

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

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

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1 Executive summary

1.1 About this consultation

Changes are being made to GCSE, A level and AS qualifications taken by students in England. Ofqual has previously consulted on new qualifications to be taught from September 2015 and on some that will be taught from September 2016, and has also announced its decisions on their structure and assessment. 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:

GCSEs	AS qualifications and A levels
Citizenship studies	Drama and theatre
Cooking and nutrition	Religious studies
Design and technology	
Drama	
Religious studies	

The consultations took place in the last quarter of 2014, and the first few days of 2015.

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

There was the opportunity to respond to closed questions on a Likert scale¹, followed by further free comments items to expand on the response as required.

The consultation was developed and managed by Ofqual; AlphaPlus Consultancy Ltd analysed and reported responses to the consultation. Although there were single consultation documents for each of parts 2 and 3, in practice there were separate sets of consultation questions on each qualification. Although some consistent messages from respondents across subjects have been reported here, the analysis of the responses has largely been reported by subject and qualification.

A total of just under 500 responses was received in either standard format (completed questionnaire) or non-standard format (letters or emails).

1.2 Key messages across subject areas

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

Most respondents agreed with the proposals to have no tiering at GCSE level across all five subjects included in this consultation.

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

1.2.2 Assessment of GCSE, A level and AS qualifications

There was a relatively high level of disagreement with the proposals to decrease the proportion of NEA in GCSE cooking and nutrition (compared with the existing qualifications in the subject) and design and technology, because of the perceived practical nature of the subjects. The proposal to assess citizenship studies entirely by exam met with particularly strong resistance; many respondents commented that taking citizenship action cannot be validly and reliably assessed via a written exam. The proposals for assessing GCSE drama, and the drama and theatre AS qualification and A level, were slightly more likely to be considered acceptable, although again objections tended to focus on the perceived lack of emphasis on practical and performance elements of the subject. There were relatively high levels of agreement with the proposals to assess all three religious studies qualifications by exam, although a small number of respondents suggested an element of NEA might help to develop in-depth knowledge and study skills.

The assessment objectives and weightings were generally considered appropriate across all subjects; any objections or suggested amendments from respondents were often linked to concerns over the suitability of the proposed proportion of exams and NEA for these largely practical subjects. For religious studies GCSE, AS and A levels, the majority of respondents considered the proposed assessment objectives and their weightings appropriate; there was evidence that any dissatisfaction expressed in the comments was sometimes due to content-related concerns (which are the subject of a separate DfE consultation²). Ofqual provided DfE with details of these comments to enable them to be considered together with their own consultation responses.

1.2.3 Key messages by subject area

1.2.3.1 Citizenship studies

The minimum and maximum numbers of responses to the closed questions were 81 and 93, respectively. The minimum and maximum numbers of responses to the free-text questions were 20 and 47.

The aspect of the proposals on GCSE citizenship studies that attracted the greatest proportion of 'disagree' responses was the proposal to assess the qualification entirely by exam. More than three-quarters of those who gave an 'agree' or 'disagree' response to the tick-box question disagreed with this proposal. In their free-text comments on this proposal many respondents expressed the view that the nature of the subject does not lend itself to an entirely exam-based assessment and that, in particular, the active citizenship element of the subject would be difficult to reliably and validly assess in a written exam.

The majority of respondents agreed that GCSE citizenship studies should be untiered.

There was a relatively high level of agreement with the assessment objectives, although the weightings applied to the objectives were slightly more likely to raise objections than the objectives themselves. Based on the free-text comments, the issue of assessing the qualification via a written exam appears to have contributed most to the objections to the proposed weightings.

² Department for Education (DfE) (2014b) *Reformed GCSE and A level subject content consultation: Government Consultation*. <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/gcse-and-a-level-reform-religious-studies> (accessed: 30/01/15)

1.2.3.2 Cooking and nutrition

The minimum and maximum numbers of responses to the closed questions were 140 and 146, respectively. The minimum and maximum numbers of responses to the free-text questions were 71 and 129.

Views on the proposal to allocate 50 per cent of the marks to exam and 50 per cent to NEA were split almost equally across the 'agree' and 'disagree' responses (excluding any 'neither agree nor disagree' responses). Many of those who disagreed and made a comment explained that, given the practical nature of the subject, the proportion of marks allocated to NEA should be higher. The majority of respondents agreed with the proposed assessment objectives; disagreement with the proposed weightings for the assessment objectives often reflected the views on the allocation of marks to NEA. Many respondents who disagreed with the weightings commented that practical skills were not given sufficient emphasis.

There was widespread acceptance of the proposal that GCSE cooking and nutrition should be untiered.

Thirty-one respondents raised concerns about the proposed subject title. These comments have been shared with DfE for them to consider together with responses to their consultation.

1.2.3.3 Design and technology³

The minimum and maximum numbers of responses to the closed questions were 118 and 129, respectively. The minimum and maximum numbers of responses to the free-text questions were 71 and 109.

The proposal to allocate 50 per cent of the marks to exams and 50 per cent to NEA attracted relatively high levels of disagreement: nearly two-thirds of those who answered the tick-box question (excluding those who ticked 'neither agree nor disagree') disagreed with this proposal. Those who objected would like to see a higher proportion of marks allocated to NEA, because of the practical nature of the subject.

Most respondents agreed that GCSE design and technology should remain untiered.

Just over half of respondents (excluding those who gave a 'neither agree nor disagree' response) agreed with the proposed assessment objectives; those who commented on why they disagreed tended to mention a perceived lack of emphasis on practical aspects of the subject. The proposed weightings for the assessment objectives were considered unacceptable by just over half of respondents (excluding the 'neither agree nor disagree' responses); once again many of the comments highlighted concerns over the extent to which the weightings were perceived to be skewed towards theoretical rather than practical elements of the subject.

A prevalent issue among the 'further comments' on this subject was the proposal to offer one overarching design and technology qualification rather than the currently endorsed routes through the qualification. Respondents voiced concerns both over the extent to which this proposal limits students' options in terms of careers and further study and also over the practicalities of teaching the 'core' design and technology curriculum, given the distinct nature of the specialisms and the implications this proposal will have on current practice, in terms of resources and staff specialisms.

³ Following the DfE consultation on subject content, DfE has decided that the GCSE in design and technology will be deferred to first teaching in 2017. The feedback from the Ofqual consultation is included for information only.

1.2.3.4 Drama GCSE

The minimum and maximum numbers of responses to the closed questions were 86 and 91, respectively. The minimum and maximum numbers of responses to the free-text questions were 53 and 72.

Nearly two-thirds of respondents (excluding those who ticked 'neither agree nor disagree') considered the proposal to allocate 40 per cent of marks to exams and 60 per cent to NEA for GCSE drama acceptable; those who disagreed with the proposal and commented on the reasons for doing so generally felt a higher proportion of marks should be allocated to NEA.

The majority of respondents agreed with the proposal to retain the untiered structure for GCSE drama; in their comments some mentioned that the need for students to work together in large groups or as a whole class meant this was in fact crucial in this subject – tiering might limit the opportunities for students to work in this way.

Around two-thirds of those who answered the tick-box question (excluding the 'neither agree nor disagree' responses) were in agreement with the proposed assessment objectives; respondents' comments suggested that any disagreement tended to be due to an apparent lack of emphasis on practical and performance skills. Similarly, while just over half of those who answered the tick-box question agreed with the proposed weightings applied to the assessment objectives, those who disagreed did so on the basis that practical and performance skills were not given adequate weightings.

1.2.3.5 Drama and theatre AS and A level

The minimum and maximum numbers of responses to the closed questions were 71 and 76, respectively. The minimum and maximum numbers of responses to the free-text questions were 31 and 51.

Approximately three-quarters of those who gave an 'agree' or 'disagree' response to the tick-box question indicated that they agreed with the proposal to assess the drama and theatre AS qualification by 40 per cent exams and 60 per cent NEA; a similar proportion agreed with the proposal to assess the A level in this way. The small number of respondents who disagreed with these proposals and made a comment indicated that their main reason for objecting was the perceived over-emphasis on exams.

The proposed assessment objectives for both qualifications were considered acceptable by around three-quarters of those who gave an 'agree' or 'disagree' response to the tick-box question and a similar proportion agreed with the proposed weightings applied to the objectives. Once again, any comments on why respondents disagreed with the objectives or their proposed weightings tended to focus on the perception that practical skills had been somewhat neglected and that written and theory skills had been over-emphasised. Several other comments expressed concern over how well the assessment objectives mapped to the proposed assessment methods and mark allocations – greater clarity on this issue was requested.

1.2.3.6 Religious studies GCSE

The minimum and maximum numbers of responses to the closed questions were 119 and 122, respectively. The minimum and maximum numbers of responses to the free-text questions were 68 and 110.

Two-thirds or more of respondents considered all the proposals relating to the religious studies GCSE acceptable, with more than 80 per cent of respondents (excluding those who said 'neither agree nor disagree') agreeing with the proposals to assess the qualification entirely by exam and to retain an untiered structure.

The proposed assessment objectives were the aspect of the GCSE proposals that was most likely to elicit negative responses (approximately a third of respondents said they disagreed with these), but the 22 respondents' comments suggest that their reasons for objecting were highly varied: there was little consensus on what could be done to make them more acceptable. In a non-standard format response, one interest group strongly opposed the assessment objectives (and had the same opposition to the AS qualification and A level objectives) on the grounds that the language used restricted assessment to religions and excluded non-religious worldviews (other respondents highlighted this issue in their content-related comments; this was, however, the only response to refer directly to the proposals relating to assessment). Approximately three-quarters of respondents agreed with the proposed weightings for the assessment objectives; again, there was little consensus among those who disagreed about how these could be improved.

1.2.3.7 Religious studies AS and A level

The minimum and maximum numbers of responses to the closed questions were 117 and 119, respectively. The minimum and maximum numbers of responses to the free-text questions were 60 and 86.

As was the case with the GCSE proposals, the majority of respondents considered the proposals for religious studies AS qualification and A level acceptable. Respondents were particularly likely to agree with the proposals to assess the qualifications entirely by exam (just over 80 per cent of those who gave an 'agree' or 'disagree' response agreed with this). Those who objected to the proposed assessment method tended to suggest in their comments that an element of NEA is needed.

The proposed assessment objectives for both qualifications were considered acceptable by around three-quarters of those who gave an 'agree' or 'disagree' response to the tick-box question; a similar proportion agreed with the proposed weightings for the objectives. While there was little consensus evident in the reasons given for objecting to the assessment objectives and/or the proposed weightings, several respondents gave content-related issues as their reason for disagreeing with the proposals (this is the subject of a separate DfE consultation).

2 Introduction

The Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual) regulates qualifications, examinations and assessments in England and vocational qualifications in Northern Ireland. Ofqual is committed to complying with UK government principles for consultation.⁴

Ofqual was responsible for writing and hosting the questionnaires that constituted this consultation, while AlphaPlus, a consultancy 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).

A consultation has already been carried out on an initial suite of qualifications – the ‘part one’ subjects; AlphaPlus’s report on these subjects is complete.⁵ This report covers two further sets of subjects – the ‘part two’ subjects:

Table 1: Part two consultation subjects

GCSEs	A levels and AS qualifications
Citizenship studies	Drama and theatre
Cooking and nutrition	
Design and technology	
Drama	

The part three consultation covered GCSEs, A levels and AS qualifications in religious studies. The part two consultation ran from 25 September to 19 November 2014; part three ran from 7 November 2014 to 5 January 2015.

Ofqual’s consultation instruments (questionnaires) – for part two⁶ and part three⁷ – can be found at the links in the footnotes.

While Ofqual was consulting on assessment arrangements, the DfE was conducting a parallel consultation on the proposed content of qualifications over the same timeframes.⁸

⁴ Cabinet Office (2013) *Consultation principles*:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/255180/Consultation-Principles-Oct-2013.pdf (accessed 26/11/14).

⁵ AlphaPlus Consultancy Ltd (forthcoming) *An Analysis of Consultation Responses: developing new GCSE, A level and AS qualifications for first teaching in 2016*.

⁶ Ofqual (2014a) *Developing New GCSEs, A levels and AS Qualifications for First Teaching in 2016 – Part 2*:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/364516/2014-09-25-developing-new-qualifications-for-first-teaching-in-2016-part-2.pdf (accessed: 26/11/14).

⁷ Ofqual (2014b) *Developing New GCSEs, A levels and AS Qualifications for First Teaching in 2016 – Part 3*:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/371790/2014-10-29-developing-new-qualifications-for-first-teaching-in-2016-part-3.pdf (accessed: 26/11/14).

Table 2 (which is adapted from an Ofqual table) shows the subjects in these consultations, and whether GCSE, AS qualifications and/or A levels are being consulted upon (this varies from subject to subject):

Table 2: Subjects and qualification types covered in parts two and three of the consultation

Subject	GCSE – covered in this consultation?	A level and AS qualifications – covered in this consultation?
Citizenship studies	Yes	No
Cooking and nutrition	Yes	No
Design and technology	Yes	No
Drama	Yes	Yes ⁹
Religious studies	Yes	Yes

For each subject, the consultation first sought respondents' views on the proposed assessment method for the revised qualifications. Typically, this was about the balance between assessment by examination and non-examination assessment (NEA).

Ofqual explains 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 generally gauged agreement with the proposed proportions of the respective types of assessment. Table 3 summarises the existing assessment arrangements (NEA vs. exams) for subjects being consulted upon. As before, this table is adapted from Ofqual's consultation document.

⁸ Department for Education (DfE) (2014a) *GCSE and A level Reform*: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/gcse-as-and-a-levels-new-subjects-to-be-taught-in-2016> (accessed 26/11/14).

⁹ Although the A level and AS qualifications are titled 'Drama and theatre'.

Table 3: 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
Citizenship studies	60%	0%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Cooking and nutrition	N/A ¹⁰	50%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Design and technology	60%	50%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Drama ¹¹	60–100%	60%	40–70%	60%	40–100%	60%
Religious studies	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

The consultation also sought respondents' views on the issue of 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: 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 all currently untiered, and the proposal is that they shall remain so in future.

The final issue the consultation sought respondents' views on was assessment objectives (AOs).¹² 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

¹⁰ Cooking and nutrition is a new qualification. Details of the current weighting of NEA are therefore not available.

¹¹ The A level and AS qualifications are titled 'Drama and theatre'.

¹² Because the phrase 'assessment objectives' occurs frequently in this report, we have used the abbreviation 'AO' for it and not for 'awarding organisation', a phrase that is often associated with this abbreviation in UK education.

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.

3 Consultation methods

3.1 Data collection

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, if both GCSE and AS qualification/A level were being consulted on). The questions were about:

- proposed assessment arrangements (proposed percentage of the available marks allocated to examination and NEA)
- tiering (GCSE only)
- content of assessment objectives
- weighting of assessment objectives

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 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); 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 not, in the main, 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 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.¹³

¹³ Becker, JP (2011) *Net Stacked Distribution – a better way to visualize Likert data*: <http://tinyurl.com/kv5akzz> (accessed 20/11/14).

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 4.

Table 4: Numbers of responses submitted to the consultation via different channels

Consultation instrument	Mode of sending	Number	Totals
Online questionnaire	Online	360	398
	By email	38	
Non-standard format	Part of a campaign (individual letters) – citizenship studies	49	86
	Not part of a campaign – individual letters	30	
	Organisation responses – letters	7	
Total			484

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 citizenship studies part of the consultation) were all from individuals, so have been treated as separate 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.

4.2.1 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.

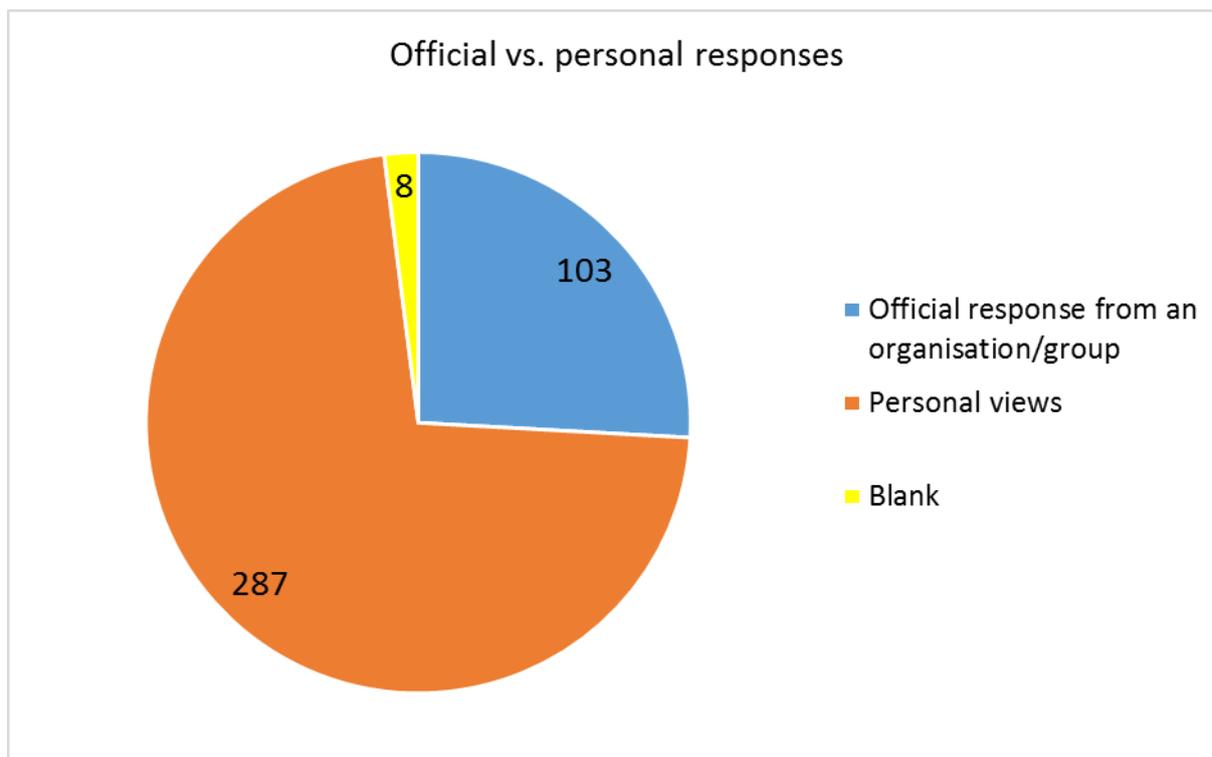


Figure 1: Numbers of official and personal responses

The large majority of responses (around 74 per cent of responses that were not blank) were personal views.

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

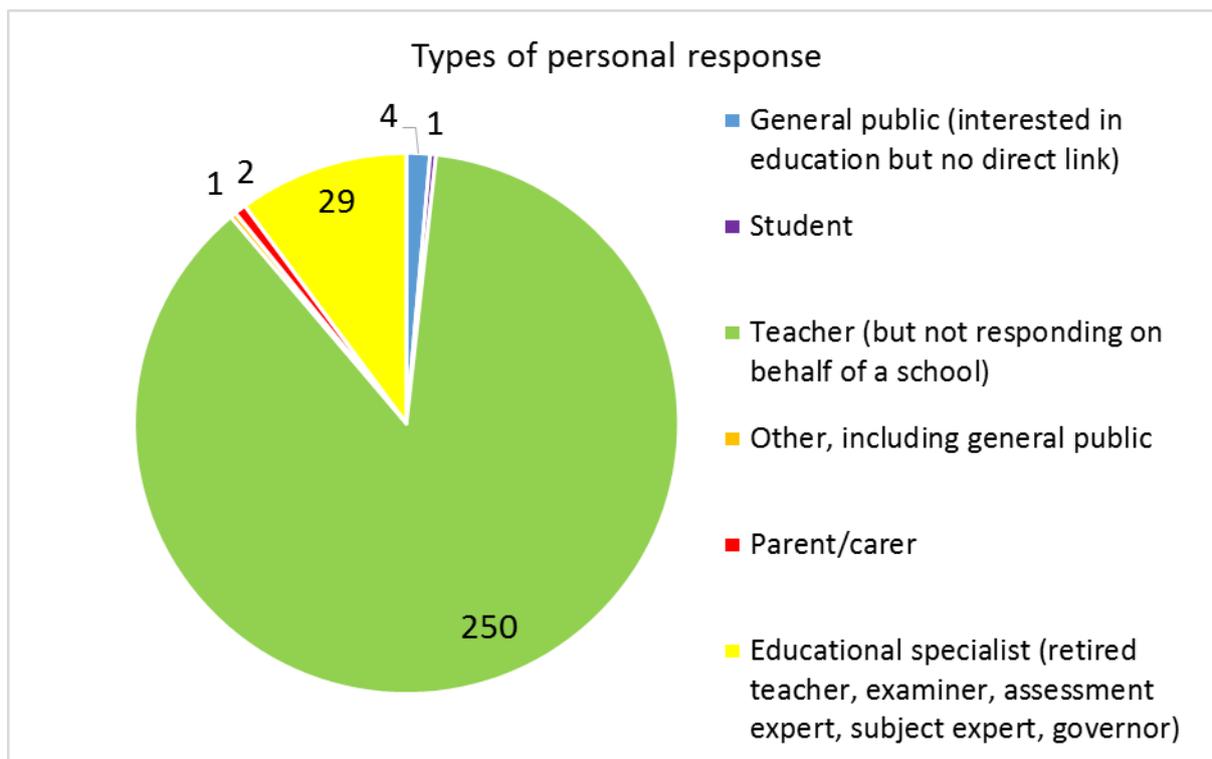


Figure 2: Types of personal response to the questionnaire

A very large percentage of personal responses (about 87 per cent) were from teachers.

