

Developing New GCSEs, AS and A Levels for First Teaching in 2017 – Part 2

covering:

GCSEs

Ancient history
Classical civilisation
Electronics
Film studies
Media studies
Statistics

AS and A levels

Accounting
Ancient history
Archaeology
Classical civilisation
Electronics
Film studies
Law
Media studies
Statistics



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1. Introduction

The scope of this consultation

- 1.1 As most readers will know, changes are being made to GCSEs, AS and A levels taken by students in England. The new qualifications are being introduced in three phases. New qualifications in the first phase will be taught from September 2015¹ and those in the second phase from September 2016.² We have already consulted on a number of new qualifications that will first be taught from September 2017.³ This consultation is about further new qualifications that will first be taught from September 2017.
- 1.2 In this consultation we are seeking views on the assessment arrangements and assessment objectives for new qualifications in the subjects detailed in the table below, and on whether the GCSEs in these subjects should be tiered.

Subject	GCSE – covered in this consultation?	AS and A level – covered in this consultation?
Accounting	No	Yes
Ancient history	Yes	Yes
Archaeology	No	Yes
Classical civilisation	Yes	Yes
Electronics	Yes	Yes
Film studies	Yes	Yes
Law	No	Yes
Media studies	Yes	Yes
Statistics	Yes	Yes

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

² New GCSEs to be taught from 2016: French, German, Spanish, ancient languages, history, geography, science, biology, chemistry, physics, art and design, dance, music, computer science, physical education, drama, religious studies, citizenship studies, food preparation and nutrition. New AS and A levels to be taught from 2016: modern foreign languages, ancient languages, mathematics, further mathematics, geography, dance, music, physical education, drama and theatre, religious studies.

³ www.gov.uk/government/consultations/development-of-new-gcse-and-a-levels-for-teaching-from-2017 covering GCSEs (astronomy, business, economics, engineering, geology, psychology and sociology) and AS and A levels (design and technology, business, environmental science, history of art, music technology and philosophy).

- 1.3 The Department for Education (DfE) is consulting⁴ in parallel on the content for the subjects included in this consultation. If you wish to comment on the proposed content for any of the subjects please respond to that consultation.
- 1.4 We will make decisions on the structure and assessment of these qualifications in light of responses to this consultation. We will then consult on the technical regulatory requirements that exam boards wishing to design, deliver and award the qualifications must meet.
- 1.5 It is intended that the exam boards will develop new qualifications in the subjects listed above ready for first teaching by schools and colleges from September 2017. The exam boards' specifications, to be taught from that date, should be available to schools and colleges from autumn 2016.
- 1.6 The subject content for further subjects is being developed to a different timescale with a further consultation⁵ planned for October 2015, in time for first teaching of the new qualifications from September 2017.⁶
- 1.7 We have summarised below the key features of all new GCSEs, AS and A levels. We do not repeat here the reasons why GCSEs, AS and A levels are being reformed, the options about the general approach to the structure and assessments of GCSEs, AS and A levels we have considered, or the full range of decisions we have already taken. This information can be found on our website.⁷ We also set out in Appendix A some of the documents relating to the background to these important reforms and progress so far.
- 1.8 Much of the information set out below on the purpose, key features and structure of GCSEs, AS and A levels, and in the following section on the assessment of new GCSEs, AS and A levels, is a repeat of the information included in our earlier consultation.⁸ It has been included here for the benefit of those who did not read our earlier consultation.

⁴ www.gov.uk/government/consultations/further-gcse-and-a-level-content-for-teaching-from-september-2017

⁵ For these subjects, the DfE will consult on the proposed content and we will consult on assessment arrangements and assessment objectives.

⁶ DfE sets out in its consultation those subjects for which further work is taking place to develop subject content: www.gov.uk/government/consultations/gcse-and-a-level-reform-content-for-teaching-from-september-2017

⁷ www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofqual

⁸ www.gov.uk/government/consultations/development-of-new-gcses-and-a-levels-for-teaching-from-2017

GCSEs – purpose and key features

- 1.9 The primary purpose of new GCSEs is to provide evidence of students' achievements against demanding and fulfilling content, and a strong foundation for further academic and vocational study and for employment. If required, they should also be able to provide a basis for schools and colleges to be held accountable for the performance of all their students. New GCSEs should be accessible, with good teaching, to the range of students who take current GCSEs.
- 1.10 GCSEs will be linear qualifications, with exams taken in one period at the end of the course. The qualifications will use new and more demanding subject content than is now the case. Students' performance will be reported with a grade from a new scale – 9 to 1, with 9 being the highest grade. As now, students' performance may be unclassified (U), in which case they will not receive a certificate.
- 1.11 GCSEs should be designed to enable all students to show what they know, understand and can do, and their grades awarded accordingly. The assessments should stretch students of all abilities. Students should not be faced with assessments that are unsuitable for them.
- 1.12 Most new GCSEs will be untiered, meaning that all students will study the same content, take the same assessments and have access to the full range of grades. GCSEs will be tiered only where, because of the nature of the subject, an untiered qualification cannot both stretch the most able students and be accessible and rewarding for less able students, while also being manageable in terms of the length and costs of assessments. In our current consultation we are proposing that only GCSE statistics should be tiered.
- 1.13 Where possible, subjects will be assessed wholly by exam. Other forms of assessment will be used when essential subject content cannot be validly assessed in this way.
- 1.14 Where non-exam assessment is used the approach adopted will be appropriate for each subject. In all cases non-exam assessment should be valid. In other words, the assessment must assess what it is intended to assess. It should also be manageable for schools and students and promote confidence in the qualification. Where non-exam assessment is used we will specify the weighting of exam and non-exam assessment and the aspects of the content to be assessed using non-exam assessment.
- 1.15 We have set out in this consultation whether we believe non-exam assessment is necessary for each subject and, where we believe it is, the appropriate balance of exam and non-exam assessment.

AS and A levels – purpose and key features

1.16 The objectives of A levels are to:

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

1.17 The objectives of AS qualifications are to:

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

The structure of AS and A levels

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

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

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

How to respond to this consultation

If you have an interest in GCSEs, AS and A levels we hope you will respond to this consultation.

This consultation covers a range of different subjects. You do not have to respond to all questions. You might prefer to answer those related to a specific subject only.

The closing date for responses is 5th November 2015.

You can respond to this consultation in one of three ways:

- Complete the online response at <http://surveys.ofqual.gov.uk/s3/gcse-as-and-a-levels-for-2017-part-two>
- Download a hard copy of the consultation questions at www.gov.uk/government/consultations/developing-new-gcse-as-and-a-levels-for-first-teaching-in-2017 and email your response to consultations@ofqual.gov.uk. Please include the consultation title (2017 GCSE, AS and A level subject requirements – part 2) in the subject line of the email and make clear who you are and in what capacity you are responding.
- Post your response to 2017 GCSE, AS and A level subject requirements – part 2, Ofqual, Spring Place, Coventry Business Park, Herald Avenue, Coventry, CV5 6UB, making clear who you are and in what capacity you are responding.

Evaluating the responses

- 1.21 To evaluate responses properly, we need to know who is responding to the consultation and in what capacity. We will therefore only consider your response if you complete the information page.
- 1.22 A third party will evaluate the responses on our behalf. Any personal data (such as your name, address and any other identifying information) will be processed in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and our standard terms and conditions.
- 1.23 We will publish the evaluation of responses. Please note that we may publish all or part of your response unless you tell us (in your answer to the confidentiality question) that you want us to treat your response as confidential. If you tell us that you wish your response to be treated as confidential, we will not include your details in any published list of respondents, although we may quote from your response anonymously.

2. Assessing new GCSEs, AS and A levels

- 2.1 Assessments can take many forms, but they can broadly be divided into exams – which are taken by all students at once, under formal supervision, and which are set and marked by exam boards – and other forms of assessment.
- 2.2 Exams are traditionally used to assess knowledge and understanding we propose that many practical skills, such as the camerawork, editing and sound design skills used to produce a product in the form of an extract from a film or a screenplay in film studies, should be assessed in other ways.
- 2.3 The term ‘non-exam assessment’ covers a range of different forms of assessment. Non-exam assessments are not necessarily marked by a teacher, nor undertaken over an extended period of time. A performance may, for example, be undertaken under timed conditions and marked by a visiting exam board assessor, but because not all students will be assessed simultaneously it does not fall within our definition of ‘assessment by exam’.

Assessment in current GCSEs, AS and A levels

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

Assessment in new GCSEs, AS and A levels

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

- Non-exam assessment must strike a balance between valid assessment of essential knowledge and skills, sound assessment practice and manageability.
 - Any non-exam assessment arrangements must be designed to fit the requirements of the particular subject, including the relative weighting of exams and other components assigned to it.
 - Non-exam assessment must be designed so that the qualification is not easily distorted by external pressures from the wider system.
- 2.6 Where subject content can be validly assessed by exams that are set and marked by exam boards, this should be the default method of assessment. But we recognise that other forms of assessment have their place.
- 2.7 In making our proposals for GCSEs, AS and A levels, we have taken advice from experts in each subject and have considered the requirements of the new proposed subject content. We have also considered how well the current assessments are working – for example, the extent to which they are validly assessing the skills, knowledge and understanding that they are intended to assess and the effectiveness and fairness with which the assessments discriminate between students.
- 2.8 We do not in all cases propose the same assessment approach in a subject for GCSEs, AS and A levels. Subject requirements at different levels vary and, in line with our principles, the amount of non-exam assessment that we propose reflects that. In addition, in our experience, the use of GCSEs in accountability measures puts them under greater pressure than AS and A levels.
- 2.9 In general, we believe that non-exam assessment causes greater difficulty in GCSEs than in AS and A levels for the following reasons:
- The GCSE cohort is larger, which can create logistical difficulties in organising, moderating and standardising non-exam assessment and the cohort is younger so typically requires more support to carry out these assessments.
 - GCSEs are subject to greater pressures as a result of their use in accountability arrangements.
 - GCSEs are smaller qualifications for which there is less available teaching time in each subject, adding to the logistical pressures of any non-exam assessment.

