

# Consultation on proposed changes to the assessment of GCSEs, AS and A levels in 2022: Analysis of responses

Prepared for

**ofqual**

August 2021

Ofqual/21/6834/2



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# Glossary

<b>Acronyms</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<b>A</b>	Advanced
<b>AS</b>	Advanced subsidiary
<b>CPAC</b>	Common Practical Assessment Criteria
<b>EAL</b>	English as an Additional Language
<b>GCSE</b>	General Certificate of Secondary Education
<b>MFL</b>	Modern Foreign Languages
<b>OFQUAL</b>	Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation
<b>SLT</b>	Senior Leadership Team
<b>SEND</b>	Special Educational Needs and Disability
<b>TA</b>	Teacher Assessment
<b>TAG</b>	Teacher Assessed Grade

# Introduction

## Background and objectives

The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted education throughout the current (2020 to 2021) and previous (2019 to 2020) academic years. In light of this disruption and uncertainty around the continuing impact of the pandemic over the coming academic year, the Department for Education (DfE) and the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual) conducted a consultation on the exams and assessments to be taken in summer 2022. The consultation aimed to collect the public's opinions, in particular the opinions of relevant stakeholders (for example, students, teachers, exam boards), on DfE and Ofqual's proposed package of measures to help mitigate the impact of the disruption on students' education.

Responses to the consultation will help identify the way the 2022 summer exam series should run. The consultation was available online for 21 days and received 6,725 responses. It gathered views on the following proposals:

- Choice of topics in GCSE English literature, history, ancient history and choice of content in GCSE geography.
- Changes to the requirements for the delivery of practical activities in science subjects, and assessment in art and design.
- The provision of advance information on the focus of the content of exams, in the majority of subjects at GCSE, AS and A level.
- The provision of support materials in GCSE mathematics, physics and combined science exams.

## Approach to analysis

The consultation was available to be completed through an online form from 12 July 2021 until 1 August 2021. The consultation included 49 questions covering the proposals for the arrangements of the summer 2022 exams. The questions were:

- (i) quantitative, having a format of either a 5-point scale (Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither agree nor disagree, Disagree, Strongly disagree) or two-option questions (Yes or No)
- (ii) qualitative, open-ended questions where respondents could provide comments on the proposals

Respondents were invited to self-identify the group to which they belonged.<sup>1</sup> For the main analysis of the responses to the quantitative questions, we grouped the original unverified respondent types into six categories:

- Education or training providers (including academy chains, private training providers as well as schools and colleges).
- Exam boards or awarding organisations.
- Parents or carers.
- School and college staff (including exams officers or managers, Senior Leadership Team members and teachers).
- Students (including students – private, home educated of any age).
- Other (including awarding organisation employees, employers, consultants, local authorities,

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<sup>1</sup> The respondent types included: (i) Academy chain, (ii) Governor, (iii) Private training provider, (iv) School or college, (v) Senior Leadership Team, (vi) Teacher, (vii) University or Higher Education Institution, (viii) Student, (ix) Student – private, home-educated of any age, (x) Awarding body or exam board, (xi) Awarding organisation employee, (xii) Employer, (xiii) Exams officer or manager, (xiv) Examiner, (xv) Parent or carer, (xvi) Consultant, (xvii) Local authority, (xviii) Other, (xix) Other representative or interest group.

other representative or interest groups, governors, examiners, universities, Higher Education Institutions, or other respondents).

Seven respondents self-identified as “Awarding body or exam board”. The four organisations recognised by Ofqual to offer GCSE, AS and A level qualifications are referred to as exam boards: AQA, WJEC, Pearson Edexcel and OCR. However, there are many more awarding bodies offering other qualifications. Where the responses from exam boards differ to those from awarding organisations more generally, or where exam board responses differ between themselves, we have included details in the analysis for the relevant questions.

Throughout the analyses presented in this report, the answers to quantitative questions are summarised in bar charts, presenting frequencies of responses broken down by respondent groups as listed above. The answers to certain questions on advance information are summarised in treemaps that present the most frequently selected options by respondents. The Appendix section includes analytical tables of the responses to the quantitative questions aggregated over all respondent types.

All responses to the qualitative questions were read in full. For these questions, we have presented the key themes which emerged from respondents’ answers. We have also included a selection of comments from respondents, some of which have been edited to correct spelling or grammar errors and to keep respondents’ identities anonymous, though we have been careful to ensure these do not alter the meaning of the comments.

Respondents could submit their final response without having replied to all questions. Many respondents skipped the qualitative questions or replied with “I don’t know” or “No comment”. These answers are included in the total number of responses presented in the document.

A small number of responses to the consultation were not submitted through the online form but summarised in a document submitted to Ofqual. Therefore, their responses are not captured in the quantitative questions, but they are reflected in the qualitative ones.

The report is organised into the following sections:

- (i) Choice of topic or content in GCSE English literature, history, ancient history, and geography
- (ii) Practical science work
- (iii) Art and design qualifications
- (iv) Advance information
- (v) Support materials
- (vi) Equality impact assessment
- (vii) Regulatory impact assessment

The questions are presented in the same order as in the consultation document.

## Profiles of respondents

In the following table, we present the number of respondents by respondent type.

**Table 1. Number of respondents by respondent type**

<b>Respondent type</b>	<b>Number of respondents</b>
Education or training provider	518
Awarding body or exam board	7
Parent or carer	1,243
School and college staff	3,257
Student	1,493
Other	207
<b>Total number of respondents</b>	<b>6,725</b>

## Overarching themes

Several themes were suggested by respondents across multiple questions. To avoid duplicating analysis, these themes are summarised below.

First, many respondents emphasised that proposed changes to summer 2022 exams and assessments needed to be announced as soon as possible to provide staff sufficient time to plan (adjusting curriculums and mock exam materials and so on). Reasons provided by respondents included the fact that last-minute announcements would increase workloads and place additional pressure on students and teachers. In addition, respondents mentioned that earlier announcements would allow students more time to familiarise themselves with additional materials (such as revised equation sheets).

Second, some respondents noted the variation in students' experiences regarding remote learning over the past two years, with some schools and colleges facing more frequent lockdowns and self-isolation events than others, and that this should be taken into account in any proposed change. Similarly, respondents brought up the concept of a "level playing field" for students and expressed concerns over proposals where, in their opinion, some students or schools and colleges may be disadvantaged relative to others.

Third, respondents suggested several modifications for exams, including lengthening the time students had to complete the exam, dividing exams into shorter papers, allowing students to choose topics to respond to on the day of the exam or reducing the number of exam papers students had to complete. In particular, some respondents stated they had faced difficulties in covering the specification during remote learning, and reducing the number of exam papers or allowing students to choose topics would reduce pressure on students caused by missed learning time. Respondents also mentioned that the subject content across many GCSE, AS and A level subjects should be reduced.

Fourth, some respondents expressed concern that the DfE and Ofqual's proposed changes were limited to a specific set of qualifications, in particular the absence of modifications to A Level subjects compared to equivalent GCSE subjects.

Fifth, many respondents generally agreed with proposals to carry over changes proposed in previous consultations in 2020 and 2021, as consistency would reduce the amount of time teachers and other staff would need to prepare for the upcoming year.

Sixth, a number of respondents who disagreed with proposals on choice of topic or content or advance information believed that these proposals would lead to grade inflation for certain students. Because these proposals would narrow the focus of exams (compared to the full specification), in their view the proposals would advantage students with resources for external tutors. As a result, proposals to provide choice of topic or content or advance information would make it difficult to differentiate between "good" and "excellent" students.

Finally, a small proportion of respondents across all respondent types called for exams to be cancelled and students to be assigned teacher assessed grades (as in summer 2021). Alternatively, respondents proposed that no modifications be made to exams and assessments in summer 2022 (compared to before the pandemic) and instead grade boundaries should be adjusted to account for varying difficulties of exams due to lost learning time.

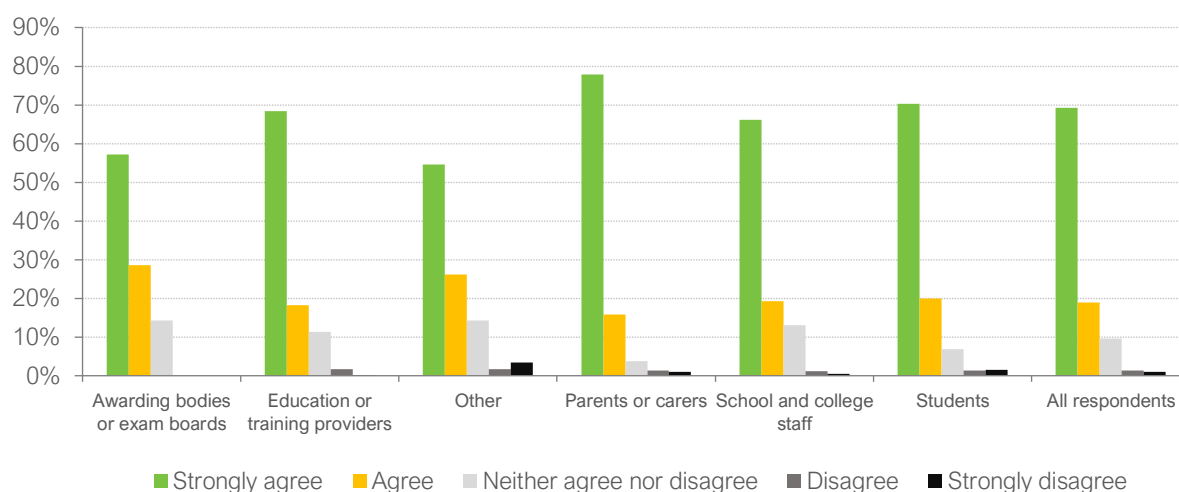
## Choice of topic or content in GCSE English literature, history, ancient history and geography

### QUESTIONS COVERED IN THIS SECTION

This section of the consultation focuses on the proposal that for GCSE English literature, history, ancient history and geography, exam boards will provide schools and colleges with some choice of topics or content beyond a common core identified in each specification on which their students would answer questions. This would help address teachers' concerns about their ability to cover all the required subject content in the time available and enable them to focus teaching time where necessary in a number of core subjects.

### To what extent do you agree or disagree that centres should have some choice of topics on which their students will answer questions for GCSE English literature exams in 2022?

**Responses by Respondent Type**



Most respondents agreed with the proposal, with 69% strongly agreeing and 19% agreeing across all respondent types. Ten percent of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with the proposal, and very few respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the proposal (2% of respondents). Across respondent types, parents or carers had the highest proportion of respondents strongly agreeing or agreeing with the proposal (94%), followed by students (90%). Parents or carers and students also had the lowest proportion of respondents who neither agreed nor disagreed with the proposal (4% and 7% respectively), compared to between 10 and 14% for all other respondent types. All four exam boards recognised to offer GCSE, AS and A levels agreed or strongly agreed with the proposal.



## Do you have any comments on our proposed approach to carrying forward specific assessment arrangements for GCSE English literature in 2021 into 2022?

There were 1,521 responses to this question. Most respondents agreed that the changes proposed were critical to helping students overcome lost learning time, as teachers said they would still struggle to cover all required material before exams. Some respondents were of the opinion that greater choice of topics was needed to provide sufficient flexibility to avoid disadvantaging schools and colleges that had already covered topics that would be dropped or made optional.

