

**An analysis of consultation responses:
developing new GCSE, A level and AS
qualifications for first teaching in 2016**

**Report for
the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual)**

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1 Executive summary

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 Key messages across subject areas

Changes are being made to GCSE, A level and AS qualifications taken by students in England. Ofqual has previously consulted on and announced its decisions on the structure and assessment of new qualifications to be taught from September 2015 and on some that will be taught from September 2016. This report records the analysis of responses received by Ofqual to its consultation on the structure and assessment of additional subjects planned for first teaching in September 2016.

Ofqual consulted on the following subjects and qualifications between July and September 2014: ancient languages (A level and AS qualifications), art and design (GCSE qualifications), computer science (GCSE qualifications), dance (GCSE, A level and AS qualifications), geography (A level and AS qualifications), mathematics (A level and AS qualifications), further mathematics (A level and AS qualifications), modern foreign languages (A level and AS qualifications), music (GCSE, A level and AS qualifications) and physical education (GCSE, A level and AS qualifications).

A total of 967 responses were received in either standard format (completed questionnaire) or non-standard format (letters or emails). The consultation asked respondents for their views on the following issues in respect of the qualifications listed above:

- Structure of GCSEs: proposed tiering arrangements
- Assessment of GCSEs, A levels and AS: proposed assessment arrangements, including proposals on examinations, non-exam assessment (NEA)
- Assessment of GCSEs, A levels and AS: content and weighting of proposed assessment objectives.

There was the opportunity to respond to closed questions on a Likert scale,¹ followed by further free comments to expand on the response as required.

The consultation was developed and managed by Ofqual, and responses to the consultation were analysed and reported by AlphaPlus Consultancy Ltd. Although there was a single consultation document, in practice there were separate sets of consultation questions on each qualification. There were some consistent messages from respondents across subjects, which have been reported here. The analysis of the responses, however, has largely been reported by subject and qualification.

1.1.1.1 Structure of GCSE qualifications (maintaining non-tiered qualifications)

Most respondents agreed with proposals to have no tiering at GCSE level for art and design, computer science, dance, music and physical education (PE).

1.1.1.2 Assessment of GCSE, A level and AS qualifications

There was a high-level of disagreement with the proposal to decrease the proportion of non-examination assessment available for GCSE dance, music and PE. Respondents disagreeing with these proposals felt the reduction would mean less opportunity for students to engage in the performance aspect of these subjects. This was also reflected in responses relating to the content of the assessment objectives in GCSE dance and PE. Where lower proportions of marks were proposed for NEA, respondents translated this as the devaluation of performance and physical skills.

¹ The Likert scale asks respondents to state that they strongly agree/agree/neither agree nor disagree/disagree/strongly disagree with a statement.

1.1.2 Key messages by subject area

1.1.2.1 Ancient languages AS and A level

The minimum number of responses to the closed questions was 86 and the maximum was 121. The minimum number of responses to the free text questions was 11, and the maximum was 41.

Views on the proposal that ancient languages AS and A levels should be assessed entirely by exam were somewhat mixed: around half of respondents who expressed an opinion (i.e. excluding the 'neither agree nor disagree' responses) indicated in their tick box responses that they disagreed with the proposal for the AS qualification, and just over half objected to the A level assessment being entirely by exam. In their free-text responses, several respondents who disagreed with this proposal stated that their objections were based on the view that the nature of the subject lends itself to an element of coursework and that this would help students to develop independent study and research skills and to broaden their knowledge of the subject.

There was a relatively high level of agreement with the proposals in terms of the assessment objectives for both AS and A level, though the proposed weightings of the A level assessment objectives (AOs) attracted 'disagree' or 'strongly disagree' responses from just over a third of respondents. The reasons stated for objecting to the proposed weightings for the A level AOs were mixed: for example, some requested single point weightings rather than ranges and a couple of respondents suggested that there is insufficient weighting applied to 'evaluation'.

1.1.2.2 Art and design GCSE

The minimum number of responses to the closed questions was 70, and the maximum was 82. The minimum number of responses to the free text questions was 21, and the maximum was 39.

Just over two-thirds of respondents who gave a substantive response (i.e. not 'neither agree nor disagree') agreed with the proposal that GCSEs in art and design should be assessed entirely by non-exam assessment (NEA) and the free text comments suggest that many felt that this is the most appropriate method given the nature of the subject. Many of those who disagreed and made a comment indicated that their concerns centred more on an 'in-principle' objection to GCSE qualifications being assessed entirely by NEA rather than anything specifically relating to art and design that renders the subject unsuitable for this form of assessment. In their further comments on the proposals for GCSE art and design, several respondents mentioned concerns about the moderation process for NEAs.

More than three-quarters of respondents who expressed an opinion in their tick box responses (excluding the 'neither agree nor disagree' responses) agreed that GCSE art and design should remain untiered. Respondents' comments indicated that retaining an untiered structure is preferable because it provides all candidates with the opportunity to achieve the highest grades and that differentiation in this subject is by outcome rather than task.

Nearly two-thirds of respondents agreed with the proposed assessment objectives for GCSE art and design, and a similar proportion agreed with the proposed weightings. Among the small number who disagreed and made a comment, the main reasons for objecting to the AOs included an apparent lack of emphasis within the AOs on providing evidence of knowledge and the perception that the AOs are too 'narrow' in their focus. Some respondents also suggested revisions to the wording of the AOs. A small number of those who disagreed with the weightings and made a comment suggested that the endorsed titles within art and design (such as textiles, graphic communication, etc.) need their own AOs.

1.1.2.3 Computer science GCSE

The minimum number of responses to the closed questions was 53, and the maximum was 59. The minimum number of responses to the free text questions was 8, and the maximum was 26.

Respondents who gave an 'agree' or 'disagree' response to the tick-box question were split into almost equal proportions in terms of their agreement and disagreement with the proposal to assess GCSEs in computer science by 80% exam and 20% NEA. Those who agreed with this proposal and made a comment indicated that they felt it was an appropriate method for the subject, while all but one of those who disagreed and gave a reason explained that they would prefer to see a higher proportion of marks allocated to NEA because of the practical nature of the subject.

A majority of respondents agreed that GCSE computer science should retain an untiered structure.

Just three respondents disagreed with the proposed assessment objectives for GCSE computer science, and the same number disagreed with the proposed weightings. Among the comments explaining any objections to the proposed AOs there was a request for clearer wording and one suggestion that there is inadequate focus on practical problem solving through programming. Those who commented on why they agree with the proposed AOs tended to state that they were considered well-balanced and appropriate for the subject.

1.1.2.4 Dance GCSE

The minimum number of responses to the closed questions was 194, and the maximum was 212. The minimum number of responses to the free text questions was 116, and the maximum was 190. It should be noted that many of the responses followed a consistent pattern, arising from a campaign about the subject.

The main source of disagreement for GCSE dance was the proposal that the qualification is assessed by 40% exam and 60% NEA: nearly 90% of those who gave a substantive response to the tick-box question disagreed with this. In the free text comments it was apparent that the objections were based on the view that 60% NEA did not allow for a high enough proportion of practical work in this subject.

The majority of respondents agreed with the proposal to retain an untiered structure for GCSE dance and comments echoed those made in response to other subjects, for example that tiering would not be appropriate for the subject.

Nearly three-quarters of respondents (excluding those who gave a 'neither agree nor disagree' response) agreed with the proposed assessment objectives for GCSE dance and those who commented on their reasons for agreeing suggested that they were an improvement on the existing AOs and/or that they were appropriate for the subject. Some of the reasons given for objecting to the proposed AOs were the weightings rather than the AOs themselves – in particular, the emphasis on practical work was considered too low by some who commented.

Respondents who gave a substantive ('agree' or 'disagree' rather than 'neither agree nor disagree') response to the tick-box question were split into almost equal halves between those who agreed and those who disagreed with the proposed weightings for the assessment objectives. Those who disagreed and gave a reason focused their criticisms on a perceived over-emphasis on theory and written work and a lack of focus on the practical aspects.

1.1.2.5 Dance AS and A level

The minimum number of responses to the closed questions was 170, and the maximum was 188. The minimum number of responses to the free text questions was 86, and the maximum was 131. It should be noted that many of the responses followed a consistent pattern, arising from a campaign about the subject.

The proposals that both AS and A level dance qualifications should be assessed by 50% exam and 50% NEA attracted mixed views. For both qualifications just under half of those who gave a substantive (i.e. excluding the 'neither agree nor disagree') response to the tick-box question said they agreed with the proposal, while just over half said they disagreed. Almost all of those who commented on their reasons for disagreeing with the proposals for AS and A level assessment methods explained that they would prefer to see a higher proportion of marks allocated to the NEA.

Just over three-quarters of those who gave an 'agree' or 'disagree' response to the tick-box question agreed with the proposed assessment objectives for AS and A level dance, and approximately two-thirds agreed with the proposed weightings. Many of those who commented on their reasons for objecting to the proposed AOs and their weightings described what they perceived to be an over-emphasis on the theoretical aspects of dance at the expense of the practical aspects of the subject.

In their further comments on the proposals for the dance qualifications a substantial number of respondents reiterated their overarching concerns that the practical elements of dance would be given insufficient emphasis and that this could result in aspects of performance becoming an extra-curricular activity.

1.1.2.6 Geography AS and A level

The minimum number of responses to the closed questions was 58, and the maximum was 66. The minimum number of responses to the free text questions was 24, and the maximum was 44.

There were slightly more respondents agreeing than disagreeing with the proposal for 100 per cent examination at AS in the closed questions. It was not always clear from their free-text responses, however, whether respondents assumed there would be no fieldwork undertaken at all at AS because there was no NEA proposed or whether respondents realised that aspects of fieldwork skills would be assessed by examination (with differing views on the relative success of this approach in developing and evidencing skills). A range of terms were used in the responses, and it cannot be assumed that there is a shared expectation of what NEA might constitute – for example, course work, fieldwork, projects. Thirteen respondents, two-thirds of those who disagreed with the proposal and commented further, felt that fieldwork skills were an intrinsic part of the subject, and many reported the importance of investigative and report writing skills, which are considered to be valued in higher education.

For A level geography, there were almost equal numbers of respondents agreeing as disagreeing in the closed questions with the proposal for 20 per cent NEA. Of the respondents disagreeing and offering further free-text responses, four respondents, including two representative/special interest groups argued that there should be a greater proportion of NEA than in the proposal, on the basis that fieldwork skills were intrinsic to geography. Three respondents were concerned that the assessment of geography was moving away from what was happening in other science subjects and NEA could devalue A level geography if it contributes to the final grade. There were some concerns about the fairness of coursework and the opportunity for 'cheating' and the practicalities of managing a large cohort of students undertaking coursework.

Although there was largely agreement with the proposed AOs and the AO weighting, 14 respondents (including six representative/special interest groups and two awarding organisations) who disagreed with the proposal expressed concerns that the AOs were too generic and might be open to interpretation. There were also concerns about 'read-across' between these AOs and GCSE AOs.

1.1.2.7 Mathematics AS and A level

The minimum number of responses to the closed questions was 90, and the maximum was 93. The minimum number of responses to the free text questions was 24, and the maximum was 58.

The majority of free-text responses considered it appropriate and preferable for the AS and A level mathematics to be assessed entirely by exam. Coursework was considered burdensome and a less reliable form of assessment. There was support from a number of respondents (both agreeing and disagreeing with the proposals for 100 per cent examination at AS and A level) for NEA for specific topics, such as modelling, numerical methods and statistics, and for some groups of students who were considered disadvantaged by assessment entirely by examination.

Overall there was high level of agreement with the AOs from respondents. There were substantial concerns expressed, however, by some of the awarding organisations, subject association/ learned bodies and a membership organisation responding about a lack of clarity in the subdivisions (bullet points) in the AOs that could be subject to misinterpretation. It was noted by one respondent that concerns with the bullet points within the AOs had been recognised in an awarding organisation meeting with Ofqual and these were being revised. There were specific concerns from several respondents (both those agreeing and disagreeing with the AOs) about the lack of a clear definition of problem solving.

There was less support for the proposed weighting of the AS and A level assessment objectives than there was for the appropriateness of the AOs. There were concerns about the weighting expressed by respondents agreeing or disagreeing with the proposal. Objections for AS weighting largely focused on how much problem solving (as opposed to standard techniques) was appropriate for AS. There were some requests for AO3 and (to a lesser extent) AO2 to be given lower weightings to ensure the AOs reflected the qualifications aims (AS and A level) and for AO1 to have a greater weighting (A level). Three awarding organisations, one subject association/learned society and one membership organisation that strongly disagreed with the proposed weighting at AS and A level expressed concerns about the assessment of problem solving with the proposed weighting.

1.1.2.8 Further mathematics AS and A level

The minimum number of responses to the closed questions was 80, and the maximum was 88. The minimum number of responses to the free text questions was 25, and the maximum was 37.

The majority of responses considered it appropriate and preferable for AS and A level further mathematics to be assessed entirely by exam. Coursework was considered a less reliable form of assessment. There was support from a number of respondents for NEA for specific topics (who argued that final decisions on AOs should not be made unless content was confirmed) and for some groups of students who were considered disadvantaged by assessment entirely by examination.

Overall, there was agreement with the proposed AOs, but some concern was expressed by several respondents that 50 per cent of the content was not confirmed. Several respondents (official and personal responses) who disagreed or strongly disagreed with the proposal were not happy with the sub-objectives (the bullet points), which were felt to lack clarity and be open to misinterpretation. There was less support for the proposed weightings at AS and A level than for the other proposals and there was less consensus on what the issues were. Some respondents felt there was need for greater weighting of AO3 (and, to a lesser extent, AO2) to ensure the AOs reflected the qualification aims, but equally there were concerns that there was already too much weight given to AO3, which would cause issues when writing qualifications. There was also concern about the proposed weighting, given that 50 per cent of the content was not specified.

1.1.2.9 Modern foreign languages AS and A level

The minimum number of responses to the closed questions was 76, and the maximum was 81. The minimum number of responses to the free text questions was 37, and the maximum was 55.

There was largely support from respondents for the allocation of 30 per cent to NEA, as it was felt that this proportion reflected the importance of speaking the target language. Some respondents

suggested that, to provide more consistent and reliable marking, an external examiner should assess this element. It was obvious from responses that most respondents understood the 30 per cent NEA to be the oral examination. A few respondents queried the terminology, orals being usually termed as examinations in MFL qualifications; others made it clear that they assumed that the NEA would be the oral and assess speaking skills. Most of those who explained their reasons for not supporting the proposal objected on the grounds of the potential for malpractice and unreliable marking of the 30 per cent NEA element. It was rarely made explicit whether the malpractice and unreliable marking comment related solely to teacher assessment – but this was implied in some instances. This concern led to some respondents calling for AS and A level qualifications to be entirely by examination.

Overall, there was agreement with the proposal that there should be the same requirements for NEA and that no exceptions should be made for specific languages. Where there were objections (it should be noted that these concerns were also sometimes raised by respondents who agreed with the proposal), these generally addressed one of two issues. Firstly the degree of perceived ‘difficulty’, several respondents felt that some languages might be more complex, for example Cantonese, Mandarin and Japanese, and therefore cannot necessarily be treated in the same way as the more widely taught European languages in terms of NEAs. Secondly the issue of capacity, some respondents felt that the need for examiners for an oral component for a ‘minority’ subject may have a negative impact on the capacity to offer these language courses in schools. One awarding organisation expressed concerns about the commercial viability of offering specifications with 30% NEA for small-entry language qualifications (non-European).

There was generally more agreement than disagreement with the proposed AOs in the closed questions. Where further comments were made respondents who disagreed were more likely to respond with any detail. Some respondents who commented objected to a perceived over-reliance on cultural awareness and literature at the expense of speaking, listening, reading and writing skills and on the use of English language for assessed work. Some respondents expressed the view that AO weighting at AS should be different from A level to help ‘bridge the gap’ between GCSE and A level by having a lower weighting on AO4 in the AS qualification. Three awarding organisations made different suggestions for a change to the weightings, but all three had specific concerns about AO4.

1.1.2.10 Music GCSE

The minimum number of responses to the closed questions was 55, and the maximum was 58. The minimum number of responses to the free text questions was 28, and the maximum was 39.

The majority of the respondents to the online survey considered the proposed 60 per cent non-exam marks too low. Many cited 70 per cent as the preferred allocation of non-exam marks, and several suggested a higher proportion (75–90 per cent). There was a very high non-standard format response to this question. A total of 413 responses (including 8 organisation-level responses) were received, of which 366 responses were identical. Most responses referred to issues with the content, but the majority (almost all) also expressed concerns about the available marks for NEAs. The majority of responses stated that a 70 per cent allocation of marks to NEAs was more appropriate. The following text was included in an identical response received from 366 individuals:

We believe that this [percentage of marks for non-exam assessment] should be 70 per cent to enable flexible and musical delivery of assessment and learning. In a subject where music is the primary method of communication, it is difficult to see how this could be achieved with as much as 40 per cent of assessment examined.

The majority of responses also expressed concerns that changes to the qualification would not encourage young musicians to study music at school. There was a higher level of agreement with the proposed AOs and the proposed weighting. Those agreeing and disagreeing made some suggestions

for specific changes to the AOs, which were largely to emphasise the role of active participation in music. There was a high level of agreement with the proposal not to tier GCSE music.

1.1.2.11 Music AS and A level

The minimum number of responses to the closed questions was 52, and the maximum was 55. The minimum number of responses to the free text questions was 24, and the maximum was 32.

Overall there was more agreement than disagreement with the proposals seen in responses to the closed questions. As with GCSE in music, more expressions of disagreement with the AS and A level proposals were received in non-standard format (letters). Comments received referred to the consultation for 'GCSE, AS and A level' and often did not specify whether comments referred to one or more specific qualification. The majority of those objecting to this proposal wanted the non-exam allocation of marks to be higher, to reflect the practical/performance aspect of the subject.

Respondents were largely supportive of the proposed AOs. Where objections were made in the free-text comments these were made on separate issues: for example, one respondent was concerned that too much emphasis on practice and performance might devalue the subject, another commented that there should be more emphasis on AO4, another commented on the apparent separation of 'knowledge' from 'critical judgement' in the AOs, and another reported that centres found AO3 and AO4 a contrived split.

1.1.2.12 Physical education GCSE

The minimum number of responses to the closed questions was 129, and the maximum was 144. The minimum number of responses to the free text questions was 65, and the maximum was 119.

GCSE PE has one of the highest response rates to closed questions in the survey. It also has high levels of disagreement – in particular, high levels of strong disagreement – for all questions except the 'tiering' question. The vast majority of the responses agreed that GCSE in PE should not be tiered. Where respondents expressed disagreement, they raised concerns about the accessibility of theory papers for lower-attaining students, especially if this was combined with less assessment of practical skills.

There was a very high-level of disagreement with the proposal for 30 per cent NEA at GCSE. Free-text responses were almost unanimous in their disagreement with only 30 per cent NEA for what they considered a practical subject about 'physical' skills and activity. Many respondents felt the proposed split was incompatible with moves to combat obesity by introducing more physical activity in schools, and that the qualification also enabled non-academic students to succeed. There were a total of 108 further comments from respondents who had strongly disagreed or disagreed with this proposal. Of these, 64 specifically mentioned the physical nature of the subject and the opportunity to reward sporting prowess and/or hard work and commitment to a sport. The promotion of a healthy and active lifestyle and the need to combat obesity was also mentioned by some of these respondents.

There was a high-level of disagreement with the AOs and weighting. The issue was once again that the low proportion of practical assessment did not reflect the physical nature of the subject skills.

1.1.2.13 Physical Education AS and A level

The minimum number of responses to the closed questions was 77, and the maximum was 99. The minimum number of responses to the free text questions was 31, and the maximum was 73.

The agreement/disagreement split was fairly even in the closed questions, the difference being that agreement tended to be 'mild' whereas there was proportionally more 'strong' disagreement.

There was substantial disagreement with the proposal for the relative proportion of exams and NEA for PE, but there were differences of extent between the GCSE (relatively high) and AS and A level. Disagreement with the PE proposals is close to 80 per cent for GCSE, whereas it is 55 per cent for AS and just under half for A level.

Where there was disagreement, reasons cited were, as for the GCSE, related to the physical nature of the subject. Where there was agreement, respondents felt that the split reflected the more academic/theoretical nature of the subject at this level and progression to 'sports science' at degree level – it allowed the subject to be more academic and prepared students for further study and university.

2 Introduction

The Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual) regulates qualifications, examinations and assessments in England and vocational qualifications in Northern Ireland. Ofqual endeavours to comply with UK government principles for consultation.²

Ofqual was responsible for writing and hosting the questionnaire that constituted this consultation, while AlphaPlus, a consultancy that is independent from Ofqual, was responsible for the analysis and report writing.

Currently, changes are being made to General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE), Advanced level (A level) and Advanced Subsidiary (AS) qualifications. These changes are being phased in.

2.1 Summary of consultation proposals

Ofqual is responsible for ensuring that the reformed GCSE, AS and A level qualifications are of the right standard and in line with government policy aims. The Department for Education (DfE) is leading on the development of subject content, with Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) also advising on certain A level subjects through the A level Content Advisory Board (ALCAB). The DfE has been consulting on the proposed content of qualifications, at the same time as Ofqual has been running this consultation.³

This consultation⁴ covered some subjects that are planned for first teaching in September 2016. Ofqual has produced Table 1, which explains which subjects were included in the consultation, and which subjects (or qualifications) were not included.

² Consultation principles

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/255180/Consultation-Principles-Oct-2013.pdf (accessed 09/10/14.)

³ GCSE and A level reform <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/gcse-and-a-level-reform> (accessed 09/10/14.)

⁴ Ofqual (2014) 'Developing new GCSE, A level and AS qualifications for first teaching in 2016'.

<http://comment.ofqual.gov.uk/developing-new-qualifications-for-2016/> (accessed: 28/10/14.)

Table 1: Subjects and qualification types covered in the consultation

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
Further mathematics	Not offered at GCSE	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
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

For each subject, the consultation sought respondents' views on the following issues:

- The proposed assessment method for the revised qualifications. Typically, this was about the balance between assessment by examination, and by non-examination assessment (NEA). Ofqual explains the term NEA in the following terms:

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'.

The consultation in respect of the proportion of exam and NEA was generally about agreement with the proposed proportions of the respective types of assessment. Once again, Ofqual's consultation document contains a table that summarises the weighting of exam and NEA clearly (see Table 2).

Table 2: Current and proposed weighting of exam assessment and non-exam assessment (NEA)

Subject	GCSE		A level		AS qualification	
	Current weighting of NEA	Proposed weighting of NEA	Current weighting of NEA	Proposed weighting of NEA	Current weighting of NEA	Proposed weighting of NEA
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% ⁵	None	0–20% ⁵	None
Geography	N/A		None	20%	None	None
Mathematics	N/A		0–20% ⁵	None	0–20% ⁵	None
Modern foreign languages	N/A		30–40% ⁶	30%	30–40% ⁶	30%
Music	60–80%	60%	60–70%	60%	60–70%	60%
Physical education	60%	30%	35–50%	30%	35–50%	30%

⁵ Although up to 20 per cent NEA can be used for A-level mathematics and further mathematics, only two qualifications include any NEA and a maximum of 10 per cent of NEA is seen in these qualifications.

⁶ 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 NEA in these qualifications is lower.

- No tiering (GCSE only)

In some current GCSEs, tiers are implemented with Foundation papers, graded G–C, and Higher papers, graded E–A*. The purpose of tiered papers has been to offer exams targeted on the ability of candidates so that candidates do not have to face a paper with material that is far too easy or far too difficult for them.

Current government policy and Ofqual practice is that 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. The GCSEs upon which Ofqual was seeking views in this consultation are currently, and are proposed in future to all be untiered.

- Assessment objectives (AOs)⁷

AOs for a subject are designed to describe the principal abilities that candidates taking that qualification must be given the opportunity to develop and demonstrate. In developing AOs for the revised qualifications, Ofqual has sought to put into effect the following principles.

AOs have been designed so 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

In consulting on AOs, Ofqual sought stakeholders' views on the extent to which the proposed AOs fulfil those criteria. As well as asking about the content of AOs, Ofqual invited comments on the (numerical) weighting of AOs.

⁷ Because the phrase 'assessment objectives' occurs frequently in this report, we have used the abbreviation 'AO' for it. In this report, therefore, 'AO' does not refer to 'awarding organisation', the phrase that is often associated with this abbreviation in UK education.

3 Consultation methods

3.1 Data collection

The consultation was carried out between 15 July and 22 September 2014. The main structured data collection instrument was a questionnaire. This instrument had a ‘your details’ section at the start, and sets of questions in respect of each subject (or subject/qualification combination where both GCSE and AS/A level were being consulted on). The questions were about:

- proposed assessment arrangements (proposed percentage of examination-only assessment)
- tiering (GCSE only)
- AOs (content of)
- AOs (weighting of)

The issues surrounding these topics have been described in the previous section. Modern foreign languages (MFL) alone had an extra question, which was:

To what extent do you agree or disagree that all A levels 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?

All subject questions started with some closed questions. Respondents could choose a response on a scale from ‘strongly disagree’ to ‘strongly agree’ – such responses are also known as Likert items. Most Likert items were also complemented by open questions (also known as ‘constructed response items’), which were worded as: ‘Please give reasons for your answer’.

The questionnaire was available in two modes: there was an online version hosted in the Survey Gizmo online platform (this was the main version) and potential respondents were also given the option of filling in a version of the questionnaire in a Microsoft Word document, and then emailing it back to Ofqual.

As well as responding to the questionnaire, respondents were encouraged to send in their views by letter, email and similar less-constrained communications methods.

As with any public consultation, responses were received from a self-selecting range of participants, which introduces the potential for selection bias. Accordingly, there can be no assumption that the stakeholders who have responded to the consultation are fully representative of the wider stakeholder population.

3.2 Data analysis

Data were analysed and findings are reported in this document by subject (or subject–qualification combination). The intention was that quantitative and qualitative analysis would be deployed in a complementary manner; quantitative (numerical) analysis gave a headline view of overall agreement rates across the group of respondents; qualitative analysis gave richness and depth to the quantitative findings. While quantitative output aimed to give a clear summary of what people thought (extent of agreement, typically), qualitative analysis sought to explain why they took the views that they did. In both types of analysis, we sought to be factual and summative (condensing large amounts of data to comprehensible messages). We were largely not evaluative; we offer no recommendations, and – unless a comment was based on an unarguable misunderstanding of fact – we did not comment on the logicity or otherwise of suggestions.

In quantitative analysis, the emphasis was on producing clear summaries of stakeholder opinion, by producing figures and tables that were as clear as possible. Tables and figures are typically followed by brief summarising comments.

We adopted the stacked bar chart approach to data visualisation (see, for instance, Figure 5). The rationale for this approach is given here: <http://tinyurl.com/kv5akzz>. In essence, the strength of this method is that it allows the viewer to compare agreement and disagreement directly, without any ‘interference’ from neutral (‘neither agree nor disagree’) responses. In Table 32, we compared agreement across subjects with one particular type of question. There are also short versions of Table 32 for two subjects⁸, where it is informative to contrast the levels of disagreement between GCSEs and AS/A levels.

⁸ Table 13 contrasting levels of disagreement on the three dance qualifications, and Table 30 contrasting the same for the three PE qualifications.

All three of these tables includes the number of ‘neither agree nor disagree’ responses in counts. This is in contrast to the stacked bar charts, which do not.