- 2.10 For certain A levels, some practical or performance-based subject skills are required for progression to higher education, making it more important that these are assessed, where possible.
- 2.11 Some students will take both an AS and an A level in a subject. We do not want students who take both qualifications in a subject to duplicate non-exam assessments covering the same or similar skills. This would be both inefficient and disruptive to teaching and learning. This is why in a number of subjects where there is non-exam assessment at A level, we have not proposed any non-exam assessment in AS qualifications. However, practical skills and/or performance are so integral to some subjects that non-exam assessment will be needed for both AS and A level.
- 2.12 There is a view that subject content and other requirements that will not be assessed will not be taught. There is no doubt that the assessment structure of a qualification can lead teachers to deliver the curriculum in a way that will help their students to get the best marks. However, it is not possible to design qualifications that will assess validly and reliably all the knowledge and skills needed for a broad and deep study of each subject, so if teaching is focused narrowly on the test, the quality of education is likely to suffer. The design of assessments should not be compromised in order to regulate the delivery of the curriculum.
- 2.13 In order to strike a better balance between exam and non-exam assessment we are proposing three main changes to the way in which qualifications in the subjects on which we are consulting are assessed. We propose, in summary, to:
- define the percentage of marks to be allocated to exam and non-exam assessment, removing or reducing any current flexibility and promoting comparability between exam boards;
 - reduce or maintain the proportion of non-exam assessment that we have in the past permitted in GCSEs, AS and A levels; and
 - remove non-exam assessment from subjects where the content can be assessed by exam.
- 2.14 Where non-exam assessments are used, we will work with the exam boards to make sure that appropriate and robust arrangements are put in place. These will include the introduction of external marking where practical, strengthening the moderation of teacher marking where that is used, and other measures aimed at reducing incidents of malpractice.

Our proposals

- 2.15 Table 1 summarises the current and proposed assessment arrangements for the subjects in this consultation. These are explained in more detail in the relevant subject sections.
- 2.16 The existing regulatory requirements for assessment in these subjects were not designed to our current definition of non-exam assessment. Instead they were determined by the amount of ‘internal’ and ‘external’ assessment permitted. Therefore, in this consultation, when we describe the current weighting of non-exam assessment, we include the amount of assessment that is seen or could be permitted in current qualifications and which falls under our definition of non-exam assessment.

Table 1

Subject	GCSE		A level		AS qualification	
	Current weighting of non-exam assessment	Proposed weighting of non-exam assessment	Current weighting of non-exam assessment	Proposed weighting of non-exam assessment	Current weighting of non-exam assessment	Proposed weighting of non-exam assessment
Accounting			0%	0%	0%	0%
Ancient history	25%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Archaeology			20%	20%	0%	0%
Classical civilisation	25%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Electronics	25%	20%	26–30%	20%	26–30%	20%
Film studies	50%	30%	45–50%	30%	40–50%	30%
Law			0%	0%	0%	0%
Media studies	60%	30%	40–50%	30%	40–50%	30%
Statistics	25%	0%	0–4 $\frac{1}{6}$ %	0%	0–8 $\frac{1}{3}$ %	0%

Changes to assessment objectives

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

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

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

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

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

- fulfil their core purpose of describing the abilities that a student taking the relevant qualification should be required to demonstrate;
- specify only the abilities that students 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; and
- provide a degree of flexibility in their application to enable alternative approaches where these are legitimate.

2.21 We have also developed the proposed assessment objectives so that they reflect and help promote progression between GCSEs, AS and A levels.

- 2.22 Following this consultation we will finalise the assessment objectives on which we are consulting. We will make it a regulatory requirement that exam boards design their qualifications and their assessments in accordance with these objectives.
- 2.23 The draft assessment objectives on which we are consulting are set out below. We have also included the current assessment objectives so that the proposed changes are clear. In each case, we have developed the proposed set of assessment objectives to be consistent with the content proposals on which the DfE is consulting. Changes to those content proposals may therefore require us to reconsider the draft assessment objectives.

Tiering of GCSEs

- 2.24 We have previously confirmed that new GCSEs should only be tiered where a single set of assessments cannot, in a valid and manageable way, assess students across the full ability range. We set out the technical issues and arguments for and against tiering in our June 2013 consultation on new GCSEs.⁹ In summary, in some subjects, students of all abilities can understand and answer the same exam questions or complete the same assessment tasks. The level of their answers will, of course, vary in accordance with their abilities. In other subjects, common questions can be too easy for some students and inaccessible to others. For this latter type of subject, common assessment must include a sufficient number and range of questions or tasks to allow both the most able and the least able students to demonstrate their abilities. Such assessment can be long and potentially demotivating for students at both ends of the ability range.
- 2.25 When a GCSE is tiered, a student enters for either the higher or the foundation tier assessments. This allows the assessment to be targeted to narrower ability ranges, with the higher tier stretching the most able and the foundation tier being accessible and rewarding for students who find the subject more difficult.
- 2.26 Students entered for the foundation tier cannot achieve the highest grades however well they perform in their assessments. This creates a risk that some students who are entered for that tier will not have their full abilities recognised and rewarded.
- 2.27 We have decided that tiering should be used in new GCSEs only when essential.

⁹ <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20141110161323/http://comment.ofqual.gov.uk/gcse-reform-june-2013>

- 2.28 Of the qualifications on which we are consulting only for GCSEs in classical civilisation and statistics are currently tiered.
- 2.29 The only qualifications in this consultation that we propose should be tiered in the future is new GCSEs in statistics.
- 2.30 Although GCSEs in classical civilisation also currently tiered, we are proposing that new GCSEs in classical civilisation should not be tiered. We believe that the new subject content for classical civilisation can be the same for all students (with no separately identified content for higher or foundation tier), and that a single set of exams can validly assess students across the full ability range.

3. Subject-specific proposals

Accounting

GCSE

3.1 We are not consulting on a GCSE in accounting at this time.

AS and A level

3.2 The DfE is consulting on the content for AS and A levels in accounting.¹⁰

Proposed assessment arrangements

3.3 AS and A levels in accounting are currently assessed wholly by exam. In our view, the draft content includes only knowledge, understanding and skills that could be validly assessed by exam. We therefore propose that reformed AS and A levels in accounting should also be assessed by exam only.

Proposed assessment objectives

3.4 The proposed assessment objectives specify the core abilities for the subject more clearly than the current assessment objectives.

	Assessment objective	Weighting	
		A level	AS
AO1	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of accounting principles, concepts and techniques.	20–30%	30–40%
AO2	Apply knowledge and understanding of accounting principles, concepts and techniques.	25–35%	35–45%
AO3	Analyse and evaluate accounting data using accounting principles, concepts and techniques to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ present information ▪ make judgements ▪ draw conclusions. 	35–45%	25–35%

¹⁰ www.gov.uk/government/consultations/further-gcse-and-a-level-content-for-teaching-from-september-2017

Current assessment objectives

	Assessment objective	Weighting		
		AS level	A2 level	A level
AO1	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of accounting principles, concepts and techniques.	30– 40%	20– 30%	25– 35%
AO2	Application Select and apply knowledge and understanding of accounting principles, concepts and techniques to familiar and unfamiliar situations.	40– 50%	40– 50%	40– 50%
AO3	Analysis and evaluation Order, interpret and analyse accounting information in an appropriate format. Evaluate accounting information, taking into consideration internal and external factors to make reasoned judgements, decisions and recommendations, and assess alternative courses of action using an appropriate form and style of writing.	20– 30%	30– 40%	25– 35%

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

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

Question 3: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate for AS and A levels in accounting?

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

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

Question 6: Do you have any further comments relating to the assessment of this subject?¹¹

Ancient history

GCSE

3.5 The DfE is consulting on the content for GCSEs in ancient history.¹²

Proposed assessment arrangements

3.6 Current GCSEs in ancient history are assessed through a mixture of exam assessment (75 per cent of the marks) and non-exam assessment (25 per cent of the marks). Having reviewed the proposed subject content, we are of the view that all of the content can be assessed through exams, and we propose that reformed GCSEs in ancient history should be assessed by exam only.

3.7 The subject content for GCSE ancient history is capable of being assessed by exam in its entirety. As set out above, one of our principles is that non-exam assessment must be used only where it is the only way to assess essential elements of the subject. These principles were not in place when current GCSEs in ancient history were being developed, and so content that was capable of assessment by exam was assessed through non-exam assessment. The new principles have been applied across all reformed qualifications, and in a number of cases they have led to the amount of non-exam assessment being either reduced or removed from reformed qualifications.

3.8 In 2012, marks were introduced in some GCSEs for spelling, punctuation and grammar to provide a strong signal to students and to teachers about their importance. This policy applied to examinations taken in 2013 onwards. Five per cent of marks in English literature, geography, history and religious studies were allocated to these skills.

3.9 We proposed in our *GCSE Reform Consultation – June 2013*¹³ that the current requirements should be carried forward to the reformed GCSEs in the subjects

¹¹ Please note that any comments relating to the subject content should be directed to the DfE.

¹²

www.gov.uk/government/consultations/further-gcse-and-a-level-content-for-teaching-from-september-2017

¹³ <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20141110161323/http://comment.ofqual.gov.uk/gcse-reform-june-2013>

for which spelling, punctuation and grammar marks had already been introduced.¹⁴

3.10 We are now proposing to introduce spelling, punctuation, grammar and use of specialist terminology requirements in new GCSEs in ancient history. GCSE ancient history is available as an alternative to GCSE history covering the period before 500 AD, and is similar in structure to GCSE history. We are of the view that the spelling, punctuation, grammar and use of specialist terminology requirements should apply in the same way to this subject and therefore that the number of marks available to credit this will be equal to 5 per cent of the number of marks allocated to the assessment objectives outlined below.

Tiering

3.11 Currently GCSEs in ancient history are not tiered. We propose that the new GCSEs in ancient history should not be tiered either.

Proposed assessment objectives

3.12 The proposed assessment objectives specify the core abilities for the subject more clearly than the current assessment objectives. We believe that the proposed weightings are appropriate for the subject.

	Assessment objective	Weighting
AO1	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the key features and characteristics of the historical periods studied.	45%
AO2	Analyse and explain historical events and historical periods to arrive at substantiated judgements.	25%
AO3	Use, analyse and evaluate ancient sources to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ reach conclusions about historical events and historical periods studied ▪ make judgements about how the portrayal of events by ancient writers/sources relates to the social, political, religious and cultural contexts in which they were written/produced. 	30%

¹⁴ New GCSEs in the following subjects contain spelling, punctuation and grammar requirements: English language (where 20 per cent of the marks are for spelling, punctuation and grammar), English literature, geography, history and religious studies.