“I agree that there needs to be some choice for students as they have not all had time to follow the entire curriculum, despite the best efforts of thousands of teachers across the country.”  
(Parent or carer)

“Carrying forward the same arrangements minimises the disruption and confusion which may be caused by making alternative amendments and requiring teachers to manage a second alternative delivery model in 2 years.” (Awarding body or exam board)

“The removal of a single component more than halfway through the course if studied over two years disadvantages those schools and students who may have already studied some of this content. I believe greater flexibility should be allowed with choice given as to which topics are assessed rather than the removal of a specific topic.” (Teacher)

Another form of support proposed by respondents was to provide students with clean copies of the text (no notes or annotations) or quotes as part of the exam. In these respondents' view, this would shift the focus away from memorising knowledge towards building analytical skills.

“Because of the lack of time students have had in school, they should be allowed access to the text or some other help sheet so that they don't have to stress about remembering quotes.”  
(Teacher)

“Consider allowing students to bring textbooks into exams rather than having to memorise text. This will reduce mental load, but still require the students to have strong knowledge of the underlying subject.” (Parent or carer)

“The first idea is to perhaps allow students to have a copy of the text in the exam, not one belonging to the students with annotations. This is so students won't immediately fail the question or panic if they can't remember a specific quote because they can get a new one and still manage to demonstrate their knowledge, analysis and understanding.” (Student)

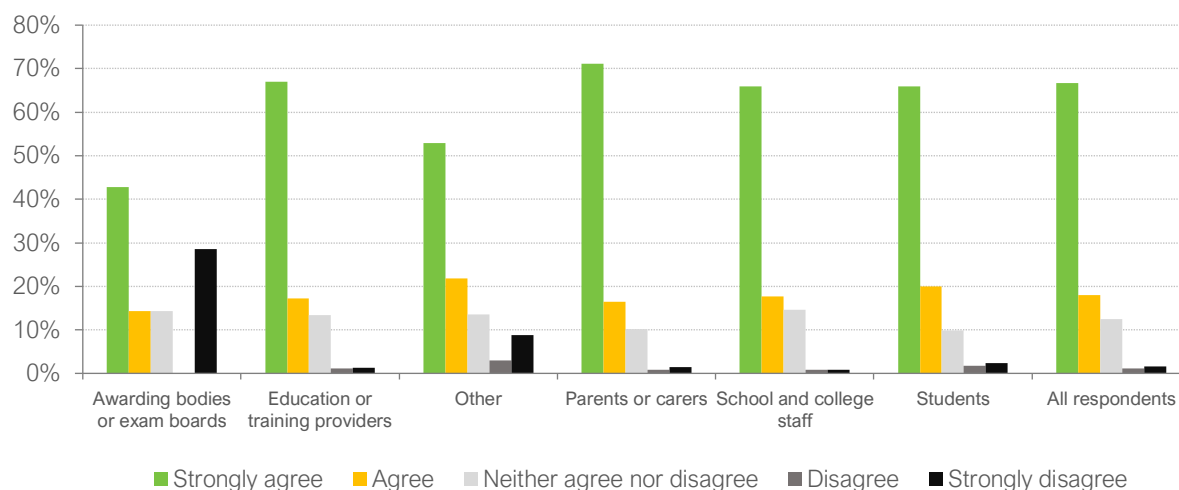
In addition, some respondents expressed specific preferences around topics to be dropped or made compulsory, in particular the Shakespeare or poetry components, although in the case of poetry these comments addressed decisions to be made by exam boards rather than the proposal itself.

“Unseen poetry is an area in which students struggle with and it does not benefit lesson time and teaching time for this to be a focus.” (Teacher)

“Centres should not have to complete the Shakespeare section - this was the most difficult to teach remotely and is the most adversely affected by self-isolation issues.” (Teacher)

## To what extent do you agree or disagree that centres should have some choice of topics on which their students will answer questions for GCSE history exams in 2022?

### Responses by Respondent Type



Most respondents agreed with the proposal, with 67% strongly agreeing and 18% agreeing across all respondent types. Thirteen percent of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with the proposal, and very few respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the proposal (3% of respondents). Across respondent types, parents or carers had the highest proportion of respondents strongly agreeing or agreeing with the proposal (88%), followed by students (86%). All four exam boards recognised to offer GCSE, AS and A levels agreed or strongly agreed with the proposal.

## Do you have any comments on our proposed approach to carrying forward specific assessment arrangements for GCSE history for 2021 into 2022?

There were 1,076 responses to this question. As with GCSE English literature, respondents highlighted that GCSE history was a very content-heavy course and both students and teachers would benefit if exams covered a narrower range of topics, in line with arrangements that had been agreed for exams in 2021.

“A lack of learning time lost due to lockdown means that it will be difficult to complete all content on the specification and give enough time to practise skills before the final exam.” (Parent or carer)

“Optionality will be welcomed by our history team as the volume of content is very difficult to cover in a normal two-year GCSE course, even without the disruption due to COVID-19.” (School or college)

“I think this is the best approach, as most teachers have taught/chosen topics to teach those students examined in 2022 based upon what was agreed for 2021.” (Teacher)

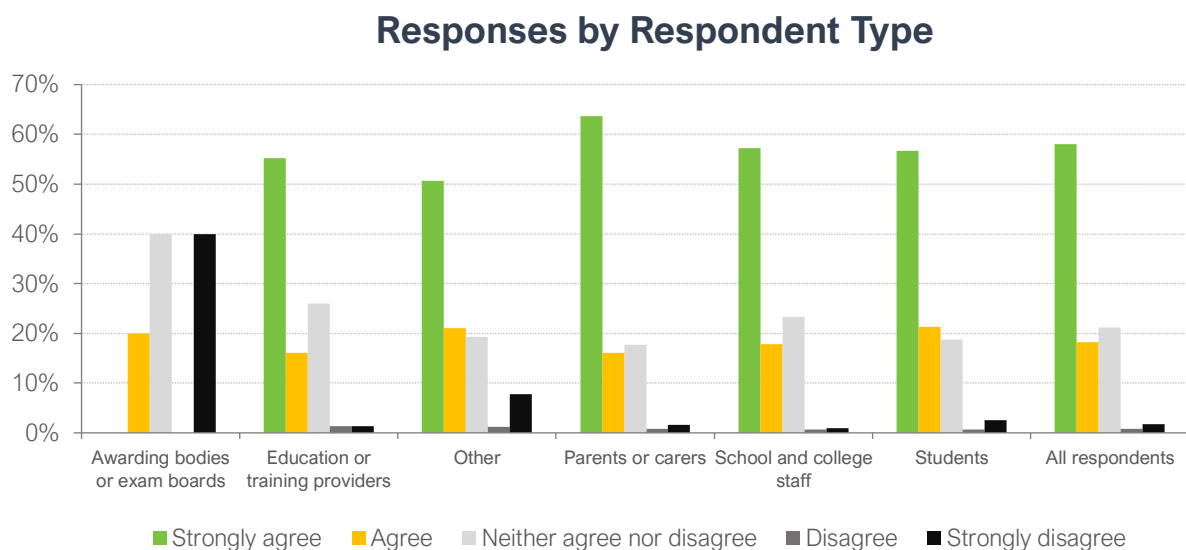
“These arrangements provide a fair reduction in teaching time of 25%, are straightforward for teachers to understand, and we know from preparatory work completed for the 2021 series that it can be delivered.” (Awarding body or exam board).

However, views about whether certain topics should be made mandatory were mixed. Many respondents said that schools or colleges should have flexibility to choose topics based on their individual circumstances, such as the order of teaching units or amount of time missed due to lockdown.

“Hesitant to accept the idea of having a mandatory topic as we have had 6 months of online lessons where some students have not had access, some did not attend for various reasons and therefore might have missed the topic that is chosen as 'mandatory'. By giving the option to centres to choose any topic we would be able to ensure students are not penalised for their home situation during lockdowns.” (Teacher)

“In order to support the full range of learners it remains essential that a core content is still taught giving broad oversight of the key components of the course in order to allow further in-depth study, and to facilitate study beyond GCSE.” (Other representative or interest group)

### To what extent do you agree or disagree that centres should have some choice of topics on which their students will answer questions for GCSE ancient history exams in 2022?



Most respondents agreed with the proposal, with 58% strongly agreeing and 18% agreeing across all respondent types. Twenty-one percent of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with the proposal, and very few respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the proposal (3% of respondents). Across respondent types, parents or carers had the highest proportion of respondents strongly agreeing or agreeing with the proposal (80%), followed by students (78%). Nine percent of other respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the proposal, compared to 4% or fewer for all other respondent types. The one exam board recognised to offer GCSE ancient history agreed with the proposal.

## Do you have any comments on our proposed approach to carrying forward specific assessment arrangements for GCSE ancient history for 2021 into 2022?

There were 473 responses to this question. Responses to this question were largely similar to responses to proposed changes to GCSE history. Very few responses to this question were specific to GCSE ancient history, though most respondents expressed support for the proposed changes as providing needed support to students and reducing variations in access and quality of remote learning.

“This is a sound idea that narrows the focus.” (Parent or carer)

“Due to the level of disruption our pupils have faced and are still facing I strongly agree.” (Teacher)

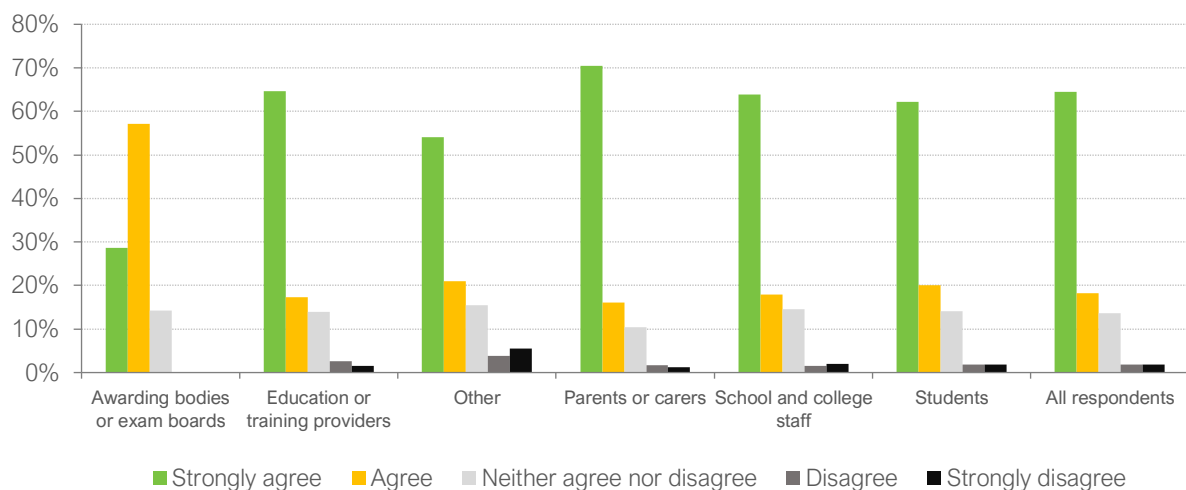
“I think the same proposals of the compulsory Period studies and then a choice of depth study to be carried forward, as the natural progression of teaching the content is period followed by depth so this arrangement allows for both period studies to be taught irrespective of whether a centre taught Greece or Rome first and then one of the two depth studies.” (Teacher)

A few respondents suggested a different assessment arrangement.

“I think it would be more valuable for students to choose one Period Study and then two from either the remaining Period Study and a Depth Study.” (Teacher)

## To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should allow centres to have some choice of content on which their students will answer questions in GCSE geography, on the lines set out in Annex B?