The breakdown of official responses is summarised in Figure 3.

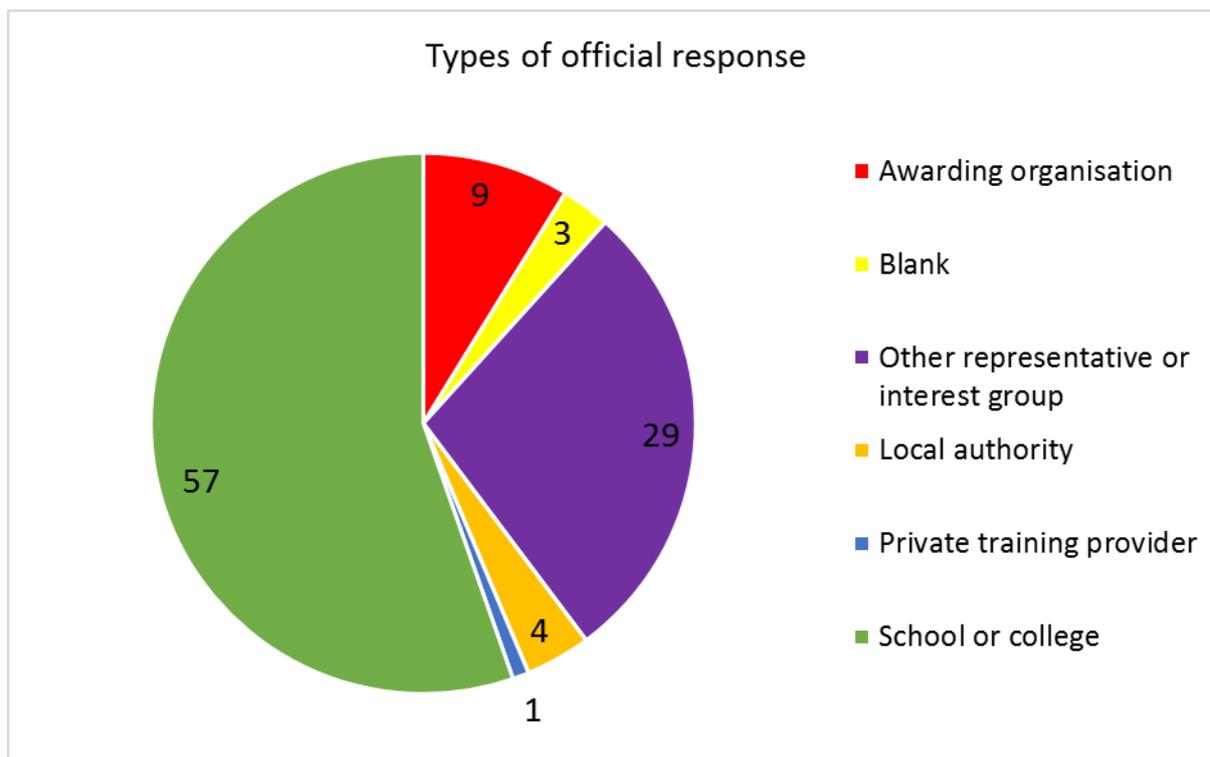


Figure 3: Types of official response to the questionnaire

In the official responses, schools or colleges were the largest respondent type, but the largest type was less dominant on this question – at 55 per cent of responses – than to the two other questions on the capacity in which respondents were filling in the consultation.

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', or 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.

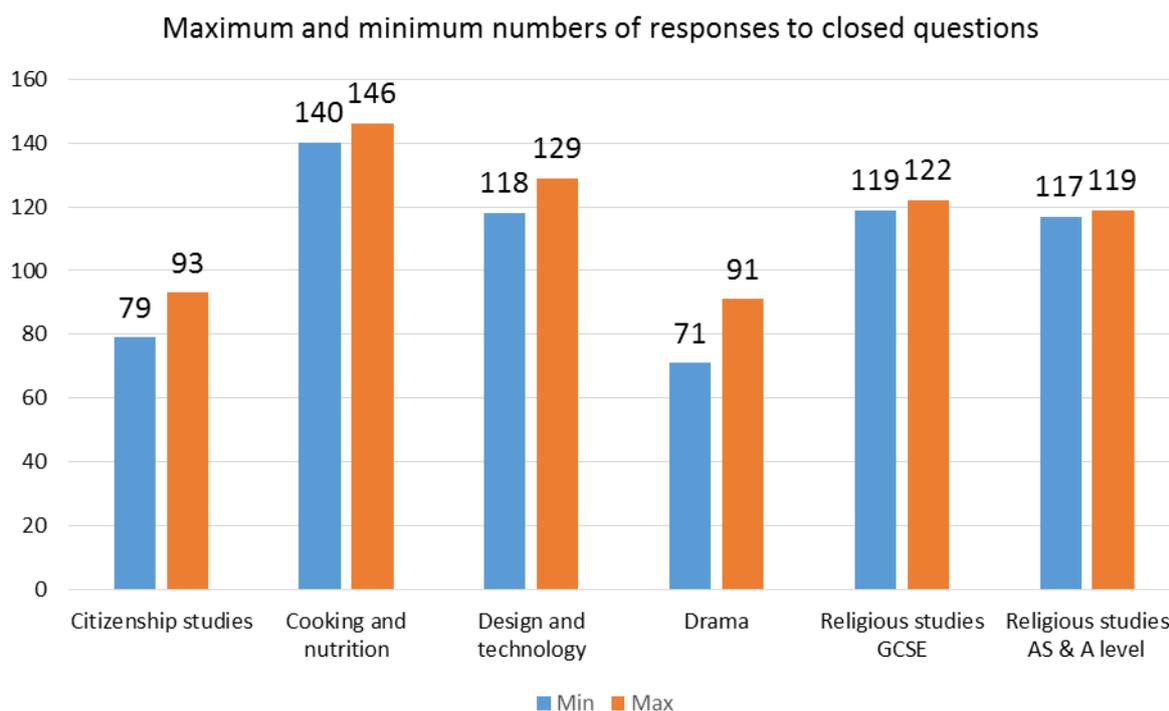


Figure 4: Maximum and minimum numbers of responses to each 'closed' question

The biggest groups of responses were for cooking and nutrition, followed by design and technology and the two sets of religious studies qualifications. The stacked bar charts (such as Figure 5) only count the number of definite (non-neutral) responses. Each bar in such charts has an 'n =' figure (i.e. the number of responses). These numbers can differ substantially from the total numbers of responses in Figure 4 in some cases.¹⁴ The 'n =' information on the bar charts (as well as reading qualitative findings) gives a good indication of the strength of opinion in subjects.

¹⁴ They exclude those who were either (genuinely) indifferent/undecided, and/or those who might have been 'clicking through to their own subject'.

5 Consultation findings

Consultation findings are organised by subject (and qualification type, where relevant), with quantitative findings reported before qualitative analysis outputs.

5.1 Citizenship studies

5.1.1 Quantitative responses

Citizenship studies had four Likert (closed, 'strongly disagree' ... 'strongly agree') items. The numbers of responses to each category are shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Levels of agreement with closed questions on citizenship studies GCSE

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 GCSEs in citizenship studies should be assessed entirely by exam?	19	23	41	8	2	93
Q2	To what extent do you agree or disagree that GCSEs in citizenship studies should not be tiered?	5	9	39	18	12	83
Q3	To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate for GCSEs in citizenship studies?	6	3	52	19	1	81
Q4	To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for GCSEs in citizenship studies?	6	7	50	13	3	79

A different take on the strength of opinion about citizenship studies 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.

Citizenship studies

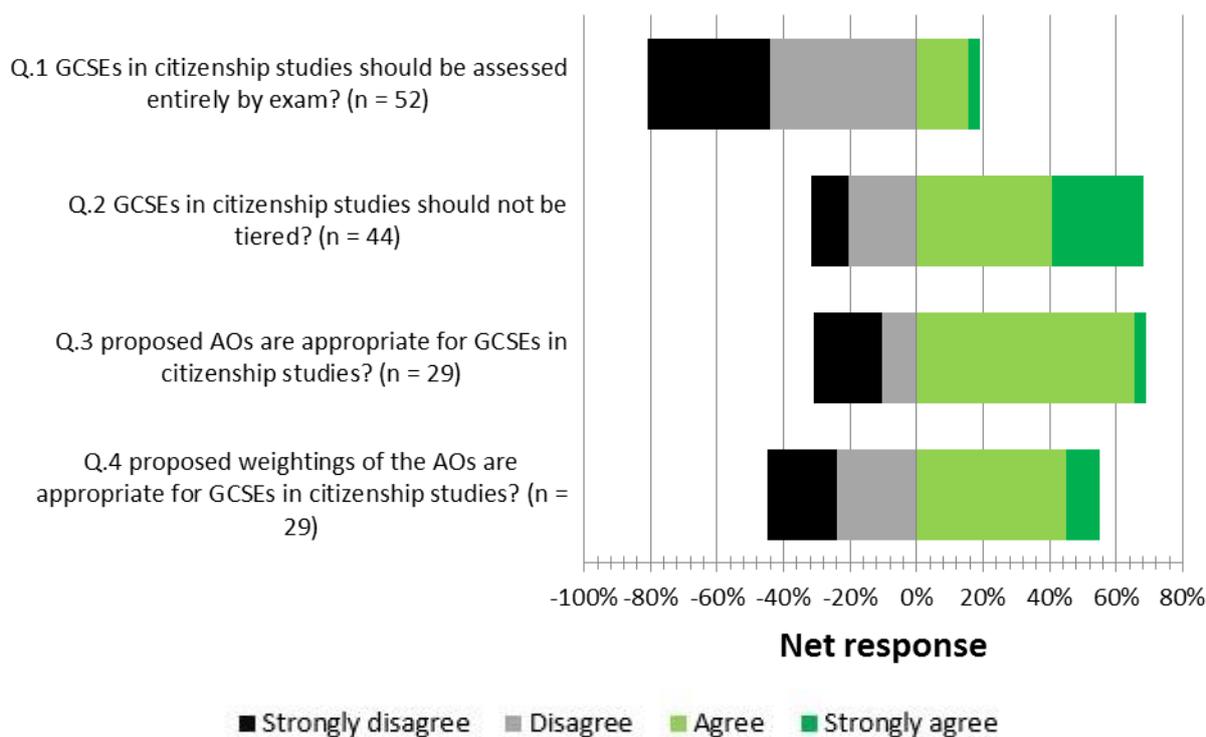


Figure 5: Stacked bar chart for citizenship studies GCSE

The stacked bar chart suggests majority agreement for questions 2 to 4. In contrast, approximately four out of five respondents disagreed, and a considerable group strongly disagreed, with the proposal to assess entirely by exam (Q1).

5.1.2 Qualitative responses

Table 6: Citizenship studies GCSE: 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	3	6	1	0	0	10
	Personal	14	12	1	4	1	32
Q2	Official	1	2	0	3	3	9
	Personal	3	3	3	10	7	26
Q3	Official	2	1	0	4	0	7
	Personal	2	2	0	8	0	12
Q4	Official	2	2	0	3	0	7
	Personal	2	4	1	3	1	11

Q1: To what extent do you agree or disagree that GCSEs in citizenship studies should be assessed entirely by exam?

Forty-seven respondents provided free-text responses to this question – slightly more than the 42 quoted in Table 6 because some respondents who commented either did not provide a tick-box agreement response or did not indicate whether their response represented an official or personal view. Respondents who commented on this topic were mostly teachers representing personal views (27 respondents); among the official responses four represented the views of awarding organisations.

SUMMARY POINTS

- A key reason cited for disagreeing with the proposal to assess GCSE citizenship studies by 100 per cent exam was the perception that this was an inappropriate method of assessing active citizenship (19 respondents mentioned this).
- Nine respondents expressed concerns that students would not have the opportunity to develop transferable and/or process-related skills if the subject was assessed entirely by exams, and six respondents expressed concerns over the burden of an entirely exam-based assessment on the students, particularly those who tend not to cope well with exams.
- Four respondents, giving their reasons for their agreement with the proposals, explained that they felt it was appropriate for the subject and a fairer method of assessing learning outcomes.

KEY POINTS ACCORDING TO LEVEL OF AGREEMENT WITH THE PROPOSAL

- Four respondents gave their reasons for agreeing with the proposal: two of these stated that they felt it was appropriate to assess this subject by exam (they did not elaborate on exactly why this was the case), while the other two respondents described it as a fairer way of assessing the subject – one of these felt exams were a more valid method of assessment.
- One person who ticked ‘strongly agree’ in their tick-box responses went on to explain that they disagreed with the proposal because it added to the burden of exams for students and that it might ‘devalue’ the qualification in the eyes of employers.
- Of the 35 respondents who ticked ‘disagree’ or ‘strongly disagree’ in response to this proposal, 19 specified in their comments that their concerns centred around the apparent lack of focus on ‘active citizenship’. Many of these respondents questioned how students’ active participation could be reliably and validly assessed by a written exam and stressed that an inherent feature of

the subject was to put into practice what has been learned, and some respondents doubted that this could be effectively evidenced and authenticated through a written exam. Nine respondents who disagreed with the proposal expressed concerns over the lack of opportunities to develop transferable skills and/or process-related skills – such as research, planning and reflecting on their participation – if the assessment were to focus on a terminal exam. Six respondents expressed concerns over the burden of an entirely exam-based assessment on the students, particularly those who tend not to cope well with exams. Two respondents (both representing official responses from ‘other representative groups’) commented on the potential effect of the proposals on those with disabilities and stressed that these students must not be disadvantaged, which might be the effect of reliance on exam assessments.

- Two respondents indicated that they neither agreed nor disagreed with the proposal and made a comment. One respondent (representing an awarding body) explained that they had concerns about the lack of opportunities for skill development and putting into practice what has been learned, but at the same time recognised the need for reliable and valid assessment methods – hence the ‘neither agree nor disagree’ response. The other respondent who neither agreed nor disagreed explained that they had concerns about the potential lack of opportunities to actively engage in the subject if it were assessed entirely by exam.

Q2: To what extent do you agree or disagree that GCSEs in citizenship studies should not be tiered?

Thirty-seven respondents provided further free-text responses to this question (slightly more than the 35 quoted in Table 6 because two respondents did not indicate whether their response represented an official or personal view). Respondents who commented on this topic were mostly teachers representing personal views (21 respondents). The nine official responses were from three awarding organisations and two schools, with the remainder coming from special interest groups or associations.

SUMMARY POINTS

- The majority of comments (28 of the 37) were reasons for agreeing with the proposal to retain the untiered structure for GCSE citizenship studies. Among the reasons cited were the opportunity for all students to perform to the best of their ability, the belief that differentiation should be by outcomes rather than predetermined decisions on which tier to enter candidates for, the view that tiering was inappropriate for the subject (you cannot decide how far you are a citizen), and the desire to retain an untiered structure because it works well currently.
- Just seven respondents expressed their objections to this proposal: five of these stated that tiering would allow the qualification to meet the individual learning needs of students better (particularly for more-able students or those with special educational needs).

KEY POINTS ACCORDING TO LEVEL OF AGREEMENT WITH THE PROPOSAL

- Ten respondents (this includes two respondents who ticked ‘disagree’ in response to the tick-box question but went on to detail reasons for agreeing with the proposal) stated that they agreed with retaining GCSE citizenship studies as an untiered qualification because it provided all students with the opportunity to perform to the best of their ability.
- Seven respondents (again, including one who had ticked ‘disagree’) agreed with the proposal because they felt differentiation should be by outcome rather than according to which tier candidates are entered for.
- Four respondents said that tiering was inappropriate for citizenship studies because of the nature of the subject (specifically, because it is a ‘life skill’ it makes little sense to build in different levels).

- Three respondents felt that the current untiered structure worked well and should therefore remain; two people expressed in-principle objections to tiering across all GCSEs, and one person agreed with retaining the untiered structure because tiering can demotivate students in the lower tiers by limiting the grades they can attain.
- Seven respondents commented on their objections to the proposal (of these, one had ticked 'agree' and one had ticked 'neither agree nor disagree' in response to the tick-box question). Five of these objected on the grounds that tiering might ensure better provision according to the different learning needs of individuals, including more-able students and those with special educational needs. One person commented that an untiered structure might 'devalue' the qualification, and a further respondent suggested that tiering allowed for knowledge to be built up incrementally.
- Two respondents who ticked 'neither agree nor disagree' in response to this proposal explained their reasons for being undecided: one suggested that if the qualification moved to 100 per cent exam assessment it should be tiered (but if an element of NEA is retained then it does not need to be tiered); the second person commented that this issue was 'open to debate'.

Q3: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate for GCSEs in citizenship studies?

Twenty-two respondents provided further free-text responses to this question (more than the 19 cited in Table 6, because three respondents provided no detail about whether their response was personal or official). Nine of the respondents who commented on this topic were teachers representing personal views; three were educational specialists representing personal views. Among the eight official responses were three awarding organisations and two schools or colleges.

SUMMARY POINTS

- Just over half of those who commented on the proposed AOs (13 of the 22 who made a comment) gave reasons for agreeing with the proposals. Most of those who agreed explained that they felt the proposals were appropriate for the subject and covered all necessary elements.
- Nine respondents described objections to the proposed AOs: of these, four complained that there was no reference to capabilities in relation to citizenship action and three respondents suggested changes to the terminology used.

KEY POINTS ACCORDING TO LEVEL OF AGREEMENT WITH THE PROPOSAL

- Ten respondents who agreed with the proposed AOs commented that they provided a good coverage of the main elements of the subject and were generally appropriate for the level and subject. One person who agreed with the objectives expressed concerns about how well they can be measured via an exam-only assessment method, and a further respondent (representing an official response from an awarding organisation) stated that while they agreed with the objectives they would like to see the terminology improved – specifically, the term 'action' required a specific definition.
- Four respondents gave their main reason for disagreeing with the proposed AOs as the lack of any reference to capabilities in relation to citizenship action; a further three respondents (two of whom were representing official views on behalf of awarding organisations) suggested that the wording should be amended. Their suggestions included: removing 'themes and debates' from AO1, removing 'demonstrating an ability to make connections and organise ideas' from AO2 as this was a differentiator of performance not an objective, changing 'different perspectives' to 'evidence' in AO4 to make the range of what can be evaluated broader, greater differentiation

between AO3 and AO4 – the current wording was felt to be ambiguous and made the two objectives too similar.

- One respondent who disagreed with the proposed AOs commented that these were too vague and narrow, but then described specific aspects of the content rather than over-narrow elements of the AOs. Another respondent who disagreed with the proposed AOs suggested that this subject should not be treated in the same way as other GCSEs and that there was a need to recognise the broad range of skills and competencies that could be developed in citizenship studies.

Q4: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for GCSEs in citizenship studies?

Twenty respondents provided free-text responses to this question. Eleven of these (mostly teachers) represented personal views; among the official responses were two awarding organisations.

SUMMARY POINTS

- Seven respondents, giving their reasons for agreeing with the proposals, cited general appropriateness of the weightings, approval of the fixed weightings rather than a range, and consistency with the current weightings. The two awarding organisations that agreed with the weightings both expressed concerns over how the proposed content could achieve the weightings.
- Many of those who disagreed with this proposal referred in their comments to aspects of the proposed assessment methods rather than the weightings of the AOs. The tick-box responses should therefore be interpreted in the context that some respondents were not focusing their opinions solely on the AO weightings.
- Those who expressed objections to the proposed AO weightings commented that AO3 should carry a greater weighting than AO2 (one respondent mentioned this) and that the weightings should be equal across all four AOs (again, one respondent suggested this).

KEY POINTS ACCORDING TO LEVEL OF AGREEMENT WITH THE PROPOSAL

- Seven respondents agreed with the proposed weightings and made a comment: two of these simply stated that they felt the proposed weightings were appropriate and suitable for the subject and level, two respondents welcomed the fixed weightings rather than the range that exists in the current AOs, one respondent felt the proposed weightings were consistent with the current weightings, and a further two respondents (both representing awarding organisations) agreed with the weightings but expressed concern over how the content could achieve these weightings. In one instance, AO1 was the particular concern: the subject content was perceived to be ‘knowledge-heavy’, and the respondent making this comment expressed concerns over how well this would translate to the proposed weighting for AO1. In the other comment from an awarding organisation, it was suggested that the broad nature of the content might make it challenging to achieve the proposed weightings for AO3 and AO4, but the suggestion was that the content be amended rather than the AOs.
- Of the 12 respondents who indicated that they disagreed with the proposed weightings and who made a comment, only two commented specifically about the proposed weightings: one respondent felt AO3 should carry a greater weighting than AO2 (if the qualification were to be assessed entirely by exam) and the other that the weightings should be equal across all four AOs.
- The remaining ten respondents who disagreed and made a comment referred to either the proposal to assess the qualification entirely by exam (four respondents commented on this, all

of whom were reiterating their previously expressed objections to this proposal), or the proposal detailed in paragraph 3.7 of the Consultation Document (that 15% of the marks in the exam should be allocated to questions which assess the knowledge, understanding and skills gained through a student's experience of taking citizenship action). This was the subject of six comments, all of which suggested that, because of the perceived importance of citizenship action, this percentage should be higher.

Q5: Further comments

Fourteen respondents made further comments: six represented personal views (three from teachers and three from educational specialists), six represented official views (one awarding organisation, one school and four from other representative or interest groups) and a further two comments were from respondents who did not identify their role.