Current assessment objectives

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

	Assessment objective	Weighting
AO1	Recall, select and organise relevant knowledge of historical events and sources.	35%
AO2	Demonstrate an understanding of historical events and sources.	30%
AO3	Interpret, evaluate and respond to historical events and sources.	35%

Question 7: To what extent do you agree or disagree that GCSEs in ancient history should be assessed entirely by exams?

Question 8: To what extent do you agree or disagree that GCSEs in ancient history should contain an assessment of a learner’s spelling, punctuation, grammar, and use of specialist terminology and that this should be weighted at 5 per cent of the total marks for the qualification?

Question 9: To what extent do you agree or disagree that GCSEs in ancient history should not be tiered?

Question 10: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate for GCSEs in ancient history?

Question 11: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for GCSEs in ancient history?

Question 12: Do you have any further comments relating to the assessment of this subject?¹⁵

¹⁵ Please note that any comments relating to the subject content should be directed to the DfE.

AS and A level

3.14 The DfE is consulting on the content for AS and A levels in ancient history.¹⁶

Proposed assessment arrangements

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

Proposed assessment objectives

3.16 The proposed assessment objectives specify more clearly than the current ones the core abilities for the subject. The proposed weighting ranges have not been reduced, but the number of assessment objectives has been increased, and the optionality between assessment objectives has been removed, which should enhance comparability between different qualifications in this subject.

	Assessment objective	Weighting	
		A level	AS
AO1	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the key features and characteristics of the historical periods studied.	20–30%	20–30%
AO2	Analyse and evaluate historical events and historical periods to arrive at substantiated judgements.	20–30%	20–30%
AO3	Use, analyse and evaluate a range of ancient source material within its historical context to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ reach conclusions about historical events and historical periods studied ▪ make judgements about how the portrayal of events by ancient writers/sources relates to the social, political, religious and cultural contexts in which they were written/produced. 	40–50%	50–60%
AO4	Analyse and evaluate modern historians' interpretations of the historical events and topics studied.	10–20%	N/A

¹⁶

www.gov.uk/government/consultations/further-gcse-and-a-level-content-for-teaching-from-september-2017

Current assessment objectives

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

Question 13: To what extent do you agree or disagree that AS qualifications in ancient history should be assessed entirely by exams?

Question 14: To what extent do you agree or disagree that A levels in ancient history should be assessed entirely by exams?

Question 15: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate for AS and A levels in ancient history?

Question 16: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for AS qualifications in ancient history?

Question 17: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for A levels in ancient history?

Question 18: Do you have any further comments relating to the assessment of this subject?¹⁷

¹⁷ Please note that any comments relating to the subject content should be directed to the DfE.

Archaeology

GCSE

3.17 We are not consulting on a GCSE in archaeology at this time.

AS and A level

3.18 The DfE is consulting on the content for AS and A levels in archaeology.¹⁸

Proposed assessment arrangements

3.19 At A level there is currently 20 per cent non-exam assessment. The new content requires students to interpret primary archaeological data to draw conclusions about past societies through a student-produced investigation which will take place over an extended period of time. This could not, in our view, be validly assessed by exam alone. The non-exam assessment will expect students to undertake independent primary research, and be assessed on their evaluation, of archaeological data through a written report.

3.20 Having reviewed the subject content, we are of the view that the current balance of exam and non-exam assessment is still appropriate. We are therefore proposing that new A levels in archaeology should have 80 per cent of the marks assessed through exam assessment and 20 per cent of the marks assessed through non-exam assessment.

3.21 At AS level there is currently no non-exam assessment. We are not proposing to introduce any non-exam assessment to new AS qualifications in archaeology.

Proposed assessment objectives

3.22 The proposed assessment objectives specify the core abilities for the subject more clearly than the current assessment objectives. We believe that the proposed weightings are appropriate for the subject.

¹⁸

www.gov.uk/government/consultations/further-gcse-and-a-level-content-for-teaching-from-september-2017

A level

	Assessment objective	Weighting
AO1	<p>Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ archaeological skills and methods, including the range of sources and techniques used by archaeologists to investigate the archaeological record ▪ key themes and ideas in world archaeology ▪ archaeological contexts. 	30%
AO2	<p>Apply archaeological skills and methods, including for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ selection, abstraction, interpretation and translation of primary archaeological material and data by interaction with the archaeological record ▪ interpretation of secondary archaeological data ▪ communicating effectively, with accurate application of archaeological terminology and conventions. 	30%
AO3	<p>Analyse and evaluate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ a range of primary archaeological material and data ▪ a range of secondary archaeological material and data ▪ strengths and weaknesses of archaeological interpretations ▪ key themes and ideas in world archaeology. 	40%

AS

	Assessment objective	Weighting
AO1	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ archaeological skills and methods, including the range of sources and techniques used by archaeologists to investigate the archaeological record ▪ key themes and ideas in world archaeology ▪ archaeological contexts. 	40%
AO2	Apply archaeological skills and methods, including to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ interpret secondary archaeological data ▪ communicate effectively, using archaeological terminology and conventions. 	20%
AO3	Analyse and evaluate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ a range of secondary archaeological material and data ▪ strengths and weaknesses of archaeological interpretations ▪ key themes and ideas in world archaeology. 	40%

Current assessment objectives

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

	Assessment objective	Weighting		
		AS level	A2 level	A level
AO1	<p>Candidates should demonstrate:</p> <p>An understanding of archaeological skills and methods, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ the range of sources and techniques used by archaeologists to investigate the archaeological record ▪ how archaeological data is analysed and interpreted. <p>A practical application of archaeological skills and methods, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ abstraction, interpretation and translation of archaeological material and data ▪ interaction with the archaeological record through an individual archaeological enquiry ▪ effective communication, using archaeological terminology and conventions. 	40%	40%	40%
AO2	<p>Candidates should demonstrate a knowledge and understanding of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ archaeological data ▪ strengths and weaknesses of archaeological interpretations ▪ key themes and ideas in world archaeology ▪ the nature of and factors affecting continuity and change in the past. 	60%	60%	60%

Question 19: To what extent do you agree or disagree that AS qualifications in archaeology should be assessed entirely by exams?

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

Question 21: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate for AS and A levels in archaeology?

Question 22: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for AS qualifications in archaeology?

Question 23: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for A levels in archaeology?

Question 24: Do you have any further comments relating to the assessment of this subject?¹⁹

Classical civilisation

GCSE

3.24 The DfE is consulting on the content for GCSEs in classical civilisation.²⁰

Proposed assessment arrangements

3.25 Current GCSEs in classical civilisation are assessed through a mixture of exam assessment (75 per cent of the marks) and non-exam assessment (25 per cent of the marks). Having reviewed the proposed subject content, we are of the view that all of the content can be assessed through exams, and we propose that reformed GCSEs in classical civilisation should be assessed by exam only.

¹⁹ Please note that any comments relating to the subject content should be directed to the DfE.

²⁰

www.gov.uk/government/consultations/further-gcse-and-a-level-content-for-teaching-from-september-2017

3.26 We set out above the principles that we have applied when determining whether each of the reformed qualifications should include assessment other than by exam. One of our principles is that non-exam assessment must be used where it is the only valid way to assess essential elements of the subject. As the subject content for GCSE classical civilisation is capable of being assessed by exam in its entirety, this principle does not apply. These principles were not in place when current GCSEs in classical civilisation were being developed, and so content that was capable of assessment by exam was assessed through non-exam assessment. The new principles have been applied across all reformed qualifications, and in a number of cases they have led to the amount of non-exam assessment being either reduced or removed from reformed qualifications.

Tiering

3.27 GCSEs in classical civilisation are currently tiered. We propose that the new GCSEs in classical civilisation should not be tiered.

3.28 We set out above the principles that we have applied when determining whether each of the reformed GCSE qualifications should be tiered. Where the content for a subject can be the same for all students (that is separate higher tier content has not been identified), and a single set of exams can validly assess students across the full ability range, then the assessments for that qualification should not be tiered. We believe that the subject content for classical civilisation can be the same for all students, and that a single set of exams can validly assess students across the full ability range.

3.29 These principles were not in place when current GCSEs in classical civilisation were being developed. The new principles have been applied across all reformed qualifications, and in a number of cases they have led to certain reformed qualifications no longer being tiered.

Proposed assessment objectives

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

	Assessment objective	Weighting
AO1	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ literary and visual/material culture from the classical world ▪ how sources reflect their cultural contexts ▪ possible interpretations of sources by different audiences and individuals. 	60%
AO2	Analyse, interpret and evaluate literary and visual/material culture from the classical world, using evidence and producing coherent and reasoned arguments.	40%

Current assessment objectives

	Assessment objective	Weighting
AO1	Recall, select and organise relevant knowledge of literature and its contexts and/or of society and values of the classical world.	25–35%
AO2	Demonstrate an understanding of literature and its contexts and/or of society and values of the classical world.	25–35%
AO3	Interpret, evaluate and respond to literature and its contexts and/or sources related to society and values of the classical world.	35–45%

Question 25: To what extent do you agree or disagree that GCSEs in classical civilisation should be assessed entirely by exams?

Question 26: To what extent do you agree or disagree that GCSEs in classical civilisation should not be tiered?

Question 27: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate for GCSEs in classical civilisation?

Question 28: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for GCSEs in classical civilisation?

Question 29: Do you have any further comments relating to the assessment of this subject?²¹

AS and A level

3.31 The DfE is consulting on the content for AS and A levels in classical civilisation.²²

Proposed assessment arrangements

3.32 AS and A levels in classical civilisation are currently assessed wholly by exam. In our view, the draft content includes only knowledge, understanding and skills that could be validly assessed by exam. We therefore propose that reformed AS and A levels in classical civilisation should also be assessed by exam only.

Proposed assessment objectives

3.33 The proposed assessment objectives specify the core abilities for the subject more clearly than the current assessment objectives. We believe the proposed weighting ranges are appropriate for the subject, and permit a degree of legitimate variation to the approach that is taken to assessment in this subject.