### Responses by Respondent Type



Most respondents agreed with the proposal, with 65% strongly agreeing and 18% agreeing across all respondent types. Fourteen percent of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with the proposal, and very few respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the proposal (4% of respondents). Across respondent types, parents or carers had the highest proportion of respondents strongly agreeing or agreeing with the proposal (87%), followed by awarding bodies or exam boards (86% of respondents). All four exam boards recognised to offer GCSE, AS and A levels agreed with the proposal.

## Do you have any comments on our proposed approach to allowing centres to have some choice of content on which their students will answer questions in GCSE geography exams in 2022?

There were 1,099 responses to this question. Most respondents expressed support for the proposal as helping mitigate time pressures for students and teachers, allowing them to compensate for lost learning time.

“Choice of topics will be critical in ensuring that schools and centres can deliver a rich and sufficient level of knowledge to students to ensure that they experience a high-quality learning experience and have the developed tools to be successful.” (Senior Leadership Team)

“For many centres, giving a choice of content within the assessments is likely to mitigate some of the pressures of covering the whole specification content, where face-to-face teaching time has been lost during the past year.” (Awarding body or exam board)

“I believe that the proposed changes are fair and make the teaching of the course much more manageable. Previous changes made to the 2021 paper were not adequate enough and did not reduce the delivery of content to reflect the impact of the pandemic.” (Teacher)

Some respondents raised questions about the comparability of the proposed optional routes for individual specifications. Also, respondents suggested that making specific content optional within each specification would not benefit all students because some centres might have already taught all of the optional content.

“I agree that choice is absolutely needed but by stipulating which topics this unfairly puts some schools at an advantage if they haven’t taught those topics yet.” (School or college)

“Lots of pupils will be at a disadvantage if the content they have been taught ends up being optional - they may still need to learn where other schools may have already covered it.” (Student)

“The option should be between Urban Issues and Challenges or The Changing Economic World. These topics are comparable, whereas Resource Management is not. The urban and economic topics both have a 9-mark question whereas Resources doesn't normally. It would be unfair to suddenly introduce a 9-mark question here or remove the 9-marker for the economics topic.” (Teacher)

“The proposed changes are extremely confusing, as they mean students could potentially answer on only 2 physical topics, and 4 human topics, which is not an appropriate balance. Why can each paper not have the same level of optionality?” (Teacher)

In addition, many respondents proposed removing all fieldwork questions from exams entirely (not just questions on familiar fieldwork) due to the difficult nature of teaching fieldwork in the abstract without the benefit of fieldwork activities. Alternatively, respondents suggested that exams should provide optionality on fieldwork questions given students’ lack of fieldwork experience.

“I also think that the whole of fieldwork component needs cutting out, not just removing the questions on familiar fieldwork, as in order to answer questions about unfamiliar fieldwork students still need to understand the process, so this still needs to be taught, taking almost as much time as carrying out actual field.” (Teacher)

“The existing changes to the fieldwork questions do not reduce teaching time for this content, all the skills involved in teaching and learning unseen fieldwork are in excess of those needed for completing one’s own fieldwork.” (Teacher)

“There should also be a choice as to answering only one set of fieldwork questions. It is not possible for them to achieve well on these if they do not have a chance to experience the fieldwork.” (Teacher)

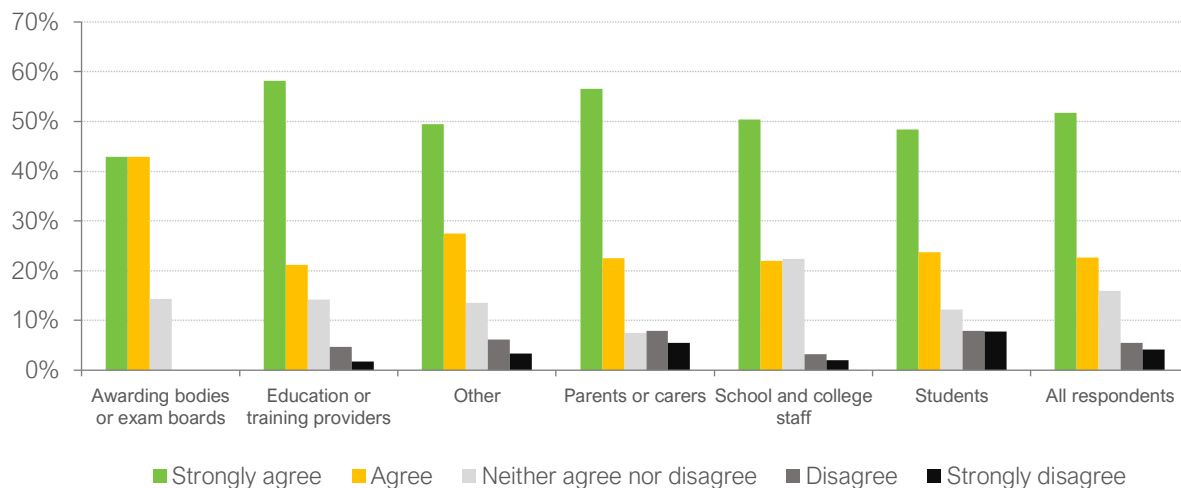
## Practical science work

### QUESTIONS COVERED IN THIS SECTION

This section of the consultation focuses on the proposal that teachers of GCSE astronomy, GCSE and/or AS biology, chemistry, physics and geology and AS and/or A level environmental science should have the opportunity to deliver practical science work by demonstration. This means students would observe a demonstration by the teacher or watch a demonstration video online. In addition, it is proposed that teachers should be allowed to assess the Common Practical Assessment Criteria (CPAC) in A level biology, chemistry, physics and geology across the minimum number of practical activities required for students to demonstrate their competence. These proposals would allow teachers more freedom to decide how best to use available teaching time and allow for any public health restrictions that might be in place.

**To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should carry forward into academic year 2021 to 2022 the arrangements in place for 2021 to 2022, that allow centres to deliver practical work in GCSE biology, chemistry, physics, combined science, geology and astronomy, AS level biology, chemistry, physics and geology, and AS and A level environmental science by demonstration?**

### Responses by Respondent Type



Most respondents agreed with the proposal, with 52% strongly agreeing and 23% agreeing across all respondent types. Sixteen percent of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with the proposal, and a small number of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the proposal (10% of respondents). Across respondent types, awarding bodies or exam boards had the highest proportion of respondents strongly agreeing or agreeing with the proposal (86% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed), followed by parents or carers and education or training providers (79% of respondents for both types). Twenty-two percent of school and college staff neither agreed nor disagreed with the proposal (the highest proportion across respondent types), while just 8% of parents or carers neither agreed nor disagreed (the lowest proportion across respondent types). Sixteen percent of students and 13% of parents or carers disagreed or strongly disagreed with the proposal, compared to 10% or fewer for all other respondent types. All four exam boards recognised to offer GCSE, AS and A levels agreed or strongly agreed with the proposal.

## **Do you have any comments on our proposed approach to carrying forward specific assessment arrangements for 2021 into 2022 for GCSE biology, chemistry, physics and combined science, geology and astronomy, AS biology, chemistry, physics and geology, and AS and A level environmental science?**

There were 1,203 responses to this question. Many respondents agreed that the proposal was an acceptable compromise, providing needed flexibility to help teachers cover the whole course and mitigating potential uncertainties around future public health restrictions.

“Due to the pandemic, many schools will have missed out on teaching time with students. In these cases, giving teachers the flexibility to use videos, class demonstrations and simulations to ensure students are familiar with a wider range of practical activities will help ensure all schools have enough time to cover the whole course in the time available. These measures may also help to reduce the impact of any potential future public health restrictions.” (Awarding body or exam board)

“This will give greater flexibility to science leaders to enable them to be more flexible in the delivery of practical learning next year.” (Senior Leadership Team)

“This is reasonable especially if the school year is disrupted and practical work becomes untenable due to time and or social distancing measures.” (School or college)

In general, respondents emphasised the importance of students’ hands-on experience with practicals to build a foundation for future learning and career opportunities in sciences. Given this importance, they believe students should be given the opportunity to conduct practicals themselves, conditional on it being safe.

“Practical work is hugely important for science subjects. Students that don't do hands-on practical work at school will be disadvantaged if they do a STEM subject at university. Many students excel at STEM subjects because by carrying out hands-on practical work they reach a deeper understanding of the subject. These students will be particularly disadvantaged by a lack of practical work.” (Parent or carer)

While many respondents agreed with the proposal, they suggested that exam questions that indirectly assess practical skills should be modified to take into account students’ limited hands-on experience or remove them entirely from exams.

“Agree with the changes to the practical requirement, but a lot of questions on exam papers actually relate to these practicals. I don't think pupils learn as much by simply watching a teacher do them and as you mention pupils won't consolidate knowledge. If you are going to make changes I think the exam questions need to be modified to reflect these changes - by removing them from the paper or by having fewer marks per question.” (Parent or carer)

“The hands-on experience is vital for understanding the experimental process. Students should not be tested to the same level as if they had carried out the practical themselves. Some of the higher-level questions which require students to apply their knowledge and understanding to a new situation / variable, are rendered almost inaccessible to most (but the top few), because there is a lack of in depth understanding about how the practicals work.” (Teacher)

“This is a sensible approach. However, care and attention must be given to subsequent questioning and marking of exam questions so that pupils are not in any way hindered or disadvantaged by not being able to conduct experiments because of the pandemic. Questions on procedures, processes and practicalities of experiments will require careful attention by the examination boards and verification by Ofqual. Observing someone else conduct an experiment, no matter how well it is done, is not a substitute for the learning provided when pupils conduct their own experiments.” (School or college)

There was also disagreement among respondents on whether practicals could be safely carried out in the classroom. Some respondents, in particular science technicians, noted they had set-up and carried out a number of practicals throughout the past year without endangering the health of students, while others pointed out social distancing would be difficult for students working in groups and sharing the same equipment.

“I do strongly agree that we shouldn’t complete the practicals ourselves as infection control can be hard with many students touching the same equipment, and social distancing is very hard to come by when working in a team.” (Student)

“I work as a science technician in a secondary school and we were able to safely deliver a full practical curriculum throughout the entire pandemic to date, and had no COVID-19 cases in the science department despite running full practicals. I see no reason why other schools decided to cut even teacher demonstrations during this time and absolutely want at least a small offering of individual practical work offered to all students.” (Parent or carer)

For many respondents, the proposed changes would not save classroom time, and the more pressing concern was difficulties covering a large amount of required material in a limited amount of time. To address this, respondents proposed a mix of core and optional components for papers so students would only have to revise for a limited number of topics

“As the most content heavy subject of all of GCSE subjects, I think that the GCSE science content needs to be cut down or to make some of the topics an option on the paper. We have been hit hard over the last year and are already well behind in teaching. Demonstrating the required practical rather than letting the students undertake them saves a minimal amount of time. We still have to go into the theory and evaluation in detail.” (School or college)

Alternatively, respondents proposed that the number of practicals should be reduced to compensate for limited classroom time.

“Practical work is more helpful to learning than just watching a demonstration, especially for science. We should consider a reduced number of key practicals that should still be undertaken.” (Parent)

“The required practical element should be reduced to one per subject (biology, chemistry, physics) to allow full coverage of skills. Significant teaching time has already been lost. The number of required practicals still constitutes a significant amount of teaching time.” (Teacher)

Finally, some respondents incorrectly believed that video or teacher demonstrations had always been an acceptable substitute for practicals if schools and colleges did not have access to the required equipment or materials and were unclear on how the proposals provided any additional support for students or teachers.