4 Data returned to consultation

4.1 Counts of numbers of responses of different types

As noted in section 3.1 the consultation used several methods to gather data. The numbers of responses gathered through these different methods are given in Table 3.

Table 3: Numbers of responses submitted to the consultation via different channels

Consultation instrument	Mode of sending	Number	Totals
Online questionnaire	Online	478	527
	By email (two with accompanying letter)	49	
Non-standard format	Part of a campaign (individual letters) – GCSE music	368	440
	Not part of a campaign – individual letters	53	
	Organisation responses – letters	17	
Total			967

Where a response was sent electronically, we checked for a duplicate or a second response from the respondent in the online questionnaire data. The campaign letters (identical letters in response to the GCSE music part of the consultation) were all from individuals, so have been treated as separate responses. One person sent in a letter for each of the two campaigns, so any duplication in the responses was only counted once. Eleven of the individual letters (personal responses) for music referred to content only, so no further reference is made to their responses.

4.2 Responses to ‘your details’ questions

The questionnaire started with several questions about respondents’ backgrounds, rather than their views on the topics of the consultation. A summary of such responses is given in sub-section 4.2.1.

4.2.1 Treat my response as confidential

A clear majority of respondents (somewhat more than a 3:2 ratio) did not wish us to treat their responses as confidential. A list of participants not wishing their response to be treated as confidential is included as an Appendix (see section 6.1, at pp. 105ff).

4.2.2 Proportion of official and personal responses

The questionnaire asked ‘Are the views expressed in response to this consultation your personal views or an official response from the organisation you represent?’ The numbers of responses to this question are given in Figure 1.

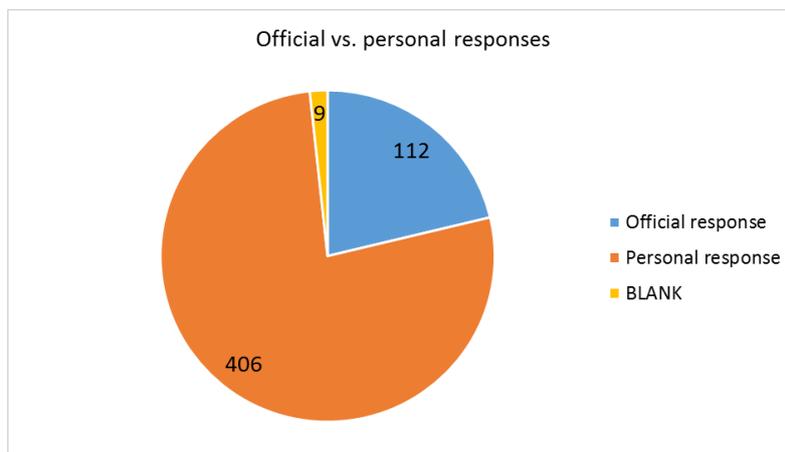


Figure 1: Numbers of official and personal responses

The clear majority (by just under a 4:1 ratio) of responses were submitted in a personal, rather than an official, capacity.

We can break down both the personal and the official responses into constituent categories. The personal responses are broken down in Figure 2.

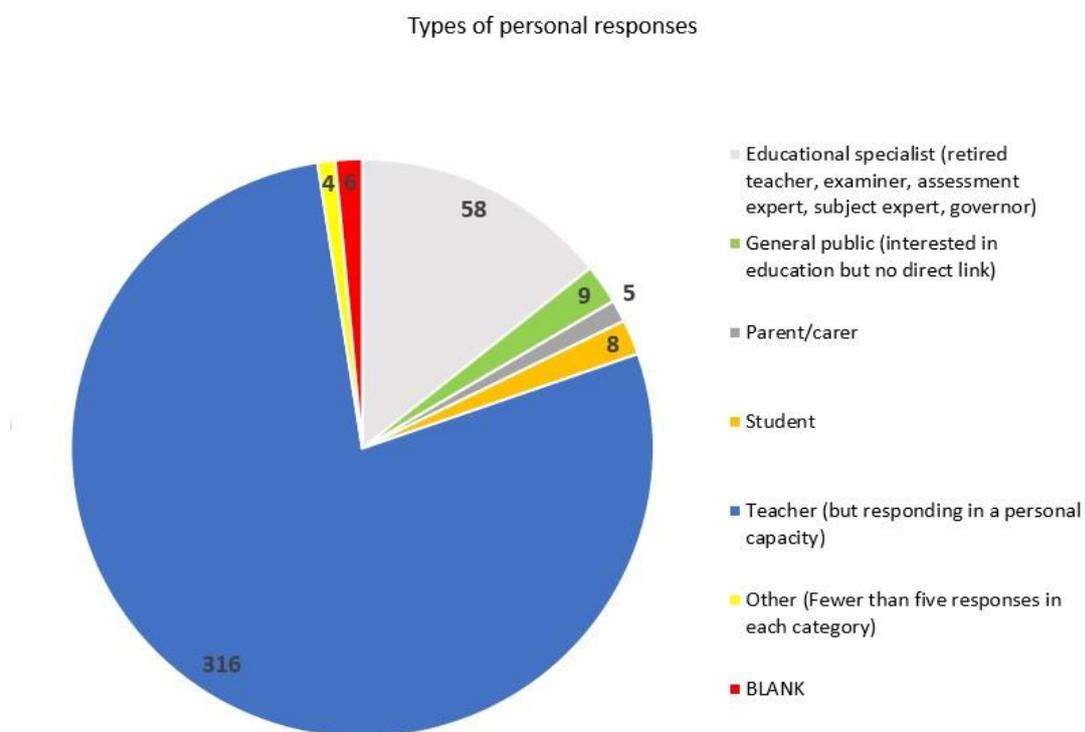


Figure 2: Types of personal response to the questionnaire

Most personal responses came from teachers in a personal capacity (316, about three out of every five); just under 60 respondents were grouped under the ‘educational specialist’ category. All the

other types of personal response categories had small numbers of persons endorsing them – fewer than 10 in every case.

The breakdown of official responses is summarised in Figure 3.

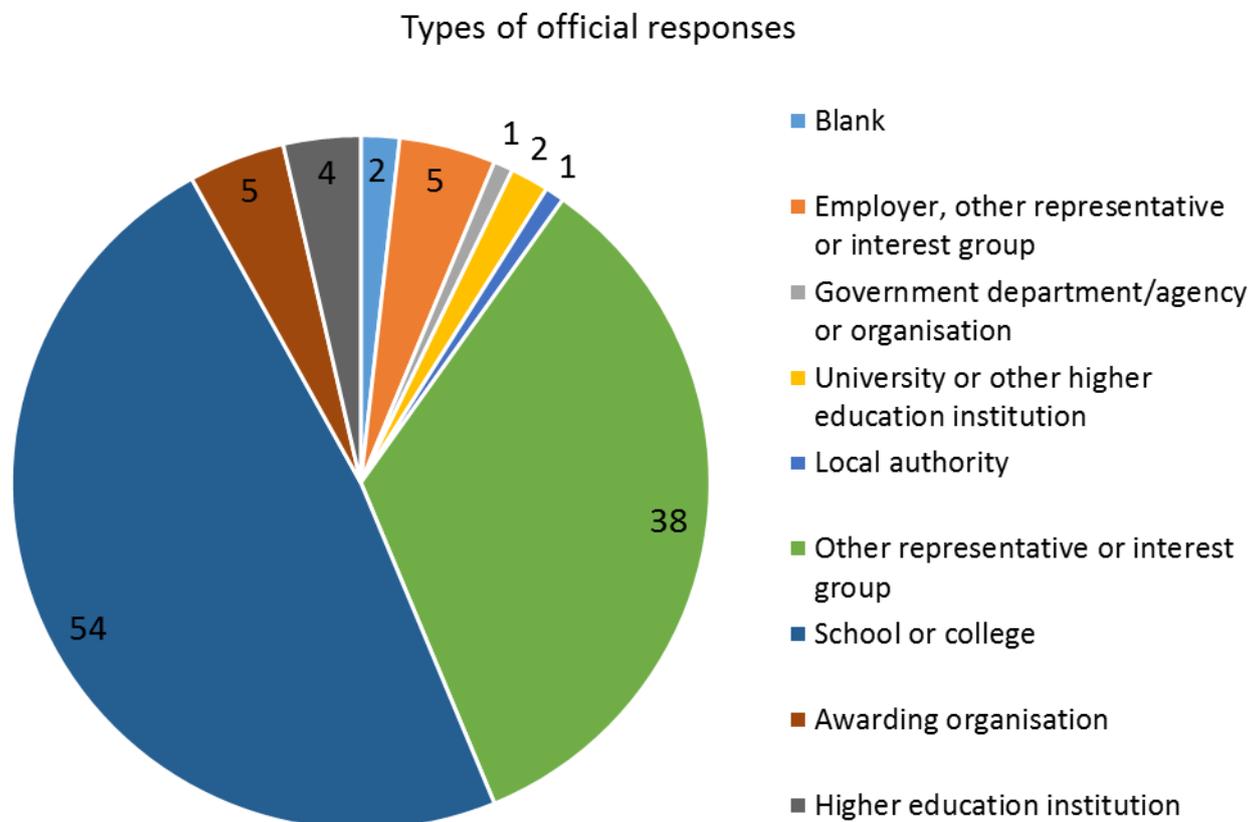


Figure 3: Types of official response to the questionnaire

In the personal category, the majority of respondents were teachers; the biggest group of official responses came from schools or colleges (48 per cent).

4.3 Numbers of responses to various subjects

A notable feature of this consultation was that most people did not respond to every item in the questionnaire; people tended to respond only to questions about the subjects they were interested in.

Figure 4 counts the numbers of responses to ‘closed’ (‘strongly disagree ... strongly agree’: Likert) items. There is a minimum and a maximum number for each subject because each subject had several questions and, even within the groups of subject questions, people often missed one or two out.

The biggest groups of responses were for dance (GCSE – maximum 212 responses to a question, and AS/A level – maximum 188), followed by GCSE PE (maximum 144). Ancient languages also had a fairly large number of responses, but some caution must be exercised here: it appears that a substantial proportion of the ancient languages responses actually came from people interested in other subjects, who were ‘clicking through’ the questionnaire on screen.

The stacked bar charts in the findings section for each subject in Figure 4 show the numbers of people who expressed definite opinions (either agreeing or disagreeing), and we have surmised that counting only definite responses in this way will exclude those who might have been 'clicking through to their own subject'.

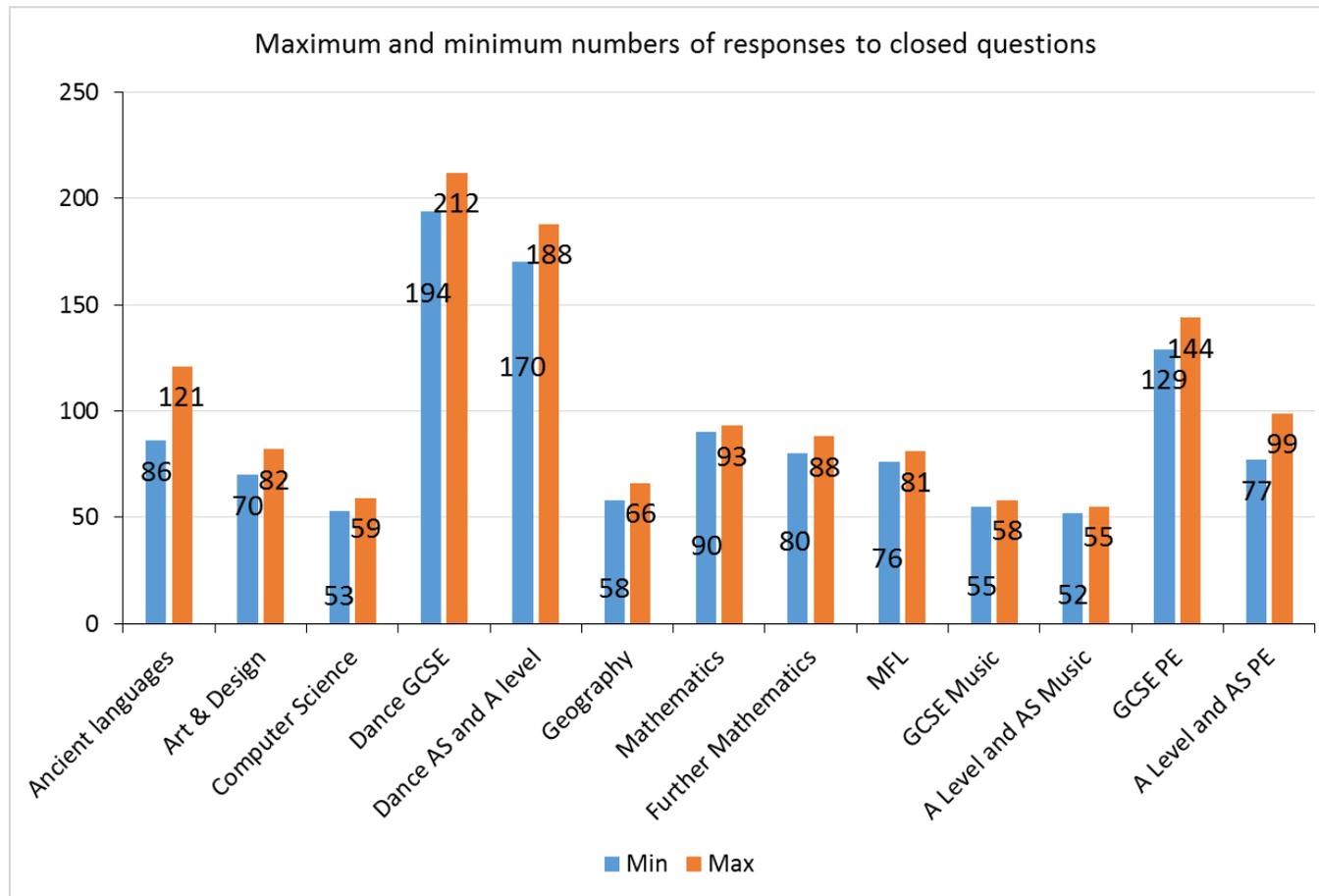


Figure 4: Maximum and minimum numbers of responses to each 'closed' question

5 Consultation findings

Consultation findings are organised by subject (and qualification type where relevant), with quantitative findings reported first, followed by qualitative analysis outputs. At the end of this findings section (p. 100), we also include a table which captures relative agreement with closed questions across subjects.

5.1 Ancient languages

5.1.1 Quantitative responses

Ancient languages AS and A levels had five Likert (closed, 'strongly disagree ... strongly agree') items. The numbers of responses to each category are shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Levels of agreement with closed questions on ancient languages AS and A levels

Question number	Question	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Total number of responses
Q1	To what extent do you agree or disagree that AS qualifications in ancient languages should be assessed entirely by exams?	6	26	58	20	11	121
Q2	To what extent do you agree or disagree that A levels in ancient languages should be assessed entirely by exams?	5	21	52	21	10	109
Q3	To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate for A levels and AS qualifications in ancient languages?	1	7	60	23	2	93
Q4	To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for AS qualifications in ancient languages?	1	8	60	18	2	89
Q5	To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for A levels in ancient languages?	1	10	57	16	2	86

A different take on the strength of opinion about ancient languages is expressed in Figure 5, which shows only definite agreement or disagreement (it excludes ‘neither agree nor disagree’ responses). Stronger opinion is expressed in darker colour. The percentage of all those responding definitely to a question is shown along the bottom (x-) axis.

Ancient languages

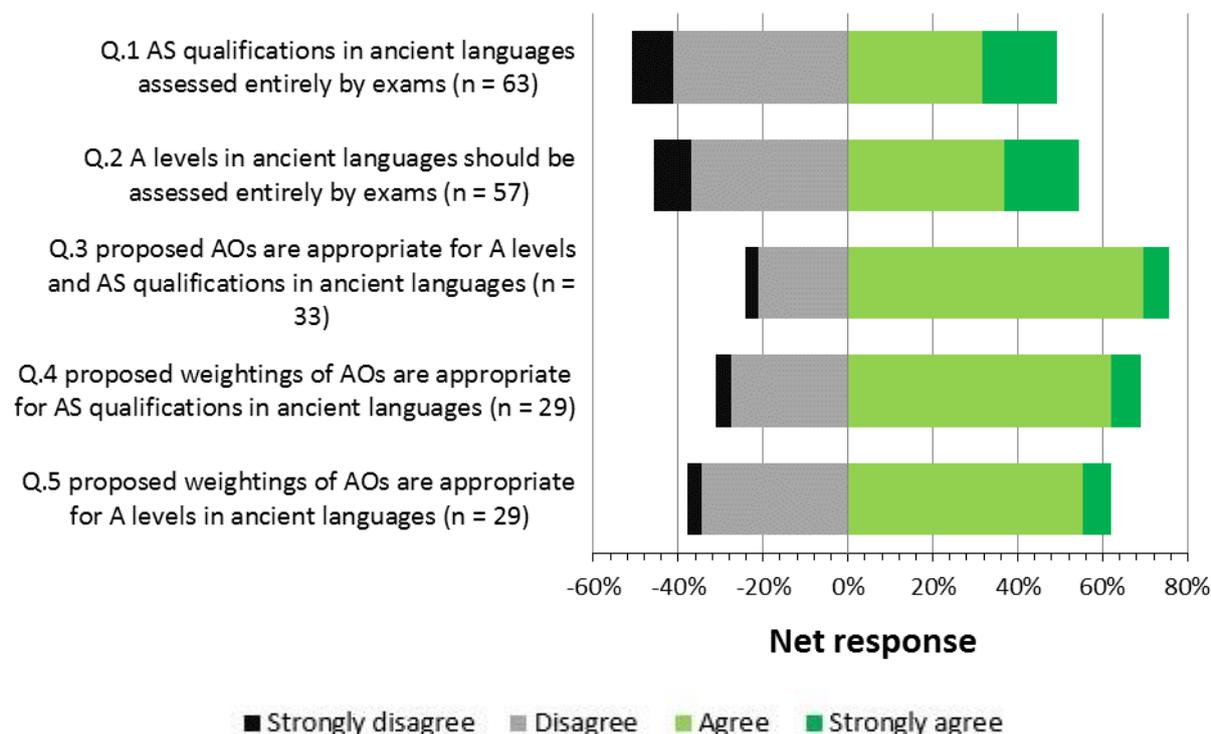


Figure 5: Stacked bar chart for ancient languages A level and AS qualifications

The stacked bar chart suggests that the new ancient languages qualifications proposals have quite high levels of agreement among those stakeholders who responded to closed questions. There was most disagreement about the proposals to assess these subjects entirely by examinations; this was true for both AS qualifications and A levels. There was more support for assessment objectives (AOs) for these qualifications, and for AOs’ weightings (although there was a fair amount of disagreement with the weighting of A level AOs).

5.1.2 Qualitative responses

Table 5: Ancient languages AS and A level: summary of the number of comments made, by level of agreement with the proposals

Question number	Type of response	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree		Strongly agree	Total number of responses
				Agree	Disagree		
Q1	Official	2	0	0	3	2	7
	Personal	1	17	2	8	6	34
Q2	Official	2	0	0	3	2	7
	Personal	2	12	1	5	5	25
Q3	Official	0	1	0	3	0	4
	Personal	0	2	2	7	2	13
Q4	Official	0	0	1	1	1	3
	Personal	0	2	0	5	1	8
Q5	Official	0	1	0	3	1	5
	Personal	0	2	0	5	1	8

Q1: To what extent do you agree or disagree that AS qualifications in ancient languages should be assessed entirely by exams?

Forty-one respondents provided further free-text responses to this question. Respondents who commented on this topic were mostly teachers, and most were representing personal rather than official views. Of the seven official responses, six were on behalf of schools and one on behalf of an awarding organisation.

SUMMARY POINTS

- Comments were equally split between reasons for agreeing with and reasons for objecting to the proposal to assess AS ancient languages entirely by exams.
- Reasons for agreeing with the proposals were mixed: seven respondents said that the system of examinations worked well for this subject, four commented that this was a fairer means of assessment than coursework, and two respondents said it was better in terms of teachers' workload.
- Sixteen people objected to the use of examinations only for assessing this subject and suggested that a coursework element was required to help students develop independent study and research skills and to broaden their knowledge.

KEY POINTS ACCORDING TO LEVEL OF AGREEMENT WITH THE PROPOSAL

- Nineteen respondents who indicated in their tick box responses that they agreed or strongly agreed with the proposal made a comment; five of these represented official views. Six respondents stated that an exam only assessment was the most appropriate method for this subject, and five said that it was a fairer method of assessment.
- Two respondents indicated that they neither agreed nor disagreed with the proposal and made a comment, but in their comments one expressed their objections to the proposal and one described why they agreed with it.
- Twenty respondents who had indicated that they disagreed or strongly disagreed with the proposal made a comment. Sixteen of these objected on the basis that they thought a coursework element should be included for a range of reasons, including the view that not all

students performed well in exams and that coursework provided good preparation for studying at higher education level.

- While six people who commented acknowledged that these were not spoken languages, five respondents felt there should be assessment of speaking and listening, though some of these acknowledged in their comments that they were not specialists in the subject.⁹

Q2: To what extent do you agree or disagree that A levels in ancient languages should be assessed entirely by exams?

Thirty-two respondents provided further free-text responses to this question. Respondents who commented on this topic were mostly teachers. The majority who commented were representing personal rather than organisational views, and the seven official responses were from five schools, one awarding organisation and one representing a union.

SUMMARY POINTS

- Responses to this question reflected those comments made in response to the equivalent question about AS ancient languages. Once again, comments were split almost exactly between those who expressed agreement with and those who expressed objections to the proposal.
- Reasons for agreeing with the proposals focused on the perception that exam only assessments were appropriate for the subject, the fairness of an exam only system and the benefits in terms of teachers' workload.
- Twelve of the 16 comments expressing objections to the proposal were on the basis that the subject lent itself to a coursework element.

KEY POINTS ACCORDING TO LEVEL OF AGREEMENT WITH THE PROPOSAL

- Fifteen respondents who indicated in their tick box responses that they agreed or strongly agreed with the proposal made a comment; this included five official views. The main reasons given for agreeing were that an exam only assessment was the most appropriate method for this subject (five respondents mentioned this) and that it was a fairer method of assessment (mentioned by four people).
- Once again opinion was split on whether a speaking and listening element was needed: four respondents who agreed with the proposal commented that this was not needed while five said it was – again, many of those who said this was needed acknowledged that they were not subject specialists.
- Fifteen respondents who disagreed or strongly disagreed with the proposal and one who stated that they neither agreed nor disagreed commented on why they objected to the use of examinations only for assessing this subject. Twelve people objected because they felt a coursework element was required to help students develop independent study and research skills and to broaden their knowledge.

Q3: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate for A levels and AS qualifications in ancient languages?

Seventeen respondents provided further free-text responses to this question. Respondents who commented on this topic were mostly teachers. The five responses that represented official

⁹ See section 4.3 where respondents' positions are described, here it is noted that generally respondents only answered with respect to subjects they have some specialism or expertise in but there were a small number who answered with respect to other subjects.

responses were from two schools or colleges, two other representative or interest groups and one awarding organisation.

SUMMARY POINTS

- Opinions of the proposed assessment objectives were generally positive (12 of the 18 comments were in agreement with the proposed AOs) with comments praising the well-balanced nature and the perception that the level was appropriate.
- Five respondents detailed their objections, which included concerns that the focus of the AOs was too narrow.

KEY POINTS ACCORDING TO LEVEL OF AGREEMENT WITH THE PROPOSAL

- Ten respondents who agreed and two who strongly agreed with the proposed AOs commented and, of these, seven described them as well balanced and appropriate, three agreed with the AOs but suggested that clearer definition of the individual objectives was needed.
- Three respondents who disagreed with the proposed AOs and two who said they neither agreed nor disagreed with the proposals described their objections (all represented personal views): two respondents expressed the concern that this would encourage a narrow teaching focus on the AOs rather than providing a rounded education in the subject, one complained that the language/literature division was too limiting, while another respondent commented that there was a lack of emphasis on translation from Latin to English. A fourth area of objection related to the reliance solely on written exams.

Q4: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for AS qualifications in ancient languages?

Eleven respondents provided free-text responses to this question. Respondents who commented on this topic were mostly teachers. Most were representing personal rather than organisational views, although there were two official responses, one from an awarding organisation and one from a union.

SUMMARY POINTS

- Seven of the 11 comments were expressing agreement with the proposed weightings (and this included a response from an awarding organisation), while four comments described respondents' objections.

KEY POINTS ACCORDING TO LEVEL OF AGREEMENT WITH THE PROPOSAL

- Five of the seven respondents who agreed or strongly agreed with the proposed weightings and made positive comments stated that the weightings were appropriate and well balanced, one person agreed with the weightings but suggested greater clarity was needed in 'level descriptors'.
- Four respondents described objections to the proposed weightings: three people expressed the view that rather than providing a weighting range (e.g. 45–55 per cent) a single point should be specified (e.g. 50 per cent) although, by contrast, another respondent suggested greater flexibility was required in the weighting specifications.

Q5: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for A levels in ancient languages?

Fourteen respondents provided further free-text responses to this question (it should be noted that this is higher than the number quoted in the table because some respondents made a comment but had not answered the corresponding tick-box question). Eight responses represented personal and six official views.

SUMMARY POINTS

- Comments were equally split with six describing objections to and six describing agreement with the proposed weightings.
- Four respondents agreed that the weightings were appropriate and well balanced.
- Similar objections were raised with the A level weightings as with AS, i.e. single point weights and, contrastingly, greater flexibility in weights.

KEY POINTS ACCORDING TO LEVEL OF AGREEMENT WITH THE PROPOSAL

- Although ten respondents indicated in their tick box responses that they agreed or strongly agreed with the proposed weightings, only six of these used the comments box to describe why they agreed. Their reasons were that the weightings were well balanced and appropriate (four respondents said this) and two respondents commented that the narrow weighting ranges allowed for differentiation between AS and A level (this included a response from an awarding body).
- Six respondents described objections to the proposed weightings: two suggested that single point weighting was needed rather than ranges, two respondents commented that insufficient weighting was applied to 'evaluation' and too much to 'knowledge and understanding', one said greater flexibility in the weightings was needed and a further respondent suggested greater emphasis should be placed on translation.

Q6: Further comments

Eight respondents commented. The six official responses comprised comments from two unions, two schools or colleges, one subject association or learned society and an awarding organisation.

SUMMARY POINTS

- The 'further comments' tended to reiterate issues raised in response to previous consultation questions on the AS and A level ancient languages proposals, including comments on the use of exams as the sole assessment method, views on 'speaking and listening' (from non-subject specialists who were perhaps unaware that these are not spoken languages) and requests for greater clarity on specific aspects of the new qualifications (e.g. mark schemes and which languages can be included).

No non-standard format responses were received for ancient languages.

5.2 Art and design

5.2.1 Quantitative responses

There were four closed questions on art and design GCSE. A full summary of these responses is given in Table 6.

Table 6: Levels of agreement with closed questions on art and design GCSE

Question number	Question	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Total number of responses
Q7	To what extent do you agree or disagree that GCSEs in art and design should be assessed entirely by non-exam assessment?	4	11	30	17	20	82
Q8	To what extent do you agree or disagree that GCSEs in art and design should not be tiered?	3	2	34	15	22	76
Q9	To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate for GCSEs in art and design?	6	6	39	15	5	71
Q10	To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for GCSEs in art and design?	1	7	44	9	9	70

In addition, the strength of agreement and disagreement (excluding neutral opinion) to the art and design part of the consultation is given in Figure 6.