	Assessment objective	Weighting	
		A level	AS
AO1	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ literary culture, visual/material culture, and philosophy and thought from the classical world ▪ how sources and perspectives reflect their cultural contexts ▪ possible interpretations of sources and perspectives by different audiences and individuals. 	40–50%	45–55%
AO2	Critically analyse, interpret and evaluate literary culture, visual/material culture, and philosophy and thought from the classical world, using	50–60%	45–55%

²¹ Please note that any comments relating to the subject content should be directed to the DfE.

²²

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	evidence to make substantiated judgements and produce coherent and reasoned arguments.		
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Current assessment objectives

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

Question 30: To what extent do you agree or disagree that AS qualifications in classical civilisation should be assessed entirely by exams?

Question 31: To what extent do you agree or disagree that A levels in classical civilisation should be assessed entirely by exams?

Question 32: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate for AS and A levels in classical civilisation?

Question 33: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for AS qualifications in classical civilisation?

Question 34: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for A levels in classical civilisation?

Question 35: Do you have any further comments relating to the assessment of this subject?²³

Electronics

GCSE

3.34 The DfE is consulting on the content for GCSEs in electronics.²⁴

Proposed assessment arrangements

3.35 In current GCSEs in electronics, 25 per cent of the assessment is non-exam assessment.

3.36 The new content, which requires students to investigate a problem through developing a design brief, developing and prototyping a solution, and then evaluating the prototype system, could not be validly assessed by exam alone.

3.37 Having reviewed the subject content, we are of the view that there is a large amount of subject content that is capable of exam assessment. We believe that this should account for 80 per cent of the total marks for this subject, leaving 20 per cent of the marks to be assessed through non-exam assessment. This is a slight reduction in the amount of non-exam assessment, but we believe this reflects the balance of the subject content requirements.

Tiering

3.38 Currently GCSEs in electronics are not tiered. We propose that the new GCSEs in electronics should not be tiered either.

Proposed assessment objectives

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

²³ Please note that any comments relating to the subject content should be directed to the DfE.

²⁴

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	Assessment objective	Weighting
AO1	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the ideas, techniques and procedures of electronics.	35%
AO2	Apply knowledge and understanding of the ideas, techniques and procedures of electronics.	40%
AO3	Research, design, produce, test, evaluate and report on electronic systems.	25%

Current assessment objectives

3.40 Since this is the first time that core content has been developed in this subject, we have not previously specified the use of a particular set of assessment objectives. Two exam boards currently award this qualification. They use the same set of assessment objectives, but the weightings of those assessment objectives differ between the exam boards.

3.41 The current assessment objectives are set out below. The different weightings are set out in the final two columns of the table.

	Assessment objective	Weighting	
		Exam board 1	Exam board 2
AO1	<p>Knowledge and understanding of science and how science works</p> <p>Candidates should be able to:</p> <p>(a) demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the scientific facts, concepts, techniques and terminology in the specification</p> <p>(b) show understanding of how scientific evidence is collected and its relationship with scientific explanations and theories</p> <p>(c) show understanding of how scientific knowledge and ideas change over time and how these changes are validated.</p>	20–40%	21%
AO2	<p>Application of skills, knowledge and understanding</p> <p>Candidates should be able to:</p>	30–55%	50%

	<p>(a) apply concepts, develop arguments or draw conclusions related to familiar and unfamiliar situations</p> <p>(b) plan a scientific task, such as a practical procedure, testing an idea, answering a question, or solving a problem</p> <p>(c) show understanding of how decisions about science and technology are made to different situations, including contemporary situations and those raising ethical issues</p> <p>(d) evaluate the impact of scientific developments or processes on individuals, communities or the environment.</p>		
AO3	<p>Practical, enquiry and data-handling skills</p> <p>Candidates should be able to:</p> <p>(a) carry out practical tasks safely and skilfully</p> <p>(b) evaluate the methods they use when collecting first-hand and secondary data</p> <p>(c) analyse and interpret qualitative and quantitative data from different sources</p> <p>(d) consider the validity and reliability of data in presenting and justifying conclusions.</p>	20–40%	29%

Question 36: To what extent do you agree or disagree that for GCSEs in electronics, 80 per cent of the available marks should be allocated to exams and 20 per cent to non-exam assessment?

Question 37: To what extent do you agree or disagree that GCSEs in electronics should not be tiered?

Question 38: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate for GCSEs in electronics?

Question 39: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for GCSEs in electronics?

Question 40: Do you have any further comments relating to the assessment of this subject?²⁵

AS and A level

3.42 The DfE is consulting on the content for AS and A levels in electronics.²⁶

Proposed assessment arrangements

3.43 In current AS and A levels in electronics, between 26 and 30 per cent of the assessment is non-exam assessment.

3.44 As with GCSE, the new AS and A level subject content requires students to investigate a problem through developing a design brief, developing and prototyping a solution, and then evaluating the prototype system. This could not be validly assessed by exam alone.

3.45 Having reviewed the subject content, we are of the view that there is a large amount of subject content that is capable of exam assessment. We believe that this should account for 80 per cent of the total marks for this subject, leaving 20 per cent of the marks for both AS and A level to be assessed through non-exam assessment. This is a slight reduction in the amount of non-exam assessment, but we believe this reflects the balance of the subject content requirements.

3.46 Currently the exam boards take different approaches to the amount of non-exam assessment in their electronics qualifications. Our proposals on a set percentage for non-exam assessment should act to enhance comparability between different qualifications in this subject.

Proposed assessment objectives

3.47 The proposed assessment objectives specify more clearly than the current ones the core abilities for the subject. We believe the proposed weighting ranges are

²⁵ Please note that any comments relating to the subject content should be directed to the DfE.

²⁶

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appropriate for the subject, and permit a degree of legitimate variation to the approach that is taken to assessment in this subject.

	Assessment objective	Weighting	
		A level	AS
AO1	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the ideas, techniques and procedures of electronics.	30–35%	30–35%
AO2	Apply knowledge and understanding of the ideas, techniques and procedures of electronics.	40–45%	35–40%
AO3	Research, design, produce, test, evaluate and report on electronic systems.	25–30%	25–30%

Current assessment objectives

3.48 Since this is the first time that core content has been developed in this subject, we have not previously specified the use of a particular set of assessment objectives. Three exam boards currently award this qualification. They use the same set of assessment objectives,²⁷ but the weightings of those assessment objectives differ between the exam boards. The current assessment objectives are set out below.

	Assessment objective	Weighting		
		AS level	A2 level	A level
AO1	Knowledge and understanding of science and of how science works: (a) recognise, recall and show understanding of scientific knowledge (b) select, organise and communicate relevant information in a variety of forms.	27–37%	28%	33–33.5%

²⁷ One board did not have the wording “and of how science works” in the heading of assessment objectives AO1 and AO2. The wording beneath, however, remains the same.

AO2	Application of knowledge and understanding of science and of how science works: (a) analyse and evaluate scientific knowledge and processes (b) apply scientific knowledge and processes to unfamiliar situations including those related to issues (c) assess the validity, reliability and credibility of scientific information.	35–37%	46%	36.5–42%
AO3	How science works: (a) demonstrate and describe ethical, safe and skilful practical techniques and processes, selecting appropriate qualitative and quantitative methods (b) make, record and communicate reliable and valid observations and measurements with appropriate precision and accuracy (c) analyse, interpret, explain and evaluate the methodology, results and impact of their own and others' experimental and investigative activities in a variety of ways.	26–30%	26%	26–30%

Question 41: To what extent do you agree or disagree that for AS qualifications in electronics, 80 per cent of the available marks should be allocated to exams and 20 per cent to non-exam assessment?

Question 42: To what extent do you agree or disagree that for A levels in electronics, 80 per cent of the available marks should be allocated to exams and 20 per cent to non-exam assessment?

Question 43: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate for AS and A levels in electronics?

Question 44: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for AS qualifications in electronics?

Question 45: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for A levels in electronics?

Question 46: Do you have any further comments relating to the assessment of this subject?²⁸

Film studies

GCSE

3.49 The DfE is consulting on the content for GCSEs in film studies.²⁹

Proposed assessment arrangements

3.50 Current GCSEs in film studies are assessed through a mixture of exam assessment (50 per cent of the marks) and non-exam assessment (50 per cent of the marks).

3.51 The new content, which requires students to produce a product in the form of an extract from a film or screenplay, could not be validly assessed by exam alone. Certain elements of the subject content relate to practical cinematography, editing and sound design skills. These could not be assessed through exam alone. Neither could the requirement to draft and redraft screenplays (part of the iterative developmental process of realising the visual and aural aspects of a film through developing scene structure, character and dialogue).

3.52 Having reviewed the subject content, we are of the view that there is a large amount of subject content that is capable of exam assessment. We believe that this should account for 70 per cent of the total marks for this subject, leaving 30 per cent of the marks to be assessed through non-exam assessment. This is a reduction in the amount of non-exam assessment, but we believe this reflects the balance of the subject content requirements.

²⁸ Please note that any comments relating to the subject content should be directed to the Department for Education.

²⁹

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Tiering

3.53 GCSEs in film studies are not currently tiered. We propose that the new GCSEs in film studies should not be tiered either.

Proposed assessment objectives

3.54 The proposed assessment objectives specify the core abilities for the subject more clearly than the current assessment objectives. We believe that the proposed weightings are appropriate for the subject. Comparability should also be enhanced by the fact that new qualifications in film studies will all use the same assessment objectives and weightings.

	Assessment objective	Weighting
AO1	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of how meanings and responses are generated ³⁰ in film.	30%
AO2	Apply knowledge and understanding of key elements of film and key film contexts, using appropriate terminology, to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ analyse films and their relationship to screenplays ▪ compare films ▪ reflect on and evaluate own work. 	50%
AO3	Apply knowledge and understanding of key elements of film through production of an extract from a genre-based film or screenplay.	20%

Current assessment objectives

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

³⁰ “how meanings and responses are generated in film” – this widely used academic term reflects the way that meanings and responses result from an interaction between film-maker and spectator, a process that is initiated and 'generated' by the film itself.