SUMMARY POINTS

- Five respondents reiterated previously expressed concerns about the proposal to assess GCSE citizenship studies entirely by exam; all who commented on this suggested that an element of NEA should be incorporated.
- Four respondents commented on their concerns over the emphasis on citizenship action, particularly in the short-course GCSE, where the proposal is that there is no requirement to take citizenship action.
- Two of those who commented expressed concerns over maintaining and applying standards given that there were no grade descriptions forming part of these proposals.
- Other issues mentioned, each by one respondent, were: a comment on the difficulty of responding to this consultation when the results of a parallel consultation on content were not yet available (this was from an awarding organisation), disagreement with the view held by some that students with disabilities struggled with the citizenship action element of the current qualification, concerns over the quality of teaching on citizenship courses, concerns that fewer students would take GCSE citizenship studies if these proposals were enacted, a query as to how evidence of citizenship action would be provided and authenticated, and a general comment that schools should do more to promote citizenship more widely than just through the GCSE qualification.

Three non-standard format responses for GCSE citizenship studies referred principally to the assessment methods and mark allocation proposal: one written response (a personal response from a teacher) stressed that the move to 100 per cent exams could undermine the practical and participative nature of the subject and might disadvantage those with additional educational needs. A further written response (representing an official response from a professional organisation) echoed these points and questioned the validity and reliability of the assessment of process-related skills (e.g. planning, undertaking and evaluating citizenship actions) if this was based solely on a written exam. This respondent acknowledged that some centres struggled with the practicalities of NEAs but that their own consultation with members suggested that a switch to exam assessment was not an acceptable solution to these practical concerns. The third written response, representing the views of a union, expressed concerns over the apparent lack of emphasis on taking citizenship action and the inherent problems in evidencing and authenticating students' reflections on this process if it were assessed solely in a written exam.

The group Democratic Life was also running an awareness campaign to highlight the consultation and encourage those with an interest to respond: 49 letters or emails were received replicating their response. The campaign centred on the points mentioned above: that is, the extent to which citizenship action is accommodated and assessed within the proposals. In particular, the proposal to

assess entirely by exam came in for criticism on the basis that the participative nature of this subject made this unsuitable.¹⁵

5.2 Cooking and nutrition

5.2.1 Quantitative responses

Cooking and nutrition had four Likert (closed, 'strongly disagree' ... 'strongly agree') items. The numbers of responses to each category are shown in Table 7.

Table 7: Levels of agreement with closed questions on cooking and nutrition GCSE

Question number	Question	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Total number of responses
Q6	To what extent do you agree or disagree that for GCSEs in cooking and nutrition 50 per cent of the available marks should be allocated to exams, and 50 per cent to non-exam assessment?	25	37	11	44	29	146
Q7	To what extent do you agree or disagree that GCSEs in cooking and nutrition should not be tiered?	5	14	17	47	61	144
Q8	To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate for GCSEs in cooking and nutrition?	5	19	25	80	12	141
Q9	To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for GCSEs in cooking and nutrition?	13	31	35	51	10	140

The strength of agreement and disagreement to the cooking and nutrition part of the consultation (excluding neutral opinion) is given in Figure 6.

¹⁵ Democratic Life 'campaign' details: <http://www.democraticlife.org.uk/2014/09/16/big-changes-expected-to-new-citizenship-gcse-from-2016/> (accessed 26/11/2014).

Cooking and nutrition GCSE

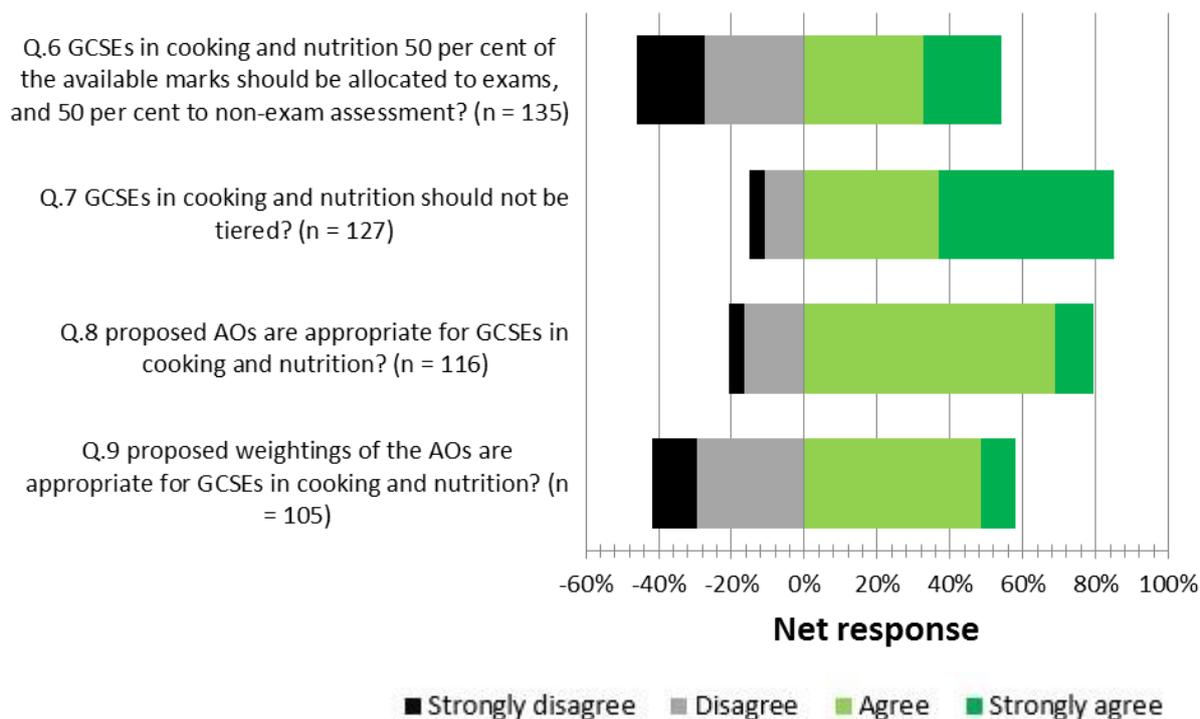


Figure 6: Stacked bar chart for cooking and nutrition GCSE

The stacked bar chart suggests large majorities agreeing with questions 7 and 8 (tiering and AOs). However, the situation is more balanced for the questions on exams vs. NEA (Q6) and on AO weightings (Q9): for these questions, a little over half of the respondents were in agreement with the proposals.

5.2.2 Qualitative responses

Table 8 shows the number of respondents who made a comment in response to each question according to whether they agreed or disagreed, and to whether they were representing a personal or an official view.

Table 8: Cooking and nutrition GCSE: 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		
Q6	Official	7	3	1	11	6	28
	Personal	18	34	2	23	22	99
Q7	Official	1	1	2	7	11	22
	Personal	3	11	4	25	41	84
Q8	Official	1	7	2	12	0	22
	Personal	2	10	6	27	9	54
Q9	Official	4	10	1	3	1	19
	Personal	8	17	8	11	6	50

Q6: To what extent do you agree or disagree that for GCSEs in cooking and nutrition 50 per cent of the available marks should be allocated to exams, and 50 per cent to non-exam assessment?

One hundred and twenty-nine respondents provided free-text responses to this question – slightly more than the 127 quoted in Table 8 because some respondents who commented either did not provide a tick-box agreement response or did not indicate whether their response represented an official or personal view. Respondents who commented on this topic were mostly teachers representing personal views (93 respondents); among the official responses there were 16 schools or colleges and 3 awarding organisations.

SUMMARY POINTS

- Respondents who made a comment were split almost equally between agreeing and disagreeing with the proposed assessment methods. Those who agreed tended to do so on the basis that the 50:50 allocation of marks across exams and NEA was perceived to be a fair and balanced way of assessing both practical skills and knowledge and understanding of the subject.
- Most of those who disagreed with this proposal and made a comment (58 of the 62 who commented on why they objected) explained that they would prefer to see a greater emphasis on practical work and suggested that the proportion of marks allocated to NEA be increased. In those instances where a percentage was recommended, a 60 per cent allocation to NEA was suggested.

KEY POINTS ACCORDING TO LEVEL OF AGREEMENT WITH THE PROPOSAL

- Sixty-two respondents agreed with the proposed assessment methods for GCSE cooking and nutrition and commented on their reasons for doing so. Forty-one of these respondents explained that they felt the 50:50 allocation of marks across exams and NEAs was fair and appropriate for the subject (this included the three awarding organisations that made a comment).

- Seven respondents agreed with the proposal but questioned why there was a shift from the current 60 per cent NEA and 40 per cent exam allocation, which they felt worked well for the subject.
- The equal weighting of exams and NEAs was praised by four respondents for its inclusiveness and for allowing students to play to their strengths: those who struggled with written exams could still attain a high proportion of marks through more practical assessments. A further three respondents welcomed the equal weighting of assessment methods since it allowed students the opportunity to develop skills such as problem solving and independent study rather than to focus only on acquiring the skills and knowledge to pass a written exam.
- Sixty-two respondents commented on their reasons for disagreeing with the proposal; of these, 58 stated that the proportion of marks allocated to NEA should be increased; in those cases where a percentage was cited, 60 per cent was given as the acceptable proportion. Many who commented on this said that the practical nature of the subject should be reflected in a greater weighting of marks towards practical assessments.
- Four respondents were concerned at the possibility that the 50 per cent weighting on exams might deter very able students who struggle with written exams from taking the subject. One respondent suggested that the 50 per cent allocated to NEAs should be further divided into 25 per cent practical exam and 25 per cent controlled-assessment-style project.
- Three respondents said they neither agreed nor disagreed with the proposal and gave comments: one objected to the perceived lack of emphasis on practical assessments in the proposal; another stated that they would need more detail on the exact nature of any practical assessments before passing judgement on the acceptability of the proposed mark allocations; the third expressed concerns about the time taken up by NEAs and said they would favour the 50:50 mark allocation only if the NEAs were made more concise.

Q7: To what extent do you agree or disagree that GCSEs in cooking and nutrition should not be tiered?

Of the 108 respondents who commented on this proposal 84 were personal responses (79 from teachers), and 23 represented official views (three from awarding organisations, 16 from schools or colleges – the remainder from other representative or interest groups). This is slightly more than the 106 quoted in Table 8 because some respondents who commented either did not provide a tick-box agreement response or did not indicate whether their response represented an official or personal view.

SUMMARY POINTS

- Just over three-quarters of those who commented on the proposal that cooking and nutrition GCSE should be untiered agreed with this proposal (this included the three awarding organisations that commented). Their reasons echoed those expressed elsewhere in the consultation about equality of opportunity to achieve the highest grade and allowing for differentiation by grade outcome. Nine respondents mentioned that tiering made it difficult for teachers to make decisions in the case of ‘borderline’ students, and seven respondents felt that the logistics and practicalities of teaching a tiered qualification to mixed ability classes made it impractical to tier this GCSE.
- Just 12 respondents expressed objections in their comments; the main reason for objecting to an untiered GCSE (cited by eight respondents) was the perception that tiering can help to ensure that the learning suited the needs and requirements of all students.

KEY POINTS ACCORDING TO LEVEL OF AGREEMENT WITH THE PROPOSAL

- The most frequently cited reasons for agreeing with the proposal that this qualification should be untiered was that all students should have the opportunity to achieve the highest grades rather than be limited by decisions about which tier to enter them for (41 respondents mentioned this in their comments).
- Fourteen respondents stated that they agreed with the untiered structure because differentiation should be through grade outcomes rather than tiering; a further nine respondents described the difficulties teachers faced when making decisions about ‘borderline’ students and which tier to enter them for – how to avoid demotivating them while at the same time ensuring they were not likely to fail.
- Seven respondents cited the practical and logistical difficulties inherent in teaching different tiers to mixed ability classes as a reason for agreeing to an untiered structure; eight respondents who had experienced tiering previously claimed that it had not been effective and should therefore not be applied to this qualification.
- Three respondents who had disagreed and one who had strongly disagreed with this proposal for an untiered structure commented that this qualification should be untiered, suggesting that some respondents had misunderstood the tick-box question.
- The 12 respondents who expressed reasons for disagreeing with this proposal said that tiering can help to ensure that the learning needs and requirements of all students are met (eight respondents mentioned this) and that tiering allowed all students to achieve in line with their abilities (this was mentioned by three respondents). One respondent objected to an untiered structure because they felt tiering allowed for teaching in groups set by ability.
- The four respondents who said they neither agreed nor disagreed with the proposal (all were teachers representing personal views) explained that there were pros and cons to tiering and that they were undecided on the best arrangement.

Q8: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate for GCSEs in cooking and nutrition?

There were 77 comments made on the proposed GCSE cooking and nutrition AOs: 54 of these represented personal views (50 from teachers) and 22 represented official views (four from awarding organisations). This is one comment more than the 76 quoted in Table 8 because one respondent who commented did not provide a tick-box agreement response and did not indicate whether their response represented an official or personal view.

SUMMARY POINTS

- The majority of those who commented (50 respondents) agreed with the proposed AOs; their comments indicated that the objectives were generally considered to be appropriate for the subject and covered the range of essential skills.
- Nineteen respondents disagreed with the proposals and commented on their reasons for objecting: a key concern was the perceived lack of emphasis on practical skills (mentioned by seven respondents).

KEY POINTS ACCORDING TO LEVEL OF AGREEMENT WITH THE PROPOSAL

- Among those who agreed with the proposed AOs, 30 respondents (including one awarding organisation) made generally positive comments stating that they were appropriate for the subject and covered the range of skills required. Those who gave more specific reasons for agreeing with the proposals mentioned a range of issues, including praise for the extent to which

practical skills were addressed (nine respondents mentioned this); two respondents welcomed the move away from 'design'-related objectives in the new qualification.

- Some respondents mentioned in their comments that they agreed with the AOs overall but would like to have additional information or to see small changes made. For example, three respondents said they needed more detail on how the content would be delivered and examined, while two respondents had concerns over meeting all the objectives within the current timetable allocation. One respondent (a teacher) suggested food safety should feature in the AOs; another teacher questioned the exact nature of the 'technical skills' referred to in AO3.
- Seven of the 19 respondents who said they disagreed with the proposed AOs stated that they would like to see greater emphasis on practical skills embedded in the objectives.
- Three respondents (all representing official views – one from an awarding organisation and two from schools or colleges) who disagreed with the proposed AOs questioned the distinction between **demonstrating** knowledge and understanding (in AO1) and **applying** knowledge and understanding (in AO2); the exact differences between these objectives and how they should be assessed needed to be made clearer. Two of these respondents suggested 'recall' might be a suitable alternative to 'demonstrate' to avoid overlap between the two.
- Two awarding organisations that had disagreed with the proposed AOs suggested wording changes that might improve clarity:
 - AO3 should read 'demonstrate practical skills in preparing, cooking and presenting a selection of recipes'
 - AO2 should be changed to 'apply knowledge and understanding of food, cooking and nutrition, including planning, developing and modifying recipes to meet particular requirements'
 - AO4 should be 'Analyse and evaluate different aspects of food, cooking and nutrition'
 - Remove the word 'developing' from AO2 (the word 'developing', considered ambiguous and insufficiently distinct from 'modifying', was felt to imply that students must create recipes from scratch)
 - Clearer definition of the word 'recipes' in AO3, perhaps distinguishing between 'dish', 'menu' and 'recipe' for clarity
- Each of the following reasons for disagreeing with the proposals was mentioned by just one respondent: the use of the term 'analyse and evaluate' in AO4 was considered too similar to the previous DT/food technology approach; there were concerns over subject content (namely, 'food provenance'); it was felt that there should be greater emphasis on rewarding experimentation.
- Three of those who indicated that they neither agreed nor disagreed with the proposed AOs gave their reasons for being undecided: one said that the objectives themselves were sound but the move away from design was somewhat out of touch with the 'modern world', another that no judgement on the AOs could be made without more detail on how assessments will be completed, and the third that the AOs were open to the interpretation of the exam boards.

Q9: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for GCSEs in cooking and nutrition?

Seventy-one respondents made a comment on the proposed weightings for the AOs for GCSE cooking and nutrition, 51 representing personal views (47 from teachers) and 20 official views (four from awarding organisations). This is slightly more than the 69 quoted in Table 8 because some respondents who commented did not provide a tick-box agreement response and/or did not indicate whether their response represented an official or personal view.

SUMMARY POINTS

- Those who agreed with the proposed weightings (20 of the 71 who commented) all felt the weightings were well balanced and appropriate for the subject.
- The 33 respondents who gave their reasons for disagreeing with the weightings provided varying amounts of detail about their exact objections, but the majority mentioned concerns about the extent to which the weightings were applied to practical skills. In particular, there were six specific suggestions that the weighting applied to AO3 should be increased from its proposed 25 per cent to anywhere between 30 and 40 per cent. There were also five suggestions that the weighting for AO4 should be reduced.

KEY POINTS ACCORDING TO LEVEL OF AGREEMENT WITH THE PROPOSAL

- Twenty respondents who had indicated in their tick-box responses that they agreed with the proposed weightings for the AOs gave their reasons for agreeing, the main one of which was that the weightings were considered well balanced and appropriate for the subject. Two respondents stated that they agreed in principle with the weightings but would need to see more detailed information about the content, delivery and assessment methods before they could make an accurate judgement on this matter.
- Twenty-four respondents disagreed with the proposed weightings on the basis of the perceived lack of emphasis on practical skills; six of these respondents specified that this lack of emphasis should be addressed by increasing the weighting of AO3 (those who suggested a figure tended to suggest 30 or 40 per cent for AO3). There were also five suggestions that AO4 should be reduced from its proposed 20 per cent since ‘analysis and evaluation’ was considered to be less of an essential skill for this subject.
- The four awarding organisations all disagreed with the proposed weightings, commenting that:
 - AO2 should be reduced to 25 per cent, AO3 increased to 35 per cent, and AO4 reduced to 15 per cent
 - They would prefer a percentage range rather than fixed weightings, and that AO1 in particular should have greater weighting, as this is the main basis of the exam-based assessment
 - There was still work to be done on mapping subject content and assessment tasks against the AOs
 - AO1 should be reduced to 15 per cent, and AO3 increased to 35 per cent
- Of the six respondents who said they neither agreed nor disagreed with the proposals, five said that they felt they needed more detailed information about content, delivery and assessment methods before making a judgement. One said they were undecided because they objected in principle to the suggestion that this qualification should replace all existing food and nutrition qualifications, feeling that it should be offered as one of a range of qualifications in this subject.
- Ten respondents who made a comment under this question (seven of whom disagreed, two agreed and one who was undecided about the proposals) commented on the proposal to assess the qualification by 50 per cent exams and 50 per cent NEAs rather than on the proposed AOs weightings. These comments reflected issues and concerns raised under question 6.

Q10: Further comments

Fifty-seven respondents made further comments, 40 representing personal views (all from teachers) and 17 official views (including two from awarding organisations).

SUMMARY POINTS

- The most frequently mentioned issue in respondents' further comments was the proposed title of the qualification (31 respondents, included one awarding organisation, commented on this); many respondents objected to the word 'cooking' in particular, which was felt to have negative connotations and the potential to understate the range of skills and knowledge covered by the course. The following alternative titles were suggested by respondents:
 - Food and nutrition (suggested by 13 respondents)
 - Food science and nutrition (suggested by 6 respondents)
 - Food, cooking and nutrition (suggested by 1 respondent)
 - Food, nutrition and cooking (suggested by 1 respondent)
 - Food science (suggested by 1 respondent)
 - Food, nutrition and culinary art (suggested by 1 respondent)
 - Food preparation and nutrition (suggested by 1 respondent)
 - Nutrition and cooking (suggested by 1 respondent)
- Seven respondents (including two representing the views of awarding organisations) stated that they needed to be clearer on how the assessments will work, while a further six respondents expressed their concerns about the practicalities of running the course, particularly the NEAs (specifically the manageability of assessing practical skills with only limited timetabled sessions). A further three made suggestions about the implementation of the NEAs: a practical task that takes no longer than 4–6 hours; making the NEAs more than one task; having the NEAs include at least one task set by the awarding organisations.
- There were four generally positive comments among the further comments, welcoming the proposals (particularly the extent to which practical skills had been incorporated into the assessment methods and objectives) and indicating that they were an improvement on existing arrangements.

Twelve non-standard format responses were received about the GCSE cooking and nutrition proposals, all from teachers representing personal views. Eleven of the twelve responses echoed the concerns of those who completed the survey and suggested that the title of the qualification should have the word 'cooking' removed; once again the title 'food and nutrition' was the most frequently suggested alternative. Three of those who submitted a non-standard response suggested that the mark allocations should be 60 per cent NEA and 40 per cent exam rather than the proposed 50:50 split. Three respondents requested more detail on the exact nature of the NEA and two teachers supported the proposal to retain an untiered structure for this qualification. Two respondents mentioned the practicalities of delivering the new qualification, one expressing concern at the amount they were required to cover in two years with only limited timetabled sessions, the other at the availability of specialist teachers and equipment to meet the demands of the new qualification.

Two people (who did not identify the capacity in which they were responding) commented on the proposed assessment of this subject in response to the DfE consultation about the content of the qualification. Both echoed the concerns of others that the proposed allocation of marks to the exam was too high and both preferred a 60 per cent NEA.

5.3 Design and technology¹⁶

5.3.1 Quantitative responses

Design and technology had four Likert items. The numbers of responses to each category are shown in Table 9.

Table 9: Levels of agreement with closed questions on design and technology GCSE

Question number	Question	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Total number of responses
Q11	To what extent do you agree or disagree that for GCSEs in design and technology 50 per cent of the available marks should be allocated to exams, and 50 per cent to non-exam assessment?	43	32	14	31	9	129
Q12	To what extent do you agree or disagree that GCSEs in design and technology should not be tiered?	11	9	19	36	50	125
Q13	To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate for GCSEs in design and technology?	21	18	33	45	5	122
Q14	To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for GCSE qualifications in design and technology?	23	20	37	32	6	118

The strength of agreement and disagreement with the design and technology part of the consultation (excluding neutral opinion) is given in Figure 7.