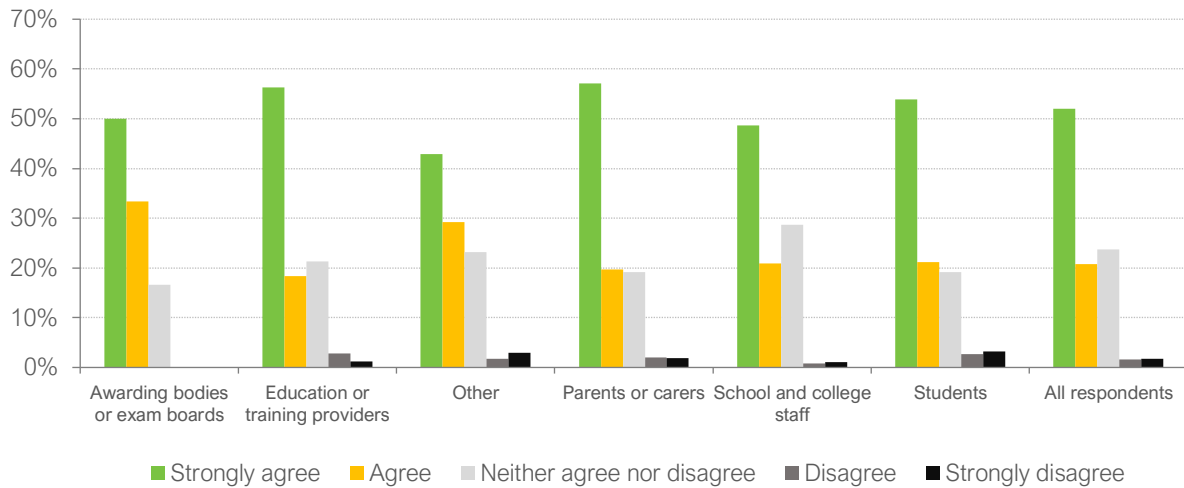
“I do not understand how you can say you have made allowances as we have always been able to meet this criteria for science practicals by demonstration.” (Academy chain)

“Videos or demonstrations were always allowed in certain circumstances, so this relaxation is not as ‘time saving’ as it may at first appear.” (Teacher)



**To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should carry forward from academic year 2020 to 2021 into academic year 2021 to 2022 the arrangements that allow centres to assess the CPAC across the minimum number of practical activities required to enable students to demonstrate their competence in A level biology, chemistry, physics and geology?**

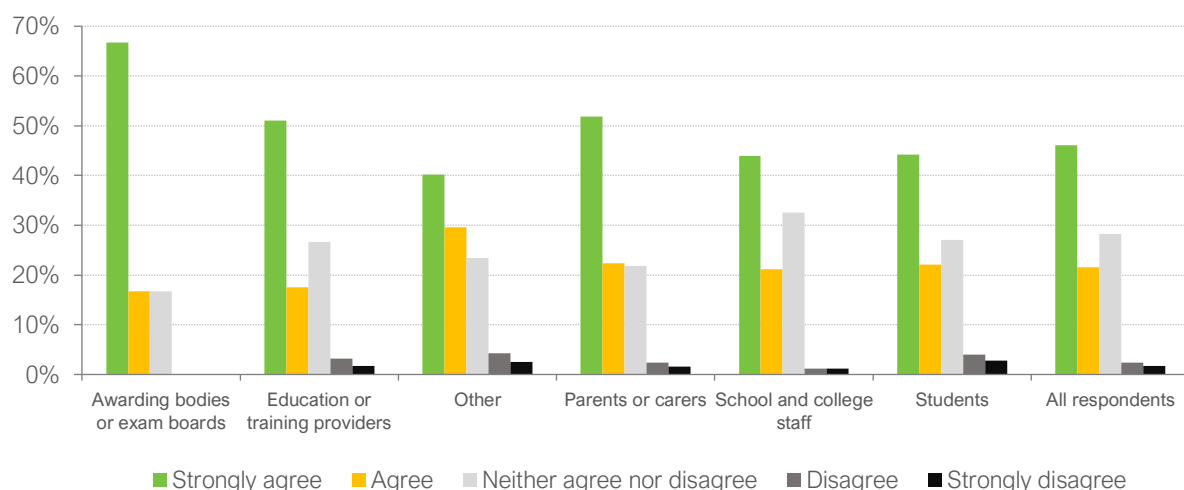
**Responses by Respondent Type**



Most respondents agreed with the proposal, with 52% strongly agreeing and 21% agreeing across all respondent types. Twenty-four percent of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with the proposal, and very few respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the proposal (3% of respondents). Across respondent types, awarding bodies or exam boards had the highest proportion of respondents strongly agreeing or agreeing with the proposal (83% agreed or strongly agreed), followed by parents or carers (77%), students (75%) and education or training providers (75%). All four exam boards recognised to offer GCSE, AS and A levels agreed or strongly agreed with the proposal.

**To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should carry forward from academic year 2020 to 2021 into academic year 2021 to 2022 the arrangements to allow the remote monitoring of centres' application of CPAC?**

**Responses by Respondent Type**





Most respondents agreed with the proposal, with 46% strongly agreeing and 22% agreeing across all respondent types. Twenty-eight percent of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with the proposal, and very few respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the proposal (4% of respondents). Across respondent types, awarding bodies or exam boards had the highest proportion of respondents strongly agreeing or agreeing with the proposal (83% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed), followed by parents or carers (74%) and other respondents (70%). All four exam boards recognised to offer GCSE, AS and A levels agreed or strongly agreed with the proposal.

### **Do you have any comments on our proposed approach to carrying forward specific assessment arrangements from academic year 2020 to 2021 into academic year 2021 to 2022 for A level biology, chemistry, physics and geology?**

There were 565 responses to this question. There was a high degree of support for this proposal, and the most frequently given reason for this support was that continuing the reduction in the minimum number of assessed practicals for the Common Practical Assessment Criteria (CPAC) was necessary due to the disruptions to practicals already faced due to the pandemic and the expected level of future disruptions. A related point was that this reduction would assist in focusing time on teaching the remainder of the specification.

“This is a very well thought out plan since it takes into consideration that teaching time is lost, and we need less practicals to work on during lesson time.” (Student)

“Incredibly difficult to get self-isolating students to catch up missed practicals within what is an already reduced curriculum time due to self-isolation. There must be the ability to take evidence from a range of practicals for some students to evidence CPAC skills.” (Teacher)

For those who did not support the proposals, the most frequent theme raised was that reducing the number of assessed practicals would lead to a reduction in students' learning and consequently being less well prepared for studying science at higher levels.

“I would not like this to continue into the future as it will impact on the students' ability to carry out practical work at university for those that follow science degree courses in the future. It may be the case that students joining science degree courses in 2022 may not have done any or little practical work for over 3 years when they reach university and may not have even basic laboratory skills before starting university practical sessions of 3-4 hours. This has implications for universities both in terms of practicals set and basic health and safety in laboratories.” (Examiner)

“Possible loss of certain aspects of practical knowledge should be considered.” (Parent or carer)

“Students may be ill prepared for their degrees with the continued lack of ability to complete practical tasks. This is particularly concerning for the high number of medical students.” (Teacher)

“I agree on the grounds of pragmatism but feel that this reduction in emphasis on practical skills will leave students unprepared for science degrees at university.” (Parent or carer)

Many respondents suggested that a reduction in assessed practical work should be reflected in written exams that assess practical skills, as they believed that students may have less developed practical skills.

“There needs to be less emphasis on practical work in exams, students who learn in different ways (kinetic, auditory, visual) will be disproportionately affected by not undertaking practicals first-hand.” (Student)

“If all students aren't completing all of the required practicals, great care needs to be taken with the design of exam papers. There would need to be a choice of optional questions to ensure every student could access one or more questions about a practical they had completed.”  
(Teacher)

“The possible gaps in knowledge from not completing all the required practicals needs to be taken into account on exam papers, which in theory could test students on knowledge of any of the practicals.” (Teacher)

Views on exam boards being permitted to monitor centres' application of CPAC by remote means were divided. Some respondents had very favourable views on remote monitoring but others noted that it could be stressful or difficult.

“Remote monitoring visits were particularly useful this year and should definitely continue.”  
(Teacher)

“The remote monitoring worked far better than we had anticipated.” (School or college)

“As a centre with only 2 years' worth of A level results, we have never been monitored and would appreciate the advice. Remote monitoring centres focus on procedure rather than making sure that students are carrying out practicals using the required level of skill.” (Senior Leadership Team)

“Remote monitoring of centres was a strategy that allowed for CPAC monitoring to continue despite lockdown; contingency planning for any potential future disruption should therefore accommodate this once again. The remote monitoring did, however, dramatically increase the workload for lead teachers, by virtue of the much greater administrative requirements needed to provide practical advisers with the required evidence. The timeframes for monitoring also increased; where previously monitoring would take a day, in 20/21 it was taking a number of weeks, at least, to complete the monitoring activities. Where possible, monitoring should, therefore, be carried out in person.” (Teacher)

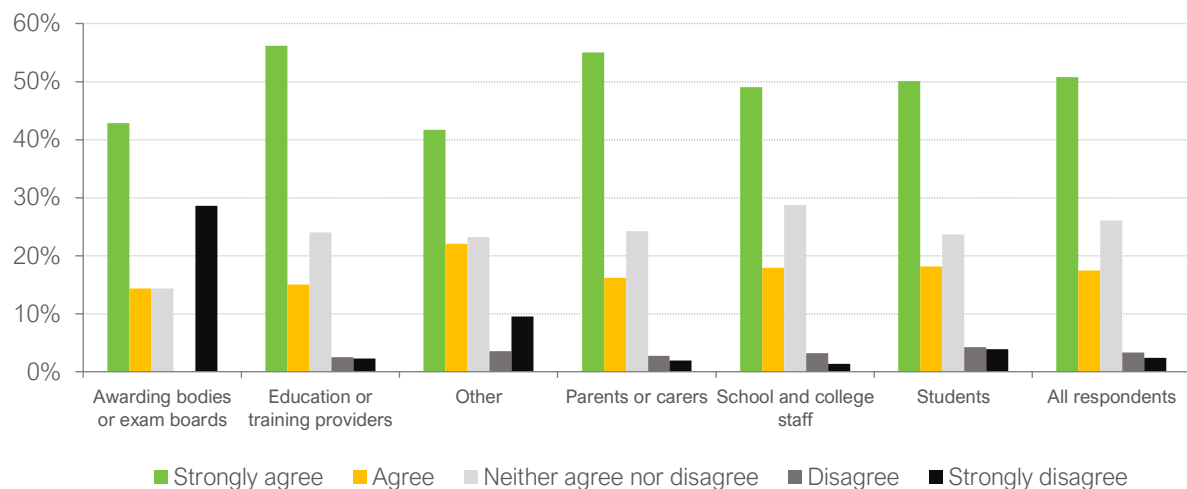
## Art and design qualifications

### QUESTIONS COVERED IN THIS SECTION

This section of the consultation focuses on the proposal that students in GCSE, AS and A level art and design should only be assessed on a portfolio of work (as opposed to both the portfolio and a task set by the exam board under timed, supervised conditions). This would mitigate the pressures of time that the pandemic has created and future proof against the risk of further public health restrictions.

### To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should carry forward from academic year 2020 to 2021 into academic year 2021 to 2022 the arrangements to remove (where applicable) the exam board set task in GCSE, AS and A level art and design?

#### Responses by Respondent Type



Most respondents agreed with the proposal, with 51% strongly agreeing and 17% agreeing across all respondent types. Twenty-six percent of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with the proposal, and very few respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the proposal (6% of respondents). Across respondent types, education or training providers and parents or carers had the highest proportion of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed with the proposal (71% for both respondent types), while awarding bodies or exam boards had the lowest proportion (57%). Twenty-nine percent of awarding bodies or exam boards along with 13% of other respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the proposal, compared to fewer than 9% across all other respondent types. All four exam boards recognised to offer GCSE, AS and A levels agreed or strongly agreed with the proposal.