	Assessment objective	Weighting
AO1	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of how films communicate meanings, evoke personal responses and engage audiences.	40%
AO2	Explore, respond to and evaluate a range of films and topics, including their own preproduction and production work, using key film concepts and appropriate terminology.	35%
AO3	Demonstrate planning, research and presentational skills.	10%
AO4	Use creative and technical skills to construct film products.	15%

Question 47: To what extent do you agree or disagree that for GCSEs in film studies, 70 per cent of the available marks should be allocated to exams and 30 per cent to non-exam assessment?

Question 48: To what extent do you agree or disagree that GCSEs in film studies should not be tiered?

Question 49: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate for GCSEs in film studies?

Question 50: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for GCSEs in film studies?

Question 51: Do you have any further comments relating to the assessment of this subject?³¹

³¹ Please note that any comments relating to the subject content should be directed to the DfE.

AS and A level

3.56 The DfE is consulting on the content for AS and A levels in film studies.³²

Proposed assessment arrangements

3.57 Current AS levels in film studies have between 40 and 50 per cent non-exam assessment. A level film studies currently has between 45 and 50 per cent non-exam assessment.

3.58 As with GCSE, the new AS and A level subject content, which requires students to produce a product in the form of an extract from a film or screenplay, could not be validly assessed by exam alone. Certain elements of the subject content relate to practical cinematography, editing and sound design skills. These could not be assessed through exam alone. Neither could the requirement to produce an extended piece of writing in the form of a screenplay.

3.59 Having reviewed the subject content, we are of the view that there is a large amount of subject content that is capable of exam assessment. We believe that this should account for 70 per cent of the total marks for this subject, leaving 30 per cent of the marks to be assessed through non-exam assessment. This is a reduction in the amount of non-exam assessment, but we believe this reflects the balance of the subject content requirements.

Proposed assessment objectives

3.60 The proposed assessment objectives specify more clearly than the current ones the core abilities for the subject, and will apply across all exam boards that offer the subject (currently exam boards use slightly different assessment objectives). This should act to enhance comparability between different qualifications in this subject. We believe that the proposed weightings are appropriate for the subject.

³²

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	Assessment objective	Weighting	
		A level	AS
AO1	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of how meanings and responses are generated ³³ through film.	35%	35%
AO2	Apply knowledge and understanding of key elements of film, key film contexts and key critical approaches, using appropriate terminology, to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ analyse films and their relationship to screenplays ▪ compare films ▪ reflect on and evaluate own work. 	45%	45%
AO3	Apply knowledge and understanding of key elements of film and key film contexts to the production of film. ³⁴	20%	20%

Current assessment objectives

3.61 Since this is the first time that core content has been developed in this subject, we have not previously specified the use of a particular set of assessment objectives. Two exam boards currently award this qualification. The assessment objectives and weightings that they use differ slightly, and so are set out below in two separate tables.

Exam board 1

	Assessment objective	Weighting	
		AS	A level
AO1	Knowledge and understanding Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of film as an audio-visual form of creative expression together with its contexts of production and reception and of the diversity in filmmaking across different historical periods and locations.	30%	30%

³³ “how meanings and responses are generated in film” – this term, used academically, reflects the way that meanings and responses result from an interaction between film-maker and spectator, a process that is initiated and 'generated' by the film itself.

³⁴ “production of film” – production either as a short film or as a screenplay for a short film and a digitally photographed storyboard of a key section (at A level); production either as a film extract or as a screenplay for a film extract and a digitally photographed storyboard of a key section (at AS).

AO2	Application of knowledge and understanding and critical evaluation Apply knowledge and understanding, including some of the common critical approaches that characterise the subject, when exploring and analysing films and when evaluating their own creative projects to show how meanings and responses are generated.	50%	40%
AO3	Planning and production skills Demonstrate the ability to devise a creative artefact or realisation, applying appropriate planning and production skills effectively.	20%	20%
AO4	Research skills Demonstrate the ability to undertake, apply and present research into film and cinema topics.	N/A	10%

Exam board 2

	Assessment objective	Weighting	
		AS	A level
AO1	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of film as an audio-visual form of creative expression together with its contexts of production and reception and of the diversity in filmmaking across different historical periods and locations.	30%	27.5%
AO2	Apply knowledge and understanding, including some of the common critical approaches that characterise the subject, when exploring and analysing films and when evaluating their own creative projects to show how meanings and responses are generated.	50%	41.25%
AO3	Demonstrate the ability to devise film projects creatively, applying appropriate planning and production skills effectively.	20%	21.25%
AO4	Demonstrate the ability to undertake, apply and present research into film topics.	N/A	10%

Question 52: To what extent do you agree or disagree that for AS qualifications in film studies, 70 per cent of the available marks should be allocated to exams and 30 per cent to non-exam assessment?

Question 53: To what extent do you agree or disagree that for A levels in film studies, 70 per cent of the available marks should be allocated to exams and 30 per cent to non-exam assessment?

Question 54: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate for AS and A levels in film studies?

Question 55: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for AS qualifications in film studies?

Question 56: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for A levels in film studies?

Question 57: Do you have any further comments relating to the assessment of this subject?³⁵

Law

GCSE

3.62 We are not planning to consult on a GCSE in law at this time.

AS and A level

3.63 The DfE is consulting on the content for AS and A levels in law.³⁶

Proposed assessment arrangements

3.64 AS and A levels in law are currently assessed wholly by exam. The draft content includes only knowledge, understanding and skills that could be validly assessed by exam. We therefore propose that reformed AS and A levels in law should also be assessed by exam only.

Proposed assessment objectives

3.65 The proposed assessment objectives specify more clearly than the current ones the core abilities for the subject. The proposed weighting ranges are narrower

³⁵ Please note that any comments relating to the subject content should be directed to the DfE.

³⁶

www.gov.uk/government/consultations/further-gcse-and-a-level-content-for-teaching-from-september-2017

and more specific, which should enhance comparability between different qualifications in this subject.

	Assessment objective	Weighting	
		A level	AS
AO1	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of legal rules, principles and concepts.	40%	50%
AO2	Apply legal rules and principles to issues and problems in context in order to present a legal argument using appropriate legal terminology.	30%	25%
AO3	Analyse and evaluate legal rules, principles and concepts, issues and problems.	30%	25%

Current assessment objectives

	Assessment objective	Weighting		
		AS level	A2 level	A level
AO1	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of legal rules and principles by selecting and explaining relevant information and illustrating with examples and citation.	45–55%	35–45%	40–50%
AO2	Analyse legal material, issues and situations, and evaluate and apply the appropriate legal rules and principles.	30–40%	45–55%	37.5–47.5%
AO3	Present a logical and coherent argument and communicate relevant material in a clear and effective manner using appropriate legal terminology.	5–15%	5–15%	5–15%

Question 58: To what extent do you agree or disagree that AS qualifications in law should be assessed entirely by exams?

Question 59: To what extent do you agree or disagree that A levels in law should be assessed entirely by exams?

Question 60: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate for AS and A levels in law?

Question 61: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for AS qualifications in law?

Question 62: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for A levels in law?

Question 63: Do you have any further comments relating to the assessment of this subject?³⁷

Media studies

GCSE

3.66 The DfE is consulting on the content for GCSEs in media studies.³⁸

Proposed assessment arrangements

3.67 Current GCSEs in media studies are assessed through a mixture of exam assessment (40 per cent of the marks) and non-exam assessment (60 per cent of the marks).

3.68 The new GCSE subject content requires students to produce a media product. Certain elements of the subject content require the creation of media products for an intended audience, and using knowledge of the theoretical framework to express and communicate meanings. These could not be assessed by exam alone.

3.69 Having reviewed the subject content, we are of the view that there is a large amount of subject content that is capable of exam assessment. We believe that this should account for 70 per cent of the total marks for this subject, leaving 30 per cent of the marks to be assessed through non-exam assessment. This is a reduction in the amount of non-exam assessment, but we believe this reflects the balance of the subject content requirements.

³⁷ Please note that any comments relating to the subject content should be directed to the DfE.

³⁸

www.gov.uk/government/consultations/further-gcse-and-a-level-content-for-teaching-from-september-2017

Tiering

3.70 GCSEs in media studies are not currently tiered. We propose that the new GCSEs in media studies should not be tiered either.

Proposed assessment objectives

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

	Assessment objective	Weighting
AO1	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ the theoretical framework, including media language, representation, institutions and audiences ▪ key contexts of media and their influence on media products and processes. 	30%
AO2	Analyse media products using the theoretical framework and appropriate terminology.	40%
AO3	Create media products for an intended audience, using knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework to express and communicate meanings.	30%

Current assessment objectives

	Assessment objective	Weighting
AO1	Recall, select and communicate their knowledge and understanding of media products and the contexts in which they are produced and consumed.	20–30%
AO2	Analyse and respond to media texts/topics using media key concepts and appropriate terminology.	20–30%
AO3	Demonstrate research, planning and presentation skills.	20–30%
AO4	Construct and evaluate their own products using creative and technical skills.	20–30%

Question 64: To what extent do you agree or disagree that for GCSEs in media studies, 70 per cent of the available marks should be allocated to exams and 30 per cent to non-exam assessment?

Question 65: To what extent do you agree or disagree that GCSEs in media studies should not be tiered?

Question 66: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate for GCSEs in media studies?

Question 67: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for GCSEs in media studies?

Question 68: Do you have any further comments relating to the assessment of this subject?³⁹

AS and A level

3.72 The DfE is consulting on the content for AS and A levels in media studies.⁴⁰

Proposed assessment arrangements

3.73 In current AS and A levels in media studies, up to a maximum of 40 to 50 per cent of the assessment is non-exam assessment.

3.74 As with GCSE, the new AS and A level subject content requires students to produce media products. Certain elements of the subject content require the creation of media products for an intended audience, and using knowledge of the theoretical framework to express and communicate meanings. These could not be assessed by exam alone.

3.75 Having reviewed the subject content, we are of the view that there is a large amount of subject content that is capable of exam assessment. We believe that this should account for 70 per cent of the total marks for this subject, leaving 30 per cent of the marks to be assessed through non-exam assessment. This is a reduction in the amount of non-exam assessment, but we believe this reflects the balance of the subject content requirements.

³⁹ Please note that any comments relating to the subject content should be directed to the DfE.