¹⁶Following the DfE consultation on subject content, DfE has decided that the GCSE in design and technology will be deferred to first teaching in 2017. The feedback from the Ofqual consultation is included for information only.

Design and technology GCSE

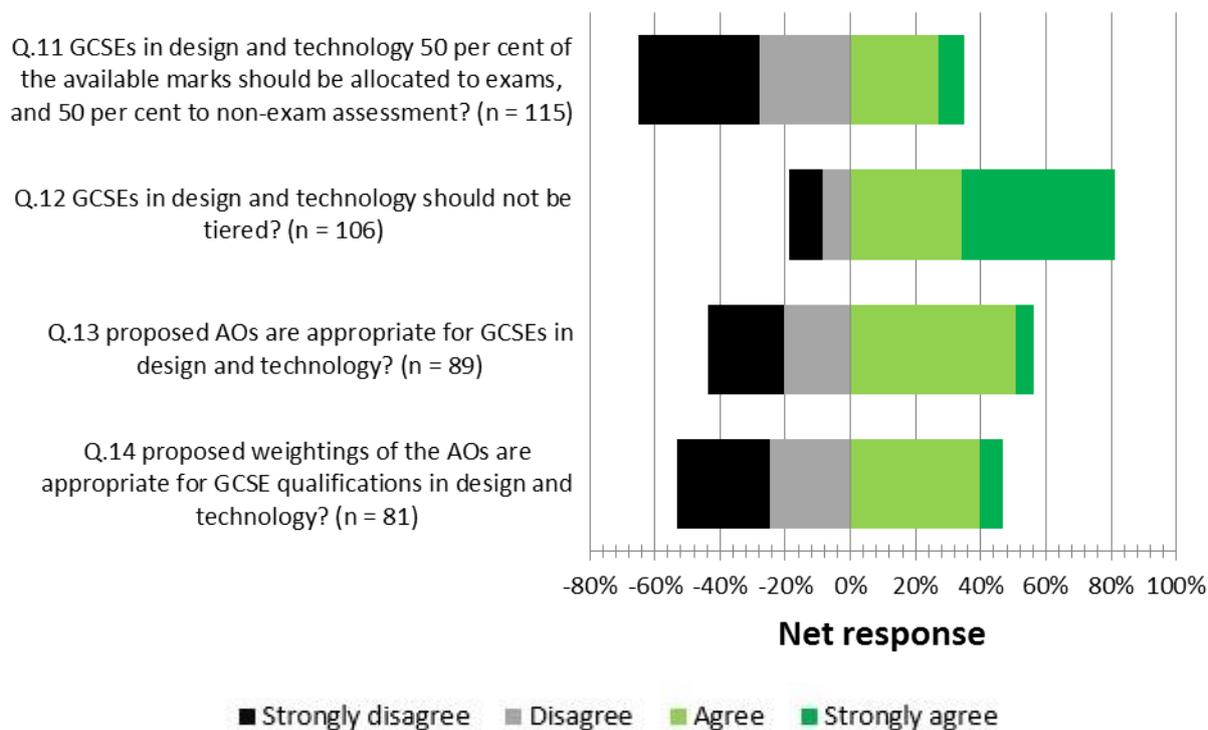


Figure 7: Stacked bar chart for design and technology GCSE

The stacked bar chart suggests that the proposals to retain non-tiered assessment arrangements had the most support, followed by AOs (being appropriate) and AOs weighting. The question on assessment arrangements received the most disagreement in this set, including a substantial block of strong disagreement.

5.3.2 Qualitative responses

Respondents were offered the opportunity to comment on each of the four Likert questions. Table 10 shows how many respondents did so according to the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the proposals and to whether they were representing personal or official views.

Table 10: Design and technology GCSE: 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		
Q11	Official	8	11	4	5	2	30
	Personal	35	19	1	19	3	77
Q12	Official	3	3	1	5	13	25
	Personal	7	4	3	20	26	60
Q13	Official	4	7	5	10	3	29
	Personal	16	8	8	19	1	52
Q14	Official	5	6	4	8	3	26
	Personal	13	10	10	8	1	42

Q11: To what extent do you agree or disagree that for GCSEs in design and technology 50 per cent of the available marks should be allocated to exams, and 50 per cent to non-exam assessment?

There were 109 comments made in response to this question (slightly more than the 107 quoted in Table 10 because two respondents who commented did not indicate whether their response represented an official or personal view), 30 representing official views (including three awarding organisations) and 77 representing personal views (72 from teachers).

SUMMARY POINTS

- The majority of comments (79 of the 109 responses) expressed objections to the proposal to assess design and technology by 50 per cent exam and 50 per cent NEAs. Most of those who objected suggested that, because of the practical nature of the subject, a higher proportion of marks should be allocated to NEAs.
- Most of the 29 respondents who agreed with the proposals and explained their reasons why considered that the 50:50 split was fair and well balanced.

KEY POINTS ACCORDING TO LEVEL OF AGREEMENT WITH THE PROPOSAL

- Twenty-one of the 29 respondents who agreed with the proposals considered the 50:50 split between exams and NEAs to be fair and well balanced. Two respondents felt that the slight increase in the proportion of marks allocated to the exam made the qualification more rigorous and consistent. One respondent pointed out that it brought design and technology into line with other subjects in terms of assessment methods and mark allocations. Five respondents who said they agreed with the proposal used their comments to express a preference for retaining the existing arrangement of 60 per cent NEA and 40 per cent exam.
- The main reason cited for disagreeing with the proposals on assessment methods was that, given the practical nature of the subject, the proportion of marks allocated to NEA was considered to be too low. Of the 109 comments, 79 were objections to the proposal to allocate 50 per cent of marks to NEA. Concerns were expressed over the deterrent effect this might have on students (particularly the less 'academically able' students who might be put off by the higher

proportion of marks allocated to exams). Most of those who suggested a preferred mark allocation for the NEA felt that 60 per cent was more acceptable, with one person suggesting 75 per cent and another preferring 100 per cent NEA for this subject.

Q12: To what extent do you agree or disagree that GCSEs in design and technology should not be tiered?

Eighty-seven respondents made a comment on the proposal to retain an untiered structure to GCSE design and technology. Of these, 26 represented official views (including three awarding organisations) and 60 represented personal views (56 from teachers) – one respondent did not indicate whether they were representing a personal or official view.

SUMMARY POINTS

- The majority (77 of the 87) of those who commented were in favour of the proposal to retain an untiered structure; many felt that it made the qualification fairer and accessible to all and that students were not limited in their achievements.
- The reasons given by the six respondents who objected to the proposal to retain an untiered structure included concerns that more-able students should be challenged while lower ability students should be able to demonstrate what they can do without feeling intimidated.

KEY POINTS ACCORDING TO LEVEL OF AGREEMENT WITH THE PROPOSAL

- Those who agreed with this proposal tended to give the reason that an untiered qualification gave equality of access and enabled all students to be aspirational and to achieve to the best of their abilities (this was mentioned by 35 respondents). Other reasons for agreeing were that differentiation should be by outcome rather than decisions on tiering (mentioned by 13 respondents) and that, with the current untiered structure working well, there was no apparent need to change it (also mentioned by 13 respondents). Other reasons for agreeing cited by fewer respondents were that the logistics of teaching a tiered qualification to mixed-ability groups made it undesirable (five respondents mentioned this); a further six respondents expressed concerns over the decisions made by teachers where students were 'borderline', fearing that the tendency might be to enter them for the lower tier to ensure they got a graded outcome.
- Six respondents described why they objected to the proposal to retain design and technology as an untiered qualification. Three of these said tiering allowed the more able students to achieve while less able students could show what they could do without being intimidated by an overly challenging assessment; two respondents favoured tiering because it seemed more accessible, suiting the learning needs and requirements of students better; one respondent felt it allowed for broader differentiation of assessment in the classroom.
- Seventeen respondents who gave comments had indicated in their tick-box responses that they disagreed with this proposal, but only six of them gave a reason for doing so. The remainder commented on why they agreed with retaining an untiered structure, which suggests that some had misunderstood the nature of the tick-box question.
- One respondent who said they neither agreed nor disagreed with the proposal commented that, if the assessment methods changed to 50 per cent exam and 50 per cent NEA, tiering might be the best option to help students cope with the written exam; if the NEA remained at 60 per cent of the marks allocation, an untiered structure would be preferable.

Q13: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate for GCSEs in design and technology?

Eighty-four respondents made a comment on the proposed AOs. This comprised 30 responses representing official views (three from awarding organisations), 52 responses representing personal views (all but four from teachers) and two responses where the respondents had not indicated whether the views represented were personal or official.

SUMMARY POINTS

- Those who expressed agreement with the proposed AOs tended either to comment in a general manner – for example, by stating that they seemed appropriate for the subject – or to say that they were fair and well balanced across the range of skills. Others expressed agreement but with the caveat that more detail was needed, for example on how the AOs linked to the assessment methods. This last issue (that further details were required) elicited seven identical comments, which appear to have come from the Design and Technology Association’s published response to the consultation.¹⁷
- Respondents’ comments on why they disagreed with the proposed AOs generally referred to one of three issues: a perceived lack of emphasis on practical skills, content-related concerns about how the individual specialisms within design and technology would be taught, and suggested changes to individual AOs.

KEY POINTS ACCORDING TO LEVEL OF AGREEMENT WITH THE PROPOSAL

- Twenty respondents who agreed with the proposed AOs made a general comment on the overall suitability or appropriateness of the proposals. A further 12 respondents agreed with the AOs in principle but commented that more detail was required, particularly on how the AOs linked to the proposed assessment methods – it should be noted, however, that seven of these responses were identically worded and replicated the Design and Technology Association’s published views (see note above).
- Three respondents who agreed with the proposed AOs made rather more specific comments: one suggested that exploring and testing materials should be an explicit part of the objectives, another expressed concerns about the apparent ‘removal’ of the discrete subjects within design and technology, while a response representing the views of an awarding body suggested that AO2 should refer to creativity and innovation.
- Thirty-five respondents gave their reasons for disagreeing with the proposed AOs: a key cause for complaint was the proposal to have a single GCSE title rather than a list of separate subjects (12 respondents mentioned this). This issue, which appears to have led to confusion about what students would have to learn and what areas of expertise teachers would be expected to have, overlaps with the separate consultation on the qualification’s content that is being conducted by the DfE. Such response data has been shared with DfE so that they can consider these together with their own consultation responses. Five respondents commented that they felt there was an insufficient emphasis on practical skills within the proposed AOs, and a further five stated that more detailed information was needed on the exact nature of the objectives and how they mapped to the assessment methods.

¹⁷ Design and Technology Association’s published response: <https://www.data.org.uk/news/dt-association-s-response-to-the-dfe-and-ofqual-consultations-relating-to-draft-gcse-subject-content-for-dt-and-cooking-and-nutrition/> (accessed on 26/11/14).

- Four respondents who disagreed with the proposals suggested specific changes that should be made to individual AOs:
 - Change AO4 to become AO1 to emphasise the hierarchy of skills evident through the AOs (this was suggested by an awarding organisation)
 - Change AO1 to ‘investigate design possibilities and considerations for the development process’; this will make it clear that investigation requires the exploration of the iterative design process and not a linear approach for one development (this was suggested by an awarding organisation)
 - Change AO2 to ‘design and make products/prototypes that meet needs and solve problems’, so that it is clear that not all design processes are required to solve a problem (this was suggested by an awarding organisation)
 - Three respondents commented that AO4 and AO2 appear to overlap, though no specific suggestion was made as to how this could be rectified. One respondent suggested merging AO4 with AOs 1, 2 and 3
- Ten of those who indicated that they neither agreed nor disagreed with the proposed AOs explained why they were undecided. Three of these respondents felt they needed more detailed information about the proposals; a further three said they could see benefits of both the current and proposed objectives, so would be satisfied with either. One person said it would depend on how the objectives mapped to the assessment methods; one respondent was keen that the technical principles should be realistic for the age range; another was concerned about a perceived lack of emphasis on the practical elements of the subject; one other, finally, was concerned about the range of subject knowledge within schools.

Q14: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for GCSE qualifications in design and technology?

There were 71 comments made in response to this question, 27 representing official views (three from awarding organisations) and 42 representing personal views (39 from teachers). There were two comments made by respondents who had not indicated whether the views represented were personal or official.

SUMMARY POINTS

- Many of the 22 comments on why respondents agreed with the proposed weightings were quite general in nature, stating that the weightings appeared to be appropriate and well balanced.
- Of the 28 comments explaining why respondents disagreed with the proposal, most (23 comments) mentioned a perceived lack of emphasis on practical skills (particularly ‘design and make’ skills) in the allocation of weightings across the AOs.

KEY POINTS ACCORDING TO LEVEL OF AGREEMENT WITH THE PROPOSAL

- Those who agreed with the proposed weightings tended to comment that they seemed appropriate to the subject and well balanced (15 respondents made comments of this nature, included two representing awarding organisations).
- Six respondents made identically worded comments (taken from the Design and Technology Association’s published response) suggesting that the proportion of each objective to be assessed by exam and NEA should also be prescribed in these qualification specifications.
- An awarding organisation that agreed with the weightings suggested that these might be improved by allowing some flexibility: that is, a range rather than a fixed weighting.
- There were 28 comments explaining why respondents disagreed with the proposal, most of which (23 comments) mentioned a perceived lack of emphasis on practical skills (particularly

'design and make' skills) in the allocation of weightings across the AOs and following on from this, it was suggested that AO2 should be increased from its proposed 35 per cent weighting.

- Other reasons for disagreeing with the proposed weightings, but mentioned by just one respondent each, included a desire to see the weightings spread more evenly across the objectives, a request for more detailed information about the objectives before a judgement could be made on the suitability of the weightings, and a request that AO2 be given a 25 per cent weighting.
- Eight respondents commented on the assessment method weightings (50 per cent exam and 50 per cent NEAs) in their comments and echoed concerns expressed previously on the reduction in the mark allocation for NEAs.

Q15: Further comments

Sixty-four respondents made further comments on this subject, 19 of these representing official views (all from schools/college or other representative or interest groups) and 44 representing personal views (42 from teachers, two from educational specialists); one respondent made a further comment without specifying whether they did so in a personal or an official capacity.

SUMMARY POINTS

- A prevalent issue among respondents' further comments on this subject was the proposal that design and technology should be offered as one overarching qualification rather than as endorsed routes within design and technology. Twenty-five respondents stated that they did not wish to see this change implemented; a further seven respondents expressed concerns over the practicalities of teaching the subject in this way, in terms of the availability of specialist equipment, teaching staff and examiners with the skills and knowledge required.
- Seven respondents highlighted in their comments their concerns over ensuring that the new qualification remain focused on the careers or further study opportunities that the qualification could lead to; it was suggested that the new qualification was too far removed from 'real life' applications of the subject and that this could ultimately be detrimental to the economy.
- Four respondents stated that the removal of food from the design and technology suite was not a good idea and might mean that this strand lost its status; one respondent, however, expressed the view that the removal of food was the right thing to do.
- Six respondents used the further comments section to put forward the views represented in the Design and Technology Association's published response. This response, in brief, recommended that:

Awarding Organisations should be given much clearer guidance in relation to the nature of the NEA and the written exam, including the allocation between examination and NEA, as some aspects can only be adequately assessed in NEA and it would be inappropriate to assess them with a 'typical' examination setting.

The NEAs should employ open starting points to ensure that students explore the context of their design challenge before developing any sort of design brief.

The Awarding Organisations should be required to adopt an approach to assessment that is minimally invasive – i.e. the way that students' work is assessed will be such that it will not distort their educative experience in tackling their designing and making task.

This will provide a much more valid form of assessment of designing and making capability than current practice does. The current models and associated mark schemes used promote a linear approach that is the result of allocating marks to very specific outcomes.

The written paper should be completely independent of the Area of Interest that candidates have chosen and should focus on assessing their understanding of enduring ideas that are

important in the subject of design and technology and on probing candidates' technological perspective.

There were eight non-standard format responses received on the GCSE design and technology proposals, three representing official views from organisations and five from teachers expressing personal views. Six of the eight non-standard responses expressed concern over the proposal to offer one overarching design and technology qualification rather than the endorsed routes that are currently offered. Respondents felt that this not only limited students' career and further study options but also left the teachers themselves unable to deliver parts of the curriculum because of their lack of specialist knowledge. Two respondents suggested greater clarity was needed on how students would select and be examined on their particular 'areas of interest'. In terms of assessment methods, one respondent supported the proposed equal allocation of marks across exam and NEAs but two others suggested that the practical nature of the subject meant that the NEA should have a higher proportion of marks. Linked to this, one response asked for a clearer definition of 'non-exam assessments' since it was unclear what format these would be in, how many there would be, and what degree of flexibility there would be for students to make their own choices.

One person (who did not identify the capacity in which they were responding) commented on the proposed assessment of this subject in response to the DfE consultation about the content of the qualification. This person echoed the concerns of others in their suggestion that the proposed allocation of marks to the exam was too high.

5.4 Drama GCSE

5.4.1 Quantitative responses

Drama GCSE had four closed questions. The numbers of responses to each category are shown in Table 11.

Table 11: Levels of agreement with closed questions on drama GCSE

Question number	Question	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Total number of responses
Q16	To what extent do you agree or disagree that for GCSEs in drama 40 per cent of the available marks should be allocated to exams, and 60 per cent to non-exam assessment?	17	12	20	25	17	91
Q17	To what extent do you agree or disagree that GCSEs in drama should not be tiered?	7	6	21	15	41	90
Q18	To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate for GCSEs in drama?	9	10	29	35	3	86
Q19	To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for GCSEs in drama?	13	15	26	29	5	88

The net rates of agreement and disagreement to the drama AS and A level Likert items (discounting neutral responses) are given in Figure 8.

Drama GCSE

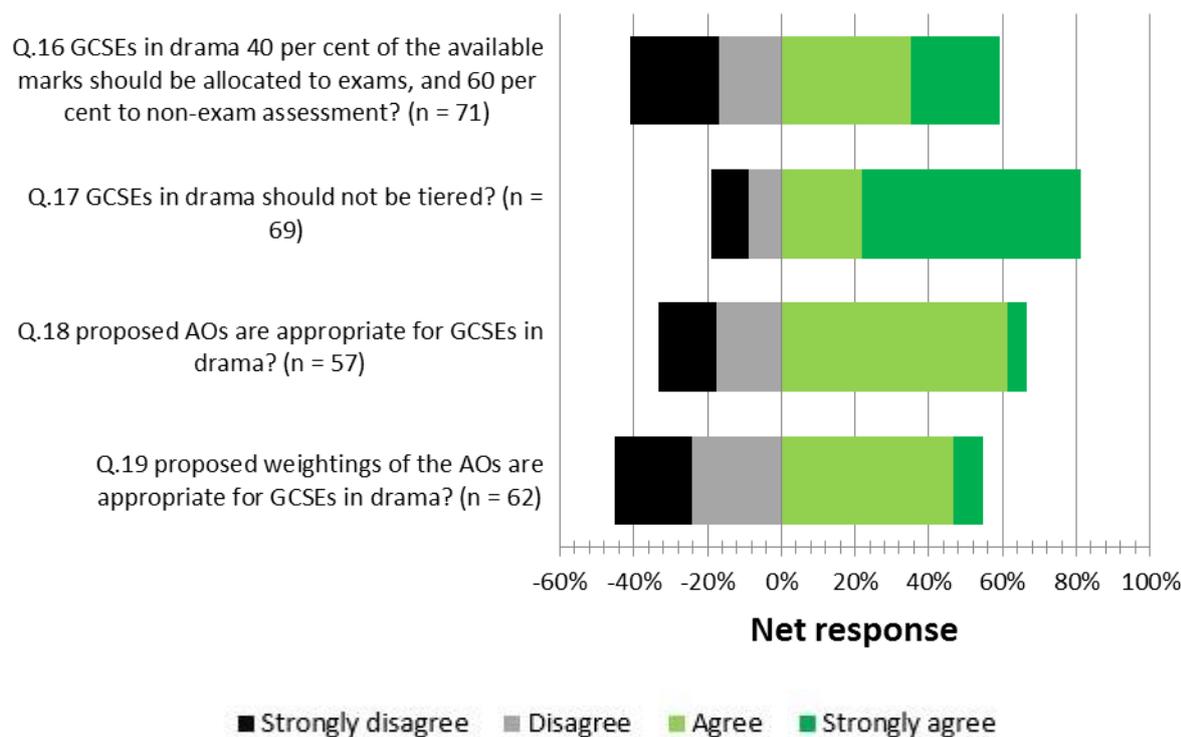


Figure 8: Stacked bar chart for drama GCSE

From this stacked bar chart we can see that the majority of respondents agreed with all four questions on this subject. There was a large majority of people who strongly agreed with proposals on tiering in particular (Q17).

5.4.2 Qualitative responses

The number of comments made for each question, broken down according to whether the respondent was representing a personal or official view and to their response to the Likert questions, is presented in Table 12.

Table 12: Drama GCSE: 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
Q16	Official	5	5	1	7	1	19
	Personal	12	6	4	16	13	51
Q17	Official	0	2	1	3	7	13
	Personal	4	3	2	6	24	39
Q18	Official	2	2	3	10	3	20
	Personal	5	8	7	14	0	34
Q19	Official	4	6	3	4	0	17
	Personal	9	8	3	16	5	41

Q16: To what extent do you agree or disagree that for GCSEs in drama 40 per cent of the available marks should be allocated to exams, and 60 per cent to non-exam assessment?

