

**Analysis of responses to our
consultation on changes to our rules
for GCSE drama and AS and A level
drama and theatre**



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Executive summary

We consulted on changes to our rules for GCSE drama, and for AS and A level drama and theatre from 9 February 2017 to 9 March 2017. A copy of the consultation is available on our website¹.

There were 18 responses to the consultation – 15 from individuals and 3 from organisations.

Most respondents commented on issues outside the scope of the consultation; most notably the impact of changes to the Department for Education’s subject content.

Some respondents also commented on the possible burden our proposals could impose on schools.

¹ www.gov.uk/government/consultations/changes-to-subject-content-for-gcse-drama-and-as-and-a-level-drama-and-theatre

Introduction

Background

Reformed GCSEs, AS and A levels are being introduced in England. We have previously consulted, and announced our decisions, on:

- the general design of reformed qualifications²;
- the assessment arrangements for the reformed GCSE, AS and A levels in drama/drama and theatre that were introduced for first teaching in 2016³; and
- regulatory requirements for reformed GCSE, AS and A level qualifications in drama/drama and theatre⁴.

Changes to the Department for Education's subject content

On 9 February 2017, the Department for Education (DfE) published new versions of the subject content for:

- GCSE drama⁵, and
- AS and A level drama and theatre⁶.

These revised subject content documents included a new requirement for GCSE, AS and A level specifications to:

require students to experience live performance, where they are a member of the audience in the same performance space as the performers. This may be a professional or amateur, but not a peer, performance.

² <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20141110161323/http://comment.ofqual.gov.uk/a-level-reform/> and www.gov.uk/government/consultations/gcse-reform-consultation-june-2013

³ www.gov.uk/government/consultations/gcse-as-and-a-levels-new-subjects-to-be-taught-in-2016

⁴ www.gov.uk/government/consultations/gcse-as-and-a-level-reform-regulations-for-dramadrama-and-theatre

⁵ www.gov.uk/government/publications/gcse-drama

⁶ www.gov.uk/government/publications/gce-as-and-a-level-drama-and-theatre

About our consultation

Our consultation took place from 9 February 2017 to 9 March 2017. It was on changes we needed to make to our rules for GCSE, AS and A level drama/drama and theatre in response to the DfE's changes to its subject content documents.

Who responded?

We received 18 responses to our consultation – 15 from individuals and 3 from organisations. We had one response from an individual from another EU country, one from an individual in a non-EU country, and one from an individual from a British Overseas Territory. All other responses were from individuals or organisations based in England or Wales.

Table 1: Breakdown of consultation responses

Personal / organisation response	Respondent type	Number
Personal	Teacher	15
Organisation	Awarding organisation	2
Organisation	Union	1

Approach to analysis

We published the consultation on our website and respondents could choose to respond by email or by posting their response to us.

The consultation did not include any specific questions; rather we sought views from respondents on:

- the way we were proposing to change our rules to reflect the change to the subject content;
- the detailed drafting of those changes; and
- the likely impact of our proposals.

During the analysis phase we reviewed every response.

Views expressed in the consultation responses

In this section, we report the views, in broad terms, of those who responded to the consultation document.

A consultation is not the same as a survey and the responses only reflect the views of those who chose to respond. Typically, these will be those with strong views and/or particular experience or interest in a topic. What follows is a fair reflection of the views expressed by respondents to the consultation.

Five respondents commented directly on our consultation proposals:

- three respondents (all individuals) commented that our proposals would impose additional burden on schools;
- two respondents (both organisations) expressed support for our proposed requirements; and
- two respondents (one organisation, one individual) commented that it was unclear what schools should do if exceptional circumstances meant that some or all of their students were unable to attend performances.

Some respondents expressed concerns that the new requirements would prevent teachers and students from using streamed or recorded performances in the classroom, or could compromise students' ability to answer exam questions.

Comments outside the scope of the consultation

Thirteen respondents (twelve individuals, one organisation) commented on the changes to the subject content for GCSE drama and GCE drama and theatre to include a requirement for students to experience live theatre.

These respondents commented on the cost of this requirement for schools, and the difficulty some schools could have in accessing live performances.

These comments are outside the scope of our consultation because the DfE decided to include this additional requirement in the subject content prior to our consultation. Our consultation focused solely on the changes we needed to make to our rules to implement the DfE's new requirement.

Appendix A: list of organisational consultation respondents

We asked respondents to indicate the capacity in which they were responding as part of their response.

Below we list those organisations that submitted a response to the consultation. We have not included a list of those responding as an individual; however all responses were given equal status in the analysis.

- AQA
- Association of School and College Leaders
- Pearson

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