⁴⁰

www.gov.uk/government/consultations/further-gcse-and-a-level-content-for-teaching-from-september-2017

Proposed assessment objectives

3.76 The proposed assessment objectives specify more clearly than the current ones the core abilities for the subject. We believe that the proposed weightings are appropriate for the subject.

	Assessment objective	Weighting	
		A level	AS
AO1	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ the theoretical framework, including media language, representation, institutions and audiences ▪ key contexts of media and their influence on media products and processes. 	30%	30%
AO2	Analyse media products using the theoretical framework and appropriate terminology.	40%	40%
AO3	Create media products for an intended audience, using knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework to express and communicate meanings.	30%	30%

Current assessment objectives

	Assessment objective	Weighting		
		AS level	A2 level	A level
AO1	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of media concepts, contexts and critical debates.	30–40%	30–40%	30–40%
AO2	Apply knowledge and understanding when analysing media products and processes and evaluating their own practical work, to show how meanings and responses are created.	30–40%	30–40%	30–40%
AO3	Demonstrate the ability to plan and construct media products using appropriate technical and creative skills.	20–30%	20–30%	20–30%
AO4	Demonstrate the ability to undertake, apply and present appropriate research.	10–15%	10–15%	10–15%

Question 69: To what extent do you agree or disagree that for AS qualifications in media studies, 70 per cent of the available marks should be allocated to exams and 30 per cent to non-exam assessment?

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

Question 71: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate for AS and A levels in media studies?

Question 72: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for AS qualifications in media studies?

Question 73: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for A levels in media studies?

Question 74: Do you have any further comments relating to the assessment of this subject?⁴¹

Statistics

GCSE

3.77 The DfE is consulting on the content for GCSEs in statistics.⁴²

Proposed assessment arrangements

3.78 Current GCSEs in statistics are assessed through a mixture of exam assessment (75 per cent of the marks) and non-exam assessment (25 per cent of the marks). Having reviewed the proposed subject content, we are of the view that all of the content can be assessed through exams, and we propose that reformed GCSEs in statistics should be assessed by exam only.

3.79 We set out above the principles that we have applied when determining whether each of the reformed qualifications should include assessment other than by

⁴¹ Please note that any comments relating to the subject content should be directed to the DfE.

⁴²

www.gov.uk/government/consultations/further-gcse-and-a-level-content-for-teaching-from-september-2017

exam. One of our principles is that non-exam assessment must be used where it is the only valid way to assess essential elements of the subject. As the subject content for GCSE statistics is capable of being assessed by exam in its entirety, this principle does not apply. These principles were not in place when current GCSEs in statistics were being developed, and so content that was capable of assessment by exam was assessed through non-exam assessment. The new principles have been applied across all reformed qualifications, and in a number of cases they have led to the amount of non-exam assessment being either reduced or removed from reformed qualifications.

Tiering

- 3.80 Current GCSEs in statistics are tiered. The qualification currently follows an overlapping tiers model. Grades A* to D (with an allowable E) are available at higher tier, and grades C to G are available at foundation tier. The current GCSE statistics qualification attracts candidates from across the ability spectrum.
- 3.81 As we set out in section 2, we have decided that tiering should be used in new GCSEs only when essential. When considering this issue, there are three principles in particular that we consider when determining whether tiering is appropriate in a subject. The first of these relates to whether content exclusive to higher tier can be identified. The subject content document for new GCSEs in statistics specifically sets this content out.
- 3.82 The second principle relates to the extent to which the assessment supports differentiation across the full ability range. In order to target questions at the full ability range, an untiered examination would need to move away from differentiation by task (the present approach that is taken in GCSE statistics) towards differentiation by outcome. We think that this subject is best suited to papers that differentiate students' abilities by task as currently, and that the length of assessments would be excessive were all students required to take the same papers.
- 3.83 The final principle is about whether the proposed assessment will allow accurate awarding across the ability spectrum. A tiered assessment will continue to attract students from the lower end of the ability range where the assessment they attempt will have been designed to be appropriate for their abilities, whereas lower ability students would find many parts of an untiered assessment inaccessible.
- 3.84 GCSEs in mathematics and science are tiered. When we consulted on the issue of tiering in these subjects and considered tiering in these subjects against a similar set of principles, we said: "in mathematics and sciences, common exam

papers could not be designed to provide valid assessments for all students. The examinations would inevitably include some questions that would be too simple and others that would be too challenging for significant numbers of students.”⁴³ The same reasoning applies to GCSE statistics, and so we are proposing that the assessments in this subject should be tiered.

3.85 We propose that the tiering arrangements in GCSE statistics should be similar to those in place for GCSE mathematics⁴⁴ and GCSE science.⁴⁵

Proposed assessment objectives

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

	Assessment objective	Weighting
AO1	Use and apply the terminology, notation and methodologies necessary at each stage of the statistical enquiry cycle.	20%
AO2	Apply standard statistical techniques for the collection and visualisation of data, and the calculation of summary statistics.	30%
AO3	Reason, interpret and communicate the results found through the application of techniques used in the statistical enquiry cycle.	25%
AO4	Critically assess the reliability and validity of statistical methodologies and the conclusions drawn through the application of the statistical enquiry cycle.	25%

⁴³ <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20141110161323/http://comment.ofqual.gov.uk/gcse-reform-june-2013/>

⁴⁴ www.gov.uk/government/publications/gcse-9-to-1-subject-level-conditions-and-requirements-for-mathematics

⁴⁵ www.gov.uk/government/publications/gcse-9-to-1-subject-level-conditions-and-requirements-for-single-science

Current assessment objectives

	Assessment objective	Weighting
AO1	Analyse a statistical problem and plan an appropriate strategy.	10–20%
AO2	Describe and use appropriate methods to select and collect data.	10–20%
AO3	Process, analyse and present data appropriately.	40–50%
AO4	Use statistical evidence to identify inferences, make deductions and draw conclusions.	25–35%

Question 75: To what extent do you agree or disagree that GCSEs in statistics should be assessed entirely by exams?

Question 76: To what extent do you agree or disagree that GCSEs in statistics should be tiered?

Question 77: To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should adopt a similar approach to tiering in GCSE statistics as we have for GCSE mathematics?

Question 78: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate for GCSEs in statistics?

Question 79: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for GCSEs in statistics?

Question 80: Do you have any further comments relating to the assessment of this subject?⁴⁶

⁴⁶ Please note that any comments relating to the subject content should be directed to the DfE.

AS and A level

3.87 The DfE is consulting on the content for AS and A levels in statistics.⁴⁷

Proposed assessment arrangements

3.88 Current AS and A levels in statistics may be assessed wholly by exam, but have an option for a small amount of non-exam assessment.⁴⁸ Having reviewed the proposed subject content, we are of the view that all of the content can be assessed through exams, and we propose that reformed AS and A levels in statistics should be assessed by exam only.

3.89 We set out above the principles that we have applied when determining whether each of the reformed qualifications should include assessment other than by exam. One of our principles is that non-exam assessment must be used where it is the only valid way to assess essential elements of the subject. As the subject content for AS and A level statistics is capable of being assessed by exam in its entirety, this principle does not apply. These principles were not in place when current AS and A levels in statistics were being developed, and so content that was capable of assessment by exam was in some instances assessed through non-exam assessment. The new principles have been applied across all reformed qualifications, and in a number of cases they have led to the amount of non-exam assessment being either reduced or removed from reformed qualifications.

Proposed assessment objectives

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

⁴⁷ www.gov.uk/government/publications/gcse-9-to-1-subject-level-conditions-and-requirements-for-mathematics

⁴⁸ At A level there is currently an option to complete part of one component (worth 4 $\frac{1}{6}$ per cent of the total qualification marks) by way of non-exam assessment. At AS there is currently an option to complete part of one component (worth 8 $\frac{1}{3}$ per cent of the total marks) by way of non-exam assessment.

	Assessment objective	Weighting	
		A level	AS
AO1	Use and apply the terminology, notation and methodologies necessary at each stage of the statistical enquiry cycle.	20%	20%
AO2	Apply standard statistical techniques for the collection and visualisation of data, and the calculation of summary statistics.	30%	30%
AO3	Reason, interpret and communicate the results found through the application of techniques used in the statistical enquiry cycle.	25%	25%
AO4	Critically assess the reliability and validity of statistical methodologies and the conclusions drawn through the application of the statistical enquiry cycle.	25%	25%

Current assessment objectives

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

	Assessment objective	Weighting	
		AS level	A level
AO1	Recall, select and use their knowledge of statistical facts, concepts, techniques and methods of data collection in a variety of contexts.	22–34%	23–35%
AO2	Construct rigorous statistical arguments through use of precise statements or hypotheses, logical deduction and inference, including the construction of extended arguments for the handling of substantial problems presented in unstructured form.	14–26%	13–25%
AO3	Recall, select and use their knowledge of statistical models to represent situations in the real world; recognise and understand given representations involving statistical models; present and	16–34%	14–32%

	interpret results from such models in terms of the original situation, including discussion of the assumptions made and refinement of such models.		
AO4	Comprehend translations of common realistic contexts into statistical models; use the results of calculations to make predictions, or to comment on the context; interpret statistical information; and read critically and comprehend statistical arguments or applications.	6–12%	6–12%
AO5	Use contemporary calculator technology, statistical tables and formulae booklets accurately and efficiently; understand the limitations of such technology and give answers to appropriate accuracy.	13–23%	12.5–23.5%

Question 81: To what extent do you agree or disagree that AS qualifications in statistics should be assessed entirely by exams?

Question 82: To what extent do you agree or disagree that A levels in statistics should be assessed entirely by exams?

Question 83: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate for AS and A levels in statistics?

Question 84: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for AS qualifications in statistics?

Question 85: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for A levels in statistics?

Question 86: Do you have any further comments relating to the assessment of this subject?⁴⁹

⁴⁹ Please note that any comments relating to the subject content should be directed to the DfE.