Seventy-two respondents made a comment about the proposal that 60 per cent of marks should be allocated to NEA and 40 per cent to exams, 19 representing official views (including three awarding organisations) and 51 representing personal views (including 45 from teachers) – two respondents did not indicate whether they were representing personal or official views in their comments.

SUMMARY POINTS

- Half of those who commented gave reasons for agreeing with the proposal to assess GCSE drama via 60 per cent NEA and 40 per cent exam, the majority of these indicating that they felt this arrangement would work well and suited the practical nature of the subject.
- Those who disagreed with the proposal (30 respondents) all expressed concerns in their comments about a perceived lack of emphasis on practical work.

KEY POINTS ACCORDING TO LEVEL OF AGREEMENT WITH THE PROPOSAL

- Among those who agreed with the proposals and made a comment (36 respondents), 23 stated that the proposals seemed fair and well balanced and reflected the nature of the subject well. In instances where the respondent had experienced a 60:40 split under their existing qualification, they explained that this had worked well.
- Five respondents agreed with the proposal but in their comments questioned whether the exam assessment would be written or whether it could include an element of practical assessment.
- Four respondents who agreed with this proposal suggested that the proposed assessment methods were likely to provide greater rigour and consistency; one person said that it was good that all awarding organisations would offer the same mark allocation.
- The 30 respondents who disagreed with the proposal all mentioned concerns over the perceived lack of emphasis on practical work in their comments. There was some confusion (also evident in the comments made by some of those who agreed with this proposal) about the exact nature of the exam; some respondents suggested a practical assessment should form part of the 40 per cent allocated to exams. Those who suggested that the proportion of marks allocated to NEAs should be increased suggested either 70 or 100 per cent in their comments.
- Four respondents who ticked 'neither agree nor disagree' in response to the tick-box question on this proposal stated in their comments that it would depend on the exact nature of the exams – that is, whether they were intended to be entirely written exams or whether an element of practical assessment could be included.

Q17: To what extent do you agree or disagree that GCSEs in drama should not be tiered?

There were 53 comments made on the proposal to retain GCSE drama as an untiered qualification, of which 12 responses represented official views (including four from awarding organisations) and 39 personal views (37 from teachers) – two respondents did not indicate in their comment whether these represented personal or official views.

SUMMARY POINTS

- The vast majority of those who commented (48 of the 53 respondents who made a comment) gave reasons for agreeing with the proposal to retain GCSE drama as an untiered qualification.
- Just two respondents gave reasons for disagreeing with the proposal; these were accessibility of the qualification for lower-ability students and the potential benefits of teaching higher-ability students in separate groups.

KEY POINTS ACCORDING TO LEVEL OF AGREEMENT WITH THE PROPOSAL

- The reasons given for agreeing with the proposal by 48 respondents largely echoed those given by respondents to the other subjects in this consultation: the perception that differentiation is through outcomes rather than tiering (mentioned by eight respondents, including three awarding organisations), the view that all students should have access to all grades (six respondents), the notion that the current untiered structure worked well and so should not be changed (five respondents), and the view that an untiered structure made the qualification inclusive and accessible to all (four respondents). Twenty-one of those who agreed with the proposal said that the sociable nature of the subject, and the fact that students very often worked together in large groups, made tiering particularly inappropriate for drama: a tiered structure might limit the extent to which these teaching and learning arrangements could be used.
- All but two of those who ticked 'disagree' or 'strongly disagree' in response to the tick-box question went on to explain their reasons for *agreeing* with the proposals – suggesting that, once again, some respondents had misinterpreted the nature of the tick-box question. Of the two respondents who disagreed with retaining an untiered structure and gave a reason for doing so, one said that tiering would make the qualification more accessible for lower-ability students and the other that tiering would enable high-ability students to benefit from working together.
- Three respondents who ticked 'neither agree nor disagree' to the tick-box question commented on why they were undecided on this matter, two of them saying that, in its current format, GCSE drama does not need to be tiered – but that, if the proposal for 40 per cent of marks to be allocated to exams were implemented, tiering would be required; the third respondent said they were undecided because tiering might benefit a mixed-ability cohort but could adversely affect the confidence of lower-ability students.

Q18: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate for GCSEs in drama?

Fifty-four respondents made a comment on the proposed AOs, 16 representing official views (including three awarding organisations) and 37 representing personal views (31 from teachers); one respondent did not indicate in their comment whether the response represented a personal or official view.

SUMMARY POINTS

- Just over half of those who commented on the proposed AOs gave reasons for agreeing with the proposals (31 respondents) and tended to say that they were appropriate for the subject and covered the range of areas associated with the subject.
- Many of those who gave a reason for disagreeing with the proposed AOs expressed concerns over an apparent over-emphasis on theoretical and written work and an under-emphasis on practical and performance skills.

KEY POINTS ACCORDING TO LEVEL OF AGREEMENT WITH THE PROPOSAL

- Among the 31 comments from respondents who agreed with the proposals there were nine responses stating that they were appropriate and covered the main skills/areas of the subject; six respondents commented that the proposed AOs were an improvement on the current ones (largely because they were seen to be clearer and more specific), and four respondents expressed general agreement with the proposed objectives.

- The four respondents representing the views of awarding organisations who said they agreed with the proposed objectives suggested the need for minor changes to the wording:
 - AO1 – Create and develop ideas to communicate meaning *for* [rather than ‘through’] theatrical performance
 - AO2 – Apply theatrical skills in live performance *to realise artistic intention*
 - AO3 – Omit the word *created*
- Five respondents who disagreed with the proposed AOs commented that AO3 was particularly problematic; three respondents felt that AO3 (and, in two cases, AO4) was too focused on the written exam element of the assessment; a further two respondents suggested that AO3 overlapped too much with AO1 and AO2.
- Three respondents disagreed with the proposed AOs on the basis that they appeared to neglect the practical skills involved; a further three commented that the proposals were more appropriate for a theatre studies qualification than drama because of their lack of emphasis on creative (but not necessarily performance) skills.
- Three respondents who disagreed with the proposals suggested changes to the wording:
 - AO1 – remove the word ‘theatrical’ as this AO could be interpreted to mean just backstage skills rather than the complete range of skills required for performance
 - AO1 – change to ‘create, *interpret* and develop ideas ...’
 - AO2 – add ‘technical skills’ to ensure there is an appropriate focus on the range of skills required to produce a live performance
 - AO3 – expand so that objectives are to ‘demonstrate knowledge and understanding of how drama and theatre (*including professional theatre*) is created ...’
 - AO3 – change to ‘demonstrate knowledge and understanding of how drama and theatre is created, *interpreted*, developed and performed’
 - AO4 – change to ‘analyse and evaluate their own work and the work of others, *including the work of professional theatre makers*’
- Five respondents who indicated that they neither agreed nor disagreed stated in their comments that they required more detailed information on the specifications before making an informed judgement on the proposed AOs.

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

Fifty-seven respondents commented on the proposed weightings for the AOs, 16 representing official views (four from awarding organisations) and 41 representing personal views (35 from teachers).

SUMMARY POINTS

- There were equal numbers of comments on reasons for agreeing and reasons for disagreeing with the proposed AOs (23 agreeing and 23 disagreeing).
- Most of those who agreed and made a comment (14 respondents) gave general reasons for their approval; among those who agreed with the proposals, however, there were five requests that greater weighting should be applied to the practical elements of the subject.
- A feature of nine comments from those who disagreed with the proposal was concern over how well the AO weightings mapped across to the proposed assessment methods and mark allocations; eight respondents (including three awarding organisations) suggested changes to the AO weightings to address this issue.

KEY POINTS ACCORDING TO LEVEL OF AGREEMENT WITH THE PROPOSAL

- Twenty-three respondents commented on their reasons for agreeing with the proposed weightings, nine of these stating that the weightings seemed appropriate given the nature of the subject, and a further five commenting that they were fair and well balanced.
- Five respondents agreed with the weightings but suggested that they would prefer greater weighting on the practical elements of the subject. Two respondents expressed general agreement with the weightings but suggested that greater clarity was needed about how these translated to the proposed assessment methods.
- The three awarding organisations that commented on the proposed weightings (two agreeing and one disagreeing with the proposals) all suggested that the weighting for AO1 should be reduced from 25 to 20 per cent and that AO3 should be increased from 25 to 30 per cent in order for the AO weightings to better align with the proposed assessment methods and mark allocations.
- Among those who disagreed with the proposed weightings, nine respondent expressed concerns about how well the AO weightings mapped across to the proposed 60 per cent NEAs and 40 per cent exam assessments mark allocation. Five respondents suggested that greater weighting should be applied to the practical elements of the subject; a further five specified that AO1 and AO2 should have greater weighting.
- Two respondents commented on the balance of NEAs and exams rather than the weighting of AOs, suggesting that an 80:20 split would be more appropriate than 60:40.

Q20: Further comments

There were 41 further comments, 10 representing official views and 30 representing personal views; one respondent who commented did not indicate whether their views were official or personal. None of the awarding organisations made a further comment.

SUMMARY POINTS

- The most frequently cited issue in the further comments (14 respondents mentioned their concerns about this) was the perception that practical skills were not emphasised enough in the new specification; linked to this, three respondents were concerned that the proposal to focus more heavily on texts might be limiting and lead to outcomes that depended on the choice of text. A further four respondents suggested that there was inadequate emphasis on developing and rewarding creativity in the proposals.
- Moderation and marking were mentioned by eight respondents: four suggested that the moderation process should be more transparent, two complained that marking seemed currently to be subjective and inconsistent, two suggested that more exemplar materials should be provided, and one person requested that greater use should be made of visiting examiners to ensure fairness and reduce the burden on teachers.
- Two respondents commented that the terms 'drama' and 'theatre' had been used incorrectly in the proposed AOs and stated that the terms were not interchangeable; one person suggested that the GCSE should be named 'drama and theatre' to reflect the content better and bring it in line with the A level.

There was one non-standard format response only to the GCSE drama proposals, from a teacher expressing their own views and commenting on what they saw as a lack of clarity on the exact nature and format of the NEAs proposed for this subject.

Five people (three teachers expressing personal views, and two responses on behalf of schools) commented on the proposed assessment of this subject in response to the DfE consultation on the content of the qualification. Three of these respondents stated that the written exam was a

welcome feature of the proposed GCSE because it was a good discriminator and prepared students for the academic rigour of studying the subject at A level. The remaining two commented that they were concerned that the written exam might penalise those who were less able at expressing themselves in writing under time constraints.

5.5 Drama and theatre AS and A level

5.5.1 Quantitative responses

Since it was being consulted upon as an AS and A level subject, drama and theatre had five closed items. The numbers of responses to each category are shown in Table 13.

Table 13: Levels of agreement with closed questions on drama AS and A level

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 drama and theatre 40 per cent of the available marks should be allocated to exams, and 60 per cent to non-exam assessment?	9	8	18	23	18	76
Q22	To what extent do you agree or disagree that for A levels in drama and theatre 40 per cent of the available marks should be allocated to exams, and 60 per cent to non-exam assessment?	6	6	17	31	17	77
Q23	To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate for A levels and AS qualifications in drama and theatre?	2	15	21	28	8	74
Q24	To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for AS qualifications in drama and theatre?	2	13	26	25	6	72
Q25	To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for A levels in drama and theatre?	1	11	26	28	5	71

The net agreement rates for this subject are shown in Figure 9.

Drama and theatre AS & A level

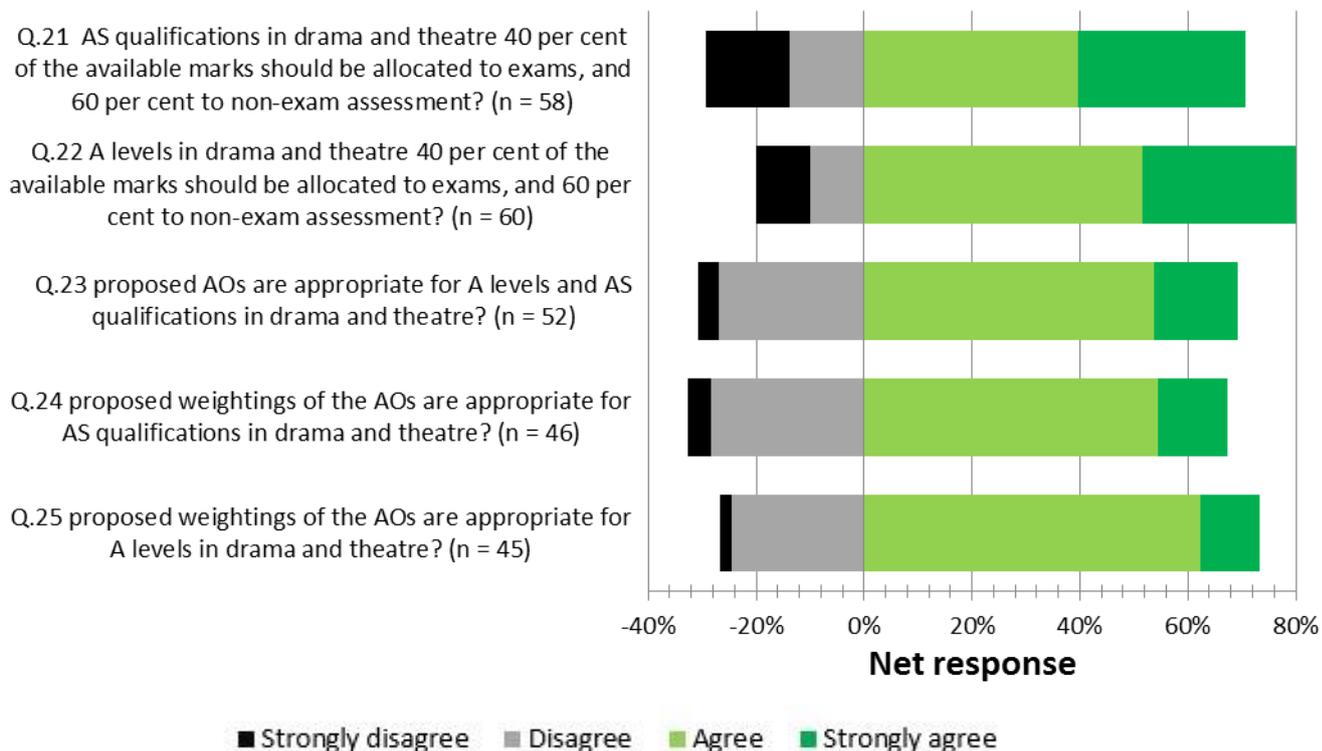


Figure 9: Stacked bar chart for drama and theatre AS and A level

Questionnaire respondents agreed in large part with the drama and theatre proposals. It is notable that the ‘strongly disagree’ response groups (black in the chart) are small in this figure.

5.5.2 Qualitative responses

Table 14 shows the number of respondents who made a comment in response to each question according to whether they were representing personal or official views and to their response to the Likert question.

Table 14: Drama 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		
Q21	Official	4	5	1	8	3	21
	Personal	5	2	5	8	13	33
Q22	Official	1	5	0	9	4	19
	Personal	4	1	3	14	8	30
Q23	Official	0	12	2	5	1	20
	Personal	1	2	3	13	6	25
Q24	Official	1	6	5	5	0	17
	Personal	0	6	4	4	4	18
Q25	Official	0	5	8	5	3	21
	Personal	0	4	2	4	0	10

Q21: To what extent do you agree or disagree that for AS qualifications in drama and theatre 40 per cent of the available marks should be allocated to exams, and 60 per cent to non-exam assessment?

Fifty-six respondents commented on this proposal, 20 representing official views (including four awarding organisations) and 34 representing personal views (29 from teachers). Two respondents made a comment but did not indicate whether they were representing personal or official views.

SUMMARY POINTS

- Nearly two-thirds of those who commented on the proposed assessment methods for the AS qualification agreed that they were appropriate for the subject and level.
- Fifteen respondents (less than one-third of those who commented) expressed objections to the proposal: their concerns centred on the perceived over-emphasis on written exams and inadequate focus on practical assessments.

KEY POINTS ACCORDING TO LEVEL OF AGREEMENT WITH THE PROPOSAL

- Thirty-three respondents agreed with the proposal and gave their reasons for doing so. Seventeen of these respondents stated that they felt the proposal was acceptable and seemed appropriate for the subject (this included two responses from awarding organisations); a further five commented that the marks allocation seemed fair and well balanced.
- Six of those who agreed with the proposal said that they would need more detail on the exact nature of the assessments to make a final judgement; their concerns centred on whether the exam would be practical or a written paper and on what limitations there might be on the format of the NEAs.
- Two respondents agreed with the proposal but would have preferred a slightly lower proportion of marks to be allocated to the exam; a further two respondents agreed but with the caveat that

they would wish to maintain the qualification's credibility as a challenging course and that this would depend on the format and marking systems of the NEAs.

- Fifteen respondents commented on why they disagreed with the proposals: 13 of these felt that the proportion of marks allocated to the exam was too high and that this meant that the practical elements of the subject would receive inadequate focus. Two awarding organisations would have preferred 30 per cent to be allocated to the exam; one of these pointed out that this would better reflect the demands of studying the subject at higher education level.
- One person who disagreed with the proposal suggested that the AS qualification should be assessed entirely by NEAs, with the exam a feature of the A level only. Another respondent expressed a preference for a more holistic approach to assessing the qualification, without the need to separate 'practical' and 'theoretical' work in such a prescribed manner.
- Three respondents who said that they neither agreed nor disagreed with the proposal stated in their comments that they needed more detailed information on the proposed assessment methods to make an informed judgement.

Q22: To what extent do you agree or disagree that for A levels in drama and theatre 40 per cent of the available marks should be allocated to exams, and 60 per cent to non-exam assessment?

There were 51 comments on the proposal to allocate 40 per cent of the marks to exams and 60 per cent to NEAs for A level drama and theatre, 18 representing official views (including four awarding organisations) and 31 representing personal views (27 from teachers); a further two respondents commented but did not indicate whether their response represented personal or official views.

SUMMARY POINTS

- Responses to the A level proposal reflected those given on the AS qualification proposal; again, around two-thirds who commented expressed their agreement with the proposed changes.
- The main reason given for disagreeing with the proposed mark allocations was the perceived over-emphasis on exams.

KEY POINTS ACCORDING TO LEVEL OF AGREEMENT WITH THE PROPOSAL

- Of the 38 respondents describing why they agreed with the proposed 40:60 allocation of marks across exams and NEAs, 25 (including two awarding organisations) said that the proposals were appropriate for the subject and that the allocations were well balanced.
- There were seven comments from those who had ticked 'agree' or 'strongly agree' in response to the tick-box question saying that, although they agreed with this proposal, they would need more detailed information on the exact nature of the assessments to make an accurate judgement – some, in particular, were unclear whether the exam could involve a practical element or not.
- Two of those who agreed with this proposal explained that they would have preferred a 30:70 allocation across exams and NEAs; one respondent requested that the proportion of marks allocated to an exam is kept as low as possible.
- One person agreed with this proposal on the basis that the AS qualification and A level should have the same specification; one respondent commented that the final exam was a positive thing since it allowed students the opportunity to reflect upon their work and learning over two years.
- Twelve respondents gave a reason for disagreeing with the proposal. As was the case with the AS qualification, the main reason cited was a concern that the allocation of marks to the exam was too high (mentioned by ten respondents, two of whom were representing awarding organisations); those who suggested an alternative allocation tended to prefer a split of 30 per cent exam and 70 per cent NEA.

- One person who disagreed and one who was undecided about the proposal stated that more detailed information on the exact nature of the assessments was needed.

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

Forty-six respondents made a comment on the proposed AOs for the drama and theatre AS qualification and A level, 19 representing official views (four from awarding organisations) and 26 representing personal views (21 from teachers); one person made a comment but did not indicate whether they were representing personal or official views.

SUMMARY POINTS

- Just over half of those who commented on the proposed AOs (26 respondents) expressed their agreement with the proposals; many of these felt they were appropriate for the subject and level, with three respondents stating that they were an improvement on the current objectives.
- Among the 14 comments expressing disagreement with the proposed AOs there were five requests for changes to the wording and four complaints that the objectives were not specific enough.

KEY POINTS ACCORDING TO LEVEL OF AGREEMENT WITH THE PROPOSAL

- Fifteen respondents who agreed with the proposed AOs made generally positive comments about the suitability and appropriateness of the proposals; a further three stated that they were an improvement on the existing objectives.
- The following suggested changes to the wording of the objectives were made by five respondents who disagreed with the proposals and four who agreed with the proposed objectives:
 - AO1 – Create *and develop* [removing the reference to 'refine'] ideas to communicate meaning as part of the theatre making process, *making connections between dramatic theory and their practice* (this was suggested by two awarding organisations)
 - AO1 – change to 'create, *interpret*, develop and refine ideas ...'
 - AO2 – change to 'apply theatrical skills *and knowledge* to realise artistic intentions ...' (two respondents requested this change)
 - AO3 – change to 'demonstrate knowledge and understanding of how *and why* drama and theatre is created, developed and performed, *including the working practices of professional theatre makers*'
 - AO4 – change to '*analyse and evaluate their own work and the work of others*' [complete re-wording] (again, this was suggested by two respondents representing awarding organisations)
 - AO4 – remove the word 'critical' as this was already encompassed by the phrase 'analytical and evaluative judgements' (this was suggested by an awarding organisation)
 - AO4 – adjust slightly to include live theatre as in the current AOs, e.g. 'make critical, analytical and evaluative judgements of their own work and the work of others, *including live theatre performances*'
 - AO4 – change to '... the work of others, *including live theatre made by professional theatre makers*'
- Four respondents who disagreed with the proposals commented that they were not specific enough, although one respondent suggested the objectives were too specific.