Art and design

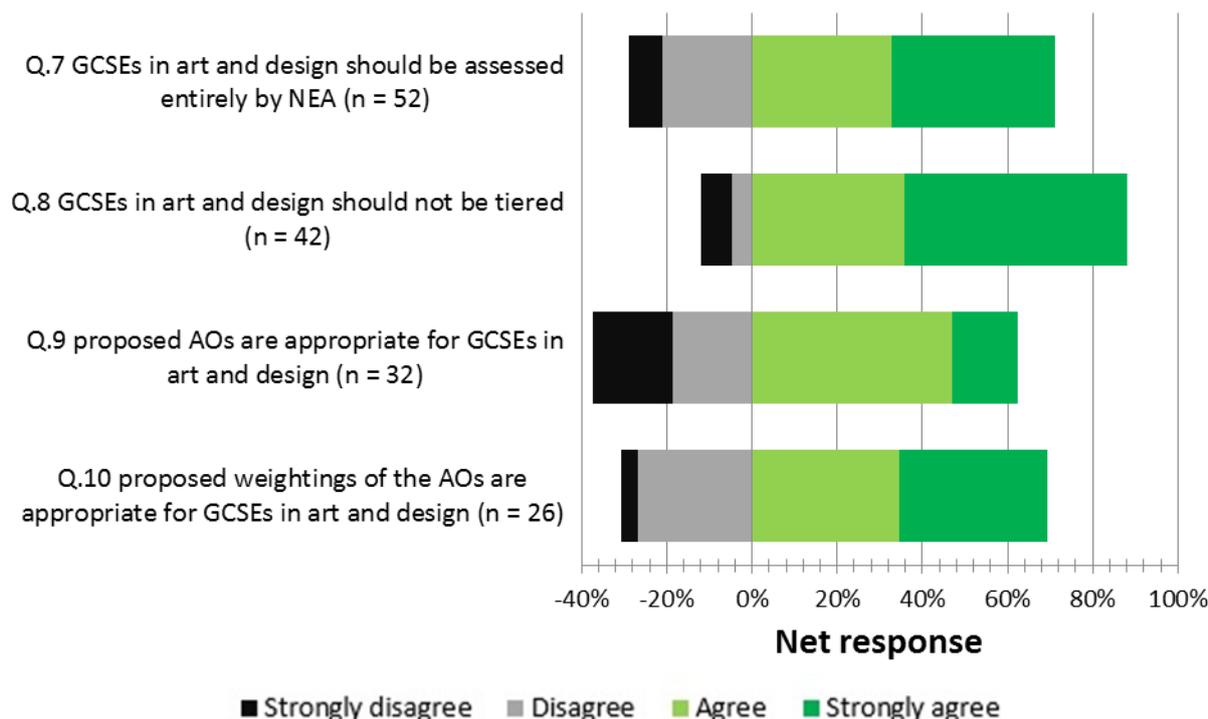


Figure 6: Stacked bar chart for art and design GCSE

It would appear from the above data presentations that proposals for art and design GCSE had moderate to high levels of agreement based on a moderately sized data set.

5.2.2 Qualitative responses

Table 7: GCSE art and design: summary of the number of comments made, by level of agreement with the proposals

Question number	Type of response	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Total number of responses
Q7	Official	0	0	2	6	4	12
	Personal	3	8	1	4	11	27
Q8	Official	1	0	0	2	8	11
	Personal	2	1	1	3	9	16
Q9	Official	5	2	1	3	1	12
	Personal	0	3	0	10	2	15
Q10	Official	0	5	1	3	2	11
	Personal	0	2	2	2	4	10

Q7: To what extent do you agree or disagree that GCSEs in art and design should be assessed entirely by non-exam assessment?

Thirty-nine respondents provided further free-text responses to this question. Most represented personal views but there were 12 official responses on behalf of organisations; of these four were other representative or interest groups, three were awarding organisations, three were schools or colleges, one was a union and one was a university.

SUMMARY POINTS

- Most of those who commented (26 of the 39 who commented) agreed that art and design should be assessed entirely by NEA and in their comments many expressed the view that this was more appropriate for the subject matter; two awarding organisations are represented among those who expressed this view.
- Among the objections were concerns about the effect of having no exams on people's perceptions of the subject (one person specified that this could 'devalue' the subject in comparison to others) and in terms of the possibilities for cheating.
- Three similarly worded official responses were received stating that an appropriate advice and consultation period was needed to help provide clear guidance on how to assess portfolios (one of these responses represented an awarding body).

KEY POINTS ACCORDING TO LEVEL OF AGREEMENT WITH THE PROPOSAL

- Among the 15 respondents who strongly agreed with the proposal and who made a comment, all but one response stated that the use of entirely NEA was more appropriate for the subject. The remaining one respondent (representing an official response) was in favour of NEA but only if clearer guidance was provided on assessing portfolios.
- Similarly, among the ten respondents who agreed with the proposal, eight of the written comments expressed the view that NEA was more appropriate for the subject matter, one response called for better exemplification and guidance on what counted as evidence and another stated that using entirely NEA eased the pressure on students.
- Three respondents indicated in their tick box responses that they neither agreed nor disagreed with this proposal and two of these (representing official responses) stated that the reason for this 'undecided' position was that they were keen to ensure that appropriate advice was taken and clear guidance given on how to assess portfolios. The remaining 'neither agree nor disagree' response with a comment was a personal view expressing concerns that the use of entirely NEA methods might 'devalue' the subject and suggesting that a compromise position might be to have a set time period (e.g. ten hours) in which students must complete a final piece of work. Eight respondents who disagreed, and the three who strongly disagreed, with this proposal all represented personal views and most of these indicated in their comments that they had an in-principle objection to the use of entirely NEAs. In the more specific reasons for objecting, one respondent felt that the system was open to cheating, one stated that all subjects should be assessed using the same methods and one person suggested that an exam could be introduced focusing on theory and background.

Q8: To what extent do you agree or disagree that GCSEs in art and design should not be tiered?

Twenty-seven respondents provided further free-text responses to this question. Of these, 11 represented official responses while the remaining 16 were personal views. Among the official responses the views of three awarding organisations, one university, one union, one school or college and five other interest groups were represented.

SUMMARY POINTS

- Most of those who commented (22 of the 27 who made a comment) agreed that art and design should not be tiered, because all candidates should have the same opportunities to achieve high

grades (one organisational response and five personal responses mentioned this) and because, unlike some other subjects, art and design did not need to differentiate between candidates in this way.

- Just three people gave a reason for implementing tiers in this subject, and two of those (one representing a personal view and one representing an organisational view from a professional teaching association) said teachers should have the ability to use tiering to differentiate between candidates.
- Two respondents commented that they were unclear about what was meant by tiering in the context of this non-exam assessed qualification.
- Three awarding organisations were represented in the comments: all three agreed that differentiation in this subject was by outcome rather than task.

KEY POINTS ACCORDING TO LEVEL OF AGREEMENT WITH THE PROPOSAL

- Among the 17 respondents (of which eight represented official and nine personal views) who strongly agreed with the proposal and who made a comment, there was a general consensus that in this subject differentiation was by outcome and tiering was therefore not necessary. There were also four comments suggesting that retaining an untiered structure would allow all candidates to have the opportunity to achieve the highest grades.
- Five respondents agreed with the proposal for the same reasons stated by those who strongly agreed, and of these two were official and three were personal responses.
- The one person who said they neither agreed nor disagreed with the proposal explained in their comments that they did not fully understand what was 'tiering' meant in this context.
- One respondent (representing a personal view) disagreed with the proposal that art and design should not be tiered because of the inherent difficulties in measuring artistic skill.
- Three respondents strongly disagreed with this proposal (one such respondent was from a professional teaching association) and explained that they felt teachers should be allowed to differentiate between candidates, to allow more able students to achieve their full potential, for example.

Q9: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate for GCSEs in art and design?

Twenty-eight respondents provided further free-text responses to this question (it should be noted that this is higher than the number quoted in the table, because some respondents made a comment but had not answered the corresponding tick-box question). Of these, 12 were official responses (four of these represented the views of awarding organisations) and the remaining 16 were personal views.

KEY POINTS

- Many comments were of a positive nature and 14 of the 28 who commented agreed with the proposed assessment objectives and commented on the similarity with the current AOs (and said that this was a good thing since it maintained some consistency and allowed for building on good practice). There was praise for the range of skills to be assessed under the proposed AOs.
- Just three respondents commented on their reasons for objecting to the proposed AOs (all represented personal views); one of these referred to an apparent lack of emphasis on providing evidence of knowledge, one suggested that there should be an exam and one made a general objection to the alleged 'narrow' focus on assessment objectives.
- There were several suggestions that changes should be made to the individual AOs – in particular, six respondents commented that the wording of AO3 'make and record ideas' did not

make sense and AO4 was criticised by some because the phrase ‘demonstrates critical’ overlapped with AO1. All four awarding bodies that responded to this question suggested changes to either or both of AO3 and AO4.

- Four respondents endorsed the adoption of recommendations put forward by the National Society for Education in Art and Design (NSEAD), including NSEAD themselves, and these included the creation of more specific, clearly defined and rigorous AOs that addressed the different specialisms in art and design (e.g. craft, textiles, etc.).

KEY POINTS ACCORDING TO LEVEL OF AGREEMENT WITH THE PROPOSAL

- Among the three respondents (of which one represented an official and two personal views) who strongly agreed and the 13 (three official and 10 personal views) who agreed with the proposed AOs, the most frequently given reasons were that they allowed for a good range of skills to be assessed and they retained a great deal of consistency with the current AOs.
- One respondent representing an official view indicated that they neither agreed nor disagreed with the proposed AOs because the new AOs were seen to be clear and easy to understand for both teachers and learners but that more specific objectives were required for the different strands of art and design.
- Five respondents disagreed with the proposed AOs (three representing personal and two official views) and a further five strongly disagreed (all representing official views). The reasons given for objecting to the proposals were at both a general and specific level: the general complaints included an alleged lack of emphasis on providing evidence of knowledge and the concern that the AOs had too narrow an emphasis and might not provide a more holistic coverage of the subject. The specific complaints focused on individual AOs (all four awarding body representatives who commented suggested changes to the individual AOs), in particular AO3 (criticised because the wording did not make sense) and AO4 (for which two respondents suggested replacing the phrase ‘demonstrates critical’ with something like ‘applies’ to avoid overlap with AO1).

Q10: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for GCSEs in art and design?

Twenty-one respondents provided further free-text responses to this question. Of these, 11 represented official responses (among these, two were from awarding organisations, two from schools or colleges, one from a university and six from other interest groups).

SUMMARY POINTS

- Most respondents who made a comment agreed with the proposed weightings, and five comments suggested that these were appropriate for the subject, with a further six (including two awarding organisations) praising the equal weighting across the four AOs.
- The main cause for objections came from the ‘other interest groups’ who expressed the view that the different subjects within art and design needed separate content, assessment objectives, weightings, etc. to account for the differences across the subjects.
- Three other comments were made on the reasons for objecting to the proposed weightings; these related to the lack of an exam, a perceived lack or recognition of creativity in the AOs (this comment represented an official view) and the suggestion that greater weighting should be applied to practical aspects of the subject.

KEY POINTS ACCORDING TO LEVEL OF AGREEMENT WITH THE PROPOSAL

- Six respondents (of which two represented an official view and four personal views) strongly agreed and five (three official and two personal views) agreed with the proposed weightings of

the AOs. The most frequently given reasons for this were that the equal weightings allowed for a well-rounded qualification and that the weightings were appropriate for the subject.

- While three respondents indicated in their tick box responses that they neither agreed nor disagreed with the proposed weightings, one of these used the comments box to state that they were satisfied with the proposed weightings, another (representing an official view) said that the fixed weightings was a good thing but that the individual specialisms (e.g. textiles, graphic communication, etc.) within art and design might need their own specifications, and the third stated that the weightings were the same as the existing weightings.
- Seven respondents (five representing official and two personal views) disagreed with the proposed weightings. Most of the official responses stated that the individual specialisms in art and design needed their own specifications, while the two personal views objected to an apparent lack of focus on creativity in one instance and a complaint about the absence of an examinable component in the other.

Q11: Further comments

Seventeen respondents made further comments. Seven of these were official responses (one from a union, one from a school or college and five from other representative or interest groups).

SUMMARY POINTS

- A wide range of different topics were mentioned in respondents' further comments on the GCSE art and design proposals. While most were mentioned by one respondent each, concerns about moderation were mentioned by four respondents. On the topic of moderation, the comments included complaints about perceived unfairness in the moderation process and a lack of detailed feedback where moderation led to substantial changes to the marks awarded. The three responses requesting that attention should be paid to the different specialisms in art and design (for example, graphic communication, textiles, craft, etc.) were all official responses from representative or interest groups.

No non-standard format responses were received for art and design.

5.3 Computer science

5.3.1 Quantitative responses

There were four Likert items on computer science GCSE. A summary of these responses is given in Table 8.

Table 8: Levels of agreement with closed questions on computer science GCSE

Question number	Question	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Total number of responses
Q12	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?	8	7	27	12	5	59
Q13	To what extent do you agree or disagree that GCSEs in computer science should not be tiered?	3	3	29	9	12	56
Q14	To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate for GCSEs in computer science?	1	2	30	17	4	54
Q15	To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for GCSEs in computer science?	0	3	34	13	3	53

In addition, the strength of agreement and disagreement (excluding neutral opinion) with the computer science part of the consultation is given in Figure 7.

Computer science

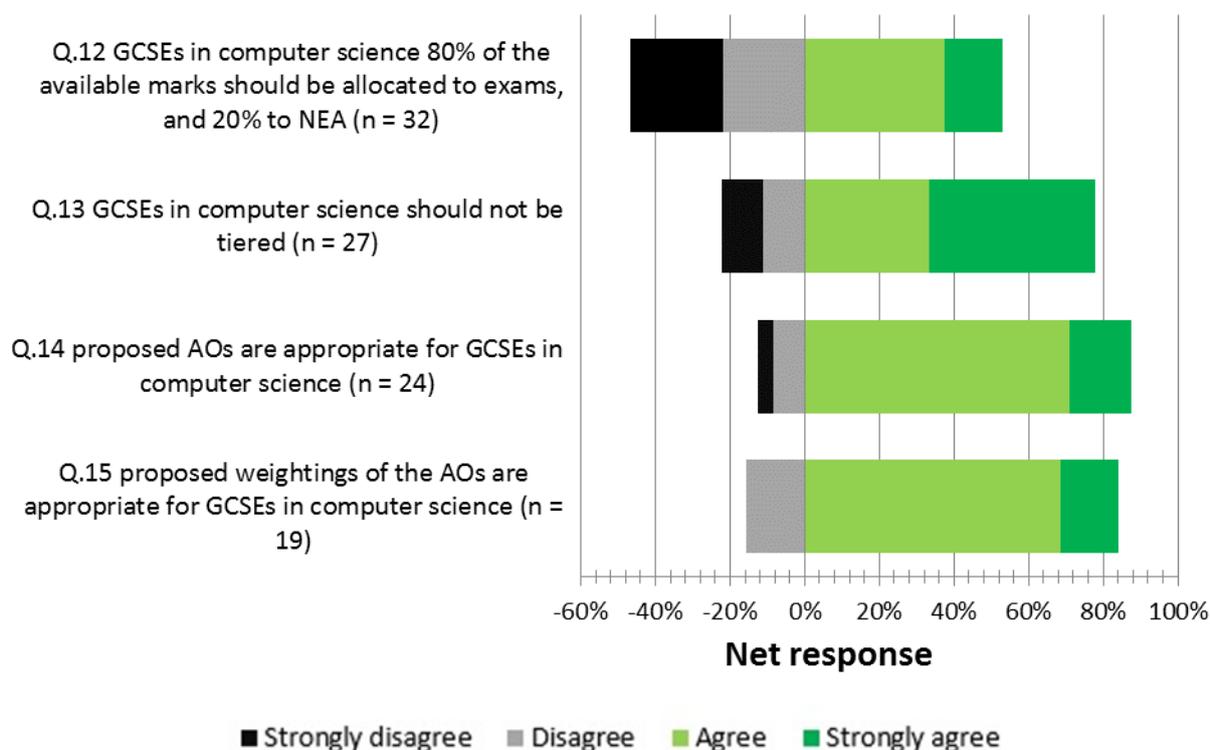


Figure 7: Stacked bar chart for computer science GCSE

Levels of agreement with the proposals appear to be strong, on the basis of the data in Table 8 and Figure 7. The one area with substantial disagreement (around a 50 : 50 divide) is in the split of marks – 80 per cent examination/20 per cent NEA. The data set on the closed questions for this subject is not particularly large.

5.3.2 Qualitative responses

Table 9: GCSE computer science: summary of the number of comments made, by level of agreement with the proposals

Question number	Type of response	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Total number of responses
Q12	Official	2	1	0	4	0	7
	Personal	5	5	2	4	3	19
Q13	Official	1	1	0	2	2	6
	Personal	2	2	1	1	8	14
Q14	Official	0	0	0	3	1	4
	Personal	1	2	0	2	2	7
Q15	Official	0	0	1	2	1	4
	Personal	0	1	1	1	2	5

Q12: 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?

Twenty-six respondents provided further free-text responses to this question. Of these, seven represented official responses (three from awarding organisations, two from schools and colleges and two from other representative or interest groups). Among the personal views, most were from teachers.

SUMMARY POINTS

- Half of those who commented (13 respondents) agreed with the proposal and the most frequently cited reason for this was that the proposed assessment methods were considered appropriate for the subject matter – these comments included three official views from awarding organisations.
- While three people commented that the practical assessment should cover just programming, one person said this would work best if the NEA covered the computer itself rather than just software.
- Nine of the 12 respondents who commented on why they objected to the proposed assessment methods indicated that they favoured a higher percentage of NEA, although one respondent argued for 100 per cent exams in this subject.

KEY POINTS ACCORDING TO LEVEL OF AGREEMENT WITH THE PROPOSAL

- Three respondents strongly agreed with the proposal (all represented personal views); two of these specified that the practical element should focus on programming, while the third stated that this aspect should focus on the computer itself rather than software.
- Eight respondents (four official and four personal views) agreed with the proposed assessment methods. Six of these (including three awarding organisations) commented that the allocation was appropriate for the subject, one person said that any higher allocation to NEAs would cause logistical problems in schools and colleges and potentially issues over cheating, while a further respondent said that the allocation was an accurate reflection of ‘real world’ situations.
- Two people ticked the ‘neither agree nor disagree’ option and then went on to comment; one of these used their comment to state that they did in fact agree with the allocation but the other said they were undecided and had some concerns about comparability with other subjects in terms of how ‘valued’ the qualification was.
- In total 13 people who had ticked either ‘disagree’ or ‘strongly disagree’ for the tick-box question provided a comment (most were personal views); nine of these argued for a higher proportion of marks to be allocated to NEA (the main reason given for this was that the subject was highly skills based and practical and that a higher proportion NEA would be more appropriate); just one person commented that the subject should be assessed entirely by exams.

Q13: To what extent do you agree or disagree that GCSEs in computer science should not be tiered?

Twenty respondents provided further free-text responses to this question. Six of the responses represented official views (three awarding organisations and one each from a union, another interest group and a school/college). Respondents who commented in a personal capacity were mostly teachers.

SUMMARY POINTS

- Fifteen of the 20 comments on this topic gave reasons for agreeing with the proposal to retain an untiered structure for GCSE computer science (note that this includes one person who had

indicated in their tick box response that they disagreed with this proposal), and the reasons echoed those expressed by respondents commenting on other subjects: the view, for example, that all candidates should have the opportunity to achieve the highest grades and that there was no practical or theoretical need to differentiate between candidates through tiering.

- All three awarding organisations that commented said that they agreed with the qualifications being untiered.
- Four respondents who commented on the proposal to have no tiers explained why they objected. Three stated that it was appropriate to have a higher and lower tier for computer science, while another voiced concerns about teaching this subject, without the tiering, at a suitable level for the diverse range of candidates' abilities.

KEY POINTS ACCORDING TO LEVEL OF AGREEMENT WITH THE PROPOSAL

- Of the 13 respondents who agreed or strongly agreed with the proposal that GCSE computer science should not be tiered (three of whom were from awarding organisations), all but one commented on either the view that all students should have the opportunity to achieve the highest grades or the fact that there is no need to differentiate between candidates through a tiering system.
- The one respondent who indicated that they neither agreed nor disagreed with the absence of tiering stated that they did so out of a desire for consistency across all GCSE subjects, so this would be appropriate if it was applied to all subjects rather than just selectively.
- Three respondents who commented disagreed and three respondents strongly disagreed with the proposal not to have tiers, and their reasons for doing so tended to focus on the extent to which more-able students can be challenged at the same time as allowing less able students to show what they know and gain useful skills and knowledge from the qualification.

Q14: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate for GCSEs in computer science?

Eleven respondents provided further free-text responses to this question. Of these, four represented official responses (three from awarding organisations and one from another representative or interest group).

SUMMARY POINTS

- Eight comments confirmed respondents' agreement with the appropriateness of the proposed AOs; these included the three awarding organisations' responses.
- Just three comments expressed objections to the AOs.

KEY POINTS ACCORDING TO LEVEL OF AGREEMENT WITH THE PROPOSAL

- Three respondents who strongly agreed and five who agreed with the proposed AOs commented on the reasons for this. Their comments (including three from awarding organisations) generally described the AOs as being appropriate for the subject, though one awarding organisation expressed concerns about the accessibility of the language used.
- Two respondents who had disagreed and one who had strongly disagreed with the AOs made a comment (all represented personal views). One requested greater clarity in the AO definitions, one suggested that there was inadequate focus on practical problem solving through programming and a third expressed dissatisfaction with the weighting applied to the final exam rather than to the specific AOs.

Q15: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for GCSEs in computer science?

Nine respondents provided further free-text responses to this question. Of these, four represented official responses (three from awarding organisations and one from another representative or interest group).

SUMMARY POINTS

- Seven of the nine comments expressed agreement with the weighting of the AOs. The three awarding organisations that commented all agreed to some extent with the proposed AO weightings.
- Of the two comments on why the respondents disagreed with the weighting, one explained that this was really an objection to the AOs rather than the specifics of the proposed weightings, and another reiterated concerns expressed previously about the weighting applied to the final exam.

KEY POINTS ACCORDING TO LEVEL OF AGREEMENT WITH THE PROPOSAL

- Three respondents who agreed (one official and two personal views) and three respondents who strongly agreed (two official and one personal view) with the proposed weightings made a comment. One awarding body commented that the weightings (particularly for AO2) fitted well with what came before (KS2–KS3) and after GCSE (A levels) and that they ‘reflect a more rigorous approach to assessing analysis of computational problems and their solutions when compared to the previous weightings’. Other respondents who commented described how they felt the weightings were appropriate for the subject and one person welcomed the move from a weighting range to fixed weightings.
- Two respondents who had ticked ‘neither agree nor disagree’ when asked whether they agreed with the proposed weightings made a comment. One of these (representing a personal view) explained that they objected to the AOs themselves and therefore felt they could not easily comment on the suitability of the weightings. The other respondent (representing an official view from an awarding body) commented that, although they felt the weightings provided for a broad and balanced qualification, they had concerns over the fixed nature of the weightings: ‘we would recommend weighting within a small range to assist valid question paper construction over time, while ensuring sufficient comparability’.
- Just one person who said they disagreed with the proposed weightings provided a reason for this and they stated that they had concerns about the proportion of marks allocated to the final exam rather than the weightings applied to the specific AOs.

Q16: Further comments

Six respondents made a further comment on the GCSE computer science proposals. Two were official responses (one from an awarding organisation and one from a union); the remaining comments were personal views from teachers or educational specialists. Comments were:

- Apparent lack of progression in computer science from KS3 to GCSE to AS or A level.
- The wholesale change from ICT to computing will take several years to filter through to GCSE, and it was unclear whether revised GCSE specifications would be appropriate for initial cohorts of ‘ICT’ students.
- New AOs are fair and appropriate and the 20 per cent NEA would increase rigour while maintaining practical elements. (This comment was from an awarding organisation.)
- GCSE computer science should be 100% exam assessed
- Need to ensure adequate emphasis on programming (two respondents mentioned this).

Two non-standard format responses were received for computer science, reflecting responses to the online questionnaire.

5.4 Dance GCSE

5.4.1 Quantitative responses

There were four 'strongly disagree ... strongly agree' items on dance GCSE. A summary of these responses is given in Table 10.

Table 10: Levels of agreement with closed questions on dance GCSE

Question number	Question	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Total number of responses
Q17	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?	157	21	9	12	13	212
Q18	To what extent do you agree or disagree that GCSEs in dance should not be tiered?	12	13	44	48	82	199
Q19	To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate for GCSEs in dance?	18	26	34	53	63	194
Q20	To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for GCSEs in dance?	53	28	27	57	32	197

In addition, the strength of agreement and disagreement (excluding the central category) with the dance GCSE Likert items is given in Figure 8.

Dance GCSE

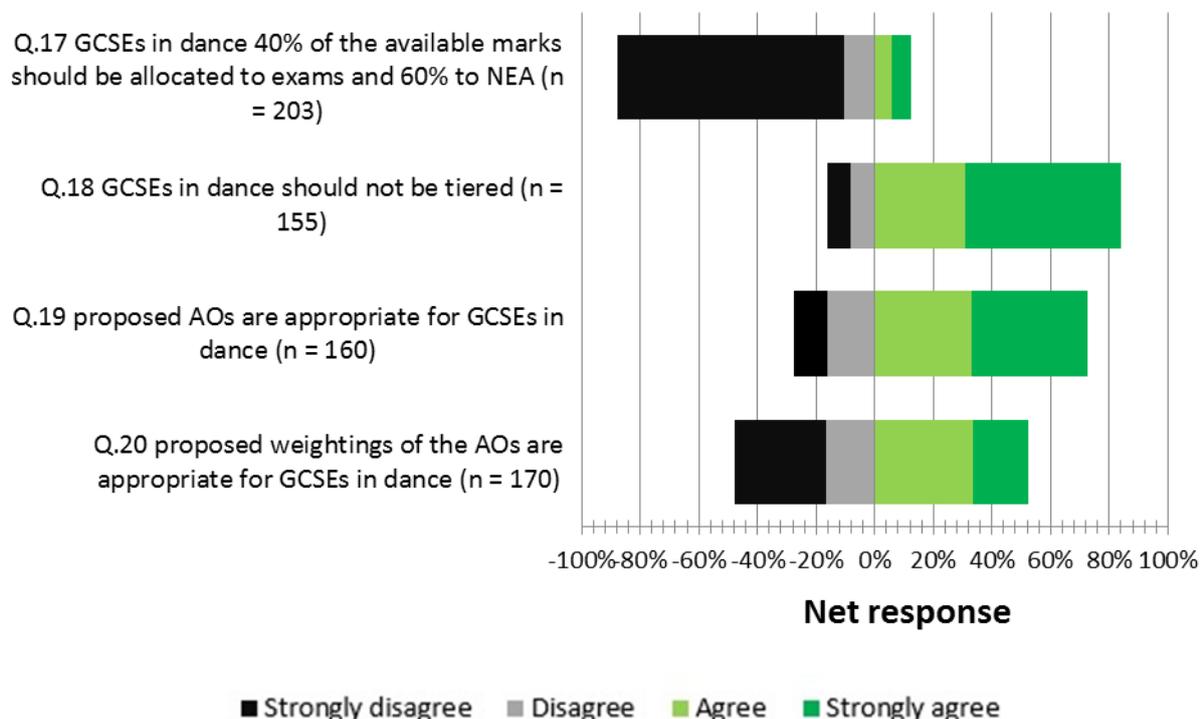


Figure 8: Stacked bar chart for dance GCSE

Dance GCSE had the biggest number of closed-question responses for any of the subjects or qualifications in the consultation. Relatively few of these were in the central, neutral category. The stacked bar chart in Figure 8 shows that there was very strong disagreement with the proposals to divide assessment 40:60 between examinations and NEA. There is fairly strong disagreement with the proposed weighting of AOs for this subject and qualification. In contrast, proposals for tiering and the content of AOs receive more approval.