### Do you have any comments on our proposed approach to carrying forward from academic year 2020 to 2021 into academic year 2021 to 2022 the specific assessment arrangements for GCSE, AS and A level art and design?

There were 754 responses to this question. The vast majority of respondents agreed that, given the circumstances, assessment solely based on students' portfolios is fair. Many said the removal of the exam board set task would give students the necessary time to improve their portfolios.

“Students need more time to develop and refine their understanding and skills to bring it up to the standards of a normal year. They can do this with the amount of work required for assessment being reduced in quantity; with more time being allowed to refine and extend current ideas and practice. This would even allow for the possibility of students being able to trim down the quantity of work selected for submission, while continuing to ensure all assessment objectives are met. Taking away the Exam board set task (Component 2) as was done this year (2021) is the fairest way to do this.” (Teacher)

“I believe that the large amount of time spent away from classrooms has had a hugely negative impact on the progress of the studies. It is entirely unreasonable to still expect students to complete both component 1 and component 2. Currently students are tirelessly trying to catch up on their studies for component 1, and given the massive disruption to learning due to the COVID-19 outbreak, students are seriously struggling and underperforming whilst trying to meet unreasonable deadlines. As with many things in life, work should primarily be based on quality not quantity, and by allowing students to only complete component 1 as was the case in the academic year 2020-2021, this would allow students to refine their work and to produce work to their fullest potential.” (Student)

A significant number of responses supported carrying forward the arrangements from 2021 as proposed because of the lack of access to specialist equipment at many students' homes. However, some respondents commented that the proposal should go further to mitigate the unequal impact of student's socio-economic circumstances.

“Remote learning is challenging, and I am finding that the majority of my students just don't have the specialist art equipment or space at home to complete coursework. I strongly support the decision to remove the externally set task.” (Teacher)

“Some of the children I teach have had to rely on regular paper packs as they had no Internet access and many didn't even have a space to even work in at home. It really isn't a fair or level playing field unless something is done to try to, where possible, remove some of that unfairness.” (Teacher)

However, there was a minority of respondents who expressed concern that students' portfolios might not provide sufficient information to be representative, and instead preferred an assessment based on both a portfolio of work and the exam board set task or an assessment only using the exam board set task.

“Whilst I think that it's a helpful concession (given nationwide disruption) to focus on the portfolio alone, it's also a real shame not to have the focus of the exam. My son completed A Level Art this year and it was a real pity not to have had the focus of the exam to sharpen his preparation and practice.” (Teacher)

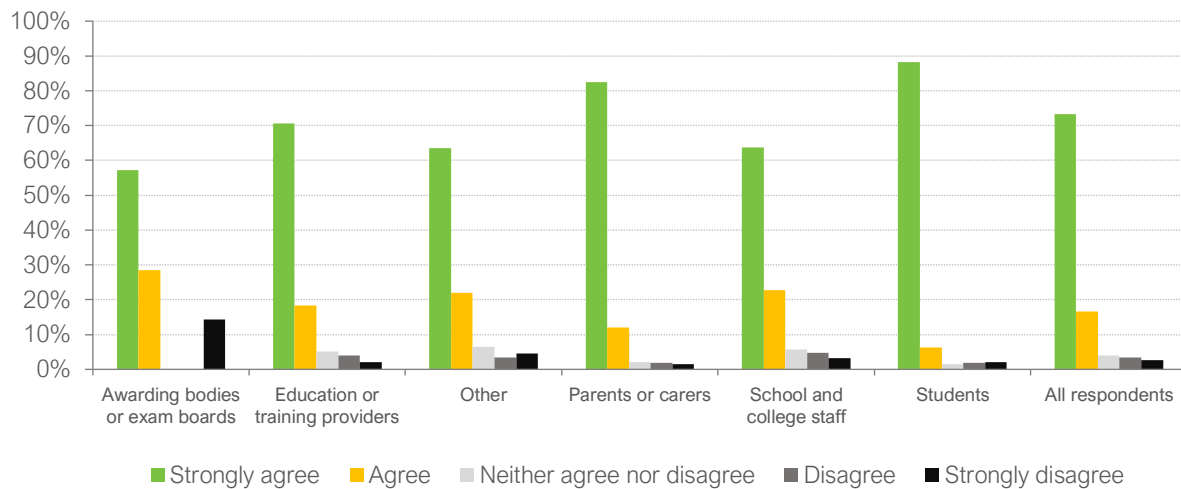
## Advance information

### QUESTIONS COVERED IN THIS SECTION

This section of the consultation focuses on the provision of advance information in the spring term to support students’ revision for GCSE, AS and A level subjects that have exams but where DfE is not proposing to offer a choice of topics or content.

### To what extent do you agree or disagree that exam boards should provide advance information about the focus of the content of exams for the majority of GCSE, AS and A level subjects?

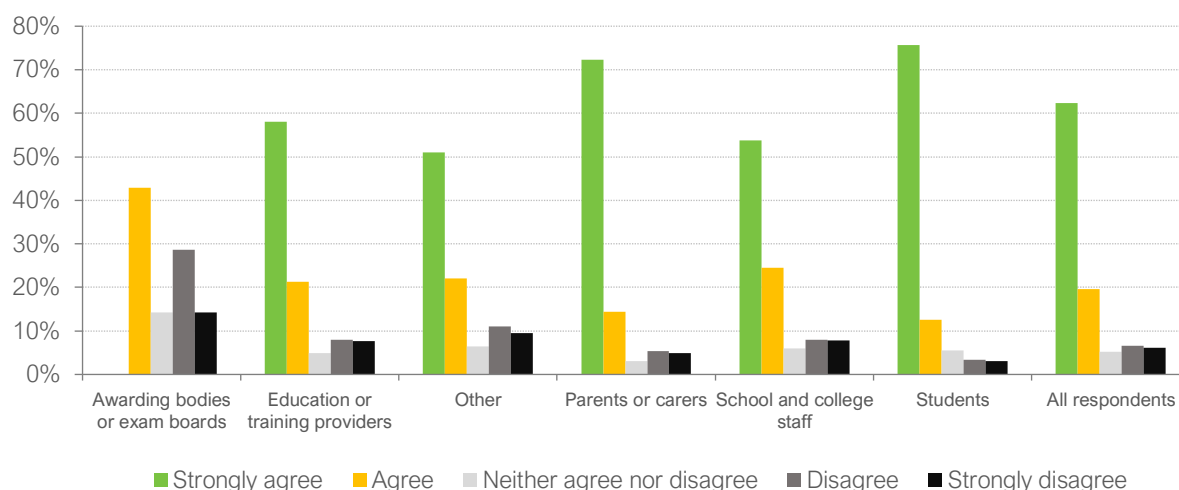
Responses by Respondent Type



Most respondents agreed with the proposal, with 73% strongly agreeing and 13% agreeing across all respondent types. Four percent of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with the proposal, and very few respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the proposal (6% of respondents). Across respondent types, parents or carers as well as students had the highest proportion of respondents strongly agreeing or agreeing with the proposal (95%), followed by education or training providers (89%). All four exam boards recognised to offer GCSE, AS and A levels agreed or strongly agreed with the proposal.

## To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should be flexible in the timing of the release of advance information in order to respond to the impact on education of any potential worsening of the pandemic?

### Responses by Respondent Type



Most respondents agreed with the proposal, with 62% strongly agreeing and 20% agreeing across all respondent types. Five percent of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with the proposal, and 13% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the proposal. Across respondent types, parents or carers had the highest proportion of respondents strongly agreeing or agreeing with the proposal (88%), followed by students (87%). Awarding bodies or exam boards had the highest proportion of respondents who disagreed or strongly disagreed with the proposal (43% of respondents disagreed), followed by other respondents (21% disagreed or strongly disagreed). Three exam boards recognised to offer GCSE, AS and A levels agreed with the proposal, while one disagreed.

### Do you have any comments on the proposed flexible approach to the timing of the release of advance information in 2022?

There were 2,330 responses to this question. Many respondents agreed that a flexible approach would help mitigate the impact of unforeseen future lockdowns on teachers and students.

“Flexibility is definitely key as the pandemic has caused such widespread disruption, affecting some areas more significantly than others.” (Parent or carer)

“Flexibility is vital and setting a date in stone would be a mistake given the constantly changing landscape.” (School or college)

“Flexibility will be key to the process. Teachers will welcome guidance as to the content of topics in the GCSE Exams should the pandemic continue to impact the provision of education to teaching.” (Teacher)

However, respondents were divided on the best timeline for advance information to be provided. Some respondents favoured advance information as early as possible to ensure that teachers cover all content that will definitely be included in the exams.

“Advance information and changes to assessment must be given as soon as possible. As teachers and education providers, schemes of work and lesson planning occur well in advance of content delivery. The persistent delay in decision making disadvantages pupils as a carefully

considered delivery of the curriculum content across the 2021 to 2022 academic year (as required for the assessments) is not possible when a decision is unlikely to have been announced well into the first term.” (Teacher)

“I think information needs to be released earlier than the spring term. In many subjects it will not be possible to cover the full breadth of the specification in sufficient depth due to the disruption that has already occurred. This uncertainty will place undue stress on the students. By releasing this information during the autumn term, teachers will be able to plan to cover the required content fully, and students will know where they stand. By issuing this information sooner, teachers can also ensure that they plan for the future progression of students for further study, in addition to preparation for the exams.” (Teacher)

In addition, respondents believed that the uncertainty around the timing of advance information would place additional stress and pressure on students as well as school and college staff, and earlier advance information would allow schools and colleges to provide additional support for remote learners or students needing to self-isolate.

“Release this information as early as possible. Recent experience where there was uncertainty as to what would be included or not, created additional stress for teachers and students.” (Parent or carer)

“The information should be released no later than the beginning of January 2022. This will ensure all centres are able to support students, especially those who may have had to isolate when topics now in the advance information were being taught.” (Teacher)

“Teachers and students need this information as soon as possible in the new school year to plan their lessons and revision. Last year pupils were told they would get more information and then didn’t as we used teacher assessed grades instead. We must remove some of the uncertainty for the pupils.” (Teacher)

Other respondents pointed out the need for clarity around the use of “spring term” in the proposal, as advance information provided one month before exams could have very different implications for students and teachers compared to advance information provided around February half-term. Some respondents said that advance information closer to February half-term would allow for more preparation time for teachers, though these respondents focused on the need to reduce content taught rather than the stated purpose of advance information in the consultation (to help students focus their revision time). Other respondents said advance information later in the spring term could help students focus their revision without compromising the breadth of material covered by teachers.

“Absolutely need flexibility to bring forward the announcements if the pandemic worsens but there should be a broader consideration as to whether the spring term is already too late in the day. Spring term does not provide sufficient time for students to prepare and to focus. The time lost in absences since the start of the pandemic has been considerable and the content of GCSEs in normal circumstances is already a challenge. I believe the announcement should be made no later than the end of February.” (Parent or carer)

“‘The spring term’ is too vague - there needs to be a date specified in advance as soon as this consultation is over but with the flexibility to bring the date forward. Schools, teachers and students need to plan - to wait until ‘spring’ does not make planning the remainder of the year particularly easy.” (School or college)

“It would be damaging to pupils who are progressing to further education to limit what they focus their learning and revision on by releasing such information too soon. Schools teach in very different topic orders and curriculum models therefore excluding certain topics any earlier than the time where teaching would finish would give us a disadvantage - many schools are unlikely to benefit by a topic being removed, so all centres should teach all topics.” (Academy)



chain)

Some respondents also proposed advance information in December (or earlier) as many schools and colleges would start preparing for mock exams in the autumn term. According to these respondents, advance information in the autumn term would help mock exams accurately reflect the content that would be covered on official exams, allowing students to be better prepared.