- Concerns about how the AOs mapped to the assessment methods were raised by three respondents who disagreed with the proposal, two of whom said they neither agreed nor disagreed.

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

Thirty-five respondents commented on the proposed weightings for the AS qualification AOs, 17 representing official views (including those from four awarding organisations) and 18 representing personal views (15 from teachers).

SUMMARY POINTS

- Views on the proposed weightings for the AS qualification were somewhat mixed: 14 of those who commented gave their reasons for agreeing with the proposals, 12 explained why they objected, and 9 why they felt undecided on the proposals.
- Those who agreed tended to state that the weightings seemed fair and balanced and were appropriate for the subject.
- A cause for concern mentioned by nine respondents was how the weightings for the AOs mapped to the proposed assessment methods and mark allocations.

KEY POINTS ACCORDING TO LEVEL OF AGREEMENT WITH THE PROPOSAL

- Fourteen respondents agreed with the proposed weightings: six of these (including one awarding organisation) expressed broad approval without specifying exactly what aspect of the weightings was particularly appropriate; a further three agreed in principle but requested more detail on how the weightings mapped to the assessment methods; linked to this, two respondents (both representing awarding organisations) said they agreed but that, if the proposed 40:60 split of exam and NEAs were implemented, the weighting for AO3 should be increased.
- One respondent who agreed with the proposed weightings said they were an improvement on the current weightings. One respondent was keen to see greater weighting applied to those objectives that related to the more practical aspects of the subject, and another respondent commented that they welcomed the increased weighting on AO4.
- The most frequently cited reason for disagreeing with the proposed weightings was the perception that it was unclear how these mapped to the proposed assessment methods and mark allocations (five respondents expressed this concern, one representing an awarding organisation). In view of this, a further three respondents suggested that the weightings for AO1 and AO2 should be increased to match the proposed assessment methods better.
- Two respondents who disagreed with the proposal suggested that greater weighting should be applied to those objectives that related to the practical aspects of the subject; one respondent suggested that the weightings should allow for more opportunities to assess through coursework rather than written exams.

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

Thirty-one respondents commented on the proposed weightings for the A level AOs, 17 comments representing official views (four from awarding organisations) and 14 representing personal views (12 from teachers).

SUMMARY POINTS

- As was the case in the responses relating to the AS qualification, those who commented on the proposed AO weightings for the A level expressed a range of views: 13 commented on why they approved of the proposals, 9 on why they objected and 8 explained why they felt undecided.
- Most of those who agreed with the proposals expressed the view that they were generally suitable and appropriate.
- The most salient issue among the reasons for disagreeing with the proposals were concerns over how the weightings mapped to the assessment methods and mark allocations and the perception that inadequate weighting was applied to the practical aspects of the subject.

KEY POINTS ACCORDING TO LEVEL OF AGREEMENT WITH THE PROPOSAL

- Seven of the 14 respondents who commented on why they agreed with the proposed weightings expressed the general view that they were appropriate and well balanced; one respondent stated that they were an improvement on the current weightings.
- Two of those who agreed with the weightings suggested that more detail was needed on how these mapped to the assessment methods; a further two respondents (both representing awarding organisations) suggested that if the 40:60 allocation between exams and NEA were implemented the weighting for AO3 should be increased to better translate the objectives to the assessment methods.
- Four respondents (including one awarding organisation) who disagreed with the proposed weightings echoed the concerns over how they mapped to the assessment methods; a further three suggested that AO1 and AO2 should have a higher weighting to facilitate this mapping.
- Two respondents disagreed with the weightings on the basis that they seemed to be skewed away from the practical elements of the subject.
- Eight respondents who indicated that they neither agreed nor disagreed with the proposed weightings made a comment: five of these respondents were concerned that having a range rather than fixed weightings left too much to the discretion of the awarding organisations,¹⁸ two respondents echoed others' concerns over the mapping of the weightings to the assessment methods, and one respondent was undecided because they were unclear how far 'live theatre' contributed to the weighting.

Q26: Further comments

Twenty-six respondents made a further comment on the proposals for the drama and theatre AS qualification and A level, 12 representing official views and 14 representing personal views.

SUMMARY POINTS

- The most frequently recurring issue among the further comments was the assessment of performance using DVD recordings; five respondents commented that, wherever possible, examiners should base their assessment on the live performance rather than a recording.
- Two respondents echoed previously expressed concerns about the level of detail currently available on the proposed assessment methods.
- An alleged lack of emphasis on the practical aspects of the course was the subject of two comments, both concerned that the more practically gifted students might be disadvantaged by the weighting given to written assessments. One comment simply stated that a 40 per cent mark

¹⁸ Respondents are referring to page 24 of the consultation document (<http://tinyurl.com/ngpcury>), where the proposed assessment objective weightings are all quoted as ranges, e.g. 20–30%, 20–25%.

GCSE, A level and AS qualifications for first teaching in 2016 (parts 2 and 3)

allocation for exams was too high, and one respondent expressed the view that the assessment of this subject should be assessed entirely by NEA. One further respondent was concerned about the logistics of running practical assessments for a separate AS qualification alongside multiple final year practical assessments for the A level.

- One respondent expressed general concerns over the ‘decoupling’ of the AS qualification and A level and suggested that as a result some schools might decide not to offer an AS qualification.
- One comment expressed concerns about the impact of the changes on teachers’ workload; another respondent commented on the cost implications of the ‘live production’ element.
- Two respondents mentioned marking. One claimed that the currently inconsistent and subjective marking must be addressed; another respondent commented that the marking for the new qualifications must be transparent and standardised.

There were no non-standard format responses received about the drama and theatre AS qualification or A level proposals.

5.6 Religious studies GCSE

5.6.1 Quantitative responses

Religious studies GCSE had four Likert (closed, 'strongly disagree' ... 'strongly agree') items. The numbers of responses to each category are shown in Table 15.

Table 15: Levels of agreement with closed questions on religious studies GCSE

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 GCSEs in religious studies should be assessed entirely by exam?	4	15	4	43	56	122
Q2	To what extent do you agree or disagree that GCSEs in religious studies should not be tiered?	2	8	10	37	63	120
Q3	To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate for GCSEs in religious studies?	13	22	19	47	20	121
Q4	To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for GCSEs in religious studies?	8	14	23	51	23	119

A different take on the strength of opinion about religious studies GCSE is expressed in Figure 10, which shows only definite agreement or disagreement (it excludes 'neither agree nor disagree' responses).

Religious studies GCSE

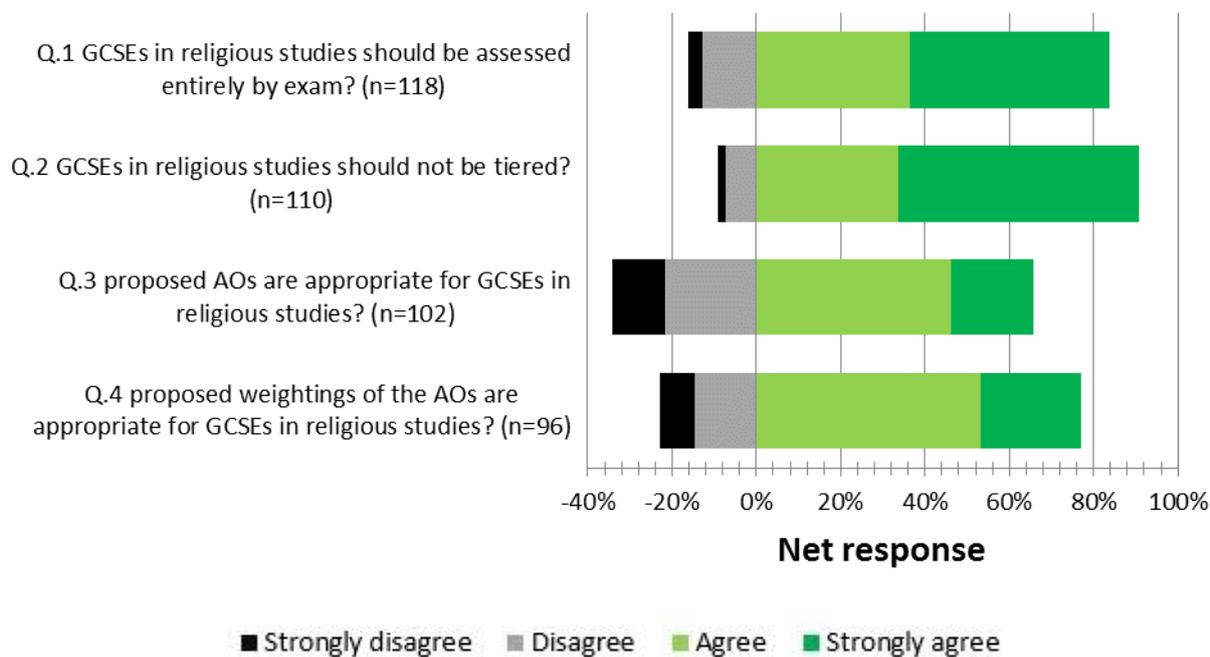


Figure 10: Stacked bar chart for religious studies GCSE

The stacked bar chart suggests that there was generally strong support for the religious studies GCSE proposals. This support was expressed in between 70 and 90 per cent of responses. There was most support for the (non-)tiering arrangements, and least for the proposed AOs.

5.6.2 Qualitative responses

Table 16 shows the number of respondents who made a comment in response to each question according to whether they agreed or disagreed, and to whether they were representing a personal or official view.

Table 16: Religious studies GCSE: 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
Q1	Official	2	8	1	9	18	38
	Personal	1	7	3	27	34	72
Q2	Official	1	2	0	11	24	38
	Personal	1	6	5	19	34	65
Q3	Official	2	8	2	14	9	35
	Personal	3	9	8	22	10	52
Q4	Official	1	2	3	13	6	25
	Personal	4	8	5	16	10	43

Q1: To what extent do you agree or disagree that GCSEs in religious studies should be assessed entirely by exam?

One hundred and ten respondents made a comment on this question. As Table 16 shows, 38 of these responses represented official views and 72 represented personal views. Among the official views were 19 responses representing schools and colleges, 4 from local authorities and 4 responses from awarding organisations.

SUMMARY POINTS

- Most of the comments (88 of the 110) expressed reasons for agreeing with the proposal to assess religious studies entirely by exam.
- The small number who described why they disagreed with the proposal (22 respondents) either expressed their concerns about students who do not cope well with the pressure of exams or suggested that an element of NEA should be introduced.

KEY POINTS ACCORDING TO LEVEL OF AGREEMENT WITH THE PROPOSAL

- Those who agreed with the proposal to assess the new religious studies qualification entirely by exam gave a range of reasons for doing so. The response most frequently given was that the current system of assessing entirely by exam worked well and therefore did not need changing (18 respondents mentioned this). Sixteen respondents commented that their agreement with retaining exam assessment methods was driven by the practicalities of administering NEAs in a subject that has relatively few teaching hours assigned to it and is taken by large numbers of students.
- In the reasons for agreeing with the proposal, there were 37 comments relating to fairness: 14 respondents commented that the proposal made the subject more academically rigorous, 12 that it prevented cheating or plagiarism, 9 that it was a fairer system for assessing the subject, and a further 2 that exams allowed for better standardisation of marks across centres.
- Those who disagreed with the proposal and gave a reason for doing so tended to cite concerns over those students who did not cope well with the pressure of exams (seven respondents mentioned this). A further eight respondents stated that they would have liked an element of

NEA in this subject to allow students to explore the subject and develop a more in-depth knowledge and understanding and to assist those students who performed less well in exams in achieving a reasonable grade (one person specified that deaf children were particularly disadvantaged in subjects where there was no coursework element).

- Among those who indicated 'neither agree nor disagree' in their tick-box response, the most frequently cited reason for being undecided (mentioned by three respondents) was that, while they agreed that there should be an exam, an element of NEA would also benefit students, making it easier for them to express their knowledge and understanding and better reflecting the learning and assessment methods employed at university level.

Q2: To what extent do you agree or disagree that GCSEs in religious studies should not be tiered?

There were 104 comments made on the proposal to retain an untiered structure for this qualification (one more than the total quoted in Table 16 because one respondent did not answer the associated tick-box question), 38 representing official views and 66 representing personal views.

SUMMARY POINTS

- A majority of the comments (90 of the 104) expressed reasons for agreeing with the proposal to retain the untiered structure for this qualification.
- Twelve respondents gave their reasons for disagreeing with the proposal, which generally related to the perception that tiering better accommodated the learning needs of different students.

KEY POINTS ACCORDING TO LEVEL OF AGREEMENT WITH THE PROPOSAL

- Those who agreed with the proposal to retain an untiered structure and made a comment on the reasons why referred to a range of issues. The most frequently cited reason was the belief that all students should have the opportunity to achieve to the best of their ability without being limited by decisions on their capabilities (24 respondents mentioned this). Eighteen respondents stated that the current untiered structure worked well and therefore should not be changed. Fourteen people pointed out that differentiation was by outcome rather than pre-decided tiers. A further ten respondents expressed the view that tiering was not suitable for this subject because of the particular practicalities of teaching the subject with limited timetabled hours available and the large numbers of students taking the qualification (making 'setting' impractical).
- Six respondents who agreed with the proposal pointed out that the structure of the exam papers and/or the wording of the questions must be carefully thought out to ensure the papers remained accessible to all students.
- Two respondents who agreed with the retention of an untiered structure had done so because they objected in principle to tiering across all subjects; a further three stated that there was no evidence to suggest that tiering was beneficial.
- Twelve respondents disagreed with the proposal (a slightly higher figure than the number quoted in Table 16 because two of these ticked 'agree' in their tick-box response but then commented on reasons for disagreeing, suggesting that they had misinterpreted the question). The main reasons given for preferring a tiered structure related to the extent to which this helped to accommodate different learning needs and levels.
- Two respondents gave their reasons for neither agreeing nor disagreeing with the proposal, one saying that the evidence for tiering was inconclusive and the other that it was important that lower ability students should be catered for regardless of whether a tiered structure was in place.

Q3: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate for GCSEs in religious studies?

Eighty-seven respondents commented on their reasons for agreeing or disagreeing with the proposed AOs, 35 representing official views (including four awarding organisations) and 52 representing personal views.

SUMMARY POINTS

- Almost two-thirds of those who commented (55 respondents) gave reasons for agreeing with the proposed AOs. Although they generally expressed satisfaction with the appropriateness of the objectives, there were a small number of suggestions about the specific wording used.
- Twenty-two respondents gave their reasons for disagreeing with the proposed AOs, which tended to focus on issues such as the practicalities of covering everything in relatively limited timetabled hours, and concerns about the focus of the objectives.

KEY POINTS ACCORDING TO LEVEL OF AGREEMENT WITH THE PROPOSAL

- The most frequently cited reason for agreeing with the proposed AOs was the perception that they were generally suitable or appropriate for the subject (19 respondents stated this), followed by the view that the proposed objectives were clearer than the current ones (cited by nine respondents) and that they covered an appropriate range of skills (mentioned by a further nine respondents). Four respondents explained that they felt the proposed AOs provided better preparation for studying religious studies at A level.
- Some respondents agreed with the AOs overall but commented on specific wording: two respondents objected to the emphasis in AO1 on a ‘compare and contrast’ approach implied by the phrase ‘similarities and differences’, and two of these suggested the word ‘between’ should be replaced with ‘within’.
- Among the 22 respondents who disagreed with the proposed objectives and made a comment there was little consensus about the exact cause of dissatisfaction. One of the most frequently given objections was that the limited number of timetabled hours devoted to religious studies might make it difficult to adequately cover all the AOs (three respondents mentioned this concern). Three respondents (including an awarding organisation) complained that comparing ‘similarities and differences’ (specified in AO1) was not a useful or academically challenging exercise; a further four (one of whom represented an awarding organisation) objected to the absence of students’ ‘personal responses’ from the proposed objectives.
- Two awarding organisations referred in their reasons for disagreeing with the proposed AOs to the link between the proposed content and the AOs: one commented that the objectives referred too specifically to content rather than skills (particularly in the case of AO1); the other commented that the proposed AOs focused too heavily on part one of the proposed subject content and not enough on Part Two.
- Two of those who disagreed with the proposals commented that the proposed AOs were too similar to the current objectives and that this appeared to be ‘change for the sake of change’.
- In an official response from another representative or interest group who disagreed with the proposed AOs, the language used was criticised for restricting the assessment to religions and excluding non-religious worldviews (this was considered not to be the case in the current AOs) and therefore not accurately reflecting the inclusive nature of the subject content.
- Those who ticked ‘neither agree nor disagree’ with the proposed AOs gave a range of reasons for this indecision, including concerns that they were too similar to the current AOs, satisfaction with one AO but not the other, issues with the specific wording, and (in the response from an awarding organisation) the view that further work was required to form these into acceptable objectives.

Q4: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for GCSEs in religious studies?

Sixty-eight respondents commented on the proposed weightings of the AOs, 25 representing official views (including two awarding organisations) and 43 representing personal views.

SUMMARY POINTS

- Two-thirds of those who commented (45 respondents) described their reasons for agreeing with the proposed weightings: key themes among these comments were the perception that they were generally appropriate, well balanced and in line with current weightings.
- Fifteen respondents gave mixed reasons for disagreeing with the proposed weightings: for example, six people wanted greater weighting applied to AO1 while a further five suggested AO2 should have greater weighting.

KEY POINTS ACCORDING TO LEVEL OF AGREEMENT WITH THE PROPOSAL

- Forty-five respondents described why they agreed with the proposed weightings of the AOs, 19 simply expressing general satisfaction with the appropriateness of the weightings without specifying exactly why they felt they were satisfactory.
- While 12 respondents commented that the 50:50 split between the two objectives was fair and well balanced, 6 respondents who agreed with the weightings expressed a preference for a slightly higher weighting on AO1 (in some instances a 60 per cent weighting for AO1 was suggested). The reason given for this preference was the view that knowledge and understanding should have a higher weighting than evaluation at GCSE level, in recognition of the fact that the higher-level skills associated with evaluation might be more challenging for students at this level.
- This theme was also evident in the comments made by those who disagreed with the proposed weightings. Six of these respondents commented that AO2 should have a higher weighting than AO1, while a further five respondents suggested that AO1 should have a higher weighting than AO2. One person disagreed with the weightings on the basis that they felt AO1 would take up more than 50 per cent of teaching time and should therefore have a higher weighting. One awarding organisation raised concerns that the proposed subject content (and the subject of a separate DfE consultation) left little opportunity to develop AO2 skills.
- Eight people who ticked 'neither agree nor disagree' and made a comment had a range of reasons for this view; one person said that AO1 should have a greater weighting and another that AO2 should have more than 50 per cent weighting. Another respondent stated that they would be unable to make a judgement on the weightings until further details about the content of the qualification and how it linked to the AOs was released. One respondent (representing the official views of an interest group) commented that the current 50:50 weighting across the objectives translated to 25:75 in reality and requested that this be addressed in future exam papers.

Q5: Further comments

Thirty-eight respondents made a further comment on the proposals for assessing the new religious studies GCSE, 17 representing official views and 21 representing personal views.

SUMMARY POINTS

- Twelve respondents made comments that related to the content of the GCSE, which is covered by the DfE consultation – as a result, their views are not represented here.

- Three respondents expressed concerns about the timing of the religious studies consultation (which forms phase three of three consultations), in particular that the introduction of the new qualification in September 2016 might leave insufficient time to properly review the consultation findings and act upon any suggestions. Raising a similar point, one respondent questioned how schools offering the qualification as a three-year GCSE would handle the move to the new specifications, since they would effectively need the specifications in place by September 2015 (rather than 2016).
- Two respondents expressed disappointment at the consultation method and would have preferred a more proactive approach to seeking the views of teachers and students on the proposals.
- One awarding organisation expressed concerns over linking the proposed content (the subject of the separate DfE consultation) with the proposed assessment, particularly given the range of different routes and options proposed.
- Two respondents mentioned in their further comments that religious studies should be included in the English Baccalaureate.
- The remaining respondents who commented all mentioned different issues, most of which had been covered in their previous responses to the consultation questions.

There were 12 non-standard format responses to the religious studies GCSE, AS and A level consultation. Of these, ten referred only to issues around the content of the qualification (the subject of the separate DfE consultation); another referred to issues of equality, which are reported in section 5.8 of this report. One response representing a personal view expressed concern at the potential for the two proposed AOs to become fragmented into separate objectives: AO1 might, for example, end up getting sub-divided into ‘understanding the similarities and difference’ and ‘the nature and impact of beliefs’.

5.7 Religious studies AS and A level

5.7.1 Quantitative responses

Religious studies AS and A level had five Likert (closed, 'strongly disagree' ... 'strongly agree') items. The numbers of responses to each category are shown in Table 17.

Table 17: Levels of agreement with closed questions on religious studies AS and A level

Question number	Question	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Total number of responses
Q6	To what extent do you agree or disagree that AS qualifications in religious studies should be assessed entirely by exam?	4	12	15	38	48	117
Q7	To what extent do you agree or disagree that A levels in religious studies should be assessed entirely by exam?	5	12	14	40	48	119
Q8	To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate for A levels and AS qualifications in religious studies?	14	18	21	49	17	119
Q9	To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for AS qualifications in religious studies?	11	15	27	49	15	117
Q10	To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for A levels in religious studies?	12	16	27	48	15	118

A different take on the strength of opinion about religious studies AS and A level is expressed in Figure 11, which shows only definite agreement or disagreement (excluding 'neither agree nor disagree' responses).