Qualitative analysis

Table 11: GCSE dance: summary of the number of comments made, by level of agreement with the proposals

Question number	Type of response	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree		Strongly agree	Total number of responses
				disagree	Agree		
Q17	Official	25	4	2	2	4	37
	Personal	122	16	1	7	7	153
Q18	Official	1	0	1	5	19	26
	Personal	8	7	6	24	55	100
Q19	Official	2	1	2	5	13	23
	Personal	8	10	4	26	45	93
Q20	Official	7	1	0	10	8	26
	Personal	27	11	1	34	22	95

Q17: 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?

In total, 192 respondents provided further free-text responses to this question. Of these, 37 were official responses representing a wide range of different types of organisations, and 98 were personal responses from teachers.

SUMMARY POINTS

- This subject attracted the highest number of comments in response to the survey. Many of the comments were repeated several times word for word. The main objection voiced among these responses was that the proposal to assess by 60 per cent NEA does not allow a high enough proportion of ‘practical’ work (116 respondents). Many respondents commented that this might have an adverse effect on perceptions and take-up of the subject among the less ‘academically able’, and there were also concerns that this might push the practical aspects of dance into an extra-curricular activity.

KEY POINTS ACCORDING TO LEVEL OF AGREEMENT WITH THE PROPOSAL

- Eleven respondents who indicated in their tick box responses that they strongly agreed with the proposals on marks allocations for GCSE dance made a comment. Of these, four represented official views (one of which was an awarding organisation), and the remaining seven were personal views. Although they had ticked ‘strongly agree’, 4 of the 11 commentators gave reasons why they objected to the proposed mark allocations. Similarly, of the nine respondents who ticked ‘agree’ and provided a comment, two explained why they objected to the proposal. Those who explained why they agreed or strongly agreed with the proposals generally felt that the balance of practical and theoretical work was at the right level for the subject, one person said that it brought the subject into line with PE (which was appropriate) and another stated that it prepared students well for the mix of practical/theoretical assessments they would experience if they studied dance at higher levels.
- Three people ticked ‘neither agree nor disagree’ for the main survey question on this proposal but then went on to comment; of these, two specified reasons for objecting to the proposal (these were that it could disadvantage those who were talented dancers but who did not excel academically, and that the practical nature of the subject meant a higher proportion of marks

should be allocated to NEA). One person explained that they were genuinely undecided on the issue, as research into the best mix of exam and NEAs in this subject had been inconclusive.

- The vast majority of respondents indicated in their tick box responses that they disagreed or strongly disagreed with the proposal and the main reason given (stated by 116 of those who commented) was the belief that the highly practical nature of the subjects required to have more than 60% of marks allocated to NEAs (two awarding organisations were among those who made a comment of this nature). Another reason for objecting (cited by 34 respondents) was the view that the three core skills (performance, choreography and written appreciation) were not reflected in a fair and balanced way. Many respondents gave identical or near identical responses in their comments, apparently from a briefing issued by the National Dance Teachers' Association.¹⁰ The repeated comment was:

The proposed weighting of 60:40 'non examined' to 'examined' does not reflect the requirements for the study of dance at this level as expressed in the assessment criteria. The proposed allocation of marks distorts the balance of the three core skills of the subject (performance, choreography, and critical appreciation). Proposing that AO3 and AO4 are assessed by written exam does not acknowledge that the demonstration of knowledge and understanding of choreographic processes and performing skills can (and arguably should) be assessed by 'non-exam' methods. This is a practice which has been undertaken in schools since the 1970s and is a feature of Higher Education up to doctoral level. It also fails to recognise that critical appreciation and development of theoretical knowledge and understanding of the art form is rooted in, and emerges from, practical engagement in performance and choreography. It is important that students receive an authentic experience of the discipline – studying the works of choreographers and different dance styles in a theoretical way is not the same as performing them. The study of dance is an important element of their dance education but the assessment weighting needs to reflect the priorities of dance education at this level; namely that the practice of the discipline is of much more value and that it needs to be assessed in non-examined modes. By giving undue weight to the written theoretical aspect, the proposal will reduce the time available to students for gaining the practical knowledge and skills that are the foundation of the subject and vital for both vocational and academic progression. Teachers will have to spend a disproportionate amount of time on preparation for the written exam. This will disadvantage students whose circumstances will not allow them to take additional practical classes outside school.

Q18: To what extent do you agree or disagree that GCSEs in dance should not be tiered?

Free-text responses to this question were provided by 126 respondents. Twenty-seven of these represented official responses (one from an awarding organisation), and the rest were personal views. Respondents who commented on this topic were mostly teachers.

SUMMARY POINTS

- The majority of the comments related to reasons why the respondents supported the retention of a non-tiered structure to the GCSE dance qualification (and this included a response from an awarding organisation).

¹⁰ 'NDA briefing/Ofqual consultation on GCSE and A level dance' (undated) available at: <http://tinyurl.com/p77aa5q> (accessed 15/10/14)

- Once again there was evidence of campaigning among the responses; many responses were identically worded (these were all in agreement with the proposal).
- The small number of objections to the proposal focused on a range of issues including concerns over enabling those who were able to excel in this subject to do so and making the qualification accessible for those with lower ability in the subject.

KEY POINTS ACCORDING TO LEVEL OF AGREEMENT WITH THE PROPOSAL

- Among those who said they agreed or strongly agreed with the proposal to retain dance as an untiered GCSE, the majority (86 respondents) said they did not think tiering was appropriate for dance. There were also 22 comments expressing the view that all students should have the opportunity to achieve the highest grades. Among the comments were 42 identical comments which appear to have been guided by the NDTA's briefing on the consultation; the repeated comment was:

There is no requirement for the proposed GCSE to be tiered as the range of knowledge, understanding and skills required, and the different modes of assessment employed, enables accessible and rewarding study for the majority of the national cohort while still providing a suitable level of challenge for the most able.
- Of the seven respondents who said they neither agreed nor disagreed with the proposal, five suggested that their indecision was due to the belief that tiering can work well in some contexts but not in others – in particular, the number of students taking dance GCSE could affect how well tiering would work.
- It should be noted that in this question four of the seven respondents who had ticked 'disagree' and seven of the nine who ticked 'strongly disagree' had then gone on to detail in their comments reasons why they *agreed* with dance GCSE being untiered. This suggests some may have misunderstood the question and that the number of 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree' tick-box responses might be slightly over-inflated as a result. Among those who indicated in their tick-box response that they disagreed with the proposal and then detailed in their comments reasons for objecting, the most frequently cited reasons were the view that all GCSEs should be tiered (two respondents said this) and the perception that tiering would allow those who wanted to excel in dancing and go on to study the subject at higher levels and/or to make a career out of dance would be better able to do so (again, two respondents mentioned this).

Q19: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate for GCSEs in dance?

Free-text responses to this question were provided by 116 respondents. Twenty-three of these represented official responses (one of which was an awarding organisation), and the rest were personal views.

SUMMARY POINTS

- The majority of comments were in agreement with the proposed AOs. Those who agreed with the proposals gave reasons such as the perception that the proposed AOs were better than the existing ones (it should be noted, however, that there were large number of identical responses within this category); 40 respondents commented on the appropriateness of the AOs for the subject.
- Some of the objections to the AOs focused on the weightings rather than the AOs themselves with concerns centring on the view that practical elements were given inadequate weighting.
- There were also some suggestions about specific AOs: two people commented, for example, that AO1 and AO2 should be integrated.

KEY POINTS ACCORDING TO LEVEL OF AGREEMENT WITH THE PROPOSAL

- Among the 58 respondents who strongly agreed with the proposed AOs (of which 13 represented official and 45 personal views) and the 31 who agreed with the proposed AOs, 59 expressed the view that the proposed AOs were clearer and better than the existing ones (one awarding organisation was among these responses) and 40 respondents said that the AOs were appropriate for the subject. Once again there were a large number of identical comments, 55 respondents making the following comment, again guided by the NDTA's briefing paper:
The proposed assessment objectives are clearer than the previous ones and represent the principal abilities that young people studying for a GCSE in Dance must be given the opportunity to develop and demonstrate.
- Six respondents (two representing official and four personal views) ticked the 'neither agree nor disagree' option in response to the closed question; in their comments, however, three of these detailed objections to the proposed AOs (on the basis that they considered there was insufficient focus on the practical elements of the subject), one expressed agreement with the AOs (stating that they were appropriate for the subject), one suggested AO1 and AO2 should be reversed, and a further respondent said they agreed with the two practical objectives but disagreed with the separating of the theoretical content into two (choreography/performing separate to analysis).
- Twenty-one respondents indicated that they disagreed or strongly disagreed with the proposed AOs (three of these were representing official views) and gave reasons for doing so. Twelve of these objected on the grounds that they felt the practical elements were not given enough focus and/or that written and theory work was given too much. Three respondents made suggestions about specific AOs, one saying that AO3 should be integrated with AO1 and AO2, another that AO3 should be assessed practically and the third suggesting that AO4 should be assessed practically.

Q20: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for GCSEs in dance?

There were 121 free-text responses to this question. Of these, 26 represented official views (including one from an awarding organisation).

SUMMARY POINTS

- Just over half of those who commented agreed with the proposed weightings, generally because they were considered to be appropriate for the nature of the subject.
- Objections to the weightings tended to centre on the perception that there was too much emphasis on theory and written work and not enough on the practical aspects.

KEY POINTS ACCORDING TO LEVEL OF AGREEMENT WITH THE PROPOSAL

- Forty-four respondents who agreed and 30 who strongly agreed with the proposed weightings made a comment; the vast majority of these (69 respondents, including the one awarding organisation that made a comment) stated that the weightings were considered appropriate for the subject. Again there were a large number of identical comments taken from the NDTA's briefing paper, 55 respondents stating the following:
The proposed weightings of the assessment objectives adequately reflect the importance of a largely balanced approach to the three-stranded study of the art form. The slightly lower weighting for AO4 acknowledges that critical appreciation of the subject must develop from the practical study of the other two strands.
- Just one respondent who commented had ticked the 'neither agree nor disagree' option in response to the closed question, but in their comments this person gave their reasons for

objecting to the proposals (the perception that too little emphasis has been placed on practical work and assessments).

- Forty-six respondents who said they disagreed or strongly disagreed with the proposed weightings made a comment, and all but two of these explained that their objections were due to the perception that there was too much emphasis placed on written/theory work. The remaining two objections both suggested that choreography, performance and appreciation should be given equal weighting.

Seven non-standard format responses were received, mainly arguing that the proportion of NEA proposed is too low for a practical subject.

5.5 Dance AS and A level

5.5.1 Quantitative analysis

There were five closed questions on dance AS and A level. All the response categories are summed in Table 12.

Table 12: Levels of agreement with closed questions on dance A levels and AS

Question number	Question	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Total number of responses
Q21	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?	58	37	18	49	26	188
Q22	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?	56	34	19	47	28	184
Q23	To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate for A levels and AS qualifications in dance?	18	13	37	66	41	175
Q24	To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for AS qualifications in dance?	29	22	35	52	36	174
Q25	To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for A levels in dance?	27	21	37	49	36	170

The net rates of agreement and disagreement discounting neutral responses to the dance AS and A level Likert items is given in Figure 9.

Dance AS and A level

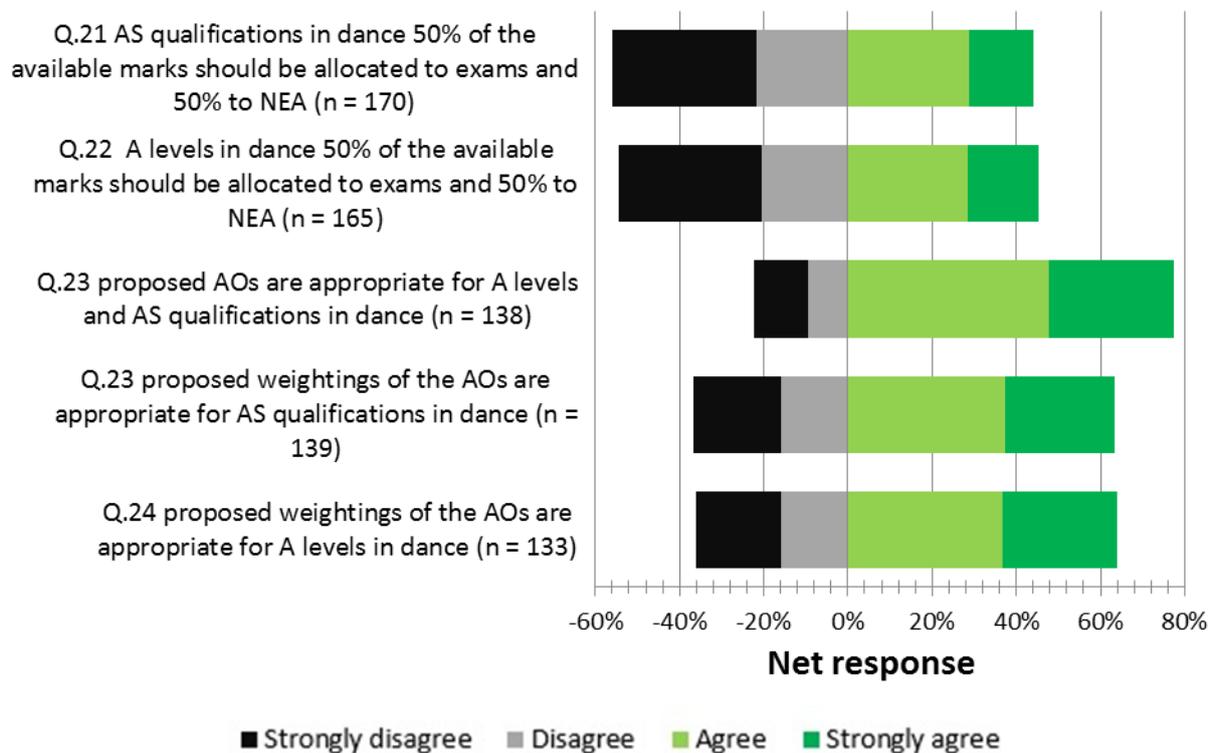


Figure 9: Stacked bar chart for dance AS and A level

As with the dance GCSE, dance AS and A level had a large group of responses to the closed items. There was disagreement over the split between exams and NEA, although not as marked as that for the dance GCSE. There was also some disagreement with the proposed weightings of both the AS and the A level. By contrast, there was majority agreement for AOs, and for their weighting.

The question about the appropriate proportion of exams and NEA had the highest levels of disagreement among the dance proposals. The relative levels of disagreement are shown in Table 13.

Table 13: Level of disagreement with exams and NEA proposals for dance qualifications

Subject and qualification type	Short version of exam vs. NEA question	Percentage disagreement	Total no. of responses
Dance GCSE	GCSEs in dance 40% of the available marks should be allocated to exams and 60% to NEA	84%	212
Dance AS	AS qualifications in dance 50% of the available marks should be allocated to exams and 50% to NEA	51%	188
Dance A level	A levels in dance 50% of the available marks should be allocated to exams and 50% to NEA	49%	184

The levels of disagreement for the dance examinations arrangement questions vary considerably. Disagreement with the GCSE proposals is more than 30 percentage points higher than for both the AS and A level proposals.

5.5.2 Qualitative analysis

Table 14: Dance AS and A level: summary of the number of comments made, by level of agreement with the proposals

Question number	Type of response	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Total number of responses
Q21	Official	6	7	2	8	4	27
	Personal	32	19	1	31	21	104
Q22	Official	4	5	2	7	5	23
	Personal	26	17	1	31	19	94
Q23	Official	0	1	1	10	9	21
	Personal	6	4	4	33	27	74
Q24	Official	1	1	2	9	7	20
	Personal	7	9	1	26	26	69
Q25	Official	1	0	2	8	8	19
	Personal	8	8	2	26	23	67

Qualitative analysis

Q21: 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?

There were 131 free-text responses to this question. Of these, 27 represented official responses (mostly from schools or colleges but there were also some from other representative or interest groups); the remainder were personal views. Respondents who provided personal views on this topic were mostly teachers.

SUMMARY POINTS

- Comments were split into roughly equal halves of agreement with, and objection to, the proposed marks allocation for AS dance.
- Those who agreed with the proposal and commented on their reasons (64 respondents) tended to say that the proposed assessment methods were appropriate for the subject matter and level of study.
- The majority of those who objected (63 of the 67 who commented on their reasons for objecting) to the proposals and commented stated that the NEA proportion should be higher than 50 per cent for this practical subject.

KEY POINTS ACCORDING TO LEVEL OF AGREEMENT WITH THE PROPOSAL

- Sixty-four respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the proposed mark allocations and gave their reasons. Among these, the most frequently cited reasons were that the 50:50 split was appropriate for the subject and level of study and/or that it provided good preparation for studying dance at higher levels. Many of these comments were identically worded and taken from the NDTA's briefing paper; the repeated comment was:
The balance of the assessment modes is appropriate given the need to assess students' skills in performing, creating and critically appreciating dance, while preparing them for Higher Education programmes of study. Students taking AS and A level dance do need to demonstrate that they not only have technical and performance skills at a higher level but also that they have a broad knowledge of the discipline of dance, as in 'performance and choreography from different periods and genres' if they are to progress onto Higher Education. How these areas are assessed, though, does need to reflect the importance of physical understanding and performance. The ability to demonstrate this understanding practically is important for a student wanting to go into further study.
- While three of those who commented ticked the 'neither agree nor disagree' option in response to the tick-box question, two of these detailed reasons for objecting to the proposal (both wanted a higher proportion of marks allocated to NEA), and one stated that they agreed with the proposal since the allocation provided better preparation for studying dance at higher levels.
- Among the 67 respondents who said they disagreed or strongly disagreed with the proposed marks allocation and made a comment, all but four stated that this was because they would prefer to see a higher proportion of marks allocated to NEAs. Three respondents expressed the view that a lower proportion of marks should be allocated to NEA and one person argued that the allocation should match other AS subjects.

Q22: 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?

There were 117 free-text responses to this question. Of these, 24 represented official responses (mostly from schools or colleges but there were some from other representative or interest groups); the remainder were personal views.

SUMMARY POINTS

- The comments made on this proposal reflected those made in response to the previous question on AS dance mark allocations. Comments were split almost equally between reasons for agreement with and objection to the proposed allocation.
- Most of those who agreed with the proposal and made a comment did so on the basis that it was appropriate for the subject and/or that it provided good preparation for studying dance at higher levels.

- The majority of those who objected to the proposals and gave their reasons stated that the NEA proportion should be higher than 50 per cent for this practical subject.

KEY POINTS ACCORDING TO LEVEL OF AGREEMENT WITH THE PROPOSAL

- As was the case for AS dance, of those who agreed or strongly agreed with the proposal for A level dance and commented on their reasons for doing so (62 respondents), more than half (37 respondents) commented that the proposed assessment methods were appropriate for the subject matter and/or the level of study. There were also a large number of comments that this proposal equipped students better for studying dance at higher education level (again, however, it should be noted that many of these comments were identically worded and guided by the NDTA's briefing paper).
- Among the 56 respondents who disagreed or strongly disagreed with the proposal, 50 said that they objected because they believe the proportion allocated to NEAs should be higher, while just 4 suggested that proportion should be lower. One person objected because they felt all assessments should be by exam, and one other said that the proportions should be the same for all A level subjects.

Q23: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate for A levels and AS qualifications in dance?

Ninety-five respondents provided further free-text responses to this question. Of these 20 represented official responses and the remainder were personal views.

SUMMARY POINTS

- The majority of comments (78 respondents) were in agreement with the proposed AOs.
- Fourteen respondents described their objections to the proposals, which tended to focus on the perception that the AOs placed too much emphasis on the theoretical aspects of the subject and not enough on practical elements.
- There were also some suggestions about specific AOs: a specific reference to 'own and professional repertoire' should be included in AO4; higher weighting for AO1 and AO2 was also suggested.

KEY POINTS ACCORDING TO LEVEL OF AGREEMENT WITH THE PROPOSAL

- Most of those who agreed or strongly agreed with the proposals and made a comment mentioned that the proposed AOs were better than the existing ones (62 respondents expressed this view); the appropriateness of the AOs for the subject was mentioned by 17 respondents. Once again many of the comments expressing agreement with the proposed AOs were identically worded (17 responses were the same) and based on the NDTA's briefing paper, the repeated comment being:

The proposed assessment objectives are more focused and clear and reflect the principal abilities that A/AS Level students must be given the opportunity to develop and demonstrate to prepare them for further study.
- Once again those who ticked 'neither agree nor disagree' in response to the tick-box question on the AOs then gave, in their comments, reasons for objecting to (in two cases) or agreeing to (in one case) the proposals.
- Of the 11 respondents who said they disagreed or strongly disagreed with the proposed AOs, 8 commented on the perceived over-emphasis on the theoretical aspects of dance and 5 expressed the view that the current AOs were better (e.g. more interesting or wide ranging) than the proposed ones. There were also two suggestions about specific AOs: a specific

reference to ‘own and professional repertoire’ should be included in AO4, and there should also be a higher weighting for AO1 and AO2.

Q24: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for AS qualifications in dance?

Eighty-nine respondents provided further free-text responses to this question. Of these, 20 represented official responses.

SUMMARY POINTS

- The majority (69 of the 89 respondents who commented) who agreed with the proposed weightings generally commented that they were appropriate for the nature of the subject.
- All but one of the 20 objections to the weightings centred on the perception that there was too much emphasis on theory and written work and not enough on practical elements of the subject.

KEY POINTS ACCORDING TO LEVEL OF AGREEMENT WITH THE PROPOSAL

- Among the 69 comments from respondents who agreed or disagreed with the proposed weightings, 54 were identical comments taken from the NDTA’s briefing paper:
The proposed weightings of the assessment objectives adequately reflect the importance of a balanced approach to the three-stranded study of the art form. The proposal of a range of weightings provides some flexibility for awarding bodies to respond to the breadth of content that is suggested by the assessment objectives.
- Twenty respondents who commented disagreed or strongly disagreed with the proposed weightings; 19 of these said that they did so because of the perception that written/theory work was given too high a weighting, while one respondent suggested a different weighting pattern across the four objectives.

Q25: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for A levels in dance?

Eighty-nine respondents provided further free-text responses to this question. Of these, 20 represented official responses¹¹.

SUMMARY POINTS

- Sixty-eight of the 89 comments were in agreement with the proposed weightings, while the remainder were objections.
- Comments on the proposed weightings for A level dance echoed those made in response to AS dance: those who agreed with the proposed weightings generally commented that they were appropriate for the nature of the subject.
- The objections to the weightings tended to centre on the perception that there was too much emphasis on theory and written work and not enough on practical elements of the subject.

KEY POINTS ACCORDING TO LEVEL OF AGREEMENT WITH THE PROPOSAL

¹¹ This statement is correct. 89 people provided a free text comment but three of them did not actually answer the agree/disagree ‘tick box question’ hence the discrepancy, and of the 20 official responses one of them didn’t answer the tick box question which is why the first figure states 20, but the figure in Table 14 (which counts the number of agree/disagree responses) is only 19.

- Among the 68 comments explaining why they agreed or strongly agreed with the proposed weightings for A level dance were 56 identical comments taken from the NDTA's briefing paper, the repeated comment being:
The proposed weightings of the assessment objectives adequately reflect the importance of a balanced approach to the three-stranded study of the art form. The proposal of a range of weightings is welcome as it will provide some flexibility for awarding bodies to respond to the breadth of content that is suggested by the assessment objectives.
- Among the 20 comments giving reasons for disagreeing or strongly disagreeing with the proposed weightings, there were 18 comments expressing the view that the weighting applied to written/theory aspects was too high, one person reiterating comments about AS dance that suggested a weighting of AO1: 30%, AO2: 30%, AO3: 20%, AO4, 20% – and one further respondent suggesting that AO3 and AO4 should have higher weightings.

Q26: Further comments

One hundred respondents made a further comment on the proposals for the dance qualifications. Of these, 20 were official responses.

SUMMARY POINTS

- Respondents who provided a further comment mentioned a range of issues, but the predominant concerns (mentioned by 88 respondents) related to the perceived lack of emphasis on the practical elements of dance and, linked to this, the weighting towards exams rather than NEAs.

5.6 Geography

5.6.1 Quantitative responses

The responses to the five closed questions on geography are totalled in Table 15.

Table 15: Levels of agreement with closed questions on geography

Question number	Question	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Total number of responses
Q27	To what extent do you agree or disagree that AS qualifications in geography should be assessed entirely by exam?	9	11	20	10	16	66
Q28	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?	11	9	22	12	11	65
Q29	To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate for A levels and AS qualifications in geography?	3	11	25	14	8	61
Q30	To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for AS qualifications in geography?	1	5	29	21	3	59
Q31	To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for A levels in geography?	1	4	27	18	8	58

The net rates of agreement and disagreement on geography closed questions are directly contrasted in Figure 10.

Geography

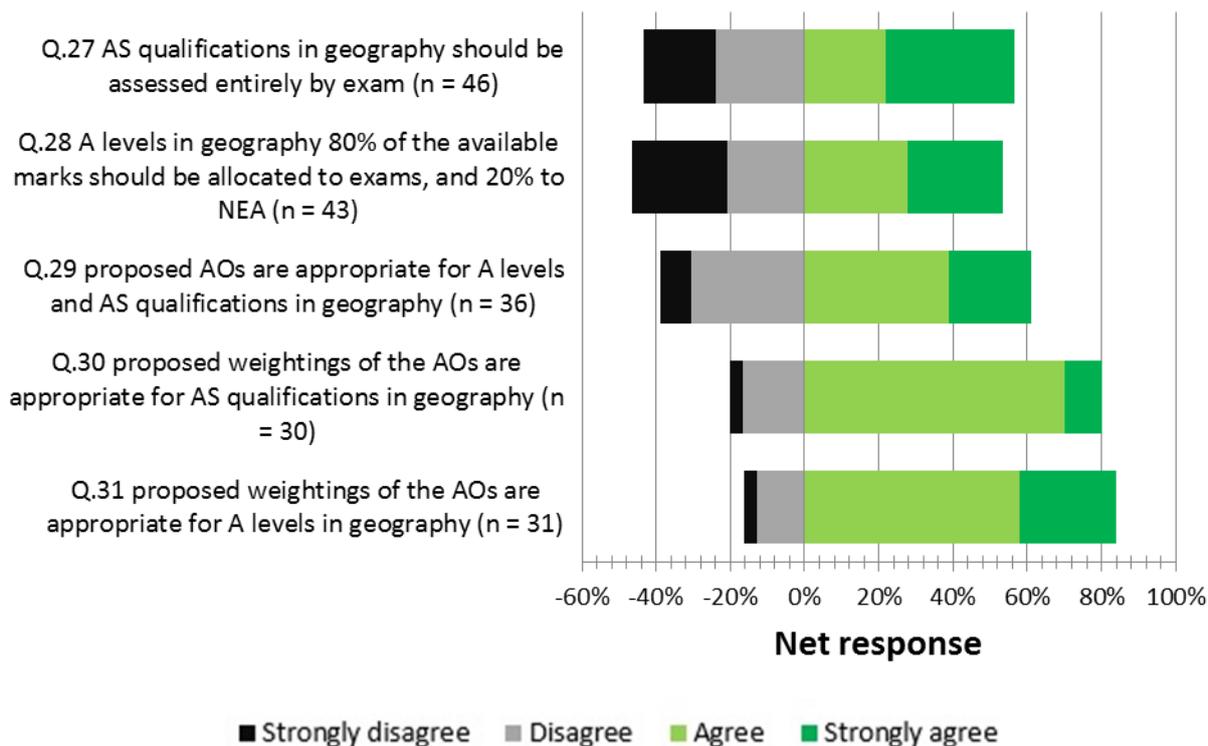


Figure 10: Stacked bar chart for geography

Disagreement rates on geography are highest for the assessment method questions (exams as opposed to NEA). There is also disagreement on the proposed AOs (this is fairly unusual among the subjects), although this is mostly in the ‘disagree’ category, rather than ‘strongly disagree’. More positive support for the proposals comes on the AO weightings questions. The majority of respondents support the proposed AOs.

