
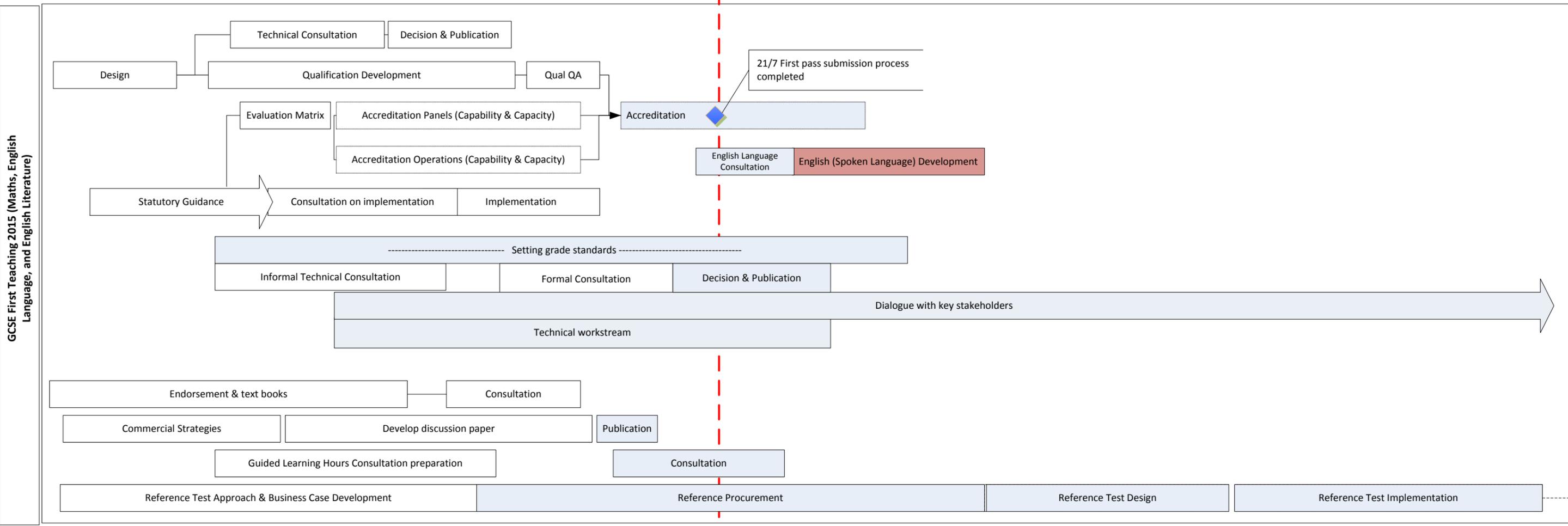
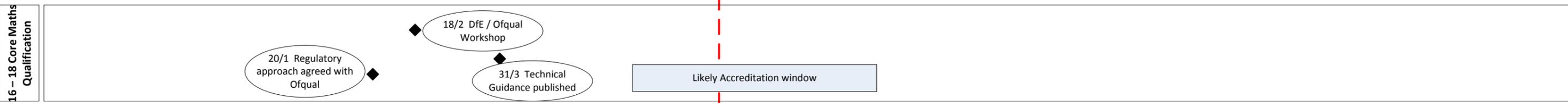
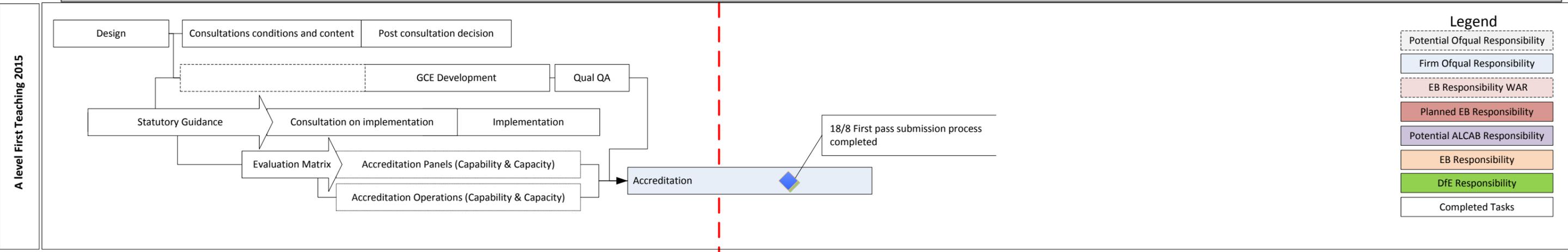
21. There is a risk that without funding confirmation from BIS, Ofqual will need to slow down the implementation of the new Regulatory Strategy and implementation of the IT platform.
22. The programme is entering a very busy period. Accreditation panels are happening, summer awards are being managed, organisation design is taking place, several important consultations are occurring. Careful resource planning is being done to manage these multiple activities, but there is a risk that, should there be an issue with summer awarding, other projects may be impacted.
23. There continues to be little time contingency in the plans either for first teaching 2015 or 2016. This risk is being managed via tight Programme focus on the critical path milestones. Scenario plans exist to plan Ofqual's reaction to any slippage or any issue with exam board accreditation failure.

Communications and stakeholder engagement

24. 12 events were held at 6 locations to support the 'Setting Grade Standards' and 'Completing GCSE, AS and A level Reform' consultations. We have also held the first meeting of a cross-stakeholder communications group which discussed messaging, sharing communications channels and working better together in future.
25. An initial 'Parents Forum' event is planned for July to test establishing this as a regular feature of our communications work, and we are exploring similar events for higher education and employer audiences.
26. We are developing a stakeholder engagement plan to support the launch and duration of the next consultation, on subjects for first teaching in 2016.
27. Longer term, CRC has endorsed an approach to communications delivery, including producing a range of informative materials and putting in place engagement plans for identified groups, and work is underway putting that into practice.

ANNEXES LIST:-

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| Annex 1 | Reform Programme Milestone Plan |
| Annex 2 | Accreditation Submissions and Panel Tracker |



Annex 1 Reform Programme High Level Overview Page 2 of 2 – Portfolio 2 First Teaching 2016 and Remaining Subjects

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