“Advance information should be released much earlier than the spring term, regardless of the ongoing COVID-19 impact, as students will be beginning their revision periods earlier for mocks, which will be (for some schools) over the Christmas holidays. Mocks should be useful and help prepare for the actual exam, so information should be given at the end of the autumn term. Otherwise, Ofqual is asking students to revise for mocks that have a high chance of covering what is essentially cut content. If they are intending to release advance information at all, they should do it as early as possible.” (Student)

“Earlier identification of the focus of exams would enable centres to apply similar foci to mock examinations in December or January and also would enable teachers to focus their teaching to those areas which were more likely to be covered.” (Teacher)

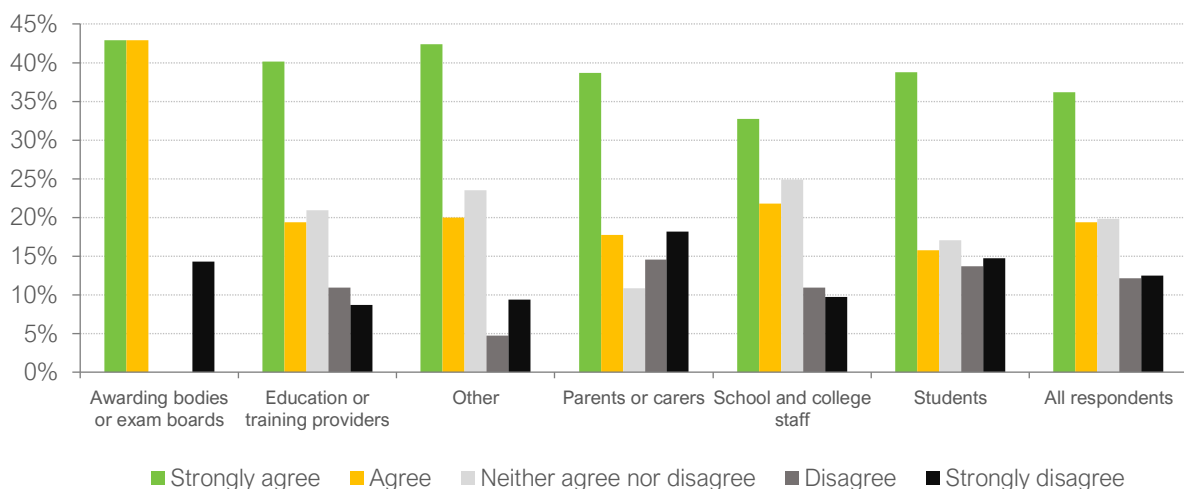
Finally, a small number of respondents opposed a flexible approach to the timing of the release of advance information as this would advantage students who could afford additional tutoring for specific topics covered on the exam.

“The government must be careful to ensure that releasing advanced information about the exams is beneficial to all students to the same extent. I believe that content should be either not released at all or released as soon as possible to support pupils in the most vulnerable positions. Pupils who are struggling to learn the content, and have been most impacted by the lockdowns, are likely to be vulnerable pupils who cannot access additional support outside of school. Therefore, if information on examinations is left to the spring term, they will be even more at a disadvantage compared to those who may be able to afford private tutoring.” (Teacher)

“Flexibility sounds like a recipe for confusion, and gives a massive advantage to those students who have access to tutors or exam support at home who can therefore benefit more from short notice information.” (Teacher)

**To what extent do you agree or disagree that for GCSE English literature, where we propose that centres should have some choice of topics on which their students will answer questions, the exam boards should not provide advance**

**Responses by Respondent Type**

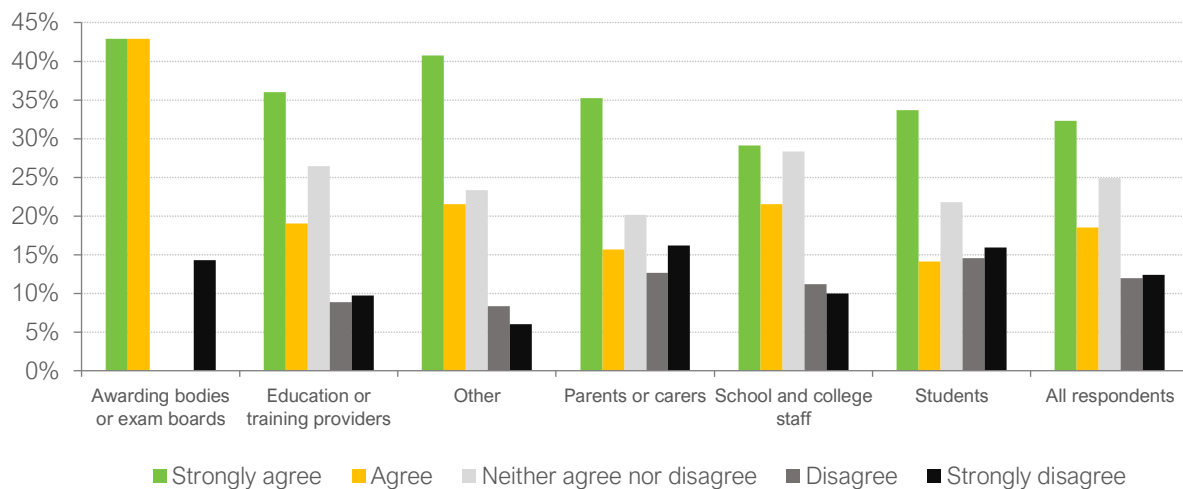


### information about the focus of the content of exams in addition?

More than half of respondents agreed with the proposal, with 36% strongly agreeing and 19% agreeing across all respondent types. Twenty percent of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with the proposal, and 25% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the proposal. Across respondent types, awarding bodies or exam boards had the highest proportion of respondents strongly agreeing or agreeing with the proposal (86%). Parents or carers had the highest proportion of respondents who disagreed or strongly disagreed with the proposal (33%), followed by students (25%). In comparison, school and college staff (25%), other respondents (24%) and education or training providers (21%) all had above-average proportions of respondents who neither agreed nor disagreed with the proposal. All four exam boards recognised to offer GCSE, AS and A levels agreed or strongly agreed with the proposal.

### To what extent do you agree or disagree that for GCSE history, where we propose that centres should have some choice of topics on which their students will answer questions, the exam boards should not provide advance information about the focus of the content of exams in addition?

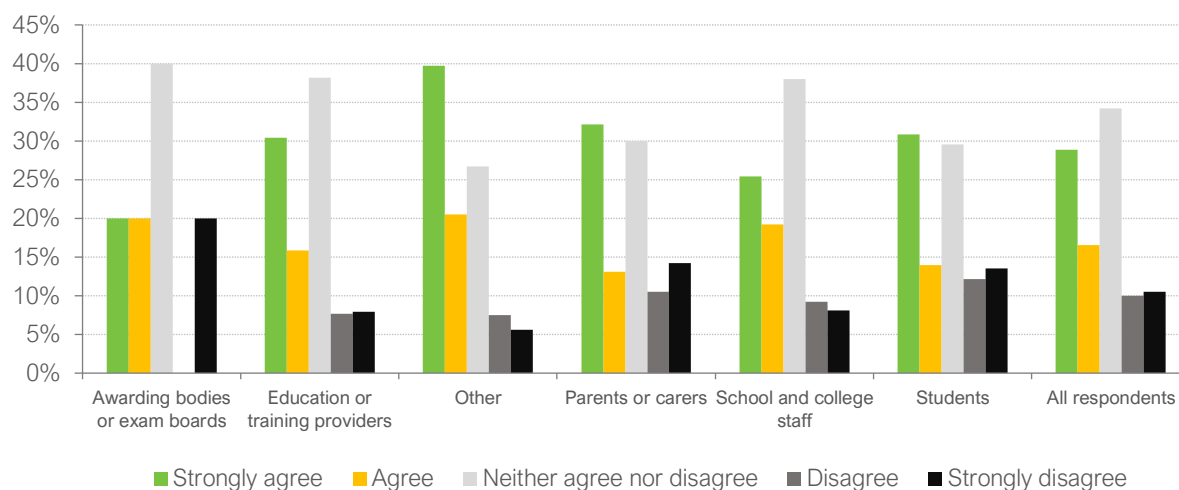
Responses by Respondent Type



Half of respondents supported the proposal, with 32% strongly agreeing and 18% agreeing across all respondent types. Twenty-five percent of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with the proposal, and 24% disagreed or strongly disagreed. Across respondent types, awarding bodies or exam boards respondents had the highest levels of support for the proposal (86% agreeing or strongly agreeing compared to 14% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing). Parents or carers (51% agreeing or strongly agreeing), school and college staff (51%) and students (48%) were least likely to support the proposal. All four exam boards recognised to offer GCSE, AS and A levels agreed or strongly agreed with the proposal.

**To what extent do you agree or disagree that for GCSE ancient history, where we propose that centres should have some choice of topics on which their students will answer questions, the exam boards should not provide advance information about the focus of the content of exams in addition?**

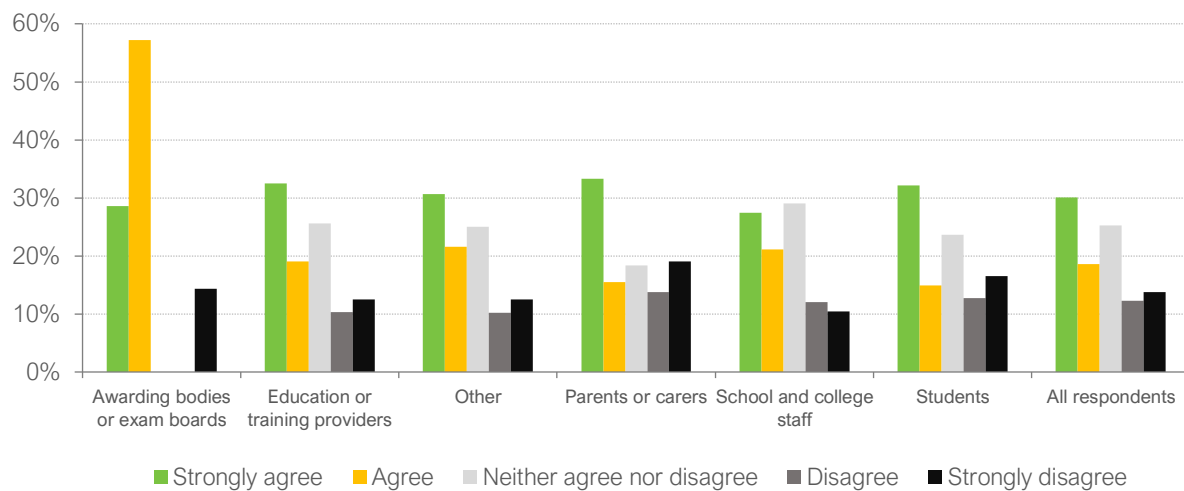
**Responses by Respondent Type**



Compared to other questions in this consultation, a relatively high proportion of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with the proposal (34% of respondents). While a plurality of respondents supported the proposal, with 29% strongly agreeing and 17% agreeing across all respondent types, 20% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the proposal. The proportion of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed was consistently around 45% for all respondent types except other respondents (60% agreeing or strongly agreeing). Education or training providers and school and college staff were most likely to neither agree nor disagree with the proposal (38% of both respondent types), while students (26% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing) and parents or carers (25%) were most likely to oppose the proposal. The one exam board recognised to offer GCSE ancient history agreed with the proposal.