5.6.2 Qualitative responses

Table 16: Geography AS and A level: summary of the number of comments made, by level of agreement with the proposals

Question number	Type of response	Strongly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree		Agree	Strongly agree	Total number of responses
			Disagree	disagree			
Q27	Official	4	4	3	4	3	18
	Personal	4	6	1	3	9	23
Q28	Official	1	4	5	6	7	23
	Personal	6	4	2	5	4	21
Q29	Official	2	8	1	3	1	15
	Personal	1	3	3	6	5	18
Q30	Official	0	2	4	4	1	11
	Personal	1	3	1	6	2	13
Q31	Official	0	1	0	3	4	8
	Personal	1	3	4	5	3	16

Q27: To what extent do you agree or disagree that AS qualifications in geography should be assessed entirely by exam?

Forty-one respondents provided further free-text responses to this question. Of these, 18 represented official responses (six schools or colleges, two HEIs, six other representative or interest groups, three awarding organisations and one employer). There was a high level of respondents disagreeing with the proposal in the free-text responses to this question. It was not always clear from their free-text responses whether respondents assumed there would be no fieldwork undertaken at all at AS because there was no NEA proposed, or whether they realised that aspects of fieldwork skills may be assessed by examination (with differing views on the relative success of this approach in developing and evidencing skills). A range of terms were used in the responses, and it cannot be assumed that there is a shared expectation of what NEA might constitute – for example, course work, fieldwork, projects.

SUMMARY POINTS

- Of those respondents agreeing who made a comment, approximately a third (seven respondents) felt that coursework was not appropriate because of the tight timeframe for AS study.
- Four respondents commented that assessing entirely by examination increased fairness, as project work was considered to be often heavily supported by the teacher or parents. Conversely, there were concerns that the lack of NEA would unfairly disadvantage some groups of students.
- Two-thirds of respondents (13 respondents) who disagreed with the proposal and commented further felt that fieldwork skills were an intrinsic part of the subject, many reporting that investigative and report-writing skills were important skills, and valued in HE. It was not always clear from their responses whether respondents thought there would be no fieldwork undertaken at all at AS because there was no NEA proposed, or whether respondents realised

that aspects of fieldwork skills could be assessed by examination (with differing views on the relative success of this approach in developing and evidencing skills).

- There was disagreement about the extent to which fieldwork skills needed to be assessed in the AS qualification if the student was progressing to A level. The number of students studying AS geography only, however, was given as one reason why the development of fieldwork skills was important at this level, as was the lack of NEA for fieldwork skills at GCSE.

KEY POINTS ACCORDING TO LEVEL OF AGREEMENT WITH THE PROPOSAL

Of the 19 respondents who strongly agreed or agreed and made a further comment, 7 felt that fieldwork/coursework was not appropriate given the tight timeframe for AS study, and that examination only allowed more teaching time. Four respondents agreed with this proposal because they had concerns about the fairness of coursework in general and the likelihood of differing levels of support from teachers and parents.

There were 18 respondents who strongly disagreed or disagreed and made a further comment. Thirteen stressed that fieldwork is at the heart of geographical study and should be included (or the assessment should be included) at AS (including two representative/special interest groups and a union) – as stated above, the absence of NEA at AS meant that some respondents thought this precluded the opportunity for any fieldwork skills, whereas others thought it meant valuable skills such as writing up fieldwork would be missed. Four of these respondents said that the skills developed were required for geographical study and/or life. Two of the respondents expressed concerns that examination-only assessment disadvantaged particular groups of students (protected characteristics).

Q28: 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 NEA?

Forty-four respondents provided further free-text responses to this question. Of these, 23 represented official responses (nine schools or colleges, two HEIs, seven other representative or interest groups, three awarding organisations, one employer and one government department/agency or organisation). There was a high level of respondents disagreeing with the proposal in the free-text responses to this question.

SUMMARY POINTS

- As with the AS there were concerns from some respondents about the fairness and robustness of NEA and the opportunity for ‘cheating’.
- There were concerns from some respondents about parity with other science subjects if NEA contributes to the final grade.
- Some schools expressed concern about the practicalities of producing a large number of ‘fieldwork reports’.
- Where there was agreement with the proposals, the majority welcomed the return of NEA and the development of the valuable skills it affords.
- Some respondents argued for a higher percentage of NEA.

KEY POINTS ACCORDING TO LEVEL OF AGREEMENT WITH THE PROPOSAL

Twenty-two respondents who responded ‘strongly agree’ or ‘agree’ to this proposal also made a comment. Twelve of these respondents were pleased that NEA is returning, citing the range of skills fieldwork developed which are valuable for university study and work. Four respondents confirmed

that they felt 80:20 was a good balance. One respondent, however, was concerned that the return of NEA was inconsistent with changes in other science subjects.

Fifteen respondents who responded 'strongly disagree or disagree' also made a comment. Four respondents, including two representative/special interest groups argued that there should be a greater proportion of NEA than in the proposal, because fieldwork skills were intrinsic to geography. Three respondents, however, were concerned that the assessment of geography was moving away from what was happening in other science subjects and NEA could devalue A level geography if it contributes to the final grade.

Q29: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate for A levels and AS qualifications in geography?

Thirty-three respondents provided further free-text responses to this question. Of these, 15 represented official responses (five schools or colleges, two HEIs, four other representative or interest groups, three awarding organisations and one government department/agency or organisation).

SUMMARY POINTS

- Of the respondents agreeing with the proposal who commented further, two-thirds confirmed that the AOs offered a good balance.
- There were concerns about the generic nature of the AOs, which might be open to interpretation from awarding organisations.
- There were some detailed recommendations for specific changes to the wording of the AOs in the responses. These largely reflect concerns that the AOs were too generic and inconsistent with the subject content.
- Some respondents had concerns about how these AOs would follow on from GCSE.

KEY POINTS ACCORDING TO LEVEL OF AGREEMENT WITH THE PROPOSAL

Of the 15 respondents who strongly agreed or agreed with this proposal and made a further comment, 10 confirmed that they were happy with the balance the new AOs offered.

Fourteen respondents (including six representative/special interest groups and two awarding organisations) who strongly disagreed or disagreed with the proposal left a further comment. They expressed concerns that the AOs were too generic and may be open to interpretation. There were also concerns about 'read-across' between these AOs and GCSE AOs.

Q30: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for AS qualifications in geography?

Twenty-four respondents provided further free-text responses to this question. Of these, 11 represented official responses (three schools or colleges, one HEI, four other representative or interest groups, two awarding organisations and one employer).

KEY POINTS

- Overall, there was agreement with the proposal to narrow the range for each AO, because this would lead to greater conformity between examination boards. Some respondents, however, called for a narrower range and some for no range at all.
- There was support for the move to equalise the weighting for AS with A level to ensure that AS geography matches the first year of the A level.

- A few respondents representing representative/special interest groups recommended that the weighting for AO3 be raised.

There was largely agreement with this proposal. Six respondents who strongly disagreed or disagreed made a further comment. One representative/special interest group wanted 25–45 per cent weighting for AO3 (rather than 20–30 per cent). One awarding organisation suggested there should be greater weighting of AO1 at AS (but gave no reason for doing so).

Q31: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for A levels in geography?

Twenty-four respondents provided further free-text responses to this question. Of these, eight represented official responses (one school or college, one HEI, three other representative or interest groups, two awarding organisations and one employer).

The key points made for this question are the same as for AS above.

Q32: Further comments

Twenty-two respondents made further comments. These largely reiterated or extended responses to the previous questions or referred to topics outside the scope of this consultation.

Three non-standard responses were received, which largely reflected responses to the questionnaire. Two of these responses, however, (official responses from a HEI and a learned society, respectively) also made explicit their views on the need for the NEA at A level to reflect individual 'geographical' study. The response from the learned society made more-detailed proposals for the non-exam course work to reflect the geography ALCAB panel's recommendation for 'independent investigative and research work which must include fieldwork'. The learned society emphasised the need for an extended piece of work to demonstrate and apply individual geographical skills, knowledge and understanding, within the context of wider geographical understanding. It was felt that the authenticity of students' work could be assured by the model of internal (teacher) assessment and external moderation, together with sampling of students' work and vivas. This official response, while recognising concerns about practicalities and safety, also stated that, given the age of students (17 years old), there need be no requirement for a teacher to accompany all students during the data collection stage, as long as there were appropriate teacher guidance and appropriate assessment of risk.

5.7 Mathematics

5.7.1 Quantitative responses

The total numbers of responses to each category in the five questions on mathematics are shown in Table 17.

Table 17: Levels of agreement with closed questions on mathematics

Question number	Question	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Total number of responses
Q33	To what extent do you agree or disagree that AS qualifications in mathematics should be assessed entirely by exam?	3	9	19	16	46	93
Q34	To what extent do you agree or disagree that A levels in mathematics should be assessed entirely by exam?	5	8	20	16	44	93
Q35	To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate for A levels and AS qualifications in mathematics?	8	8	31	33	12	92
Q36	To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for AS qualifications in mathematics?	9	12	33	27	9	90
Q37	To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for A levels in mathematics?	7	12	34	30	8	91

The strength of agreement and disagreement (excluding neutral opinion) to the mathematics part of the consultation is given in Figure 11.

Mathematics

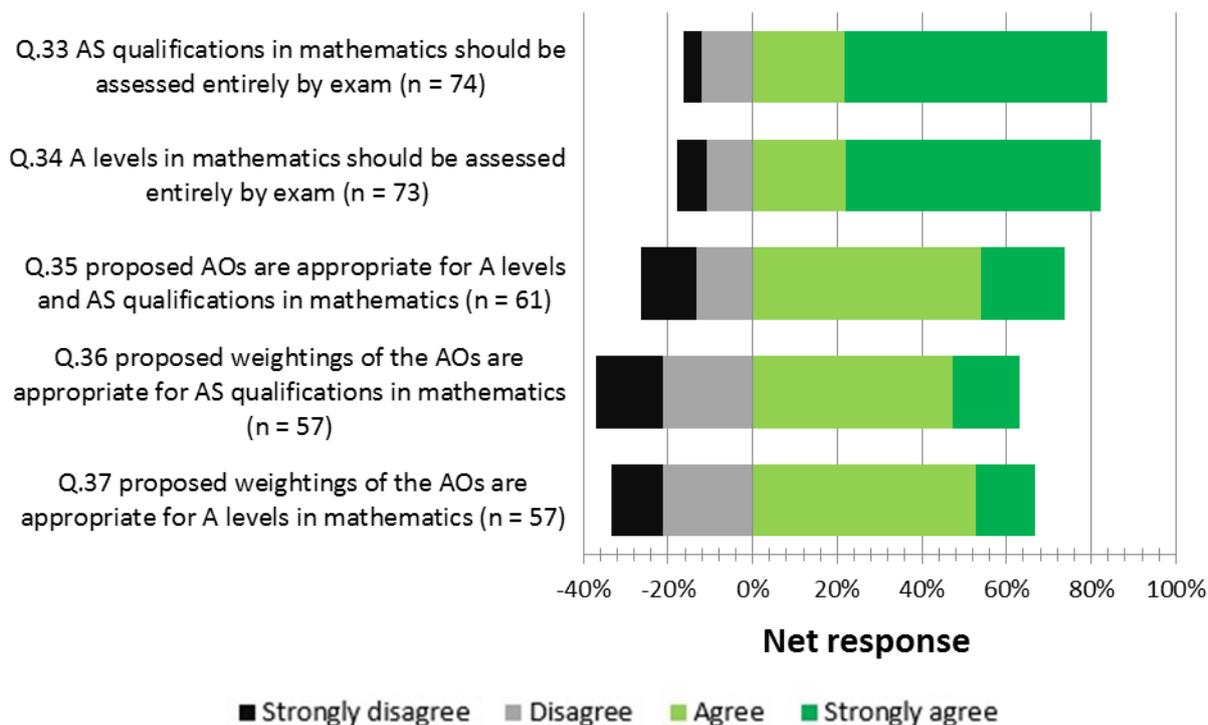


Figure 11: Stacked bar chart for mathematics

Responses to the closed questions asking about the mathematics proposal are among the most positive of those consulted on. In contrast to some of the other subjects upon which views were expressed, mathematicians who responded were strongly in agreement with the proposal for 100 per cent assessment by examination. By contrast, and again unusually, they had more reservations about the weightings of AOs.

5.7.2 Qualitative responses

Table 18: Mathematics AS and A level: summary of the number of comments made, by level of agreement with the proposals

Question number	Type of response	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Total number of responses
Q33	Official	1	4	3	3	7	18
	Personal	1	5	1	8	25	40
Q34	Official	2	3	2	4	6	17
	Personal	2	5	2	8	23	40
Q35	Official	5	1	1	5	1	13
	Personal	1	1	0	8	4	14
Q36	Official	6	4	1	3	1	15
	Personal	1	6	5	2	5	19
Q37	Official	5	5	2	1	0	13
	Personal	1	6	2	0	2	11

Q33: To what extent do you agree or disagree that AS qualifications in mathematics should be assessed entirely by exam?

There were 58 further free-text responses to this question in total and, of these, 18 represented official responses (seven schools or colleges, seven other representative/interest groups and four awarding organisations).

SUMMARY POINTS

- The majority of free-text responses considered it appropriate and indeed preferable for AS mathematics to be assessed entirely by exam. Coursework was considered burdensome and a less reliable form of assessment.
- There was support from a number of respondents for NEA for specific topics, such as modelling, numerical methods and statistics, and for some groups of students who were considered disadvantaged by assessment entirely by examination.

KEY POINTS BY LEVEL OF AGREEMENT WITH THE PROPOSALS

Thirty-two respondents who strongly agreed with this proposal provided further free-text responses. Of these, the majority referred to coursework as burdensome or a less fair form of assessment due to differential levels of support for students from teachers or parents, with only five respondents specifically stating that an examination was the most appropriate form of assessment for the subject content. One of these five respondents, a subject association, accepted that assessing entirely by examination limits the scope to assess the handling of large data sets but in the interest of more open comparability, exam-only assessment was still considered most appropriate.

There was not quite the same level of consensus from the 11 respondents who agreed with this proposal and provided a free-text response. A range of comments were made: coursework is burdensome for teachers and students, with one respondent stating that coursework in the AS qualification may discourage students who just want to take it as an 'extra'; examinations are fairer, although one respondent felt that not all examinations should be at the end of the course, and one subject association suggested that examinations should be longer to increase the validity of the assessment; a wider range of assessment tools should be made available for the examinations, according to another respondent; two awarding organisations expressed concern that if, as stated in the DfE's content paper, students need to become familiar with one or more specific large data set(s) and to have used technology to explore the data set(s) in advance of the examination this would require some NEA (one awarding organisation proposed that the requirement should be removed); and one further respondent felt that controlled assessment would be more appropriate for the assessment of statistical skills.

Of the four free-text comments from 'neither agree nor disagree' responses, three were official responses. One awarding organisation felt that some aspects, such as statistics and numerical methods, may be better assessed through NEA; two responses (one a school response and the other a personal view) suggested a different range of assessment tools should be used in the examinations, with one of these responses proposing some pre-exam materials; and one membership organisation commented that the decoupling of the AS from the A level meant that students taking both examinations would have to repeat NEA for the A level, so regrettably in their opinion, the AS should not include NEA.

There were nine free-text comments from respondents who responded 'disagree' with this proposal. Of these, two included comments that suggested NEA supports the development of skills that are more relevant for employment and better preparation for university level study. One of these responses (from an awarding organisation) also cited a range of research that suggested that

without NEA there is a narrowing of the curriculum and of the students' experience of mathematics, with greater emphasis on the reliability of assessment over its validity. Four responses referred to specific aspects of mathematics that respondents felt required some other form of assessment rather than examination: numerical methods, modelling, statistics, and use of technology. Two responses referred to the need for NEA to engage particular students: one representative group felt that a particular group of students (with protected characteristics) would be disadvantaged by examination-only assessment and another official response from a school felt that more students would engage with the subject if practical application were encouraged and understood. One further comment suggested that there should be the opportunity for different specifications to co-exist to allow for innovation and offer choice.

There were two free-text comments from respondents who responded 'strongly disagree' (one official and one person response). These mirrored concerns above relating to issues regarding the assessment of specific aspects of mathematics without NEA options available, the role of non-exam work in learning and preparation for work and university, and the need for a wider range of assessment methods to ensure validity of assessment.

Q34: To what extent do you agree or disagree that A levels in mathematics should be assessed entirely by exam?

Fifty-seven respondents provided further free-text responses to this question. Of these, 17 represented official responses (six schools or colleges, 7 representative/interest groups and four organisations).

SUMMARY POINTS

- Responses to this question largely mirrored those for the AS qualification. The vast majority of respondents considered it appropriate and preferable for A level mathematics to be assessed entirely by exam. Coursework was considered burdensome and a less reliable form of assessment.
- There was support from a small number of respondents (agreeing and disagreeing with this proposal) for NEA for specific topics, such as modelling, numerical methods and statistics, and to introduce 'real-life' projects (including several official responses, among them a subject association and awarding organisation).

KEY POINTS BY LEVEL OF AGREEMENT WITH THE PROPOSALS

Twenty-nine respondents who strongly agreed with this proposal provided further free-text responses. Just over half of these respondents agreed with the proposal because they felt it was a fairer and more reliable form of assessment. There were concerns that coursework advantaged students who had more support from teachers or parents. Three of these respondents also considered coursework to be burdensome, and two commented further that coursework took up valuable time required to acquire mathematical competence. The other respondents confirmed that they felt mathematics could be assessed without the need for NEA. Twelve respondents who agreed with this proposal provided further free-text responses. Six of these respondents (three were official responses), while agreeing with the proposal in their Likert response, went on to express some concerns as to how certain aspects of mathematics such as problem solving, modelling, numerical methods and statistics could be assessed solely by examination. Three respondents considered assessment by examination fairer and more reliable. One respondent considered coursework time consuming. One official response suggested longer exams would be required.

There were four respondents who chose the 'neither agree nor disagree' option and then went on to make a comment. Two respondents, including an awarding organisation, highlighted the issue

regarding the assessment of aspects of numerical methods and statistics raised by some of the respondents who chose the 'agree' response (see above). One official response commented that the appropriateness of 100 per cent assessment by examination depended on whether a student was going on to do pure or applied mathematics. The final respondent felt that mathematics students should complete some form of alternative assessment (to examination-only assessment) to provide experience for university or the workplace.

The eight respondents who chose the 'disagree' response and made a further response largely made similar comments to those above. Five comments, including the responses from a subject association and an awarding organisation, expressed some concern about how specific aspects of the subject content (modelling and statistics) could be adequately assessed by examination only – although the awarding organisation went on to comment that the decoupling of the AS and A level qualifications made coursework problematic for those students taking both examinations. One further respondent commented that more understanding of the best way to assess different topics was needed before a decision should be made as to the nature of assessment of A level mathematics. Another respondent felt that choice should be offered and specifications should not be identical, because this would stifle innovation. One representative group reiterated their response to the question above regarding the AS qualification, stating that assessing a subject purely by examination disadvantaged a specific group of candidates (with protected characteristics). There were four further comments from respondents who selected the 'strongly disagree' response to this question. All four responses (including one from a representative group and one from a union) questioned the appropriateness of examination-only assessment of the specific aspects of mathematics, such as modelling and statistics, and one (union response) also expressed concerns that examinations prevented young people from 'working at their best' and did not reflect the skills needed for the workplace or the assessment approaches used in universities.

Q35: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate for A levels and AS qualifications in mathematics?

Twenty-seven respondents provided further free-text responses relevant to this question. Of these, 13 represented official responses (two schools or colleges, six other representative/interest groups and four awarding organisations).

SUMMARY POINTS

- Overall, there was high level of agreement with the AOs from respondents. There were substantial concerns expressed, however, by some of the awarding organisations, subject association/learned bodies, and by a membership organisation responding about a lack of clarity in the subdivisions (bullet points) in the AOs that could be subject to misinterpretation. It was noted by one respondent that concerns with the bullet points within the AOs had been recognised in an awarding organisation meeting with Ofqual and that these were being revised.
- There were specific concerns from several respondents (both those agreeing and disagreeing with this proposal) regarding the lack of a clear definition of problem solving.

KEY POINTS BY LEVEL OF AGREEMENT WITH THE PROPOSALS

Five respondents, including one official response, who strongly agreed with this proposal made further comments. Two specifically mentioned that they preferred three objectives to five because it was more concise and straightforward. The other three responses stated the AOs were a good balance, practical and appropriate.

Thirteen respondents, including five official responses, who agreed with this proposal made further comments. Eight of the respondents affirmed their support for the proposal and confirmed that they

welcomed the overarching themes and/or approved of the reduction to three succinct AOs, although one subject association/learned body felt that the opportunity to identify some progression between AS and A level appeared to have been missed. Another respondent (an education specialist), while supporting the reduction in AOs, would have preferred a more holistic approach (with just the three headers and not the bullet points), as it was felt a literal interpretation of the bullet points may make the writing of assessment more difficult.

Two respondents (a student and an education specialist) felt further clarification of 'problem solving' was required. Two further respondents expressed concern as to how in practice problem solving would be assessed. One subject association/learned body welcomed the increased emphasis on problem solving but mentioned concerns regarding the need for professional development to support the teaching of problem-solving skills. They also expressed concerns that, with AS and A level mathematics sharing certain AOs, AS mathematics becomes overloaded, which may affect the uptake of AS and progression to A level. Another subject association/learned body commented that they felt the critical issue was that awarding organisations should carry out assessments that reflect these AOs.

There was one respondent who chose the 'neither agree nor disagree' option and then went on to make a comment about this proposal. This official respondent (school) felt the style and number of examinations required further clarification.

Two respondents who disagreed with this proposal made further comments.¹² One official response from an awarding organisation broadly agreed with the principle of using the same AOs for A level as GCSE. It was suggested, however, that the subdivision of the objectives into bullet points required further work in order to be fit for purpose. Some of the current wording was felt to be confusing or even misleading. Problem solving and modelling were considered skills valued by higher education and there was thus a case for each having its own AO. The other respondent (personal response) offering a free-text response to this question also felt that the AOs needed further work.

Six respondents who strongly disagreed with this proposal made further comments relating to the consultation. Two awarding organisations were broadly in agreement with the AOs but felt there were issues with the subdivision of the objectives (the bullet points) as a lack of clarity meant these were open to misinterpretation. Confusion about the allocation of marks for problem solving in AO1 and AO3 was given as an example, as this had already been an issue for GCSE mathematics. One of these awarding organisations reported that this issue had already been raised in a meeting between awarding organisations and Ofqual, and further work was being undertaken. One awarding organisation, however, felt there were major issues with the AOs: the main concern was that there was a change in the style of assessment required to focus on problem solving and modelling, which meant that, even if the wording and interpretation were sorted out, the weighting would be impossible to achieve.¹³ The awarding organisation also felt that AO1 required the assessment of skills more appropriate to GCSE than A level. There was also a concern expressed that the requirement to recall proofs may lead to the testing of rote learning. This concern was also reflected in two further responses (from a subject association/learned body and a personal response). One membership organisation was largely in agreement with the three AOs but had concerns about the further detail.

¹² Six further respondents made comments, but these related to content rather than the AOs.

¹³ 'At A level, questions that require students to choose an appropriate technique and then to apply it will tend to have only a mark or two of AO3 and many marks of AO1. By their nature, A level questions have more procedural steps following from problem solving steps than at GCSE which requires more AO1 than at GCSE, not less.' Awarding organisation responding to question 35.

Q36: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for AS qualifications in mathematics?

Thirty-four respondents provided further free-text responses to this question. Of these, 15 represented official responses (five schools or colleges, six other representative/interest groups and four awarding organisations).

SUMMARY POINTS

- There was less support for the proposed weighting of the AOs than there was for the previous question relating to the appropriateness of the AOs.
- There were concerns about the weighting expressed by respondents agreeing or disagreeing with the proposal. Objections largely focused on the relative proportion of problem solving and standard techniques that was appropriate for AS and/or reflected the proposed subject content. There were some requests for AO3 and (to a lesser extent) AO2 to be given lower weightings and AO1 to have a greater weighting. There was no overall consensus on what the balance should be, however.

KEY POINTS BY LEVEL OF AGREEMENT WITH THE PROPOSALS

Six respondents, including one official response, who strongly agreed with this proposal made further comments confirming their support for the proposal.

Five respondents who agreed with this proposal made a further comment relating to this question. One respondent (personal response) considered the increase in weighting for AO1 positive as it would allow access to a greater proportion of the examination paper for students who found mathematics challenging. One further response, however, suggested the weighting for AO1 should be increased further to help weaker students. One awarding organisation felt that the weighting for AO1 should be increased (and AO2/AO3 decreased) to reflect the emphasis on routine procedures in the objectives. One respondent (personal response) suggested an increase in AO3 (decrease in AO2) on the basis that to write a proof, while important for mathematicians, was not as important for mathematics-related subjects such as engineering. A subject association/learned society felt that the opportunity to build in progression between A level mathematics and A level further mathematics had been missed by having identical AOs and weighting.

There were six respondents who chose the 'neither agree nor disagree' option and then went on to make a comment about this proposal. Of these, five either required further detail about numbers of examinations, or confirmed they had no strong feelings about the weighting of the AOs. One respondent (personal response) felt that, although it was appropriate that there should be a difference in weightings between AS and A level in AO1, it would be better if the consequent reduction in weighting were then in AO2 rather than AO3. No reason was given.

There were ten respondents who disagreed with this proposal and made further relevant comments. Two respondents preferred the use of point weighting rather than a range. One further respondent suggested that the weighting should be centred on 100 per cent rather than 105 per cent. One respondent felt that there was too much weight given to AO3 but did not expand on the response. Another respondent was not satisfied with the way in which the core and applied were weighted but did not give any explanation. Where further explanation was given to support different weighting from those proposed, there was little consensus about what the change should be, with two responses calling for an increase in AO1 because otherwise the AS would become too hard (suggested decrease in AO2 and/or AO3) and another suggesting that AO1 was too high as the AS was already considered very procedural. The remaining relevant comments suggested that the

current weighting for AO2 and AO3 would be off-putting for students, especially where students are taking AS mathematics to support other subjects such as science.

Three awarding organisations, one subject association/learned society and one membership organisation strongly disagreed with this proposal and made a further free-text response.