4. Equality analysis

Ofqual's role, objectives and duties

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

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

- 4.2 We have considered in some detail the potential impact on students who share protected characteristics⁵⁰ of the application of the principles and features that will apply to all new GCSEs, AS and A levels. We have also considered specific issues that have arisen for the subjects on which we have already consulted. Our equality impact analyses for our earlier consultations on GCSE, AS and A level reform are therefore of interest and we encourage you to read them.⁵¹
- 4.3 We do not repeat here all of the evidence we have considered, as this can be found in our earlier reports. We focus instead on the specific issues that are relevant to the subjects on which we are now consulting.
- 4.4 During this consultation we will continue to seek and consider evidence and feedback to our proposals that might help us identify any potential subject-specific impacts on students who share a protected characteristic. We will also seek views from interested groups during the period of this consultation, including the Access Consultation Forum and our External Advisory Group for Equalities.

⁵⁰ For the purposes of the public sector equality duty, the protected characteristics are sex, disability, racial group, age, religion or belief, pregnancy or maternity, sexual orientation and gender reassignment.

⁵¹ <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20141110161323/http://comment.ofqual.gov.uk/gcse-reform-june-2013>

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20141110161323/http://comment.ofqual.gov.uk/a-level-regulatory-requirements-october-2013>

www.gov.uk/government/consultations/gcse-as-and-a-levels-reform-of-subjects-for-september-2016

www.gov.uk/government/consultations/gcse-as-and-a-levels-new-subjects-to-be-taught-in-2016

www.gov.uk/government/consultations/religious-studies-gcse-as-and-a-levels-new-qualifications-for-2016

AS and A level accounting

- 4.5 AS and A levels in accounting are currently assessed wholly by exam. We are not proposing to change this position. We have not identified anything about our proposals that would have a negative impact on students because of their sex, disability, racial group, age, religion or belief, pregnancy or maternity, sexual orientation or as a result of gender reassignment.

GCSE, AS and A level ancient history

- 4.6 GCSEs in ancient history are currently assessed by a combination of exam and non-exam assessment. We are proposing that new GCSEs in ancient history should be assessed entirely by exam assessments. This proposed removal of non-exam assessment is in line with our general principles for GCSE reform that we have considered in detail in our previous equality analyses.
- 4.7 We have not identified anything in addition to the impacts discussed in our earlier consultations about our proposal that all assessments in GCSE ancient history should be by exam that would have a negative impact on students because of their sex, disability, racial group, age, religion or belief, pregnancy or maternity, sexual orientation or as a result of gender reassignment.
- 4.8 We are proposing to introduce spelling, punctuation, grammar and use of specialist terminology marks for new GCSEs in ancient history. We considered when we first introduced the spelling, punctuation and grammar marks the potential impact of the policy on disabled students whose spelling, punctuation and grammar skills are affected by their disability, and on students whose first language is not English. We concluded that although some students may find it more difficult to achieve the marks than others, the policy objective was legitimate, in light of concerns about the spelling, punctuation and grammar abilities of some young people.
- 4.9 Disabled students may be entitled to a reasonable adjustment in the form of extra time in which to complete their examinations. They may choose to use some of this extra time when they are answering or checking their answers to the questions to which spelling, punctuation and grammar marks are assigned. We have been working with the exam boards to make sure that disabled students who, because of their disability, answer exam questions either by dictating their answers to a scribe or by using technology, can continue to do so if they wish, and that they are able to access the marks for spelling, punctuation and grammar when it is their skills that are being demonstrated.

- 4.10 We have not identified anything in addition to the impacts discussed in our earlier consultations⁵² about our proposal that GCSE ancient history should include spelling, punctuation, grammar and use of specialist terminology marks that would have a negative impact on students because of their sex, racial group, age, religion or belief, pregnancy or maternity, sexual orientation or as a result of gender reassignment.
- 4.11 AS and A levels in ancient history are currently assessed wholly by exam. We are not proposing to change this position. We have not identified anything about our proposals in this regard that would have a negative impact on students because of their sex, disability, racial group, age, religion or belief, pregnancy or maternity, sexual orientation or as a result of gender reassignment.

AS and A level archaeology

- 4.12 A levels in archaeology are currently assessed through a mixture of exam assessment (80 per cent) and non-exam assessment (20 per cent). We are not proposing to change this position.
- 4.13 Students taking A level archaeology are already expected to undertake independent primary research. Our requirement that 20 per cent of marks should be devoted to non-exam assessment will not therefore introduce a new requirement.
- 4.14 Certain activities that could fall within this independent primary research could impact on students with particular physical disabilities who may not be able to access the chosen research sites. However, schools are already required to ensure that appropriate reasonable adjustments are made for disabled students, and they take this into account when they select the research experience.⁵³
- 4.15 Arrangements will have to be made for students who are absent when the research exercise and/or the writing of the assessment takes place to do them at another time. Such absence may occur because of a disability, pregnancy or maternity or gender reassignment. However, exams might also be missed for the same reasons.

⁵² <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20141110161323/http://comment.ofqual.gov.uk/gcse-reform-june-2013>

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20141031163546/http://www.ofqual.gov.uk/downloads/category/149-equality-analyses>

⁵³ www.equalityhumanrights.com/advice-and-guidance/education-providers-schools-guidance/providing-education-and-access-to-any-benefit-service-or-facility

- 4.16 We are satisfied that our proposals will not introduce new difficulties, as the A level is already designed to require students to undertake independent research. We are also satisfied that research is such an inherent part of the subject that it should be directly assessed.
- 4.17 We have not identified any potential impact on our planned approach for non-exam assessment in archaeology that would have a negative impact on students because of their race, sex, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief.
- 4.18 AS levels in archaeology are currently assessed wholly by exam. We are not proposing to change this position. We have not identified anything about our proposals that would have a negative impact on students because of their sex, disability, racial group, age, religion or belief, pregnancy or maternity, sexual orientation or as a result of gender reassignment.

GCSE, AS and A level classical civilisation

- 4.19 GCSEs in classical civilisation are currently assessed by a combination of exam and non-exam assessment. We are proposing that new GCSEs in classical civilisation should be assessed entirely by exam. This proposed removal of non-exam assessment is in line with our general principles for GCSE reform that we have considered in detail in our previous equality analyses.
- 4.20 We have not identified anything in addition to the impacts discussed in our earlier consultations about our proposal that all assessments in GCSE classical civilisation should be by exam that would have a negative impact on students because of their sex, disability, racial group, age, religion or belief, pregnancy or maternity, sexual orientation or as a result of gender reassignment.
- 4.21 We are proposing that new GCSEs in classical civilisation should not be tiered as they are currently. We have not identified anything in addition to the impacts discussed in our earlier consultations⁵⁴ about our proposal on tiering in this subject that would have a negative impact on students because of their sex, disability, racial group, age, religion or belief, pregnancy or maternity, sexual orientation or as a result of gender reassignment.
- 4.22 AS and A levels in classical civilisation are currently assessed wholly by exam. We are not proposing to change this position. We have not identified anything about our proposals that would have a negative impact on students because of

⁵⁴ <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20141110161323/http://comment.ofqual.gov.uk/gcse-reform-june-2013>

their sex, disability, racial group, age, religion or belief, pregnancy or maternity, sexual orientation or as a result of gender reassignment.

GCSE, AS and A level electronics

- 4.23 GCSEs, AS and A levels are currently assessed through a mixture of exam and non-exam assessment. Electronics is a subject that contains a practical element, and we are proposing that it should be assessed through a combination of exam and non-exam assessment. Our proposal is that for GCSEs, AS and A levels, 80 per cent of the marks should be allocated to exam assessment and 20 per cent of the marks allocated to non-exam assessment.
- 4.24 Some disabled students might not be able to undertake elements of the non-exam assessment because of their disability. Using our powers under the Equality Act 2010, we have specified that a disabled student can be exempt from a maximum of 40 per cent of the marks available for a GCSE, AS or A level qualification and have their marks from the assessments that they are able to take scaled up. However, students can only be exempted from whole components, and then only when they cannot access any part of the component in question.
- 4.25 We are proposing that the percentage of marks allocated to the practical elements in GCSE, AS and A level electronics will be 20 per cent. This would allow a disabled student who is unable to undertake the practical elements of the subject to be granted an exemption from those assessments, and to have their marks from the remaining aspects of the qualification scaled up. The proposed reduction in the amount of non-exam assessment in GCSE, AS and A level electronics means that it would be possible for a disabled student unable to undertake that assessment to be awarded the qualification nonetheless.
- 4.26 We have not identified anything about the proposed changes that would have an adverse impact on students because of their sex, disability, racial group, age, religion or belief, pregnancy or maternity, sexual orientation or as a result of gender reassignment.

GCSE, AS and A level film studies

- 4.27 Film studies is a subject that contains a practical element. We are proposing that the subject should be assessed by a combination of exam and non-exam assessment.
- 4.28 Some disabled students might not be able to undertake elements of the non-exam assessment because of their disability. Using our powers under the Equality Act 2010, we have specified that a disabled student can be exempt from a maximum of 40 per cent of the marks available for a GCSE, AS or A level qualification and have their marks from the assessments that they are able

to take scaled up. However, students can only be exempted from whole components, and then only when they cannot access any part of the component in question.

- 4.29 If, within a specification, there was a discrete component that assessed the student's practical skills in the subject, worth no more than 40 per cent of the marks, an exemption could be given for that assessment. The student would take the remaining components. This would allow a disabled student who was unable to undertake the practical assessment to be granted an exemption from the assessment and to have their marks from the remaining aspects of the qualification scaled up.
- 4.30 We are proposing that the percentage of marks allocated to the non-exam assessment elements in GCSE, AS and A level film studies will be 30 per cent. This would allow a disabled student who is unable to undertake the practical tasks of producing a short film or screenplay, which will be assessed within the non-exam assessment, to be granted an exemption from those assessments, and to have their marks from the remaining aspects of the qualification scaled up. The proposed reduction in the amount of non-exam assessment from a maximum of 50 per cent in current GCSEs, AS and A levels in film studies could make it possible for a disabled student unable to undertake that assessment to be awarded the qualification nonetheless. The proposed reduction in the percentage of marks allocated to non-exam assessment may therefore make the qualification more accessible to some disabled students.
- 4.31 We have not identified anything about the proposed changes that would have an adverse impact on students because of their sex, racial group, age, religion or belief, pregnancy or maternity, sexual orientation or as a result of gender reassignment.