**To what extent do you agree or disagree that for GCSE geography, where we propose that centres should have some choice of content on which their students will answer questions, the exam boards should not provide advance information about the focus of the content of exams in addition?**

**Responses by Respondent Type**



Just under half of respondents supported the proposal, with 30% strongly agreeing and 19% agreeing across all respondent types. Twenty-five percent of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with the proposal, and 26% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed. Except for awarding bodies or exam boards, between 45% and 52% of respondents across all respondent types agreed or strongly agreed with the proposal. Parents or carers (33% of respondents disagreeing or strongly disagreeing) and students (29%) had the highest proportion of respondents opposing the proposal. All four exam boards recognised to offer GCSE, AS and A levels agreed or strongly agreed with the proposal.

**Do you have any comments on our proposal not to provide advance information for 2022 for GCSE English literature, history, ancient history or geography?**

There were 1,020 responses to this question for GCSE English literature, 724 responses for GCSE history, 368 responses for GCSE ancient history and 674 responses for GCSE geography. Because many themes apply to respondents’ answers across all four of the above questions (and respondents frequently copied the same free text answer across all four questions), these four questions were analysed together.

A large number of respondents expressed fairness concerns regarding the non-provision of advance information about the focus of exam content. Some respondents stated it would be unfair to provide advance information in some subjects but not in others. Other respondents said the 2022 student cohort had lost more learning time than the 2021 cohort and that further modifications were needed as opposed to carrying forward the proposed arrangements from 2021.

“This year’s cohort is experiencing a longer-term, more significant loss of teaching time than any of the two previous cohorts. There is likely to be further disruption to come. They therefore need additional modifications including advance information on topics. Students studying geography and history should not be disadvantaged by their choice of option subjects. Many students study both, and these are content heavy subjects.” (Exams officer or manager)

Many respondents argued that given the significant disruptions to teaching experienced by this cohort, both a choice of topics and advance information about the focus of the content of exam should be provided.

“I don't understand why some subjects would have targeted information provided and not others. Even if the breadth of content has been reduced, it has been done so because they have lost face-to-face teaching time and opportunity for discussion and knowledge enhancement on themes that contribute to the overall development and maturity of the student. Confidence has been shattered and knowing which areas to focus their learning and revision on give them a fighting chance to feel good about themselves on results day 2022. That will be the biggest stepping stone we can give the next generation in rebuilding what has been lost.” (Exams officer or manager)

“Even if we are teaching fewer texts, I do not think this is fair. Students may have covered certain texts, but they will not have covered them in the normal depth. Some students, for instance, will have been self-isolating for the whole of Act Two of 'Macbeth', and due to lack of technological access, personal circumstances, or actual COVID-19-related illness, may not have been able to access remote learning.” (Teacher)

For GCSE history, English literature and geography, respondents said that additional support was particularly important due to the content-heavy nature of these courses.

“Not giving any guidance because of content reduction doesn't acknowledge the huge amount of content across the rest of GCSE history or English literature. It also doesn't acknowledge that clearly history and English literature have more content than other subjects in the first place, otherwise removal of those topics wouldn't be necessary! If a whole paper was taken out for history then I would agree that guidance would be unnecessary. However, as it is only one topic I think a bit of advanced information would be a good idea.” (Senior Leadership Team)

“Even though centres will have some optionality, I think that providing advance information on topics would be helpful given the fact that schools teach English language and literature often without additional curriculum time. I believe that providing the focus of the question will be helpful. For example, stating that the focus of a question on Macbeth will be Lady Macbeth, or the theme of masculinity, will be useful and broad enough as not to offer additional advantage.” (Teacher)

“GCSE English literature is such a broad subject covering a variety of topics. This year has impacted students' learning and with remote learning it has been difficult for some to understand the key themes within these topics. Offering a choice of topics is a good solution, however I feel some advance information should be given to enable students who have experienced problems to gain a fuller understanding of the texts they studied during remote learning.” (Parent or carer)

“Geography is an extremely broad subject. Each 'question', for example Natural Hazards, can have up to 12 sub-questions. This covers a wide range of the content and is very difficult for students to revise for. I understand not giving advance topics for a subject which only has a few questions as this would focus the revision too much. However, for geography I feel that some further help is needed to revise the vast amount of content for each section.” (Senior Leadership Team)

In addition, advance information was generally viewed by some respondents as being beneficial to SEND students.

“For students with dyslexia it can take longer to study as they cannot rely on short term memory. Not giving enough information would penalise such students as all they need is enough time to study the material for longer.” (Parent or carer)

Some respondents agreeing with the proposal said that in the presence of optionality, advance information about the focus of the exam was not necessary. Concerns were raised about maintaining the credibility of the qualification.

“If we are given the choice to select the texts that our students are examined on, then we have the opportunity to cover other texts in more detail, meaning it’s not necessary for us to know the topic in advance.” (Senior Leadership Team)

“If they have a choice of topic there is no need to provide further advanced information. This gives them an unfair advantage over other subjects. Alternatively give students a choice of topics in all subjects.” (Exams officer or manager)

“There is already an advantage in the choice of topic and advance information will reduce the challenge of the examination even more. Not providing advance information is a better preparation for A level.” (School or college)

“Where optionality will be introduced there is a danger that advanced support information could further narrow the curriculum and preparation.” (Local Authority)

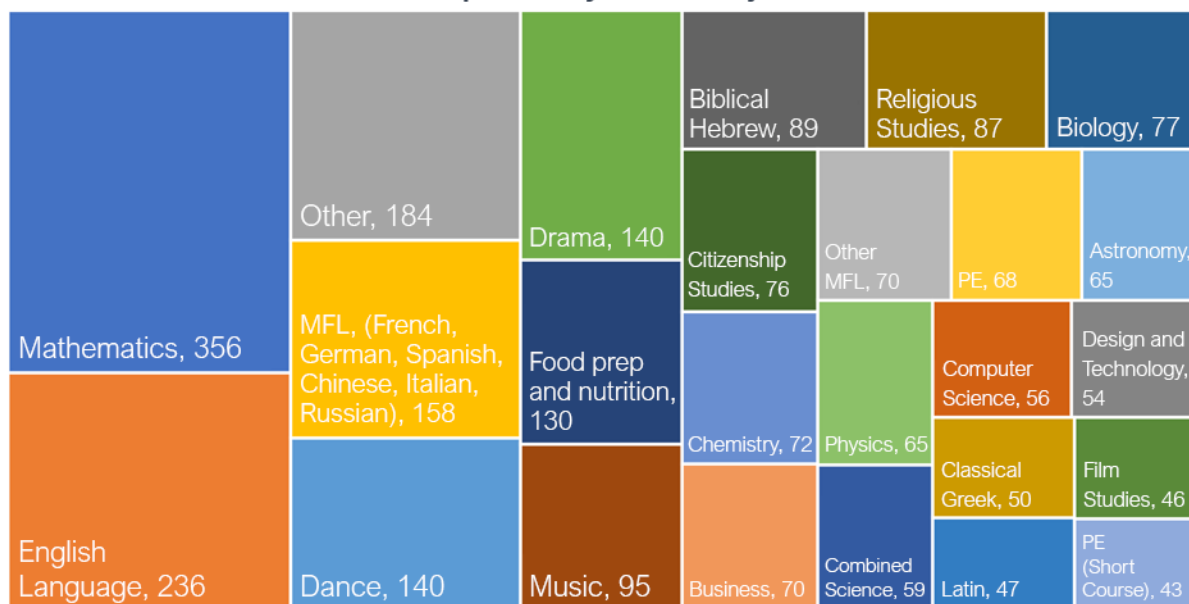
On the other hand, many respondents were concerned that providing advance information would exacerbate socioeconomic inequalities, as respondents were concerned that students who are able to access additional support, such as from private tutors, might be able to take fuller advantage of any advance information as they prepare for their exams.

“I do have a concern that providing advance information could further increase the social divide. Those who are most well-off will be paying for tutors to drill their children using this information.” (Teacher)

“It’s difficult because we know how our friends’ children have been spoon fed by their private schools compared to our state grammar where self-learning is the norm. I am concerned that they will be given prepared answers to learn as there would be quite specific clues on topics.” (Parent or carer)

## Are there any GCSE subjects for which advance information about the focus of the content of exams should NOT be given to students in advance of the exam?<sup>2</sup>

Responses by GCSE Subject

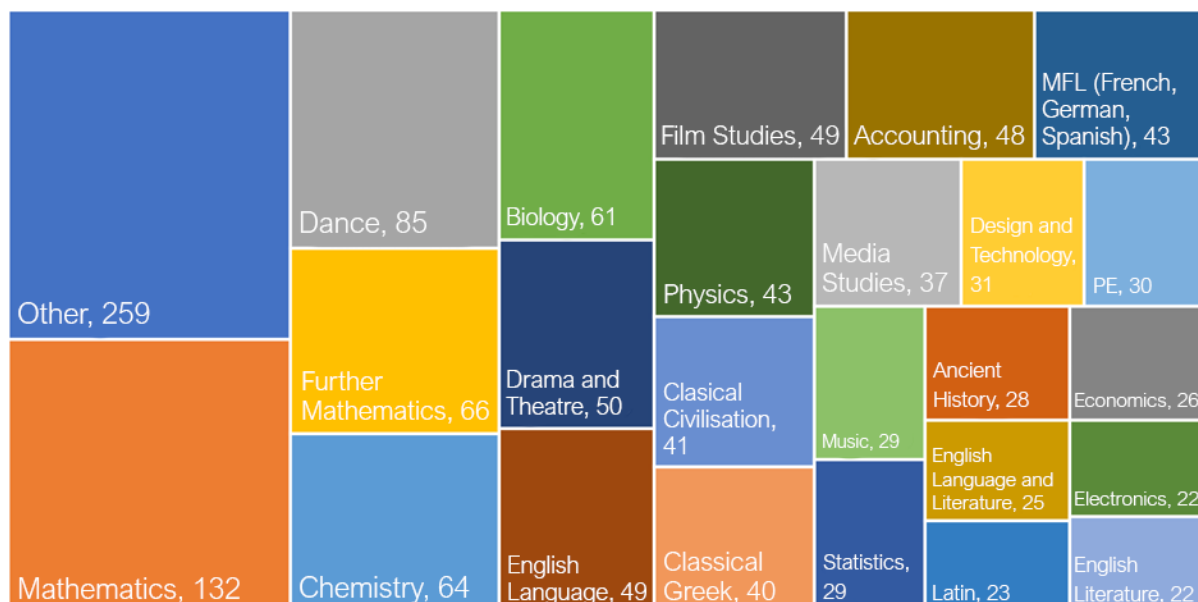


There were 1,085 responses to this question. The top five most frequently selected subjects included mathematics (33% of respondents), English language (22%), MFL (15%), dance (13%) and drama (13%). Mathematics was more likely to be selected by school and college staff (46% of respondents) or education or training providers (44%). If we compare the top 5 subjects for each respondent type to the top 5 subjects overall, a number of education and training providers selected biology (15%), other respondents selected computer science (16%) and school and college staff selected physics (7%) and biology (7%). For all respondent types, mathematics and English language were the two most frequently selected subjects except for students (mathematics was the most frequently selected, followed by MFL).

<sup>2</sup> In this treemap, "Other" includes all GCSE subjects which were selected by fewer than 40 respondents. These include statistics, media studies, sociology, psychology, economics, engineering, classical civilisation, geology and electronics. Physical education has been abbreviated as "PE".