One awarding organisation suggested that the statements in italics at the end of AO2 and AO3 would make it difficult to produce an assessment that matched the weightings:

[E]ven a paper entirely targeted at problem-solving questions would have a majority of AO1 marks, because the solution to most problem-solving questions requires a few critical decisions about strategy but is otherwise a collection of standard techniques. If these paragraphs are to remain, the AO1 weighting would need to be increased to around 60–70%. This is where A level differs significantly from GCSE. The standard techniques that are applied to solve problems are complex and must be worthy of significant credit.

It was proposed that the statements should be removed, so that students would need to make good strategic choices (AO3 skills) to access ‘standard technique’ marks.

The two other awarding organisations expressed concerns that the weighting of AO1 would need to be considerably increased if marks for procedures within problem-solving questions were allocated to AO1 (as is the case with the new GCSE in mathematics); otherwise, the assessments would have too much emphasis on problem solving and would be far too demanding. One of the awarding organisations recommended:

... that AO3 questions include a larger proportion of procedural work than AO2 questions and that a weighting of 70%/20%/10%, each $\pm 5\%$ would allow for setting papers on the same content but without unduly raising the level of demand, and that it will result in papers that are approximately one third each of procedural questions, proof and reasoning, and problem solving and modelling. If the desire is to increase the amount of problem solving and modelling, then 50%/30%/20% may well be appropriate, but this must come with a commensurate drop in the amount of content.

The membership organisation welcomed the difference in weighting between AS and A level in AO1 but stated that the subsequent reduction in weighting should be in AO2 rather than AO3 because the statistical problem solving in A level is also in AS (this contributes to AO3), and proof (AO2) was considered less important for the future of the cohort of students who take AS mathematics than for those who take A level mathematics. The subject association/learned society considered that the emphasis on problem solving and modelling in the proposed content would require more weighting for AO3.

Q37: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for A levels in mathematics?

Twenty-four respondents provided further free-text responses to this question. Of these, 13 represented official responses (six schools or colleges, five other representative or interest groups and two awarding organisations).

SUMMARY POINTS

- As with the previous question there was less support for the weighting of the AOs than for the proposed AOs, but there was less consensus on what the issues are. Some respondents felt there was need for greater weighting of AO3 (and, to a lesser extent, AO2) to ensure the AOs reflected the qualification aims, but equally there were concerns from others that there was already too much weight given to AO3, which would cause issues when writing qualifications.

KEY POINTS BY LEVEL OF AGREEMENT WITH THE PROPOSALS

There were only three comments from respondents who had either strongly agreed or agreed with the proposed weightings, and two of these responses just confirmed support for the proposal with no further comment. One respondent felt the weighting was appropriate as long as it allowed access for weaker students – more AO1 may be required.

Four respondents selecting the ‘neither agree nor disagree’ response made a further comment. One respondent welcomed less weighting of AO1 at A level but felt that the additional weighting should be allocated to AO2, so that students could solve more complicated problems. Another respondent felt the changes were reasonable but unnecessary, and a further respondent wanted more examples of the number of exams and type of questions that could be expected. A subject association/learned society stated:

Within the AOs, we note the italic text accompanying both AO2 and AO3 and we recognise that it has been included in order to support the new emphasis on reasoning, interpreting and problem solving. However, it does mean that many AO1 marks will be used up in questions addressing AO2 and AO3 and there is a risk that there will therefore be insufficient remaining AO1 marks available to test basic technique on its own (which is certainly still needed). For weaker candidates, AO1 is likely to be the source of many of their marks but, if the AO1 marks are hidden behind AO2 and AO3 barriers, then those AO1 marks will not be accessible to the weaker candidates.

The seventeen respondents who disagreed or strongly disagreed and made a further comment mainly referred to their responses to question 36 (AS weighting) – see above. Two responses made the point about the italic text for AO2 and AO3 and the impact on the number of marks available for AO1 to assess basic technique.

Q38: Further comments

Forty-one respondents made further comments. These largely reflected or added further detail to comments already made about previous questions or related to topics outside the scope of this consultation, such as the decoupling of the AS and A level and the inclusion, or exclusion, of specific content. Several respondents commented on their hope that students would still be able to have some options as to which area of mathematics they focused on despite the removal of modules.

Six non-standard responses were received. These reflected responses to the online questionnaire.

5.8 Further mathematics

5.8.1 Quantitative responses

The total numbers of responses to each category in the five questions on further mathematics are shown in Table 19.

Table 19: Levels of agreement with closed questions on further mathematics

Question number	Question	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Total number of responses
Q39	To what extent do you agree or disagree that AS qualifications in further mathematics should be assessed entirely by exam?	6	7	17	19	39	88
Q40	To what extent do you agree or disagree that A levels in further mathematics should be assessed entirely by exam?	6	9	18	15	38	86
Q41	To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate for A levels and AS qualifications in further mathematics?	7	3	32	30	11	83
Q42	To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for AS qualifications in further mathematics?	7	9	33	24	9	82
Q43	To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for A levels in further mathematics?	6	9	32	24	9	80

The strength of agreement and disagreement (excluding neutral opinion) to the further mathematics part of the consultation is given in Figure 12.

Further mathematics

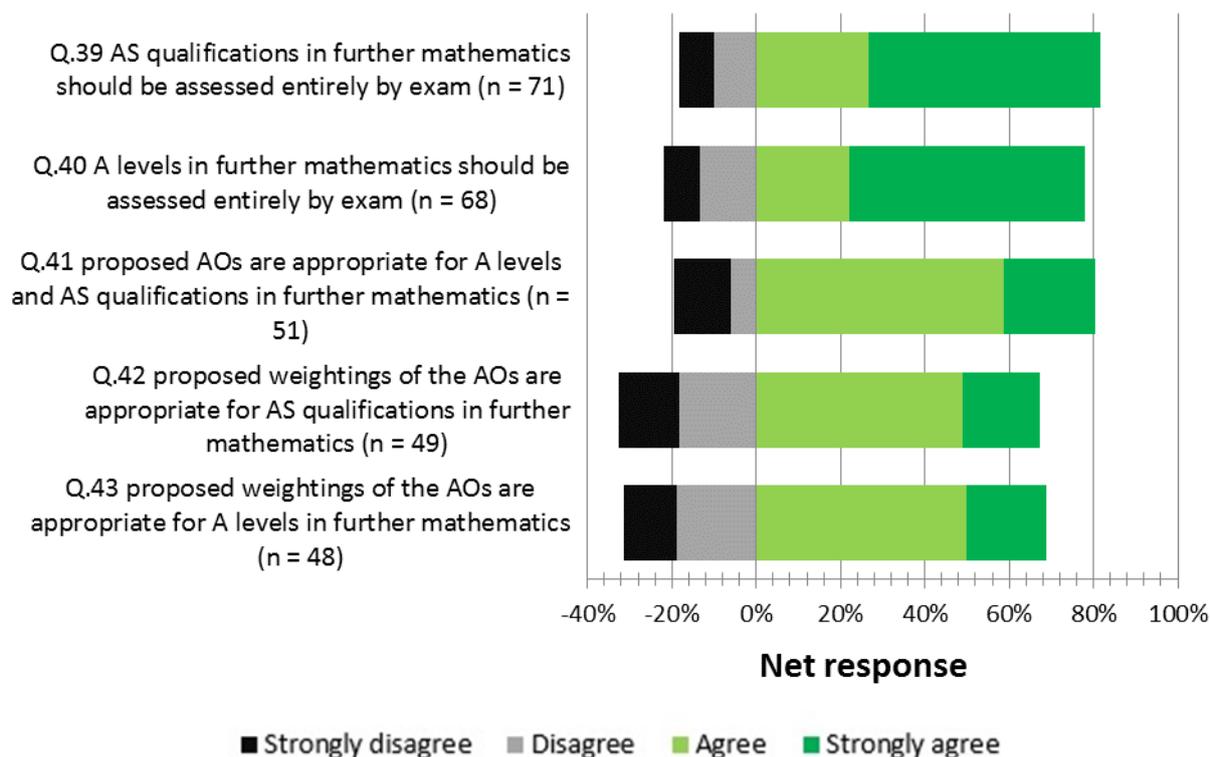


Figure 12: Stacked bar chart for further mathematics

The pattern of agreement and disagreement for further mathematics is similar to that for mathematics. There are large numbers of people strongly agreeing with the assessment method proposals for both the A level and the AS qualifications. There are slightly more people disagreeing with AO weightings, but there is still net agreement in respect of the AO weighting questions.

5.8.2 Qualitative responses

Table 20: AS and A level further mathematics: summary of the number of comments made, by level of agreement with the proposals

Question number	Type of response	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Total number of responses
Q39	Official	3	3	1	2	1	10
	Personal	1	4	1	4	7	17
Q40	Official	1	3	1	3	2	10
	Personal	2	4	2	6	13	27
Q41	Official	5	1	0	4	1	11
	Personal	1	1	4	6	5	17
Q42	Official	4	5	1	3	1	14
	Personal	2	2	2	2	5	13
Q43	Official	4	5	1	2	5	17
	Personal	1	4	1	1	1	8

Q39: To what extent do you agree or disagree that AS qualifications in further mathematics should be assessed entirely by exam?

Twenty-seven respondents provided further free-text responses to this question. Of these, 10 represented official responses (two school or colleges, five other representative/interest groups and three awarding organisations).

SUMMARY POINTS

Responses largely mirrored those made for AS mathematics.

- The majority of responses considered it appropriate and preferable for AS further mathematics to be assessed entirely by exam. Coursework was considered a less reliable form of assessment.
- There was support from a number of respondents (who argued that final decisions on AOs should not be made unless content was confirmed) for NEA for specific topics and for some groups of students who were considered disadvantaged by assessment entirely by examination.

KEY POINTS ACCORDING TO LEVEL OF AGREEMENT WITH THE PROPOSAL

Eight respondents (one official response) who strongly agreed with this proposal made a further free-text response. Seven respondents felt that examination was the fairest form of assessment, as some students may have greater levels of support with coursework than others. It was thought that examination ensured that the work was the student's own.

Six respondents (two official responses) who agreed with this proposal made a further free-text response. Two respondents felt it was hard to comment further while there was uncertainty over the AS content. Two further respondents commented about the length of time examinations would now require, with 2.5 hours recommended by one of the respondents. One respondent was concerned that students taking AS further mathematics as an extra subject might be discouraged if a lot of time were to be taken up with coursework. Another respondent felt the focus in the AS qualification should be on developing and applying fundamental mathematical skills, which were considered best assessed in exam conditions.

Of those respondents selecting the 'neither agree nor disagree' response for this question, two made a further comment. One respondent felt that some flexibility about the type of assessment to be used should be maintained until content was confirmed. The other respondent (an awarding organisation) considered that aspects of some content (numerical methods and statistics) might be assessed better using NEA, also arguing for some flexibility until additional content was confirmed by awarding organisations.

Seven respondents (three official responses) who disagreed with this proposal made further comments. Five of the responses felt that for further mathematics there should be greater opportunity to use NEA to allow, for example, team approaches to problem solving and greater use of technology. One representative group felt that examination-only assessment disadvantaged a specific group of students (protected characteristics). One further respondent reiterated his/her response given earlier for AS/A level mathematics and requested greater levels of difference between awarding organisation specifications to allow choice and innovation in assessment.

Of the four respondents who strongly disagreed with this proposal and made a further comment, two (including one response from a membership organisation) questioned how Ofqual would be able to determine that assessment by examination was most appropriate if a large proportion of the content were to be agreed by individual awarding organisations. Two further respondents felt that some aspects of mathematics (such as statistics, numerical methods, modelling and use of computing) required NEA.

Q40: To what extent do you agree or disagree that A levels in further mathematics should be assessed entirely by exam?

Thirty-seven respondents provided further free-text responses to this question. Of these, ten represented official responses (one school or college, six other representative/interest groups, three awarding organisations).

SUMMARY POINTS

- The majority of responses considered it appropriate and preferable for A level further mathematics to be assessed entirely by exam. Coursework was considered a less reliable form of assessment and more open to abuse.
- There was support for NEA for specific topics such as modelling and numerical methods from seven respondents, who argued that final decisions on the mode of assessment should not be made until content was confirmed.

KEY POINTS BY LEVEL OF AGREEMENT WITH THE PROPOSALS

Fifteen respondents (including two official responses) who strongly agreed with this proposal made further relevant comments. Two-thirds of responses referred to NEA as open to abuse, with some students experiencing a greater level of help from teachers and parents than others, so that work did not always reflect the true ability of the student. One further respondent felt that time was better spent 'doing' mathematics rather than completing coursework.

Three of the nine respondents (three official responses) who agreed with this proposal and made a further comment also considered NEA to be open to abuse. Three respondents felt that NEA might be necessary for certain aspects of further mathematics but this could not be fully appreciated without knowing what the additional content would be. Two further respondents felt that examinations might need to be longer, with one response suggesting 2.5 hours was required.

Three respondents who neither agreed nor disagreed with this proposal made a further comment. These all related to the appropriateness of assessment by examination for some aspects of further

mathematics, such as problem solving. One respondent suggested that, if no NEA were possible, more open questions would need to be used.

Of the seven respondents (three official responses) who disagreed with this proposal and made a further comment, six considered that there was a role for NEA for some aspects of the further mathematics A level, such as numerical methods, modelling and statistics, especially given that some content was not specified at this stage. One official response repeated that examination-only assessment disadvantaged a specific group of students (protected characteristics).

Two of the three respondents who strongly disagreed with this proposal and made a free-text comment referred again to the fact that with a substantial amount of content undecided it was not possible to suggest that examination-only assessment was most appropriate, and some content might be assessed better using NEA. This latter comment was also made by the third respondent.

Q41: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate for A levels and AS qualifications in further mathematics?

Twenty-eight respondents provided further free-text responses to this question. Of these, 11 represented official responses (one school or college, five other representative or interest groups and four awarding organisations).

SUMMARY POINTS

- Overall, there was agreement with the proposed AOs, but some concern was expressed by several respondents that 50 per cent of the content was not confirmed.
- There were some comments expressing concern that proof could be learned by rote and reproduced.
- Several respondents (official and personal responses) who disagreed or strongly disagreed with the proposal were not happy with the sub-objectives (the bullet points), which they felt lacked clarity and might be open to misinterpretation.

KEY POINTS BY LEVEL OF AGREEMENT WITH THE PROPOSALS

Of those strongly agreeing and agreeing, 16 made further comments (five official responses). The majority of these confirmed their agreement with the AOs. One respondent welcomed the emphasis on problem solving but was unsure how assessment would work in practice. Another respondent expressed concern about how the additional content would be decided.

Four respondents (personal responses) opting for the 'neither agree nor disagree response' made a further comment. One of these respondents felt that the AOs could not be fixed if the content was not agreed and another expressed concerns that further mathematics as a qualification would be confusing for employers if not clearly defined.

Two respondents (one official and one personal response) who disagreed with this proposal, made a further relevant comment. Both were in agreement with the AOs but had concerns about the lack of clarity in the sub-objectives (bullet points).

Six respondents (five official responses) who strongly disagreed with this proposal made further relevant comments. These comments all repeated what had already been said in relation to the AOs for AS/A level mathematics. There were concerns from three respondents that students may simply learn proof by rote and reproduce them. The recall of proof in AO1 was considered inappropriate and it was thought that the construction of proof in AO2 should not be limited to non-standard proofs, and assessment mechanisms needed to ensure proof was genuinely tested. Lack of mention of technology in the AOs was considered by two respondents to result in the AOs not meeting the requirements of the proposed content. As with responses for AS/A level mathematics, issues were

largely with the detail in the sub-objectives rather than the three AOs. As mentioned previously, one awarding organisation respondent referred to a meeting attended by Ofqual and four awarding organisations, in which it was agreed that the bullet points were not fit for purpose and would need to be re-written. This work is still going on.

Q42: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for AS qualifications in further mathematics?

Twenty-seven respondents provided further free-text responses to this question. Of these, 14 represented official responses (three schools or colleges, seven other representative/interest groups and four awarding organisations).

- There was less support for this proposal than for the previous proposals and there was less consensus on what the issues were. Some respondents felt there was need for greater weighting of AO3 (and, to a lesser extent, AO2) to ensure the AOs reflected the qualification aims, but equally there were concerns that there was already too much weight given to AO3, which would cause issues when writing qualifications.
- There was also concern about the proposed weighting, given that 50 per cent of the content was not specified.

KEY POINTS BY LEVEL OF AGREEMENT WITH THE PROPOSALS

The six respondents (one official response) who responded ‘strongly agree’ to this proposal and made a further comment confirmed their agreement with the proposal. Two of the five respondents (three official responses) who agreed were glad of the increased weighting for AO1 to ensure the examination were accessible for weaker students. One of these respondents suggested that weighting could be taken from AO2, but another respondent felt that there was some argument to increase AO2 to prepare students for university-level study (whether this should come from AO1 or AO3 was not mentioned).

Three respondents (one official response) who responded ‘neither agree nor disagree’ made further relevant comments. Two of these argued that AOs would need to be flexible as there was currently no understanding about what 50 per cent of the content would look like. One further respondent was concerned that the weighting would limit the options at AS.

Seven respondents who disagreed with the proposal also made a free-text comment. Two respondents, including a union, wanted a point weighting rather than a range/tolerance. A subject association/learned society and a representative/special interest group felt AO3 weighting was too low. One felt that the weighting of AO3 did not match the aspirations of the subject content. The second respondent was concerned the weighting tolerance was too high and suggested that weighting for AO1 should be lowered to allow a heavier weighting for AO3. Conversely, two respondents felt that at AS AO1 should be higher – one felt that this would make the papers more accessible for weaker students and the other that it would not be possible to set papers within the proposed weighting.

Of the six who strongly disagreed and made a further comment, three were awarding organisations and one a membership group. The four felt that the current weighting would make it difficult to produce balanced and accessible papers. One awarding organisation and the membership group referred to the statements in italics at the end of AO2 and AO3, stating that if these statements remained there would need to be greater emphasis on AO1. The membership group felt that the weighing for AO2 and AO3 could be higher if NEA were permitted. Another awarding organisation recommended that the weightings be removed or widened considerably, to allow for innovation. A

further awarding organisation thought more consideration was needed on how marks were allocated to AOs within questions.

Q43: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for A levels in further mathematics?

Twenty-five respondents provided further free-text responses to this question. Of these, 17 represented official responses. All responses either duplicated or referred to the previous response given to question 36 or for parallel questions for A level mathematics.

Q44: Further comments

Thirty-seven respondents made further comments. These comments largely mirrored those for AS and A level mathematics. They reflected or added further detail to comments already made to previous questions or related to topics outside the scope of this consultation, such as the decoupling of the AS and A level and the inclusion, or exclusion, of specific content. Several respondents commented on their hope that students would still be able to have some options about which area of mathematics they focused on, even with the removal of modules. There were a few questions about the expected length of the examination papers, given that currently 50 per cent of the course content was not specified.

5.9 Modern foreign languages

5.9.1 Quantitative responses

Uniquely in this consultation, modern foreign languages had six closed questions – the extra question concerning (lack of) exceptions for all languages within the suite of MFL AS and A levels. The total number of respondents endorsing each category in the closed questions is shown in Table 21.

Table 21: Levels of agreement with closed questions on modern foreign languages

Question number	Question	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Total number of responses
Q45	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?	10	12	17	31	11	81
Q46	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?	10	11	20	28	12	81
Q47	To what extent do you agree or disagree that all A levels 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?	5	11	21	25	19	81
Q48	To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate for A levels and AS qualifications in modern foreign languages?	5	21	20	26	5	77
Q49	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?	3	20	24	23	6	76
Q50	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?	3	13	27	26	7	76

The strength of agreement and disagreement (excluding the central category) to the modern foreign languages Likert items is given in Figure 13.

Modern foreign languages

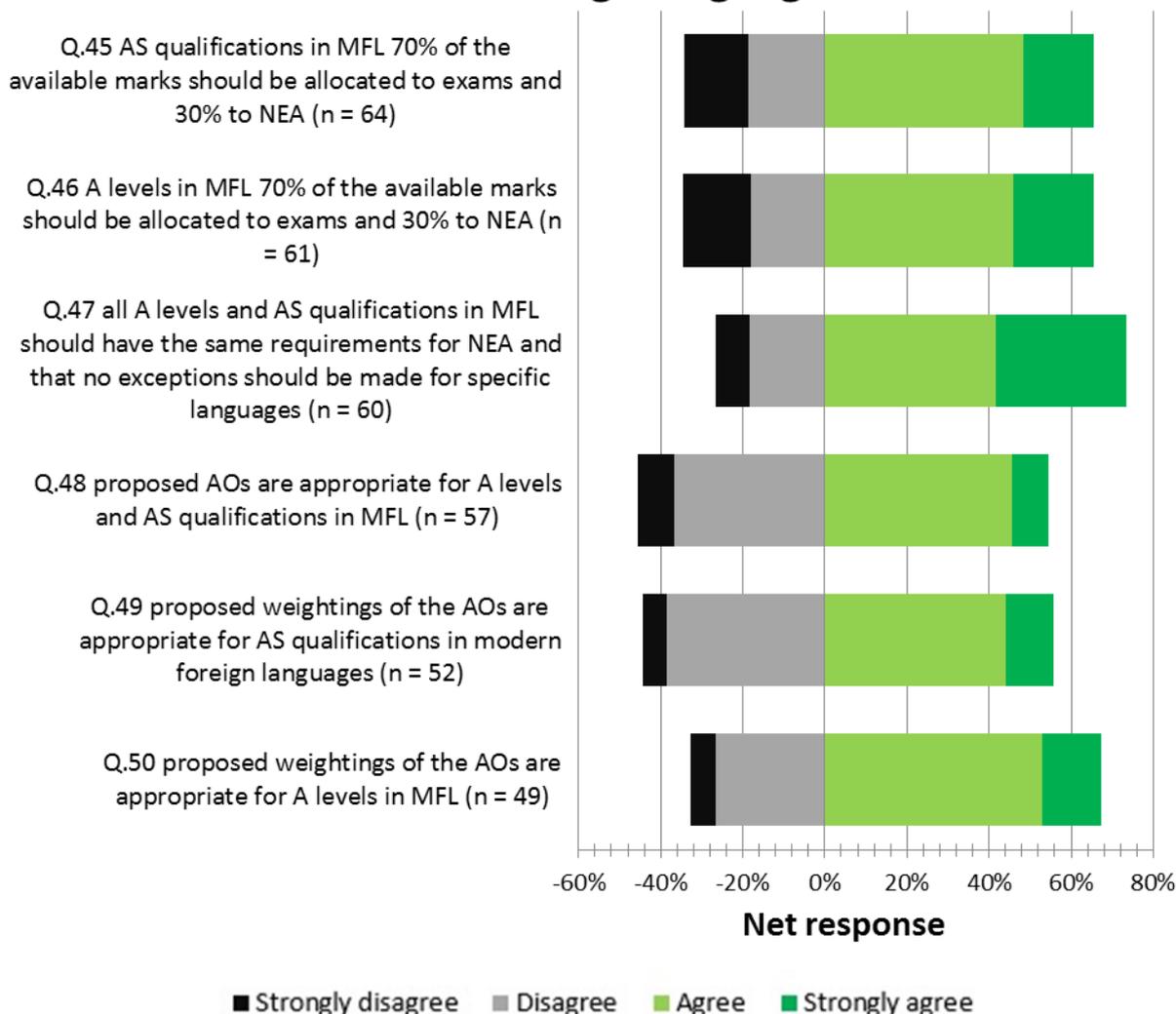


Figure 13: Stacked bar chart for modern foreign languages

The agreement rates for modern foreign languages questions were high. Of all the MFL questions, the proposals that there should be no exceptions for specific foreign languages had the highest levels of net agreement.

5.9.2 Qualitative responses

Table 22: Modern foreign languages: summary of the number of comments made, by level of agreement with the proposals

Question number	Type of response	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree		Strongly agree	Total number of responses
				disagree	Agree		
Q45	Official	2	1	1	8	3	15
	Personal	6	11	2	14	7	40
Q46	Official	2	0	3	6	4	15
	Personal	6	10	4	14	6	40
Q47	Official	2	2	1	6	2	13
	Personal	2	8	3	10	14	37
Q48	Official	0	7	1	7	0	15
	Personal	4	14	2	13	3	36
Q49	Official	0	7	3	2	1	13
	Personal	2	11	5	6	3	27
Q50	Official	0	3	4	4	2	13
	Personal	1	9	6	5	3	24

Q45: 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?

Fifty-five respondents provided further free-text responses to this question. Of these, 15 represented official responses (five schools or colleges, one HEI, five other representative/interest groups and four awarding organisations).

SUMMARY POINTS

- There was largely support from respondents for the allocation of 30 per cent to NEA, which was seen to reflect the importance of speaking the target language. Some respondents suggested that this should be assessed by an external examiner to provide more consistent and reliable marking. The inconsistency of external marking was raised as a concern by one respondent giving a personal response.
- It was obvious from responses that most respondents understood the 30 per cent NEA would be the oral examination. A few respondents queried the terminology, as orals were usually termed as examinations in MFL qualifications; others stated their assumption that the NEA would be the oral and would assess speaking skills.
- Most of those who gave their reasons for not supporting the proposal objected on the grounds of the potential for malpractice and unreliable marking of the 30 per cent NEA element. It was rarely made explicit whether the malpractice and unreliable marking comment related just to teacher assessment, but this was implied in some instances. This led to several respondents calling for AS qualifications to be entirely by examination.
- A small number of those objecting to the proposal argued for a higher proportion of NEA. Notably, there were a couple of official responses (from a sixth-form college and a university) that stated that this would prepare students better for studying MFL at degree level.

KEY POINTS BY LEVEL OF AGREEMENT WITH THE PROPOSALS

Thirty-two respondents who strongly agreed or agreed with this proposal made a further comment. Twenty of these confirmed their approval of the 30 per cent allocation to NEA, with a few confirming that they expected this to mean an oral. Four of these felt the balance reflected that speaking was one of the four language skills. A further six respondents who agreed with the proposal felt that 30 per cent was the right proportion of NEA, to ensure fairness and to avoid malpractice. Only one of these responses explicitly stated an expectation that NEA would be assessed by the teacher.

Of the respondents giving a 'neither agree nor disagree' response, three made a further relevant comment. These were all different. One respondent felt that it could be a positive change only if examination centres were very thoroughly monitored. This respondent felt that a considerable amount of exam centres gave too much help to their pupils during the GCSE MFL exams. A further respondent felt 30 per cent NEA was a good idea but was concerned that awarding organisations might not redevelop some of the language qualifications with a smaller number of entries to meet the requirement. An awarding organisation respondent felt 30 per cent NEA was appropriate for speaking.

Twelve respondents (three official responses) who either disagreed or strongly disagreed with this proposal made a further comment. Concerns over malpractice or inconsistent marking of NEA (12 comments) ranged from concerns about inconsistent marking by external examiners to comments about too much teacher intervention. Conversely, there were comments that suggested all assessment should be externally marked to ensure fairness.

Two respondents, including one higher education official response, felt spoken language should represent more of the qualification, with up to 50 per cent NEA; this, they felt, was a better learning experience for students, providing them with greater opportunity to do well, and would reflect the drive for communication in the target language at key stages 3 and 4.

Q46: 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?

Fifty-five respondents provided further free-text responses to this question. Of these, 15 represented official responses. Responses overall were the same as for AS (with many respondents referring directly to their previous response to the previous question about the AS qualification).

Q47: To what extent do you agree or disagree that all A levels 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?