Religious studies AS & A level

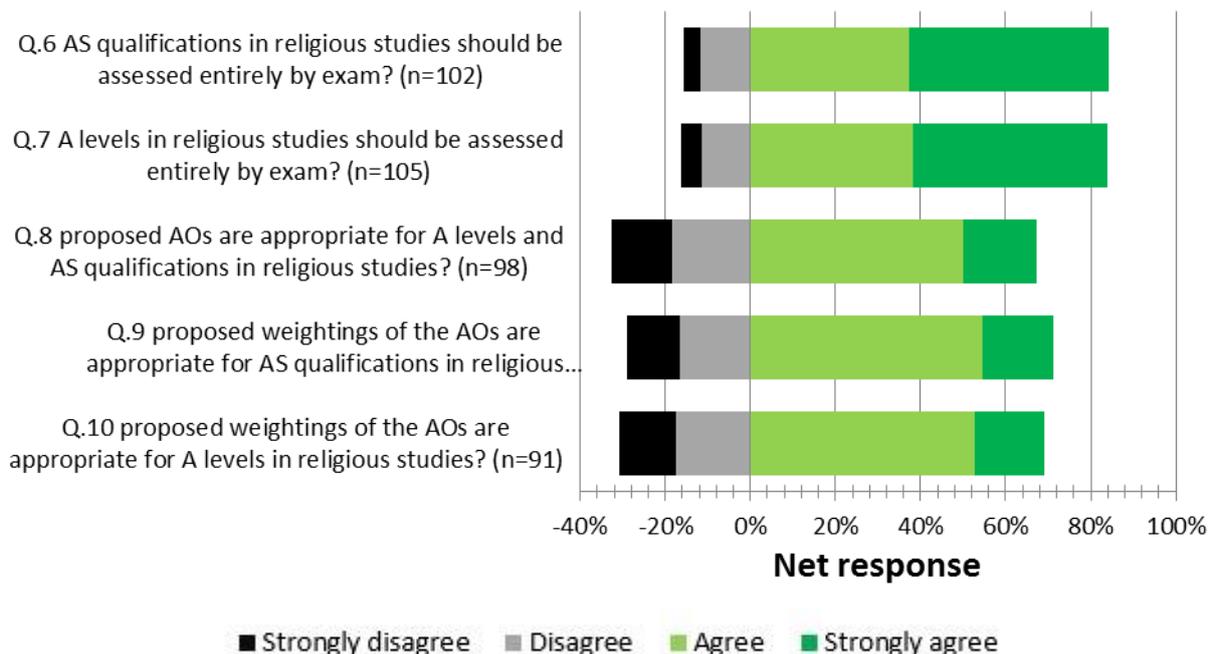


Figure 11: Stacked bar chart for religious studies AS and A level

The stacked bar chart suggests that there was strong support for the proposals in all the summarised questions. This support is particularly strong in respect of assessment arrangements (exam only) for AS and A level.

5.7.2 Qualitative responses

Table 18: Religious studies 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
Q6	Official	1	7	0	8	14	30
	Personal	1	5	5	19	26	56
Q7	Official	2	5	0	8	15	30
	Personal	1	6	6	17	24	54
Q8	Official	3	8	2	4	7	24
	Personal	10	10	3	19	5	47
Q9	Official	3	6	2	7	6	24
	Personal	5	9	6	13	5	38
Q10	Official	2	6	3	6	8	25
	Personal	5	9	5	13	3	35

Q6: To what extent do you agree or disagree that AS qualifications in religious studies should be assessed entirely by exam?

There were 86 comments made on the proposal to assess the AS qualification entirely by exam, 30 representing official views (including four awarding organisations) and 56 representing personal views.

SUMMARY POINTS

- The reasons given in the 67 comments of respondents agreeing with the proposal tended to be of a general nature expressing approval of the use of exams for this subject.
- Among the 15 respondents who commented on why they disagreed with the proposals, 11 suggested that an element of NEA should be added, many commenting that it would provide better preparation for study at university level.

KEY POINTS ACCORDING TO LEVEL OF AGREEMENT WITH THE PROPOSAL

- Among the 67 comments explaining why respondents agreed with the proposal to assess this qualification entirely by exam, ten respondents suggested that this avoided cheating and plagiarism, a further ten that exams provided a truer reflection of students' abilities and nine that it was generally a fairer system for assessing the subject.
- Six respondents who agreed with the proposal said it maintained academic rigour in the subject; four respondents referred back to the use of coursework in this subject several years ago, suggesting that it had not worked for either the students or the teachers.
- Fifteen respondents commented on why they disagreed with the proposal. The most frequently cited reason (given by seven respondents) was that an element of NEA would provide better preparation for studying at university level (for example by developing independent study and research skills); a further four respondents suggested that an element of NEA was needed, but without specifying what the advantages of this would be. Three respondents disagreed with the proposal out of concerns about those students who do not cope well when under pressure in exams.
- Four respondents explained why they neither agreed nor disagreed with the proposal. Three of these agreed with exams in principle but felt that including some NEA would be better

preparation for university level study (though one of these acknowledged that it would add to teachers' workload). One respondent explained that they were undecided because there were advantages to either approach.

Q7: To what extent do you agree or disagree that A levels in religious studies should be assessed entirely by exam?

Eighty-four respondents commented on the proposal to assess the A level entirely by exam, 30 representing official views and 54 representing personal views.

SUMMARY POINTS

- The comments made generally repeated those made about the AS qualification (and were largely made by the same people). Reasons for agreeing with the proposal tended to centre on perceptions of fairness and academic rigour; those who disagreed were highly likely to do so on the basis that they felt some element of NEA should be included.

KEY POINTS ACCORDING TO LEVEL OF AGREEMENT WITH THE PROPOSAL

- Sixty-four respondents who agreed with the proposal to assess A level religious studies entirely by exam gave reasons for doing so. The most frequently cited reasons were similar to those given in response to the AS qualification question: ten respondents believed that exams provided for a more academically rigorous qualification, a further ten suggested that exams gave a truer reflection of students' abilities, and eight respondents said that exams avoided issues of cheating and plagiarism, which can be experienced with coursework.
- Twelve respondents who agreed with the proposal said the use of exams was appropriate for the subject; a further seven expressed the view that it exams were the fairest way of assessing this subject.
- Among the 16 respondents who disagreed with the proposal and gave their reasons, the most frequently mentioned concern was the exclusion of NEAs: eight respondents felt NEAs provided better preparation for university level study; four stated that there should be an element of NEA but did not elaborate on their reasons for holding this view; three respondents were concerned that students who did not cope well in exams might be disadvantaged.
- Five respondents explained why they neither agreed nor disagreed with the proposal. Four of these agreed with exams in principle but felt that including some NEA would be preferable (for example, because it helped prepare for university study). One respondent explained that they supported assessment by exam but only if awarding organisations provided pre-release materials, giving the proposed topics for the exam.

Q8: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate for A levels and AS qualifications in religious studies?

There were 72 comments on the topic of the AOs (one more than the figure quoted in Table 18 because one person commented but did not answer the associated tick-box question), 24 representing official views and 47 representing personal views.

SUMMARY POINTS

- The high levels of agreement with the proposed AOs evident in the tick-box responses were reflected in respondents' comments; nearly half of those who commented (34 respondents) detailed reasons for agreeing with the proposals.
- Twenty-eight respondents described why they disagreed with the proposed objectives; of these, 11 identified the content of the qualification as the source of their dissatisfaction – this is

covered in the separate DfE consultation (the most frequently recurring complaint on the content was an alleged neglect of philosophy and ethics in the new qualification).

KEY POINTS ACCORDING TO LEVEL OF AGREEMENT WITH THE PROPOSAL

- Of the 34 respondents who described why they agreed with the proposed AOs, 13 said they were generally suitable and appropriate, 5 praised the emphasis on the higher-level skills in AO2 and 4 were satisfied with the range of skills covered and the balanced nature of the objectives.
- Among the 28 comments from respondents who disagreed with the proposal, 11 referred specifically to the content of the qualification, which is not part of this consultation. Four respondents felt that the focus of the objectives was too narrow (for example, AO2 was thought to be lacking in terms of personal reflection and creativity), and a further four felt the current AOs were clearer than those being proposed. Two respondents felt that there was too much emphasis on AO1, and four respondents suggested minor changes in wording that might make the objectives clearer and more acceptable to them.
- Four respondents answered 'neither agree nor disagree' to the tick-box question and made a relevant comment: two of these suggested changes in wording, another said they were unable to make a judgement until the full specification was released, and a fourth respondent (representing an awarding body) commented that further work was required on the objectives.

Q9: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for AS qualifications in religious studies?

There were 63 comments on the topic of the AOs (one more than the figure quoted in Table 18 because one person commented but did not answer the associated tick-box question), 24 representing official views and 39 representing personal views.

SUMMARY POINTS

- Approximately half of those who commented (31 respondents) gave their reasons for agreeing with the proposed weightings for the AS qualification AOs. Twenty of these simply expressed general satisfaction with the balance of the weightings and the perceived appropriateness for the subject and level.
- There was little consensus among the 24 respondents who disagreed with the proposed weightings and gave reasons for doing so.

KEY POINTS ACCORDING TO LEVEL OF AGREEMENT WITH THE PROPOSAL

- Most of those who agreed with the proposed weightings and gave their reasons for doing so gave fairly general responses indicating that the weightings were appropriate and well balanced. Some respondents were more specific, however: four respondents, for example, felt the differences in weightings between the AS qualification and A level provided a good opportunity for progression, and one respondent felt that the gradual increase in weightings on AO2 provided good progression through to university level study.
- Of the 24 respondents who commented on why they disagreed with the proposed weightings, four people referred to the content of the qualifications in their comments (which is not covered by this consultation). The remaining respondents who disagreed gave a range of reasons: three respondents suggested that AO2 should have a greater weighting while one person suggested it should be lower; three respondents commented that they would prefer the AS qualification and A level to have the same weightings, with two of these explaining that different weightings would make it difficult when teaching mixed classes of AS and A level students. There were requests for some flexibility in the weightings (a small range rather than fixed percentages) from

three respondents, two of whom represented the views of awarding organisations. Three respondents preferred the current weightings to the proposed weightings; although one of these did not give a reason for this preference, the other felt that the current weightings took better account of the amount of knowledge and understanding to be assessed.

- Among the eight comments made by respondents who neither agreed nor disagreed with the proposed weightings there were two suggestions that the proposed 50 per cent weighting on AO2 was too high for the AS qualification and a further two that AO2 should be given greater weighting at A level. One respondent who was undecided (and represented the views of an awarding organisation) stated that further work was required before these could be formed into acceptable objectives.

Q10: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for A levels in religious studies?

Sixty respondents commented on the proposed weightings for the A level AOs, 25 representing official views and 35 representing personal views.

SUMMARY POINTS

- As was the case for the proposed weightings for the AS qualifications, the majority of the comments (31 of the 60 comments) referred to reasons for agreeing with the proposed weightings. Twenty of these expressed general satisfaction with the proposed weightings.
- Key reasons cited by the 22 respondents expressing objections to the proposed weightings included issues around the content (which, though not part of this consultation, was mentioned by five respondents) and concerns (on the part of three respondents) that the weighting for AO2 was too great.

KEY POINTS ACCORDING TO LEVEL OF AGREEMENT WITH THE PROPOSAL

- Twenty of the 31 respondents who commented on their reasons for agreeing with the proposed weightings for the A level AOs expressed general satisfaction with the appropriateness of the proposals: five felt that the proposals allowed for good progression through to university level study. Two agreed with the proposals but preferred a 50:50 weighting at A level: one of these specified that the practicalities of teaching AS and A level students together with different weightings was a concern, and the other felt that the amount of content still to be covered at A level necessitated a 50 per cent weighting on AO1.
- Twenty-two respondents who disagreed with the proposed weightings commented gave their reasons for doing so: five of these mentioned the content of the qualification, which is not covered by this consultation; of the three who suggested that AO1 should have a higher weighting, one felt that this would allow for greater differentiation of outcomes. Two respondents explained that they preferred the current weightings – with one of them saying that they felt the current weightings took better account of the amount of knowledge and understanding that had to be assessed. Two respondents (including one representing the views of an awarding organisation) suggested the weightings should be within a small range rather than fixed percentages.
- Although the reasons given by the seven respondents who indicated that they neither agreed nor disagreed with the proposed weightings varied, two respondents suggested that they felt the weightings should be the same for the AS qualification and the A level (at 50:50).

Q11: Further comments

Twenty-six respondents made a further comment on the proposals for the religious studies AS qualification and A level, 8 representing official views and 18 representing personal views.

SUMMARY POINTS

- The most frequently mentioned issue in respondents' comments was the content of the qualifications: 12 respondents made comments on the content, 5 of these referring to the perception that the new qualification placed too much emphasis on theology and not enough on philosophy and ethics. Three of those who commented on the content also expressed the view that the changes might make the subject less attractive to students.
- The consultation arrangements themselves were the subject of five comments: three people were concerned that the new qualifications might not be ready for teaching in September 2016, given that this subject is the last to be consulted on; two respondents felt that the consultation should have been wider and more proactive, for example by more actively seeking the views of teachers and students.
- The exam arrangements were mentioned by three respondents: one expressed the view that the types of question used in the exam must allow for sufficient differentiation, another that problems with inconsistencies and inaccuracies in the marking of written exam papers must be addressed, and a third (representing the views of an awarding organisation) that a 'research'-based exam should be introduced.

As reported in the section on religious studies GCSE, 12 non-standard format responses to the religious studies GCSE, AS and A level consultation were received. Of these, ten referred only to issues around the content of the qualification (which is the subject of the separate DfE consultation); another, referring to issues of equality, is reported in section 5.8 of this report. One response representing a personal view expressed concern that the two proposed AOs could fragment into separate objectives, a problem which the respondent felt was more pronounced at A level, where the AOs could potentially be sub-divided into six objectives.

5.8 Equality impact of proposals

In this section, the responses from both the part 2 and part 3 consultations have been integrated to provide a full description of respondents' perceptions of the equality impact of the proposals.

5.8.1 Quantitative analysis

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

Respondents were first asked whether they believed that there were any potential impacts, unidentified by Ofqual, on people with protected characteristics.¹⁹ Responses to this question are quantified in Figure 12.

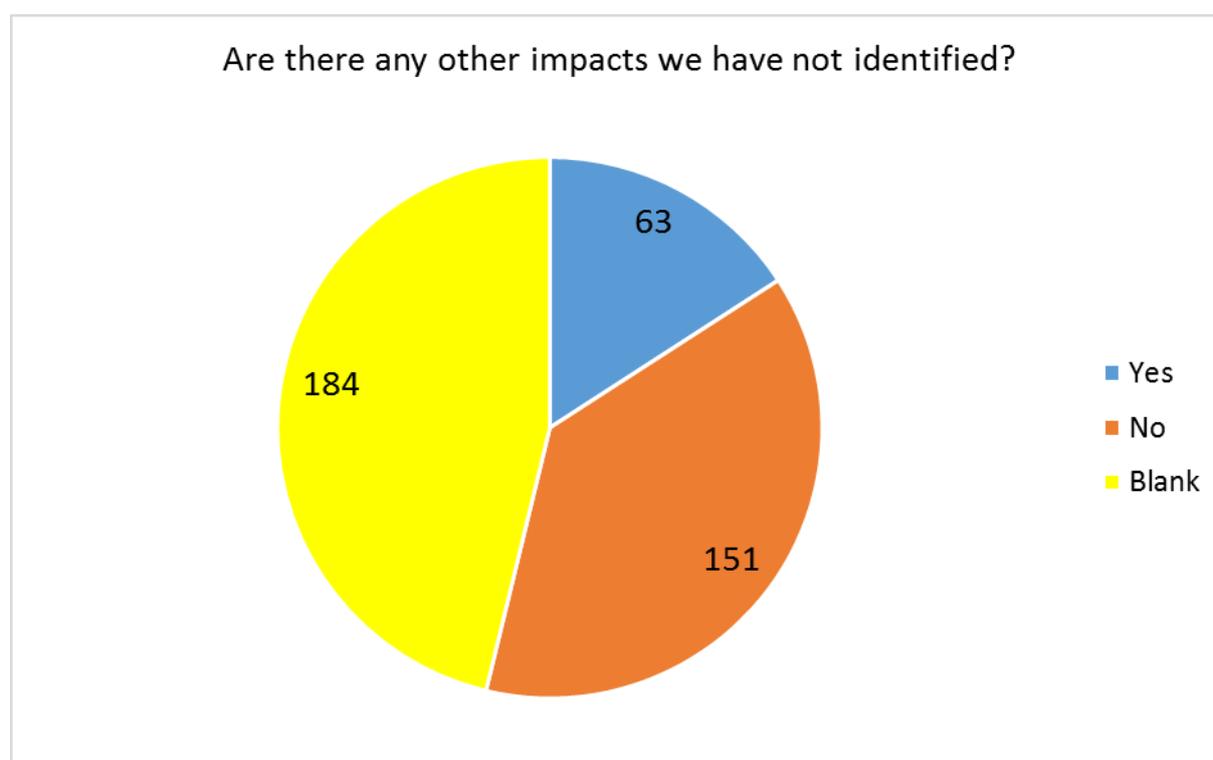


Figure 12: Responses about the likelihood of additional impacts on people with protected characteristics

A little under half of respondents did not respond to this item. Among the 214 respondents who did, 151 (70 per cent) 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 equality legislation. The pie chart in Figure 13 presents the responses to this question.

¹⁹ Protected characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.

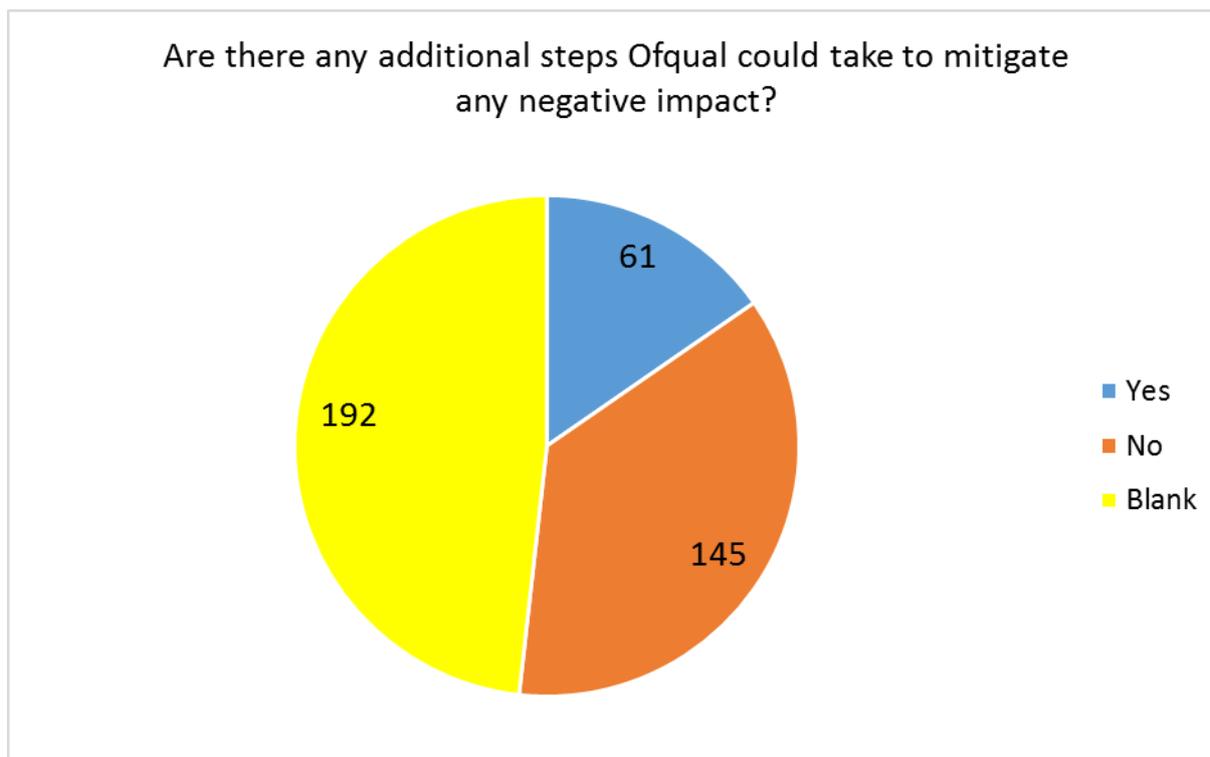


Figure 13: Responses on additional steps Ofqual could take to mitigate any negative impact

As was the case with Figure 12, nearly half the respondents did not answer this question. Among the 206 that did answer, 145 (70 per cent) thought that there were no additional steps that Ofqual could take.

5.8.2 Qualitative responses

Ofqual asked the respondents who had said 'yes' to the 'yes/no' question (on whether there were any impacts of the proposals on people who shared a protected characteristic) to say what these impacts were.

The status of the 63²⁰ respondents is given in Table 19.

Table 19: 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	30
Other representative or interest group	16
School or college	9
Local authority	3
Awarding organisation	2
Personal response	33
Teacher (but not responding on behalf of a school)	26
Educational specialist	3
General public	2
Parent/carer	1
Student	1
Total	63

Among those 63 responses, eight 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 these might be, 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 20. 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'. In addition, where some comments refer to more than one characteristic, cross-references have been made.

²⁰ Sixty-three is the right number, even though it is two more than the number of respondents who said 'yes' to the 'Are there any additional steps Ofqual could take to mitigate any negative impact?' question. The two extra respondents gave a comment, despite not having ticked yes to that question.

