

# Decisions on Conditions and Guidance for AS and A level philosophy



In December 2015 we published a consultation about the rules and guidance we proposed to put in place for new AS and A levels in philosophy.

This consultation set out draft Subject Level Conditions and guidance which would apply to all new AS qualifications and A levels in philosophy.

We have reviewed the responses to the consultation and are now announcing our decisions. We are also publishing a more detailed analysis of the responses alongside this document.<sup>1</sup>

## AS and A level philosophy

### Conditions and requirements

We proposed that all reformed AS and A level qualifications in philosophy should comply with the subject content requirements published by the Department for Education,<sup>2</sup> and with our assessment objectives.

Respondents generally supported this proposal and, having reviewed our proposed Condition following consultation, we are satisfied that it is fit for purpose and consistent with our overall approach to reformed AS and A level qualifications. We have therefore decided to adopt the Condition unchanged.

### Guidance

We proposed to introduce guidance on the interpretation of our assessment objectives.

One respondent (an organisation) expressed concern that the wording of our proposed guidance could lead to narrowing of the subject content. The respondent suggested ways we could improve the wording to ensure the guidance aligns fully with the subject content.

In response to these comments, we have decided to make changes to the drafting of the guidance on assessment objectives to make sure there is full coverage of the

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<sup>1</sup> [www.gov.uk/government/consultations/as-and-a-level-reform-regulations-for-philosophy](http://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/as-and-a-level-reform-regulations-for-philosophy)

<sup>2</sup> [www.gov.uk/government/publications/gce-as-and-a-level-philosophy](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/gce-as-and-a-level-philosophy)

subject content (and consistency with other AS and A level subjects), but have not changed the substance of our proposals.

## **Other issues**

One respondent to our consultation made comments relating to the subject content requirements published by the Department for Education. The subject content was subject to an earlier consultation by the Department for Education,<sup>3</sup> and the issues raised were outside the scope of this consultation.

One respondent to our consultation made comments relating to the length of assessments in AS and A level philosophy, particularly the impact that long assessments may have on students with certain disabilities. We have not proposed to set any requirements relating to the length of AS and A level philosophy assessments. In the absence of such a requirement, it is for the exam boards to determine the appropriate length of assessments in this subject. This is consistent with the approach we have taken in other subjects, and we remain of the view that we should not set any requirements relating to the length of assessments in AS and A level philosophy.

## **Next steps**

We have published the following documents which set out our final rules and guidance for reformed AS qualifications and A levels in philosophy:

- *GCE Subject Level Conditions and Requirements for Philosophy*<sup>4</sup>
- *GCE Subject Level Guidance for Philosophy*<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/gcse-and-a-level-reform-content-for-teaching-from-september-2017>

<sup>4</sup> [www.gov.uk/government/publications/gce-subject-level-conditions-and-requirements-for-philosophy](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/gce-subject-level-conditions-and-requirements-for-philosophy)

<sup>5</sup> [www.gov.uk/government/publications/gce-subject-level-guidance-for-philosophy](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/gce-subject-level-guidance-for-philosophy)