Fifty respondents provided further free-text responses to this question. Of these, 13 represented official responses (six schools or colleges, one HEI, two other representative/interest groups and four awarding organisations).

SUMMARY POINTS

- Overall there was agreement with this proposal.
- Where there were objections, these generally addressed one of two issues: several respondents pointed out that some languages perceived as more 'difficult' such as Cantonese, Mandarin and Japanese cannot necessarily be treated in the same way as the more widely taught European languages in terms of NEAs, and a few respondents felt there might be a negative impact on the capacity to offer these language courses.

KEY POINTS BY LEVEL OF AGREEMENT WITH THE PROPOSALS

There was a high level of agreement with this proposal from those adding a further comment. Comments tended to refer to perceived fairness and consistency in having a 'standard' assessment format across all MFLs.

Seven respondents, including two awarding organisations and a union, who disagreed or strongly disagreed with this proposal expressed concerns about the practicalities of NEA for some small-entry languages and the feasibility of developing and offering these. Specific concerns included the challenges around arranging the NEAs across all languages offered and finding suitably qualified people to undertake the assessments.

Q48: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate for A levels and AS qualifications in modern foreign languages?

Fifty-one respondents provided further free-text responses to this question. Of these, 15 represented official responses (five schools or colleges, one HEI, five other representative or interest groups and four awarding organisations).

SUMMARY POINTS

- Opinion was fairly evenly split between those agreeing and those disagreeing with this proposal.
- Some respondents accepted the proposal without further comment, while others felt that the proposed AOs represented a shift away from speaking and listening. In particular, AO4 attracted criticism, and some respondents complained that there was too much emphasis on cultural awareness (although others welcomed its return) and critical analysis skills.
- Some respondents felt there was too much emphasis on writing in English.

KEY POINTS BY LEVEL OF AGREEMENT WITH THE PROPOSALS

There were three respondents (personal responses) who strongly agreed with the proposal who made a further comment. Two of these welcomed the cultural context in AO4. Of the 20 respondents agreeing with this proposal, there were eight expressing some reservations. Two respondents, including a union, felt there was not enough detail at present to make a judgement on the AOs, for example where the 30 per cent for the oral examination sat in relation to the four AOs. One awarding organisation was concerned about the financial viability and practicality of NEA for small-entry language qualifications. Two respondents questioned whether the cultural content would be prescriptive. Two further respondents expressing personal views were concerned that the cultural context would make the subject harder and affect the number of students studying MFLs.

There were 21 respondents who disagreed with this proposal and made further comments. Eight respondents, including one representative/special interest group reported some concerns about the proposal that candidates undertake written examination responses in English. Three awarding organisations expressed concerns about specific AOs:

- One awarding organisation expressed concerns about AO4, in particular the alleged lack of clarity for the critical analysis requirement and whether this referred solely to the essay in English at A level. If this was the case, they suggested that the weighting of 20% for this AO for AS would be difficult to apply.
- Another awarding organisation made very specific suggestions on the AOs, relating primarily to the wording used. They pointed out ambiguities or lack of clarity in some of the terminology, but they also commented on AO4 and stated that the emphasis on cultural awareness was a welcome addition (provided it was assessed qualitatively with less emphasis on a 'facts and figures' approach). They raised a concern, however, about the use

of an English language essay and said that it would be preferable for students to write in the target language.

- The other awarding organisation commented that the proposed AOs 1, 2 and 3 were appropriate but that AO4 was a cause for concern on the basis that, first, it encouraged a ‘facts and figures’ approach to teaching rather than the ‘incidental’ accrual of knowledge on cultural aspects; second, the emphasis on critical analysis might not be relevant or accessible to all AS and A level candidates and this might serve as a disincentive to study MFL at this level; and, third, the concerns raised by other respondents over the production of work in English were also repeated.

Of the four respondents who strongly disagreed with the proposal and made a further comment, two were concerned about the requirement to write an essay in English for AO4. The other two respondents were concerned that some students would not want to study cultural context.

Q49: 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?

Forty respondents provided further free-text responses to this question. Of these, 13 represented official responses (four schools or colleges, one HEI, four other representative or interest groups and four awarding organisations).

SUMMARY POINTS

- There was more disagreement than agreement in the free-text responses to this proposal. *Respondents were more likely to respond with any detail if they disagreed, however.*
- Respondents who commented on their objections echoed the views expressed in the previous question (see above); complaints were generally levelled at a perceived over-reliance on cultural awareness and literature at the expense of speaking, listening, reading and writing skills.
- Some respondents expressed the view that AO weighting at AS should be different from A level to help ‘bridge the gap’ between GCSE and A level by having a lower weighting on AO4 in the AS qualification.
- Several respondents argued that the use of English in student responses should be kept to a minimum.

KEY POINTS BY LEVEL OF AGREEMENT WITH THE PROPOSALS

Approximately half of the 18 respondents disagreeing with this proposal who went on to make a comment had concerns about the weighting of AO4. The emphasis on literature was felt to be too great for AS study and was at the expense of speaking and listening. Three awarding organisations felt that the weightings needed revision and/or more clarity:

- One awarding organisation expressed concerns about the 20% AO weighting for AO4 and suggested that there was a lack of clarity for the critical analysis requirement and whether this referred solely to the essay in English at A level.
- Another awarding organisation felt that the introduction of AO4 and the increase in weighting of AO3 had resulted in a considerable reduction in the weighting of AO1 and AO2 compared with the current syllabus. They expressed concerns that this had meant that listening would have the lowest weighting of all the skills at 15%. They suggested that the weighting of AO3 be reduced to 25% so that more emphasis might be placed on the skill of listening. They also recommended

that the rules on ‘acceptable error’ be tightened in order to counteract any concern that the grammar weighting was too low and to ensure a greater focus on grammatical accuracy.

- An awarding organisation also commented that AO1 should carry a higher weighting for AS (practical use of language) and that the AO4 weighting should be decreased.

Four further respondents felt that the emphasis on AO4 meant that the AS was as hard as the A level. There should be greater emphasis on the proficiency of speaking and listening at this level.

Q50: 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?

Thirty-seven respondents provided further free-text responses to this question. Of these, 13 represented official responses (four schools or colleges, one HEI, four other representative or interest groups and four awarding organisations).

SUMMARY POINTS

Many of the respondents repeated their response to the previous question on weighting for the AS qualification.

- There was slightly more agreement than disagreement in the free-text responses to this proposal, but respondents were more likely to respond with any detail if they disagreed.
- Respondents who commented on their objections echoed the views expressed in the question on the AOs (see above); complaints were generally levelled at a perceived over-reliance on cultural awareness and literature at the expense of speaking, listening, reading and writing skills.
- Some respondents expressed the view that AO weighting at AS should be different from A level to help ‘bridge the gap’ between GCSE and A level.

KEY POINTS BY LEVEL OF AGREEMENT WITH THE PROPOSALS

Those who agreed or strongly agreed with the proposed weightings for the AOs and who made a comment generally agreed that the weightings were well balanced and appropriate for the subject and level of study.

Twelve respondents disagreed and made a comment, and these tended to repeat the concerns voiced in response to question 49 on the proposed weightings for the AS qualification – that is, concerns about the level of emphasis on cultural awareness and on the use of English language for assessed work. One official response (representing an awarding organisation) suggested that the weighting for AO1 and AO2 should be increased (and AO3 reduced to accommodate this) in order to better reflect the ‘mixed skills’ required during language acquisition.

The one respondent who strongly disagreed with the weightings and made a comment suggested that equal weightings should be applied to each of the four objectives but did not specify the reasons why this should be changed.

Some of those who indicated that they neither agreed nor disagreed with the proposed weightings echoed the other comments on the use of the English language for some of the work. Commentators felt this was counterintuitive for an MFL qualification and could limit students’ opportunities to develop their skills and competencies in the target language.

Q51: Further comments

Forty-five respondents made further comments. Many of these expressed concerns that proposed changes to the AS and A level qualifications might result in a further decline in the number of students studying an MFL. A large number of these comments related to issues with content.

Four non-standard responses were received. These reflected responses to the online questionnaire.

5.10 Music GCSE

5.10.1 Quantitative responses

Music GCSE had four closed items in the survey instrument. Numbers of respondents on these items by category are shown in Table 23.

Table 23: Levels of agreement with closed questions on music GCSE

Question number	Question	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Total number of responses
Q52	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?	13	8	17	10	10	58
Q53	To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate for GCSEs in music?	4	9	19	20	5	57
Q54	To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for GCSEs in music?	7	9	20	15	4	55
Q55	To what extent do you agree or disagree that new GCSEs in music should not be tiered?	1	1	19	15	20	56

The net rates of agreement and disagreement on GCSE music closed questions are directly contrasted in Figure 14.

GCSE music

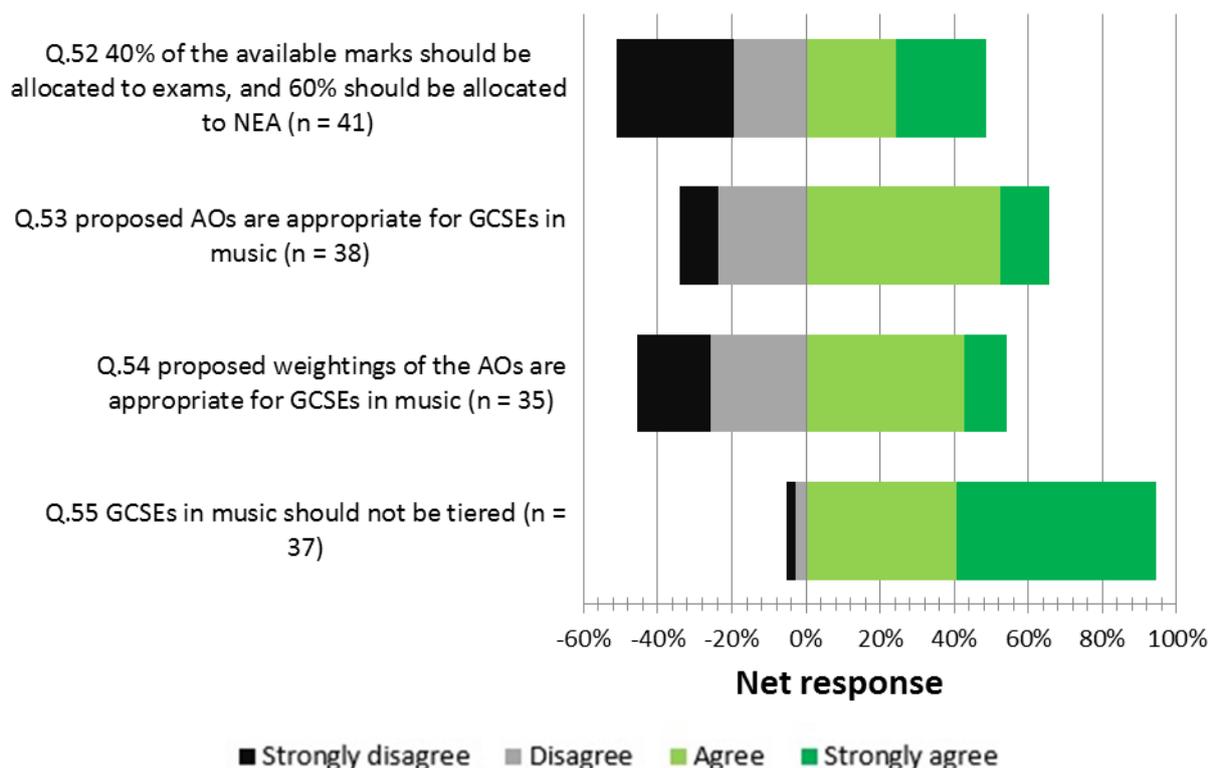


Figure 14: Stacked bar chart for GCSE music

In the GCSE music closed responses, there were only two people who disagreed with the proposal to have no tiering, but there were more objections in respect of the other questions. The biggest net disagreements were, first, in the assessment arrangements questions and, second, the question relating to AO weightings.

5.10.2 Qualitative responses

Table 24: GCSE music: summary of the number of comments made, by level of agreement with the proposals

Question number	Type of response	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Total number of responses
Q52	Official	6	4	2	2	3	17
	Personal	6	3	4	4	5	22
Q53	Official	2	4	0	5	2	13
	Personal	1	4	0	9	3	17
Q54	Official	2	3	1	3	3	12
	Personal	1	6	2	6	1	16
Q55	Official	1	0	1	3	9	14
	Personal	0	1	1	4	10	16

Q52: 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?

Thirty-nine respondents provided further free-text responses to this question. Of these, 17 represented official responses (three schools or colleges, eight other representative or interest groups, three awarding organisations and two HEIs).

SUMMARY POINTS

- The majority of the respondents considered the proposed 60 per cent non-exam marks too low. Many cited 70 per cent as the preferred allocation of non-exam marks, and several suggested a higher proportion (75–90 per cent). Most respondents to this question responded in a non-standard format (letter) – see below.

KEY POINTS BY LEVEL OF AGREEMENT WITH THE PROPOSALS

Of the ‘strongly agree/agree’ responses to the online questionnaire, there were 14 further comments, the majority of which considered the split to be a good balance between practice and theory. There were responses from two awarding organisations.

There were 19 free-text comments relating to the ‘strongly disagree/disagree’ responses. Of these, nine were official responses.

Reasons given for the need for a higher proportion of non-exam marks were:

- It represents the balance of musicality/doing and theory – the practical nature of the subject
- It reflects the proposed subject content – allowing for some NEA of AO3 and AO4 (AO3 should include some evaluative and practical assessment of own performance) and reflecting the practical/performance nature of the subject
- It would allow for more musical teaching and learning at KS3 and GCSE – a weighting of 40 per cent for exam assessment will over-emphasise appreciating, resulting in a disproportionate amount of time spent on this area in the classroom
- A limit of 60 per cent non-exam marks would disadvantage many pupils who elect to study music as a creative, practical, performance-based subject

In addition, one response noted that the definition of the term ‘non-examined assessment’ was inconsistent with ‘graded music examination’ assessed by external examiner. What was defined as NEA for this consultation was considered an ‘examination’ elsewhere.

Two respondents felt that 60 per cent non-exam marks was too high.

There was a very high non-standard format response to this question. A total of 413 responses (including eight organisation-level responses¹⁴) were received, of which 366 responses were identical. Most responses referred to issues with the content,¹⁵ but the majority (almost all) also expressed concerns about the available marks for NEAs. The majority of responses stated that 70 per cent allocation of marks to NEAs was more appropriate:

¹⁴ Please note – one organisation included a very detailed response, of which only a small amount was relevant to the specific questions in this consultation.

¹⁵ Most considered the main focus of the study (Western music 1700–1900) too narrow and made suggestions as to how it should be widened.

We believe that this [percentage of marks for non-exam assessment] should be 70 per cent, to enable flexible and musical delivery of assessment and learning. In a subject where music is the primary method of communication it is difficult to see how this could be achieved with as much as 40% of assessment examined.

An identical response to question 52 was received in non-standard format from 366 individuals.

The majority of responses also expressed concerns that changes to the qualification would not encourage young musicians to study music at school.

Two responses in non-standard format supported the proposed split 60:40 split.

Q53: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate for GCSEs in music?

Thirty respondents provided further free-text responses to this question. Of these, 13 represented official responses (three schools or colleges, six other representative/special interest groups and four awarding organisations).

SUMMARY POINTS

- There was slightly more agreement than disagreement with the proposal in the free-text responses. Those agreeing and disagreeing made some suggestions for specific changes to the AOs. These were largely to emphasise the role of active participation in music.

KEY POINTS BY LEVEL OF AGREEMENT WITH THE PROPOSALS

Of the 11 'strongly disagree/disagree' comments from respondents, there were a number of recommendations for changes to AOs, many of these related in some way to the use of the term 'apply' within three of the AOs. The specific recommendations were as follows:

- Two people made the following recommendation for AO1:
 - Amend to 'Perform with technical control, expression and interpretation', so it is clear that this AO is about performing.
- Two respondents made the following recommendation for AO2:
 - Amend to 'Compose and develop musical ideas with technical control and coherence', so that it is clear that this AO is about composing.
- One person suggested AO1 and AO2 should include a reference to successful communication of intent, while another expressed the view that the 'application' of performance skills required no creative intention or critical thought.
- One respondent said all learning objectives should refer to performing or composing.
- One person suggested that the reference to elements was entirely inappropriate, as it lacks continuity from the national curriculum, which refers to the same things as 'dimensions'.
- AO4 was criticised by one respondent on the basis that context in musical learning has value only when it is related directly to practical engagement with music making (both performing and composing). Another respondent suggested AO3 and AO4 should be merged into a single AO (with a weighting of 40 per cent).

Of the fourteen respondents agreeing with the proposal, three also made suggestions for some changes:

- Students should be allowed to choose their options more flexibly – there may be a student who composes better than performing and reading theory, and vice versa.
- It needs to be made clear that AO4 is overarching and should be assessed in each of the three remaining AOs to emphasise the integration of performing, composing and listening/appraising activities.
- The wording could be improved as follows: AO1 ‘Perform with technical control, expression and interpretation’ (to cover the need for accuracy and communication), AO2 ‘Compose and develop musical ideas with technical control and coherence’ (coherence in this instance would need to be defined as ‘using and combining musical elements fluently so that they make sense as a whole’).

Q54: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for GCSEs in music?

Twenty-eight respondents provided further free-text responses to this question. Of these, 12 represented official responses (three schools or colleges, six other representative or interest groups, two awarding organisations and one HEI).

SUMMARY POINTS

- Views were fairly evenly split as to whether the proposed weightings were appropriate for GCSEs in music.
- As was the case with the previous question, the reasons given for objecting to the proposals on the weighting of the AOs were varied and sometimes contradictory: for example, one person complained there was too much weight on performance and another not enough. Similarly mixed views were expressed about the emphasis on composing and AO4.

KEY POINTS BY LEVEL OF AGREEMENT WITH THE PROPOSALS

Twelve respondents who disagreed or strongly disagreed with the proposal made further comments. Some of these were specific suggestions for a change in the weighting of the AOs:

- Two respondents commented that they felt the weighting applied to AO1 and AO2 was too low; in both instances this was due to the perception that performing and composing should form a greater part of the qualification. Contrastingly, one person commented that the weighting applied to AO2 (composing) was too high for GCSE level.
- The weightings applied to AO3 and AO4 attracted several comments: two people stated that the weighting for AO3 was too high, one felt that this reflected unreasonably high expectations on ‘critical judgements’ while another said that AO3 and AO4 with their combined weighting of 40% placed too much emphasis on appraisal and knowledge.
- There were two comments that the 10% weighting for AO4 was too low, one of which stated that demonstrating knowledge and understanding should be given greater importance, while the other felt that the low weighting would not adequately prepare students for A level and university-level study of music.
- One respondent commented that AO3 and AO4 should be merged into one AO; this person expressed the view that separating the two and allocating the combined 40% weighting had been designed solely to give greater weight to a written exam.

- One person expressed the view that the weightings did not allow for students to critically judge their own compositions and that AO3 should be expanded to allow for this.

Q55: To what extent do you agree or disagree that new GCSEs in music should not be tiered?

Thirty respondents provided further free-text responses to this question. Of these, 14 represented official responses.

SUMMARY POINTS

- There was strong support for this proposal. In the free-text responses only two respondents who disagreed made further comments; of these, one (a representative/special interest group) disagreed, arguing that tiering increased accessibility for some groups of students.

5.11 Music AS and A level

5.11.1 Quantitative analysis

Scores by category on the five closed questions concerning music AS and A level are shown in Table 25.

Table 25: Levels of agreement with closed questions on music AS and A levels

Question number	Question	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Total number of responses
Q56	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?	7	6	21	13	8	55
Q57	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?	8	5	20	14	8	55
Q58	To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate for A levels and AS qualifications in music?	3	6	21	23	2	55
Q59	To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for AS qualifications in music?	3	9	21	15	4	52
Q60	To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for A levels in music?	3	7	21	16	5	52

The net agreement (excluding the central category) on the closed responses for AS and A level music is shown in Figure 15.

A level and AS music

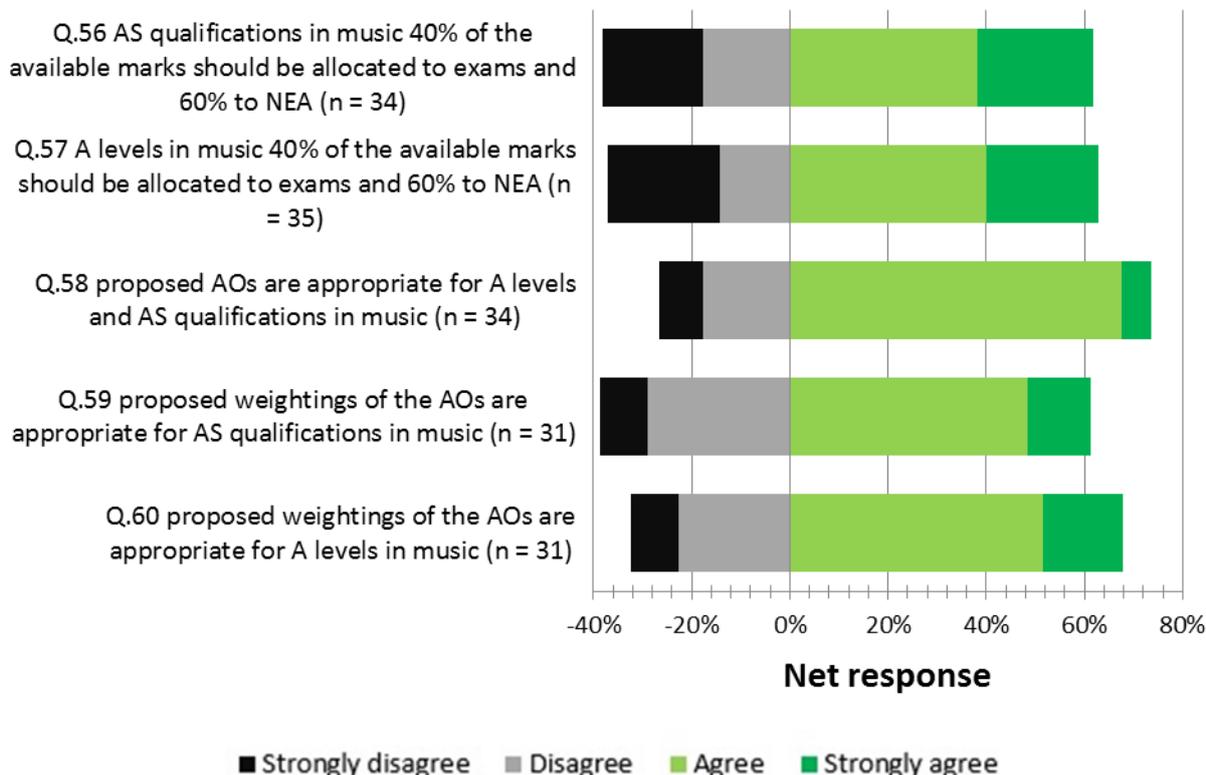


Figure 15: Stacked bar chart for AS and A level music

The closed-question data set for AS and A level music is among the smallest for all the subject/qualification combinations in this consultation (between 52 and 55 responses). There is net agreement in response to each question, but notably, where there is disagreement, it tends to be *strong* disagreement in the questions about the relative proportions of exams and NEA.

5.11.2 Qualitative responses

Table 26: Music AS and A level: summary of the number of comments made, by level of agreement with the proposals

Question number	Type of response	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree		Strongly agree	Total number of responses
				Agree	Disagree		
Q56	Official	3	3	2	3	2	13
	Personal	4	2	1	6	6	19
Q57	Official	2	3	2	3	2	12
	Personal	5	1	1	6	6	19
Q58	Official	2	4	0	5	0	11
	Personal	0	2	1	9	1	13
Q59	Official	1	5	2	2	1	11
	Personal	2	4	0	7	2	15
Q60	Official	1	4	0	4	2	11
	Personal	2	3	1	6	3	15

Q56: 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?

Thirty-two respondents provided further free-text responses to this question. Of these, 13 represented official responses (three schools or colleges, six other representative or interest groups, three awarding organisations and one HEI).

KEY POINTS

- As with GCSE in music, more expressions of disagreement were received in non-standard format (letters).
- Almost all those objecting to this proposal wanted the non-exam allocation of marks to be higher to reflect the practical/performance aspect of the subject.
- A few respondents commented on the need for a clear and unambiguous definition of NEA for music.

Q57: 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?

Thirty-one respondents provided further free-text responses to this question. Of these, 12 represented official responses.

These responses echoed those for GCSE and AS music – with respondents often referring to their earlier responses.

Q58: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate for A levels and AS qualifications in music?

Twenty-five respondents provided further free-text responses to this question. Of these, 11 represented official responses (two schools or colleges, five other representative groups, four awarding organisations).

SUMMARY POINTS

- Comments made were largely supportive of the proposal.

- Where objections were made, they raised separate issues: for example, one respondent was concerned that too much emphasis on practice and performance might devalue the subject, another that there should be more emphasis on AO4, another commented on the apparent separation of ‘knowledge’ from ‘critical judgement’ in the AOs, and another reported that centres found the AO3 and AO4 a contrived split.

Q59: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for AS qualifications in music?

Twenty-six respondents provided further free-text responses to this question. Of these, 11 represented official responses (two school or colleges, five other representative or interest groups, three awarding organisations and one HEI).

SUMMARY POINTS

- There was largely agreement with the proposal.
- There were some objections with recommendations for changes in the weighting:
 - The weighting applied to AO4 (15%) was considered too low by five of those who commented, all of whom mentioned concerns about how much importance was being placed on demonstrating understanding and knowledge.
 - One person stated that AO3 should have a higher weighting but did not give a reason for holding this view.
 - One respondent said that the proposed weighting for AO2 was too high and that the weighting should be shifted away from AO2 and towards AO4.
 - Two respondents (both representing official responses) stated that the proposed weightings for AO1 and AO2 were too low; both indicated they would like to see greater emphasis on the practical elements of, and active engagement with, music reflected in higher weightings for these two objectives.

Q60: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for A levels in music?

Twenty-six respondents provided further free-text responses to this question. Of these, 11 represented official responses.

The majority of responses were either identical to, or referred to, answers relating to AS (see above).

Q61: Further comments

Twenty respondents made further comments. Several of these related to NEA, either making suggestions for how it should be undertaken and/or what guidance might be needed. Other comments largely reiterated earlier responses.

5.12 Physical education GCSE

5.12.1 Quantitative analysis

The scores in all categories on the four closed physical education GCSE questions in the consultation are shown in Table 27.

Table 27: Levels of agreement with closed questions on physical education GCSE

Question number	Question	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Total number of responses
Q62	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?	101	13	14	10	6	144
Q63	To what extent do you agree or disagree that new GCSEs in physical education should not be tiered?	8	17	42	46	27	140
Q64	To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate for GCSEs in physical education?	41	23	39	22	4	129
Q65	To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for GCSEs in physical education?	71	15	24	16	4	130

Agreement and disagreement rates for physical education GCSE are contrasted directly in Figure 16.