Table 20: Comments about impact on protected characteristics, organised by characteristic

Protected characteristic	Comment
Disability	D1. Many students who often study design and technology have learning difficulties and often succeed in the subject. Reducing the practical element of this course will reduce their ability to perform well.
	D2. Please see further comments above regarding the barring of disabled students from the practical exam. I am amazed this is a credible proposal in 2014. <i>[Comment above relating to A level drama was: I am however quite horrified to read on to your section regarding students with disabilities. Surely now is the time to operate an inclusive qualification. All we need to involve students with disability is a little imagination and it is these very students who have the most creative and innovative ways of theatre making in the 21st Century.]</i>
	D3. Some candidates may not be able to carry out practical work unaided due to disabilities. The assessment criteria should allow for aided practical work to allow candidates to access some marks in AO3. <i>[This respondent answered with reference to GCSE cooking and nutrition.]</i>
	D4. Some students who have SEN have a good understanding of the subject but find it difficult to structure written work or to answer long questions, however they are able to share their knowledge and understanding verbally. <i>[This respondent answered with reference to GCSE cooking and nutrition.]</i>
	D5. As mentioned in previous answers, the lack of tiering and the extent of examination assessment will have a deleterious effect on the performance of deaf candidates, others who may have linguistic difficulties and those on the autistic spectrum. <i>[This respondent answered with reference to GCSE/AS/A level drama.]</i>
	D6. For a start, a student's ability to write has little or no bearing on their ability as a citizen, yet that is the only way you intend to assess it. Students that have difficulty writing often show good levels of citizenship knowledge, understanding and skills when assessed in a non-exam environment. Moving to 100 per cent written examination will penalise these students in particular. The proposed content is so focused on, and so full of, knowledge that it will make this qualification very hard for some SEND pupils, who have hitherto been comfortable with GCSE citizenship; and who, in many cases, will be the very people that we WANT to benefit from an education in citizenship.
	D7. As noted above, for design & technology, [...] it is important to ensure that this, and the proposed decrease in the percentage of marks awarded on the basis of non-exam based assessment, do not impact upon the appeal of the subject to pupils with protected characteristics such as dyslexia, nor upon the attainment of these pupils whilst undertaking the qualification.
	D8. When revising the GCSE and A-Level content the following should be considered: Are all students, including those with disabilities enabled to 'show knowledge and understanding'? Teachers and schools should consider how they are making reasonable adjustments for SEND pupils. Teachers must be empowered by having the skills and knowledge to enable them to go further than differentiation and to recognise when a specific need requires specialist intervention, a reasonable adjustment or access via other means as mandated by relevant legislation and guidance. These adjustments can be minor and inexpensive such as additional notes, assistive technology, use of buddy systems, sitting in a close place to a teacher, repeating information, etc. but must always be appropriate for individual needs. They can, however, mean the difference between a student engaging with the subject or not. <i>[This respondent answered with reference to a range of subjects in phase two of the consultation.]</i>
	D9. The shift towards end-of-course examinations and away from non-examination forms of assessment will penalise female students. There are also a significant number of groups of SEN students for whom this will be a negative step. <i>[This respondent answered with</i>

Protected characteristic	Comment
	<p><i>reference to GCSE/AS/A level drama.]</i></p> <p>D10. Students with disabilities may struggle with end-of-course examinations if there are no options within the assessment and the whole content of the course is assessed in a 3-hour period. [<i>This respondent answered with reference to GCSE/AS/A level religious studies.]</i></p> <p>D11. How are students with special educational needs going to access an untiered system if entry level is not available? [<i>This respondent answered with reference to GCSE/AS/A level religious studies.]</i></p> <p>D12. Dyslexic pupils struggle with providing very coherent answers based on highly conceptual subjects. [<i>This respondent answered with reference to GCSE/AS/A level religious studies.]</i></p> <p>D13. The different linguistic demands in the GCSE Annexes could adversely affect those students who have SEN, or who are EAL. In some Annexes the non-English terms are privileged, while this is not the case in others. The AOs will need to be very clear about the terms required for students to gain marks. There is a comparability issue here. [<i>This respondent answered with reference to GCSE/AS/A level religious studies.]</i></p> <p>D14. 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. Also, because of the emphasis on the use of GCSE, AS and A levels for progression to further academic or vocational study, the equality analysis overlooks the position of students who are pursuing these qualifications in order to enhance their general education and employment prospects. Such students include many weaker candidates, for whom A level 1 performance at GCSE or a grade D or E at AS or A level would represent a significant achievement. It would be inequitable if increased rigour were to lead to these qualifications becoming less inclusive or accessible, especially given the current drive to raise the education participation age. [<i>This respondent answered with reference to GCSE/AS/A level religious studies.]</i></p>
Race	<p>R1. EAL requirements. [<i>This respondent answered with reference to GCSE/AS/A level drama.]</i></p> <p>R2. The more able, predominantly white, British origin, predominantly male pupils will have their life opportunities diminished by not being offered the opportunity to properly learn how to design and make things in DT AND ENGINEERING since the majority of all schools will choose the easy path of drawing things if the two are equally certificated as proposed. Drawing things inevitably favours female students since they tend to prefer such work and seem to have more highly developed hand-eye skills at that age.</p> <p>R3. Adherents of religions and beliefs are drawn from all cultures, races and nationalities and it is important that any exemplars, illustrations and stimulus material used in specifications or exam questions reflect this in order to avoid stereotyping or discriminating in favour or against students from any culture, race or nationality. [<i>This respondent answered with reference to GCSE/AS/A level religious studies.]</i></p> <p>R4. See D13.</p>
Religion or belief	<p>B1 Food has a sacred or profane significance in many religions, so the handling or method of preparing of some types of food may be problematic for some students. [<i>This respondent answered with reference to GCSE cooking and nutrition.]</i></p> <p>B2 More students may pull out of the subject as a more in-depth study of religions could cause conflict with their own religion or if they are atheist could be against their beliefs also. [<i>This respondent answered with reference to GCSE/AS/A level religious studies.]</i></p> <p>B3 I think that RS gives a significant boost to students' understanding and tolerance of others. It also helps dispel many prejudices about others. I think the new proposals reduce the capacity to do this as they focus too narrowly on the beliefs/teaching/authority of religions, giving greatly reduced space to ethical studies, and to learning about how a religion moves from the theory of belief etc. to the practical of daily life. This can only lead to a more myopic understanding, and so a greater level of</p>

Protected characteristic	Comment
	prejudice against vulnerable and other groups. [<i>This respondent answered with reference to GCSE/AS/A level religious studies.</i>]
B4	Students from a Humanist background and those from a non-faith background. [<i>This respondent answered with reference to GCSE/AS/A level religious studies.</i>]
B5	The characteristic of Humanism for students with no strong religious belief themselves [<i>This respondent answered with reference to GCSE/AS/A level religious studies.</i>]
B6	What does this question even mean? For example do you think the fact that you've left a systematic study of Humanism out will result in non-religious pupils feeling excluded? [<i>This respondent answered with reference to GCSE/AS/A level religious studies.</i>]
B7	The courses are designed to exclude students from a non-faith background. The content will alienate thousands of students from Humanist backgrounds. [<i>This respondent answered with reference to GCSE/AS/A level religious studies.</i>]
B8	Belief is not a core characteristic of many of the world's religions in the sense in which it is used by the version of RS proposed here. You would therefore be asking candidates who follow those traditions potentially to learn about a distorted version of their own religion, at odds with what they do and understand about their own practice. [<i>This respondent answered with reference to GCSE/AS/A level religious studies.</i>]
B9	AO2 Those without religious world views. It is not clear why non-religious beliefs are simply excluded or what the basis for their inclusion would be. AO1 seems to include them in bullet point one and preclude them in all other bullet points. [<i>This respondent answered with reference to GCSE/AS/A level religious studies.</i>]
B10	At GCSE there is an allusion to non-religious belief. How are candidates who do not identify with a religion included where all pupils in a school, not withdrawn by their parents, are required to follow an accredited course according to the Agreed Syllabus? Although they are not required to sit the examination at the end of the two years. [<i>This respondent answered with reference to GCSE/AS/A level religious studies.</i>]
B11	There is the potential that increasing the required weighting of studying a second religion will disproportionately advantage some candidates. Equally, it may place some multi-cultural schools in a difficult position because they must prefer one or two religions that are represented by their community over others. It is acceptable for Christianity to have advantage because Britain is a society with an established Church. [<i>This respondent answered with reference to GCSE/AS/A level religious studies.</i>]
B12	To make sure that the requirements include non-religious as well as religious perspectives would ensure inclusion. [<i>This respondent answered with reference to GCSE/AS/A level religious studies.</i>]
B13	It is quite possible that students who follow a religion as their way of life are at an unfair advantage over their fellow students, especially in Part 1 (GCSE) which is greatly content driven. This is less so in Part 2. In addition, a Muslim student for example may not be allowed to study Islam because the school teaches Christianity and Buddhism. This gives the Muslim student a problem in deciding whether to answer from Islam or from each of their 2 'learnt' religions [<i>This respondent answered with reference to GCSE/AS/A level religious studies.</i>]
B14	There will be a quarter of our Catholic ethos missing as a result of the proposed reforms. [<i>This respondent answered with reference to GCSE/AS/A level religious studies.</i>]
B15	Content changes appear to be a result of extremism in some schools, so some Muslim students may feel targeted. [<i>This respondent answered with reference to GCSE/AS/A level religious studies.</i>]
B16	Alienate Muslim pupils. [<i>This respondent answered with reference to GCSE/AS/A level religious studies.</i>]
B17	I am concerned that the protected characteristic of being religious OR NOT is not adequately protected under the new proposals. There is no credit for secular or atheistic views on the GCSE syllabus and this does devalue the opinion of those who are without a faith insofar as it is deemed not relevant. It should be possible to credit these while also

Protected characteristic	Comment
	<p>insisting that students demonstrate knowledge of religion(s) as the current syllabuses do. As the vast majority of students that I teach do not have a religious faith I think they will feel that their views and beliefs are not respected on the new GCSE. I think this will also limit the extent to which the course can appeal to them. [<i>This respondent answered with reference to GCSE/AS/A level religious studies.</i>]</p> <p>B18 We believe there is a risk of discriminating unfairly against young people who are of no religious belief and wish to include that perspective in their responses. Students should be able to learn about non-religious worldviews as well as religious ones on grounds of educational relevance (i.e. the large numbers of people in Britain today who describe themselves as being of no religious belief and whose views matter in any discussion of religious and other beliefs). [<i>This respondent answered with reference to GCSE/AS/A level religious studies.</i>]</p> <p>B19 Too much emphasis is placed on religious ideas and not enough on atheists' ethical theories at A level. [<i>This respondent answered with reference to GCSE/AS/A level religious studies.</i>]</p> <p>B20 Humanists, atheists, etc. will probably oppose non-inclusion of alternative religious/non-religious viewpoints. Some minority religious groups may also object. [<i>This respondent answered with reference to GCSE/AS/A level religious studies.</i>]</p> <p>B21 The proposed qualifications are proposed to be assessed by examination only; these examinations are generally available during the summer period. This may disadvantage Muslim students who wish to take this qualification in years when the month of Ramadan falls within the summer examination season. [<i>This respondent answered with reference to GCSE/AS/A level religious studies.</i>]</p> <p>B22 [We are] aware that some faith schools are unhappy about the fact that the reformed content makes studying more than one faith obligatory. This could be interpreted as discriminating against those covered by the protected characteristic of religion or belief where the study of another faith could contravene the rules of the faith that they are observing. [<i>This respondent answered with reference to GCSE/AS/A level religious studies.</i>]</p> <p>B23 Some sections of the content could be interpreted as a belief that Christian values are the most important. It is vital that there should be no comparison of worth in the teaching of different religions and that assessment does not give greater weight to one religion over another. There is some concern that those who do not subscribe to one of the recognised world religions will be discriminated against by the exclusion of their world views. [<i>This respondent answered with reference to GCSE/AS/A level religious studies.</i>]</p> <p>B24 These proposals would have a significant negative impact on non-religious individuals. As we set out in our response to question 3 and to the DfE's consultation, it is hard to see how RE and RS can remain relevant to young people today, particularly to those with no religion, if non-religious beliefs cannot be systematically studied. These issues are at their most acute with respect to the AOs, which are even less inclusive than the subject content, and a significant step back from what is there currently, which is entirely inclusive [<i>This respondent answered with reference to GCSE/AS/A level religious studies.</i>]</p> <p>B25 To be aware of cultural sensitivities of all faith groups. The negative impact on students from smaller faith groups, such as Baha'ism, through the lack of any mention of them. We have commented further on this in our response to the DfE consultation on the content of GCSE exams. [<i>This respondent answered with reference to GCSE/AS/A level religious studies.</i>]</p>
Sex	<p>S1. Girls and some boys do not always want to study wood, metal and graphics but if they want to study textiles they are now going to have to. [<i>This respondent answered with reference to GCSE design and technology.</i>]</p> <p>S2. Gender stereotypes potentially promoted and reinforced by the use of 'cooking' in the title of GCSE cooking and nutrition.</p> <p>S3. See D9.</p>

Protected characteristic	Comment
	S4. See R2.
Sexual orientation	<p>O1. When teaching to these exams, schools need to take into account the position that some faith groups take with regard to human sexuality, so that LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bi sexual, and Transgendered) young people are not made to feel vulnerable when these issues are being explored. Schools will need to be aware of possible impacts on students, when teaching some of these issues. [<i>This respondent answered with reference to GCSE/AS/A level religious studies.</i>]</p> <p>O2. We have been concerned in recent years about the types of questions set by Awarding Organisations that require students to argue against their own sexuality (in sexual ethics topics). This is clearly not acceptable and wouldn't be allowed to happen with reference to any other 'protected characteristics' groups. We will be responding to the DfE consultation on this matter too. [<i>This respondent answered with reference to GCSE/AS/A level religious studies.</i>]</p>

The quantitative survey item summarised in Figure 13 was followed by an open-response item: '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 21.

Table 21: Are there any additional steps we could take to mitigate any negative impact from these proposals on persons who share a protected characteristic?

Type of response (official/personal, and sub-divisions)	Number of responses
Official response	28
Other representative or interest group	14
School or college	10
Local authority	2
Awarding organisation	2
Personal response	34
Teacher (but not responding on behalf of a school)	26
Educational specialist	4
General public	2
Parent/carer	1
Student	1
Total	54

The actual responses from these people were rather varied, and not all of them pertained to a consultation on assessment. The following relevant suggestions were made:

- Have more practical assessment and less weighting towards written assessments [*three respondents mentioned this*].
- Retain the individual subject qualifications in design and technology [*two respondents suggested this*].
- Incorporate different cultural contexts and histories into the curriculum [*three respondents mentioned this, one with reference to design and technology, one with reference to drama and one with reference to cooking and nutrition*].
- Remove the focus on performance in drama [*one respondent mentioned this*].

- Better access to/availability of assistive technologies [*one respondent mentioned this*].
- Schools should provide ingredients for cooking and nutrition [*one respondent mentioned this*].
- Include non-religious world views in the religious studies qualifications [*eight respondents mentioned this*]
- Allowing candidates with SEN, specific learning disabilities or sensory disabilities to sit modular assessments or, at least, terminal assessments at different times of the year, could constitute a reasonable adjustment [*one respondent mentioned this*].

The final survey question asked for any further comments on the impacts of the proposals on persons who share a protected characteristic. There were seven relevant comments made in response to this, from which the following issues were raised:

- Two respondents asked what was meant by ‘protected characteristics’
- Concerns that the changes might improve grades at the lower end of the spectrum but could devalue and diminish what was achievable by more able pupils
- Concerns over potential adverse effects on those with dyslexia-SpLP [dyslexia or other specific learning problems] as a result of the proposed ‘linear’ structure of the new qualifications and the emphasis on final written exams
- For design and technology schools should ensure all pupils have access to technology and equipment by protecting facilities, investing where possible, and forming partnerships with higher and further education institutions
- Two respondents suggested that the religious studies GCSE should offer broader opportunities to study religions (rather than Christianity plus one other), including the non-religious worldview
- One respondent suggested that there should be full consultation with protected groups on the proposals

A non-standard format response was received from a representative or interest group, which referred to issues of equality. The response focused on SEND pupils and emphasised the need to provide assistive technologies or to make other reasonable adjustments for these pupils. The response stressed that teachers must be empowered by having the skills and knowledge to enable them to recognise pupils’ needs and make the relevant reasonable adjustments or other intervention. They were keen to see the promotion of the use of assistive technologies in the general curriculum and through teacher education to increase inclusion for those who need them.

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 the organisation's name is given.

Table 22: List of non-confidential respondents

Name of organisation or group (if applicable):

51 The Chase
 Abbey School, The
 Abbots Hill school
 Alderley Edge School for Girls
 Altrincham Grammar School for Girls
 Ampleforth College
 AQA
 AQA examiner/reviser/coursework advisor (currently)
 Archbishop Holgate's School
 Arts Council England
 Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL)
 Bath Spa University and TRS: UK
 BATOD, British Association of Teachers of the Deaf
 Beauchamp College
 Beaulieu Convent School
 Beaumont Leys School
 Bedales
 Berwick Academy
 Birchwood High School
 Birkdale School
 Bishop Vesey's GS
 Blatchington Mill School
 Blessed Edward Oldcorne Catholic College
 Blessed George Napier School
 Board of Deputies of British Jews, The
 Board of the Religious Education Council of England and Wales,
 The
 Bolton School
 Borden Grammar School
 Bristol Grammar School
 British Humanist Association
 British Nutrition Foundation
 Brookfield Community School
 Buckinghamshire County Council

Name of organisation or group (if applicable):

Burgate School, The
Burnham Grammar School
Bury Grammar School Girls
Calday Grange Grammar School
Caludon Castle School
Campaign for Real Education
Campion School
Catholic Education Service
Cheltenham Ladies' College
Children's Food Campaign
Christleton High School
Church of England
Citizenship Foundation
Clacton County High School
Collingwood College
Connaught School
Coombeshead Academy
Coombeshead Academy/Edexcel
Cornwall SACRE
Coundon Court School
County High School Leftwich, The
Crafts Council
Cranford House School
Cranleigh School
Crypt School
Cultural Learning Alliance
D&T
Dame Allan's Schools
Derby High School
Design & Technology Association, The
Diocese of Leeds
Diocese of Lincoln Board of Education
Dr Challoner's High School
Dronfield Henry Fanshawe school
Dyslexia-SpLD Trust, The
Ecclesfield Secondary School
Edexcel
Edgbaston High School
Edgbaston High School for Girls
Eton College
Exmouth Community College
Failsworth Academy
Framwellgate School Durham
Free Churches Group

Name of organisation or group (if applicable):

Furness Academy
George Eliot School, The
Glossopdale Community College
Goffs School
Greenwich Community College
Hartismere School
Haslingden High School
Haywood Academy
Heckmondwike Grammar School
Hedingham School & Sixth Form College
Highams Park School
Hills Road Sixth Form College
Hitchin Girls' School
Hope House School, Barnsley
Huntington School
HWGA
ifs University College
Institution of Engineering and Technology, The
Isles of Scilly SACRE
ISRSA
John Madejski Academy
Kent County Council
Keswick School
King's School, Canterbury, The
Kingham Hill School
Kingsbury high school
Lady Eleanor Holles School, The
Langley School
Le Rocquier School
Les Quennevais School
Llantwit Major School
London Oratory School, The
Lutterworth High School
Making Project, The
Malmesbury School
Marist Senior School, The
Marlborough C of E School, The
Marlborough School Woodstock
Marlborough School, The
Marling school
Merchant Taylors' Girls' School
Morley Academy, The
Mortimer Community College
National Association of Teachers of Religious Education (NATRE)

Name of organisation or group (if applicable):

National Board of Religious Inspectors and Advisers (NBRIA)

National Theatre

Newent Community School and Sixth Form Centre

Northallerton College

Northumberland Park Community School

Oaklands Catholic School

OCR

OCR Examinations

OCR/The Open University

Ormiston Denes Academy

Parkstone Grammar School

Parliament Hill School

Peacehaven Community School

Pearson

Philip Morant School

Plymouth High School for Girls

Poole Grammar School

Porthcawl Comprehensive

Prince Henry's Grammar School

Priory School

Queen Elizabeth's Grammar school

Ratton School

Resource, The

RGS Worcester

Ribston Hall High School

Royal Shakespeare Company

Salesian College

Sandhurst school

Sherborne School for Girls

Shrewsbury Sixth Form College

Sir John Lawes school

South Wilts Grammar school for Girls

South Wolds Academy and Sixth Form, The

St Albans School

St Aloysius College

St Anne's Catholic School

St Augustine's Priory

St Clement Danes School

St Edmund's College

St Gabriel's

St James' Catholic High School

St John's Marlborough

St Mary's Catholic School

St Mary's School, Gerrard's Cross

Name of organisation or group (if applicable):

St Michael's School
St Paul's Catholic School
St Paul's Girls' School
St Peter's Catholic School
St Thomas More Catholic School
St Wilfrid's School, Exeter
Strood Academy
Studley High School
Sutton Community Academy
Textile Institute, The
Thorpe St Andrew High School
Thorpe St Andrew School and Sixth Form
Trent College
Tuxford Academy
Twynham School
University of Warwick
Verulam school
Voice
Wakefield City Academy
Waldegrave School
Warriner School Bloxham
Westbourne Academy
Westhaven school
Wigmore High School
WJEC
WJEC-CBAC
Wodensborough Ormiston Academy
Wood Green Academy
Woodchurch High School

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