AS and A level law

- 4.32 AS and A levels in law are currently assessed wholly by exam. We are not proposing to change this position. We have not identified anything about our proposals that would have a negative impact on students because of their sex, disability, racial group, age, religion or belief, pregnancy or maternity, sexual orientation or as a result of gender reassignment.

GCSE, AS and A level media studies

- 4.33 Media studies is a subject that contains a practical element. We are proposing that the subject should be assessed by a combination of exam and non-exam assessment.
- 4.34 Some disabled students might not be able to undertake elements of the non-exam assessment because of their disability. Using our powers under the

Equality Act 2010, we have specified that a disabled student can be exempt from a maximum of 40 per cent of the marks available for a GCSE, AS or A level qualification and have their marks from the assessments that they are able to take scaled up. However, students can only be exempted from whole components, and then only when they cannot access any part of the component in question.

- 4.35 If, within a specification, there was a discrete component that assessed the student's practical skills in the subject, worth no more than 40 per cent of the marks, an exemption could be given for that assessment. The student would take the remaining components. This would allow a disabled student who was unable to undertake the practical assessment to be granted an exemption from the assessment and to have their marks from the remaining aspects of the qualification scaled up.
- 4.36 We are proposing that the percentage of marks allocated to the non-exam assessment elements in GCSE, AS and A level media studies will be 30 per cent. This would allow a disabled student who is unable to undertake the creation of media products, which will be assessed within the non-exam assessment, to be granted an exemption from those assessments, and to have their marks from the remaining aspects of the qualification scaled up. The proposed reduction in the amount of non-exam assessment, from a maximum of 60 per cent in current GCSEs and 50 per cent in current AS and A levels in media studies, could make it possible for a disabled student unable to undertake that assessment to be awarded the qualification nonetheless. The proposed reduction in the percentage of marks allocated to non-exam assessment may therefore make the qualification more accessible to some disabled students.
- 4.37 We have not identified anything about the proposed changes that would have an adverse impact on students because of their sex, racial group, age, religion or belief, pregnancy or maternity, sexual orientation or as a result of gender reassignment.

GCSE, AS and A level statistics

- 4.38 GCSEs, AS and A levels in statistics are currently assessed by a combination of exam and non-exam assessment. We are proposing that new GCSEs, AS and A levels in statistics should be assessed entirely by exam assessments. This proposed removal of non-exam assessment is in line with our general principles for GCSE, AS and A level reform that we have considered in detail in our previous equality analyses.
- 4.39 We have not identified anything in addition to the impacts discussed in our earlier consultations about our proposal that all assessments in GCSE, AS and

A level statistics should be by exam that would have a negative impact on students because of their sex, disability, racial group, age, religion or belief, pregnancy or maternity, sexual orientation or as a result of gender reassignment.

- 4.40 GCSEs in statistics are currently tiered. We are not proposing to change this position. We have not identified anything about our proposal on tiering in GCSE statistics that would have a negative impact on students because of their sex, disability, racial group, age, religion or belief, pregnancy or maternity, sexual orientation or as a result of gender reassignment.

Question 87: We have identified a number of ways the proposed requirements for reformed GCSEs, AS and A levels may impact (positively or negatively) on persons who share a protected characteristic. Are there any other potential impacts we have not identified? If so, what are they?

Question 88: Are there any additional steps we could take to mitigate any negative impact resulting from these proposals on persons who share a protected characteristic? If so, please comment on the additional steps we could take to mitigate negative impacts.

Question 89: Have you any other comments on the impacts of the proposals on persons who share a protected characteristic?

Appendix A: Background to the reforms

GCSE

Government policy

On 6th February 2013, in a letter to Ofqual, the Secretary of State set out the government's policy intentions for new GCSEs.⁵⁵

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

Controlled assessment

In June 2013 we published a report on the use of controlled assessments in GCSEs. The report was largely informed by feedback from teachers and highlighted a number of weaknesses with the current controlled assessment arrangements.⁵⁶

Consultation on new GCSEs

In June 2013 we published a consultation on the principles that should apply to all new GCSEs and on proposals for the new qualifications in English language, English literature, mathematics, geography, history and the sciences.⁵⁷

YouGov report on responses to the consultation

In November 2013 we published a summary of responses to the consultation.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20141031163546/http://ofqual.gov.uk/news/gcse-reform-6th-february-2013>

⁵⁶ <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20141031163546/http://ofqual.gov.uk/news/ofqual-launches-consultation-on-gcse-reform>

⁵⁷ <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20141110161323/http://comment.ofqual.gov.uk/gcse-reform-june-2013>

⁵⁸ <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20141110161323/http://comment.ofqual.gov.uk/gcse-reform-june-2013>

Our equality impact assessment

In November 2013 we published our equality analysis of the impact of the reforms on students who share protected characteristics.⁵⁹

Subjects for first teaching 2015

On 1st November 2013 we published our decisions on the features of all GCSEs and on specific arrangements for English language, English literature and mathematics.⁶⁰ We have published our Conditions and Guidance documents.⁶¹

Grading consultation

On 2nd April 2014 we published a consultation on setting the grade standards for new GCSEs.⁶²

Consultation on subjects for first teaching 2016

In July, September and November 2014 we consulted and published our decisions on the design and assessment arrangements for those GCSE subjects to be taught first in 2016.⁶³ Subsequently we consulted on and then published our Conditions and Guidance documents for these subjects.⁶⁴

⁵⁹ <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20141110161323/http://comment.ofqual.gov.uk/gcse-reform-june-2013>

⁶⁰ <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20141031163546/http://ofqual.gov.uk/news/design-details-of-new-gcses-in-england>

⁶¹ www.gov.uk/government/collections/gcses-9-to-1-requirements-and-guidance

⁶² <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20141110161323/http://comment.ofqual.gov.uk/setting-the-grade-standards-of-new-gcses-april-2014>

⁶³ www.gov.uk/government/consultations/gcses-as-and-a-levels-reform-of-subjects-for-september-2016

www.gov.uk/government/consultations/gcses-as-and-a-levels-new-subjects-to-be-taught-in-2016

www.gov.uk/government/consultations/religious-studies-gcses-as-and-a-levels-new-qualifications-for-2016

⁶⁴ www.gov.uk/government/collections/gcses-9-to-1-requirements-and-guidance

Consultation on subjects for first teaching 2017

In July 2014 we consulted on our proposals for the design and assessment arrangements for a number of GCSE subjects to be taught first in 2017.⁶⁵

Subject content

The government has published the content for all GCSEs for first teaching in September 2015 and September 2016.⁶⁶ In July 2014 the government consulted on the subject content for a number of GCSE subjects to be taught first in 2017.⁶⁷

AS and A level

November 2010

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

Spring/summer 2012

We published our research on A levels.⁶⁸ For this research, we spoke to teachers, employers and other higher education representatives. We also looked at the standards and methods that other countries use to assess students at this point in their education.⁶⁹

June to September 2012

We ran an open consultation⁷⁰ where we asked education specialists and the general public for their opinions on possible changes to A levels, including removing exams in January. This consultation was supplemented with face-to-face events across the

⁶⁵ www.gov.uk/government/consultations/development-of-new-gcse-and-a-levels-for-teaching-from-2017

⁶⁶ www.gov.uk/government/collections/gcse-subject-content

⁶⁷ www.gov.uk/government/consultations/gcse-and-a-level-reform-content-for-teaching-from-september-2017

⁶⁸ www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/377930/2012-04-03-fit-for-purpose-a-levels.pdf

⁶⁹

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20141031163546/http://ofqual.gov.uk/documents/international-comparisons-in-senior-secondary-assessment-full-report/all-versions>

⁷⁰ <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20141110161323/http://comment.ofqual.gov.uk/a-level-reform>

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

November 2012

We confirmed that we would remove January exams. There were no A level exams in January 2014.

March 2013

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

September 2013

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

We also confirmed the timetable for reform (which has since been updated):

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

October 2013

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

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

Subjects for first teaching 2015

On 9th April we published our decisions on the features and specific arrangements for A levels to be taught first from September 2015.⁷¹ We have published our Conditions and Guidance documents.⁷²

Consultation on subjects for first teaching 2016

In July, September and November 2014 we consulted and published our decisions on the design and assessment arrangements for those AS and A level subjects to be taught first in 2016.⁷³ Subsequently we consulted on and then published our Conditions and Guidance documents for these subjects.⁷⁴

Consultation on subjects for first teaching 2017

In July 2014 we consulted on our proposals for the design and assessment arrangements for a number of AS and A level subjects to be taught first in 2017.⁷⁵

Subject content

The government has published the content for all AS and A levels for first teaching in September 2015 and September 2016.⁷⁶ In July 2014 the government consulted on the subject content for a number of AS and A level subjects to be taught first in 2017.⁷⁷

⁷¹ <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20141110161323/http://ofqual.gov.uk/news/gcse-a-level-as-qualification-updates-ofqual>

⁷² www.gov.uk/government/collections/new-a-level-and-as-level-qualifications-requirements-and-guidance

⁷³ www.gov.uk/government/consultations/gcse-as-and-a-levels-reform-of-subjects-for-september-2016

www.gov.uk/government/consultations/gcse-as-and-a-levels-new-subjects-to-be-taught-in-2016

www.gov.uk/government/consultations/religious-studies-gcse-as-and-a-levels-new-qualifications-for-2016

⁷⁴ www.gov.uk/government/collections/new-a-level-and-as-level-qualifications-requirements-and-guidance

⁷⁵ www.gov.uk/government/consultations/development-of-new-gcse-as-and-a-levels-for-teaching-from-2017

⁷⁶ www.gov.uk/government/collections/gce-as-and-a-level-subject-content

⁷⁷ www.gov.uk/government/consultations/gcse-and-a-level-reform-content-for-teaching-from-september-2017

Appendix B: Ofqual's role, objectives and duties

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

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

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

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

As a public body, we are subject to the public sector equality duty.⁷⁸ This duty requires us to have due regard to the need to:

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

The exam boards that design, deliver and award GCSEs, AS and A levels are required by the Equality Act, among other things, to make reasonable adjustments for disabled people taking their qualifications, except where we have specified that such adjustments should not be made.

⁷⁸ Equality Act 2010, section 149.

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

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

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

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

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

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

The protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnerships
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation.

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

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