GCSE physical education

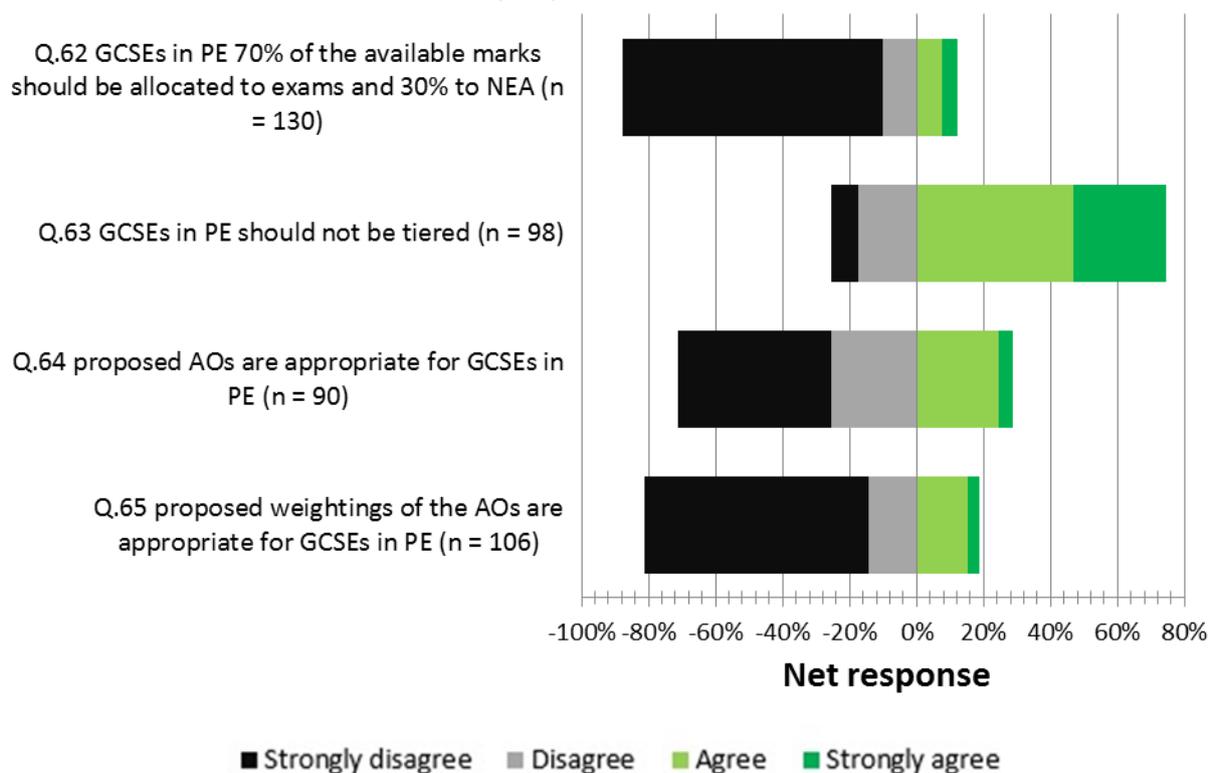


Figure 16: Stacked bar chart for physical education GCSE

GCSE PE has one of the highest response rates to closed questions in the survey. It also has high levels of disagreement – in particular, high levels of strong disagreement – for all questions except the tiering question.

5.12.2 Qualitative responses

Table 28: GCSE PE: summary of the number of comments made, by level of agreement with the proposals

Question number	Type of response	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree		Strongly agree	Total number of responses
				Neither agree nor disagree	Agree		
Q62	Official	29	5	1	1	1	37
	Personal	66	8	1	4	3	82
Q63	Official	2	2	2	7	9	22
	Personal	2	9	4	20	8	43
Q64	Official	10	8	5	4	1	28
	Personal	18	8	9	5	2	42
Q65	Official	18	3	2	4	2	29
	Personal	37	4	4	5	1	51

Q62: 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?

Further free-text responses to this question were provided by 119 respondents. Of these, 37 represented official responses (24 schools or colleges, 9 other representative/interest groups, 3 awarding organisations and 1 employer).

SUMMARY POINTS

- Free-text responses were almost unanimous in their disagreement with only 30 per cent NEA for what they considered a practical subject about 'physical' skills and activity. Many respondents felt the proposed split was incompatible with moves to combat obesity by introducing more physical activity in schools. The qualification also enabled non-academic students to succeed.

KEY POINTS ACCORDING TO LEVEL OF AGREEMENT WITH THE PROPOSAL

Of the 119 comments made, there were only nine from respondents who had strongly agreed or agreed. Responses included concern that there was too much reliance on the practical component, that the split was considered better preparation for AS and A level, that it would offer better theoretical understanding and that it was more balanced.

There were a total of 108 further comments, however, from respondents who had strongly disagreed or disagreed with this proposal. Of these, 64 specifically mentioned the physical nature of the subject and the opportunity to reward sporting prowess and/or hard work and commitment to a sport. The promotion of a healthy and active lifestyle and the need to combat obesity were also mentioned by some of these respondents. A further six respondents mentioned the value of the qualification in building confidence in non-academic students, allowing them the opportunity to succeed.

Q63: To what extent do you agree or disagree that new GCSEs in physical education should not be tiered?

Sixty-five respondents provided further free-text responses to this question. Of these, 22 represented official responses (12 schools and colleges, 7 other representative or interest groups, 2 awarding organisations and 1 employer).

KEY POINTS

- The vast majority of the responses agreed that GCSE in physical education should not be tiered.
- Where there was disagreement, it was due to concerns about the accessibility of theory papers for lower-attaining students, especially if there was to be less assessment of practical skills.

KEY POINTS ACCORDING TO LEVEL OF AGREEMENT WITH THE PROPOSAL

Forty-four respondents who strongly-agreed or agreed with the proposal made further comments. Respondents felt that no tiering was fairer and increased opportunity for all to achieve. The overall assumption was that tiering was not required for a mainly practical subject.

The fifteen respondents who strongly disagreed or disagreed with the proposal and made a further comment felt that a tiered paper might help lower-attaining students, especially if there was more assessment by examination.

Q64: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate for GCSEs in physical education?

Seventy respondents provided further free-text responses to this question. Of these twenty-eight represented official responses (19 schools or colleges, 5 other representative/interest groups and 4 awarding organisations).

SUMMARY POINTS

- There was a high level of disagreement with this proposal. The issue was once again the low proportion of practical assessment to reflect the physical nature of the subject skills.

KEY POINTS ACCORDING TO LEVEL OF AGREEMENT WITH THE PROPOSAL

Forty-four respondents who responded 'strongly disagree' or 'disagree' with this proposal made a further comment. Nearly all of these respondents mentioned the fact that assessment should reflect the physical nature of the subject.

Q65: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for GCSEs in physical education?

Eighty respondents provided further free-text responses to this question. Of these, 29 represented official responses (20 schools or colleges, 6 other representative/interest groups, and 3 awarding organisations).

SUMMARY POINTS

- There was a high level of disagreement with this proposal, too, with responses very similar in nature to the question on the AOs. Respondents requested a higher proportion of practical assessment to reflect the physical nature of the subject skills.

5.13 Physical education AS and A level

5.13.1 Quantitative analysis

The scores in all categories on the five closed physical education AS and A level questions in the consultation are shown in Table 29.

Table 29: Levels of agreement with closed questions on physical education AS and A level

Question number	Question	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Total number of responses
Q66	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?	30	24	20	20	5	99
Q67	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?	24	24	18	26	6	98
Q68	To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate for A levels and AS qualifications in physical education?	7	14	38	23	3	85
Q69	To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for AS qualifications in physical education?	16	15	30	20	2	83
Q70	To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for A levels in physical education?	14	14	29	18	2	77

The net agreement rates for this subject are shown in Figure 17.

Physical education AS and A level

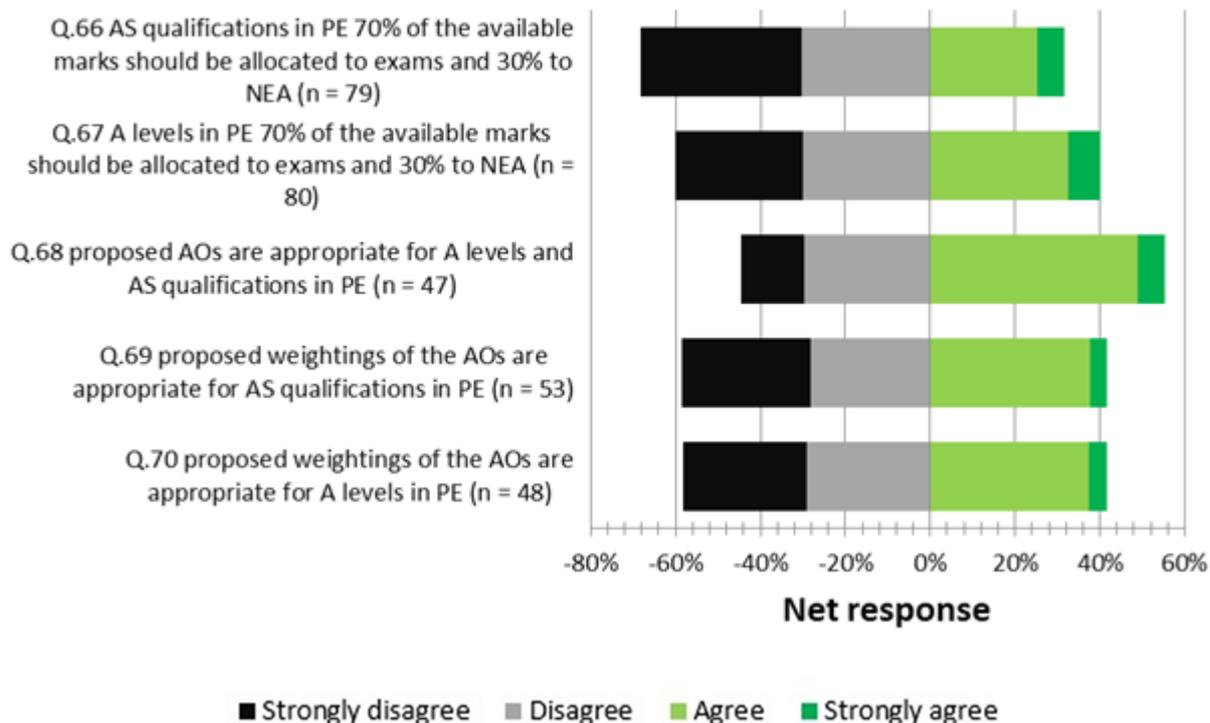


Figure 17: Stacked bar chart for physical education AS and A level

The AS and A level PE closed-question data set is considerably smaller than the GCSE data set (130 – 145 in the case of the GCSEs, a little below 100 for the AS/A levels). The agreement/disagreement split is fairly even, the difference being that agreement tends to be ‘mild’ whereas there is proportionally more ‘strong’ disagreement.

Table 30: Level of disagreement with exams and NEA proposals for PE qualifications

Subject and qualification type	Short version of exam vs. NEA question	Percentage disagreement	Total no. of responses
PE GCSE	GCSEs in PE 70% of the available marks should be allocated to exams and 30% to NEA	79%	144
PE AS	AS qualifications in PE 70% of the available marks should be allocated to exams and 30% to NEA	55%	99
PE A level	A levels in PE 70% of the available marks should be allocated to exams and 30% to NEA	49%	98

There was substantial disagreement with the proposal for the relative proportion of exams and NEA for PE, but there were differences of extent between the GCSE (relatively high) and AS and A level. Disagreement with the GCSE PE proposals is close to 80 per cent, whereas it is 55 per cent for AS and just under half for A level.

5.13.2 Qualitative responses

Table 31: AS and A level PE: summary of the number of comments made, by level of agreement with the proposals

Question number	Type of response	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Total number of responses
Q66	Official	9	8	3	7	3	30
	Personal	11	13	4	13	2	43
Q67	Official	7	7	2	5	4	25
	Personal	9	10	2	12	1	34
Q68	Official	1	4	5	4	2	16
	Personal	3	2	5	5	1	16
Q69	Official	4	4	4	3	2	17
	Personal	5	2	4	6	1	18
Q70	Official	3	3	6	3	1	16
	Personal	5	2	3	5	0	15

Q66: 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?

Seventy-three respondents provided further free-text responses to this question. Of these, 30 represented official responses (17 schools and colleges, 8 other representative/interest groups, 4 awarding organisations and 1 employer).

SUMMARY POINTS

- There was less disagreement with the lower proportion of NEA in these responses than there had been for GCSE.
- Where there was disagreement, reasons cited, as before, related to the physical nature of the subject.
- Where there was agreement, respondents felt that the split reflected the more academic/theoretical nature of the subject at this level and progression to ‘sports science’ at degree level.

Twenty-five respondents who strongly agreed or agreed with this proposal made further comments. Seventeen of these respondents (including three awarding organisations and a representative/special interest group) felt it allowed the subject to be more academic and prepared students for further study and university.

Of the 41 comments received from respondents who strongly disagreed or disagreed, nearly all referred to the physical nature of the subject and the need for a higher proportion of practical assessment.

Q67: 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?

Fifty-nine respondents provided further free-text responses to this question. Of these, 25 represented official responses. The respondents offering free-text responses largely repeated or referred to their responses to the previous question (see above).

Q68: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate for A levels and AS qualifications in physical education?

Thirty-two respondents provided further free-text responses to this question. Of these, 16 represented official responses. There was slightly more agreement than disagreement with the proposed AOs in the free-text responses but there were far fewer comments than for the previous questions. Where further comments were made, again respondents largely repeated or referred to responses to the last two questions.

Q69: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for AS qualifications in physical education?

Thirty-five respondents also provided further free-text responses to this question. Of these, 17 represented official responses. There was a higher proportion of disagreement with this proposal, but free-text responses largely echoed or referred to responses to the previous three questions.

Q70: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for A levels in physical education?

Thirty-one respondents provided further free-text responses to this question. Of these, 16 represented official responses. Response to this question overall echoed the higher proportion of disagreement with the question above on AS AO weightings. Free-text responses repeated or referred to previous responses on AS and A level physical education.

Q71: Further comments

Forty-eight respondents made further comments. While these mainly reiterated what had been said before, especially in response to the non-exam/exam assessment split, there were some additional concerns that rounders was no longer a GCSE sport. Although a comment regarding content, similar concerns were echoed in two responses received in non-standard format (letter).

5.14 Disagreement on questions about the split between exam assessment and NEA

It should be plain from the foregoing reports of findings that most disagreement in this consultation was about whether to assess through examination or NEA. Table 32 was developed to gauge this issue across the subjects in the consultation, rank-ordering subjects (or subject-qualification combinations in the case of those subjects for which both GCSE and AS/A levels were included in the consultation). Those where there was most disagreement appear at the top, and those with least disagreement (most agreement) at the bottom.

'Disagreement' was calculated by summing 'strongly disagree' and 'disagree' responses. The number of responses for each question in the table is given in the final column, to give a sense of whether a high percentage of disagreement was based on a large or small number of responses.

Table 32: Percentage disagreement on question about the split between exam assessment and NEA

Subject and qualification type	Short version of exam vs. NEA question	Percentage disagreement	Total no. of responses
Dance GCSE	GCSEs in dance 40% of the available marks should be allocated to exams and 60% to NEA	84%	212
PE GCSE	GCSEs in PE 70% of the available marks should be allocated to exams and 30% to NEA	79%	144
PE AS	AS qualifications in PE 70% of the available marks should be allocated to exams and 30% to NEA	55%	99
Dance AS	AS qualifications in dance 50% of the available marks should be allocated to exams and 50% to NEA	51%	188
PE A level	A levels in PE 70% of the available marks should be allocated to exams and 30% to NEA	49%	98
Dance A level	A levels in dance 50% of the available marks should be allocated to exams and 50% to NEA	49%	184
Music GCSE	40% of the available marks should be allocated to exams, and 60% should be allocated to NEA	36%	58
Geography A level	A levels in geography 80% of the available marks should be allocated to exams, and 20% to NEA	31%	65
Geography AS	AS qualifications in geography should be assessed entirely by exam	30%	66
MFL AS	AS qualifications in MFL 70% of the available marks should be allocated to exams and 30% to NEA	27%	81
Ancient languages AS	AS qualifications in ancient languages assessed entirely by exams	26%	121
MFL A level	A levels in MFL 70% of the available marks should be allocated to exams and 30% to NEA	26%	81
Computer science GCSE	GCSEs in computer science 80% of the available marks should be allocated to exams, and 20% to NEA	25%	59
Ancient languages A levels	A levels in ancient languages should be assessed entirely by exams	24%	109
Music A levels	A levels in music 40% of the available marks should be allocated to exams and 60% to NEA	24%	55
Music AS	AS qualifications in music 40% of the available marks should be allocated to exams and 60% to NEA	24%	55
Art and design GCSE	GCSEs in art and design should be assessed entirely by NEA	18%	82
Further maths A level	A levels in further mathematics should be assessed entirely by exam	17%	86
Further maths AS	AS qualifications in further mathematics should be assessed entirely by exam	15%	88
Maths A level	A levels in mathematics should be assessed entirely by exam	14%	93
Maths AS	AS qualifications in mathematics should be assessed entirely by exam	13%	93

The spread of disagreement is very wide, from around 80 per cent in the case of dance and PE GCSE, to less than 20 per cent for art and design GCSE, and mathematics and further mathematics A level and AS. There are quite big gaps in the disagreement rate at points in the rank order; for example, PE GCSE is in 'second place' at 79 per cent, while PE AS is third with 55 per cent. Further down the table, the gap between the neighbouring dance AS and music GCSE is 13 percentage points (dance AS at 49 per cent, music GCSE at 36 per cent).

This table is indicative: no calibrating or common question was asked. It may be that questions which had a high disagreement rate might just have had respondents who tend to disagree with propositions in general, given that, in the main, different people answered the different questions. Further, this table includes ‘neither agree nor disagree’ when calculating percentages. This is in contrast to the stacked bar charts, which exclude this central category. We must therefore be careful in our interpretations.

5.15 Equality impact of proposals

5.15.1 Quantitative analysis

The questionnaire contained a section that asked respondents questions that arose from Ofqual’s obligations under equalities legislation.

First, respondents were asked whether respondents believed that there were any potential impacts on people with protected characteristics¹⁶ that Ofqual had not identified. Responses to this question are quantified in Figure 18.

Are there any other potential impacts we have not identified?

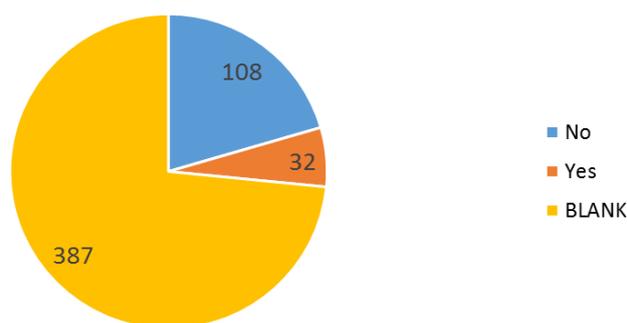


Figure 18: Responses about the likelihood of additional impacts on people with protected characteristics

The vast majority of people did not respond to this item. Among the 140 respondents who did, over 100 thought that Ofqual had not overlooked any impacts on people with protected characteristics.

The consultation also asked respondents whether there were any additional steps that the exams regulator could take to mitigate any negative impact arising from the proposals on people protected under the equalities legislation. The pie chart in Figure 19 conveys the responses to this question.

¹⁶ Protected characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.

Any additional steps Ofqual could take to mitigate any negative impact?

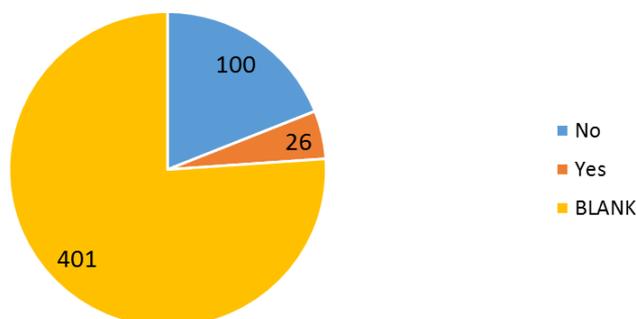


Figure 19: Responses on additional steps Ofqual could take to mitigate any negative impact

As was the case with Figure 18, roughly four out of five people did not answer this question. Among those that did answer, once again about four out of five thought that there were no additional steps that Ofqual could take.

5.15.2 Qualitative responses

Following the above ‘yes/no’ question that asked whether respondents believed there were any impacts of the proposals for assessment reform on people who shared a protected characteristic, Ofqual asked those who had said ‘yes’ what these impacts were.

The status of the 32 respondents is given in Table 33.

Table 33: Status of people who commented on impact of proposals on people with protected characteristics

Type of response (official/personal, and sub-divisions)	Number of responses
Official response	10
Awarding organisation	1
Other representative or interest group	3
School or college	5
University or other higher education institution	1
Personal response	22
Educational specialist (retired teacher, examiner, assessment expert, subject expert, governor)	6
Parent/carer	1
Teacher (but not responding on behalf of a school)	15
Total	32

Among those 32 responses, however, many comments either did not refer at all to protected characteristics or did so only (for example) to assert (non-specifically) that the proposals disadvantaged people with protected characteristics (without saying which characteristics, and/or without suggesting how Ofqual might mitigate the perceived impacts on such people).

Those comments that did refer to a specific protected characteristic are arranged in Table 34. Some interpretation was necessary to carry out this assignment; for example, English as an Additional Language (EAL) has been interpreted as the protected characteristic ‘race’, and ‘Special Educational Needs (SEN) has been interpreted as the characteristic ‘disability’. Also, some comments refer to more than one characteristic. Cross-references are made in such cases.

Table 34: Comments about impact on protected characteristic, organised by characteristic

Protected characteristic	Comment
Disability	<p>D1. Students with anxiety will suffer, as 80% of their grade will be risked on their emotional state of one day.</p> <p>D2. ASD [Autistic spectrum disorders] students and others with stress conditions would benefit from having very limited retakes as an option.</p> <p>D3. No consideration appears to have been given to the significant number of candidates with sensory disabilities, specific learning difficulties or other special educational needs who benefit from being able to spread assessments over time and who are disadvantaged by having to sit all assessments on a terminal basis in the summer. This is exacerbated by Ofqual's decision to increase the examination load in most subjects.</p> <p>D4. See also: R3, R6</p>
Race	<p>R1. Students with EAL needs will struggle on their GCSEs.</p> <p>R2. The proposed arrangements for spoken language give native speakers an unfair advantage in continuous assessment.</p> <p>R3. How will the NEA operate for those who for disability or cultural reasons are not able to undertake projects?</p> <p>R4. How will native speakers cope with an essay in English on a French/German book? Answer badly, this seems unfair?</p> <p>R5. ... students from a lower socio-economic background ... statistically tend to have lower attainment levels in GCSEs with a large terminal examination content. Many of these will be from Black or minority ethnic backgrounds. They will simply be pushed down the BTEC route if any PE option is offered.</p> <p>R6. Increasingly making it harder for EAL/SEN pupils to gain a Level 2 GCSE qualification as theory aspect was hard for them before [and] now could be unobtainable even though able sportsperson.</p>
Religion or belief	See: R3
Sex	<p>S1. The effect of confidence in progress in mathematics for girls. The assessment structure coupled with the changes in difficulty at GCSE may result in fewer females opting to take A level maths and especially further maths.</p> <p>S2. The activity list is very male orientated. The activities are traditional old-school activities and many of them are not traditionally played by girls. The omission of rounders, dance (different styles), fitness (yoga, pilates, exercise to music, etc.) has limited the chances of girls' success, which is a huge issue across the UK (female inactivity). Girls will feel less able to access activities they have covered in school at GCSE PE level.</p> <p>S3. Girls will be put off mathematics as it will be harder and they will find other subjects.</p> <p>S4. There is a weighting to written exams which is likely to reduce the chances of girls having success. Coursework has proved helpful in enabling girls, particularly in computer science.</p> <p>S5. We are concerned about the impact on gender, ethnicity and disabled students in relation to the choice of activities on offer and the assessment weighting. Many students in these categories with the right opportunities excel in a practical context.</p>

The quantitative survey item summarised in Figure 19 was followed by an open-response item, which requested the following: 'if [you said there were some additional steps we could take to mitigate any negative impact], please comment on the additional steps we could take to mitigate negative impacts'.

The types of respondent who gave a positive answer to this item are shown in Table 35.

Table 35: Status of people who made suggestions for how impacts on people with protected characteristics could be mitigated

Type of response (official/personal, and sub-divisions)	Number of responses
Official response	8
Other representative or interest group	5
School or college	3
Personal response	18
Educational specialist (retired teacher, examiner, assessment expert, subject expert, governor)	8
Teacher (but not responding on behalf of a school)	10
Total	26

The actual responses from these people were rather varied, and not all of them pertained to a consultation on assessment (several questioned the PE activities that were listed, for instance – a content concern for the DfE, rather than an assessment matter for Ofqual).

Among suggestions about assessment, the following were prominent:

- Have more practical assessment (five PE commentators and one mathematics commentator)
- Keep the exams/NEA weighting as at present (one PE and one dance commentator)
- Retain coursework (two computer science commentators)
- Assess spoken (modern foreign) language by external examination (one commentator)
- Get rid of writing an essay in English as part of an MFL qualification (one commentator)

6 Appendices

6.1 List of non-confidential respondents

The following is a list of questionnaire respondents who answered ‘no’ to the question:

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.

The following were all ‘official’ respondents, and only organisation name is given.

Table 36: list of non-confidential responding organisations

Abingdon School
 AQA
 Arts Council England
 Arts Learning Consortium
 Association for Physical Education
 Association for the Study of Modern and Contemporary France
 Association of Teachers of Mathematics
 Being Frank Physical Theatre
 CDA College Limassol
 Chisenhale Dance Space
 Cirencester College
 Council for Learning Outside the Classroom
 Cultural Learning Alliance
 Dulwich College
 East London Dance
 Edmonton County School
 Elmhurst School for Dance
 engage
 English Federation of Disability Sport
 English Folk Dance and Song Society
 English Outdoor Council
 Essex Dance Theatre ~ Essex County Council
 Felsted School
 Field Studies Council (FSC)
 Fleetwood High School
 Geographical Association
 Greenhead College
 Greenwich Dance
 Haydock High School
 Heath Park School
 High School for Girls Gloucester
 Hills Road Sixth Form College
 HMC (Headmasters’ and Headmistresses’ Conference)
 Hofesh Shechter Company
 Holmfirth High School
 King’s Ely
 Leicestershire Schools Rounders Association
 London Mathematical Society
 London School of Economics and Political Science
 Lostock Hall Academy
 Mathematics in Education and Industry
 National Association for Music in Higher Education (NAMHE)

National Association of Field Study Officers
National Dance Centres for Advanced Training (CATs)
National Governors' Association
National Society for Education in Art and Design
New Adventures
Northern School of Contemporary Dance
OCR
Old Buckenham High School
Ordnance Survey
paullong.net
Pearson
Phoenix Dance Theatre
Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College
Richard Huish College
Rodborough School
Royal Opera House / The Royal Ballet
Sadler's Wells Theatre
Second Hand Dance
St Albans School
St Helen and St Katharine
St Helena school
St Leonards Mayfield School
St Paul's Girls' School
St Paul's Girls' School
Stephen Perse Foundation
The Castle School
The Frances Bardsley Academy
The Mathematical Association
The Place (Contemporary Dance Trust)
Thomas Knyvett College
Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music & Dance
Ulverston Victoria High School
University Council of Modern Languages
University of Central Lancashire
University of the Arts London
Uppingham Community College
UXBRIDGE COLLEGE
Voice: the union for education professionals
Wanstead high school
Weaverham High School
West London Free School
WJEC
Youth Sport Trust

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