### Are there any AS subjects for which advance information about the focus of the content of exams should NOT be given to students in advance of the exam?<sup>3</sup>

Responses by AS Subject

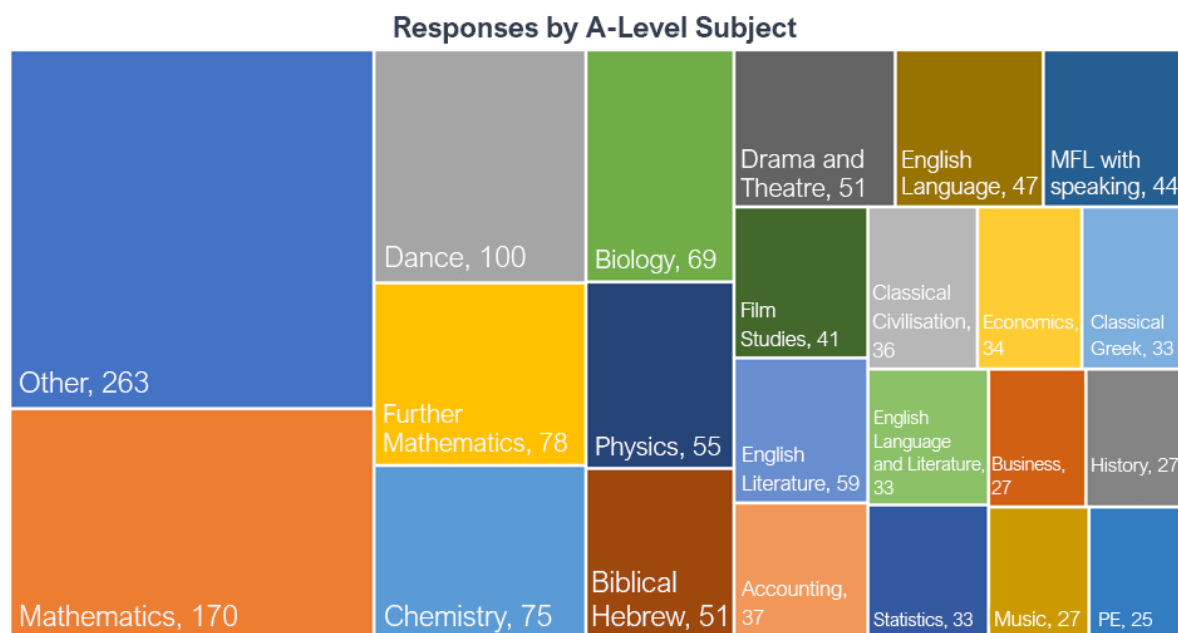


There were 482 responses to this question. The top 5 most frequently selected subjects included mathematics (27%), dance (18%), further mathematics (14%), chemistry (13%) and biology (13%). Forty-two percent of school and college staff selected mathematics (the highest proportion across all respondent types), while dance was the most frequently selected subject for students (28%). If we compare the top five subjects for each respondent type to the top five subjects overall, accounting ranked in the top five for education and training providers (13%), other respondents (27%) and students (13%); physics ranked in the top five for school and college staff (16%) and both drama and theatre (15%) and film studies (14%) ranked in the top 5 for students.

<sup>3</sup> In this treemap, "Other" includes all AS subjects which were selected by fewer than 20 respondents. These include computer science, business, history, religious studies, music technology, sociology, environmental science, politics, law, psychology, geography, philosophy and geology.



## Are there any A level subjects for which advance information about the focus of the content of exams should NOT be given to students in advance of the exam?<sup>4</sup>



There were 566 responses to this question. The top five most frequently selected subjects included mathematics (30%), dance (18%), further mathematics (14%), chemistry (13%) and biology (12%). Forty-three percent of school and college staff selected mathematics (the highest proportion across all respondent types), while dance was the most frequently selected subject for students (29%). If we compare the top five subjects for each respondent type to the top five subjects overall, Biblical Hebrew ranked in the top five for parents or carers (16%), physics ranked in the top five for school and college staff (14%) and drama and theatre ranked in the top five for students (14%).

### If you have identified any subjects above, do you have any comments on the subjects that should NOT be given advance information about the focus of exams in 2022?

There were 454 responses to this question, though only 216 respondents selected at least one subject. Respondents who selected one or more science subjects, computer science, English language and/or mathematics (across GCSEs, AS and A levels) stated that these subjects were needed to build basic skills and narrowing the curriculum in these subjects would disadvantage students progressing to further studies.

“Biology, chemistry and mathematics require a breadth of study and understanding. Any further narrowing of the already narrow curriculum in these subjects will seriously disadvantage the current cohort of students. Advance notice that has any meaningful impact on student preparation will result in such a narrowing of the curriculum studied. This will significantly disadvantage students progressing on to study science and engineering courses.” (Other respondent)

<sup>4</sup> In this treemap, “Other” includes all A level subjects which were selected by fewer than 25 respondents. These include ancient history, media studies, design and technology, psychology, politics, electronics, geography, Latin, sociology, computer science, history of art, MFL without speaking, religious studies, law, music technology, environmental science, geology and philosophy.

“Science has such a large content base that by telling students what will be on the exam it will limit their revision and impact on any further studies of science that they do.” (Teacher)

“I teach computer science at a school where quite a few members of our cohort will attend university to study computer science. Even during the pandemic we covered all of the content -- not because of the assessment, but because we would be doing our students a great disservice by not fully preparing them for a career in this subject.” (Teacher)

“There is a need to keep mathematics and English language, broad and in depth at level 3 in order for students to be able to succeed in progression either to HE and or specific employment.” (Teacher)

“English language involves a fundamental set of basic skills that is required across all other subjects. The content needs to be taught so that students can access other subject areas but also so that they have the skills when they move forward.” (Other representative or interest group)

In particular, for GCSE English language, respondents noted that the exam was largely skills-based and it was important to assess students’ ability to respond to unseen texts.

“Due to English language being an 'unseen' paper, with questions around texts which are not previously studied, I think this means that it is fairest to keep this format and not release advance information for this area.” (Teacher)

“English language papers assess students’ reading ability -pre-releasing the reading material would make differentiation difficult. The paper is skills based and the question types are the same each year, so students know what to expect already.” (Teacher)

Similarly, for mathematics (across GCSEs, AS and A levels) and further mathematics (AS and A levels), respondents stated it might be difficult to provide advance information as questions often draw on knowledge of several topics and many sections of the specification are closely linked.

“For a subject like maths, students are often required to use several topics in a single question and it would therefore be difficult to inform students of the topics on these exams.” (Student)

“For mathematics, there are so many overlaps between sections of the specification that it is not uncommon for the entirety of possible content to appear on the exam. Informing students which topics will appear could present two possible issues: firstly, it could be redundant information if all or almost all units appear on the exam. Secondly, removing just one or two units from the exam will severely limit the types of questions that could be examined.” (Student)

“In mathematics and further mathematics it would be very difficult to separate the topics out and would lead to chunks of material not being taught.” (Senior Leadership Team)

Finally, respondents selected subjects such as dance (across GCSEs, AS and A levels), GCSE drama, drama and theatre (across AS and A levels) or film studies (across AS and A levels) because respondents perceived that the assessments for these subjects would be primarily practical- or skill-based.

“GCSE and A level Biblical Hebrew, GCSE and A level dance, GCSE astronomy and AS dance are only taken by a few or have a large practical element so do not necessarily require advance information.” (Parent or carer)

“GCSE, AS and A level dance, GCSE drama, GCSE and AS physical education and A level drama and theatre are more physical skill-based subjects. I'm not sure you can compare this to the more academic subjects which require knowledge, analysis and evaluation of materials. Generally speaking these subjects are given more teacher choice in terms of what content is covered.” (Teacher)

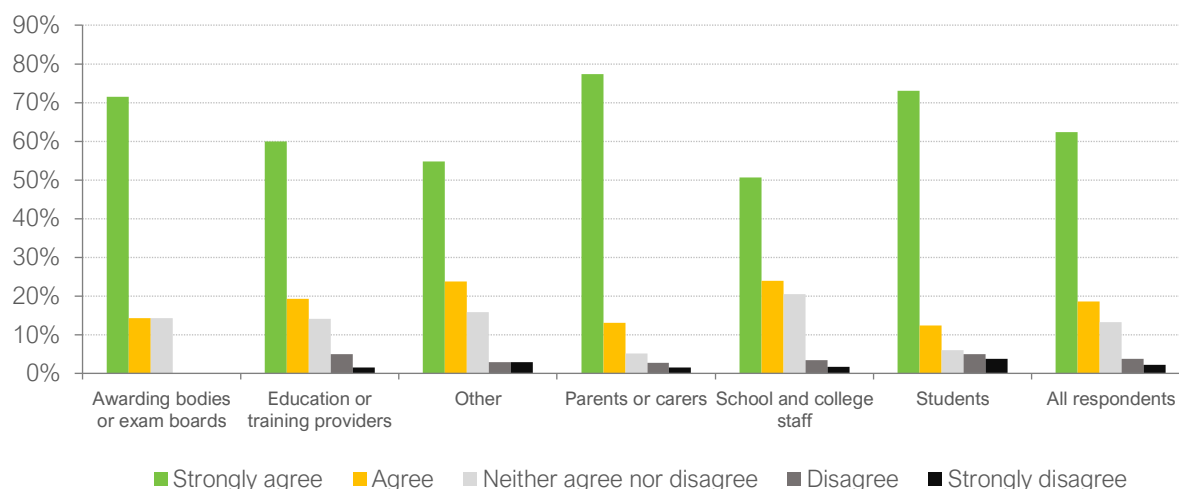
## Support materials

### QUESTIONS COVERED IN THIS SECTION

This section of the consultation focuses on the provision of support materials in exams. This would include students sitting GCSE mathematics having access to a formulae sheet and students sitting GCSE physics and combined science papers having access to a sheet with all relevant equations.

### To what extent do you agree or disagree that a formulae sheet should be provided in the exam room for GCSE mathematics in 2022?

#### Responses by Respondent Type



Most respondents agreed with the proposal, with 62% strongly agreeing and 19% agreeing across all respondent types. Thirteen percent of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with the proposal, and very few respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the proposal (6% of respondents). Across respondent types, parents or carers had the highest proportion of respondents strongly agreeing or agreeing with the proposal (90%), followed by awarding bodies or exam boards (86%). Between 13% and 20% of respondents across all respondent types except for parents or carers (5%) and students (6%) neither agreed nor disagreed with the proposal. All four exam boards recognised to offer GCSE, AS and A levels agreed or strongly agreed with the proposal.

### Do you have any comments on the proposal to provide a formulae sheet in the exam room for GCSE mathematics in 2022?

There were 870 responses to this question. Many respondents who supported the proposal stated that mathematics should test the understanding, implementation and manipulation of formulae instead of their memorisation. As a result, a formulae sheet would not impact the fair assessment or the learning objectives of the qualification.

“Mathematics should not be about remembering formulae but knowing when to apply the correct ones. In this digital age, the need to memorise facts is becoming obsolete and the examinations of students should reflect the world in which they will use the content.” (Teacher)

“I think this is an excellent idea and not just for this set of exams. Exams should be about testing the application of knowledge, theories, etc, not memorising formulae in advance - this is an outdated approach that does not reflect real life and the ability to look up information before acting on it.” (Parent or carer)

Some respondents also believed that there would be insufficient time for students to memorise all the formulae therefore, so at least some of them should be provided.

“Mathematics is a difficult subject to remember all of the formulae even when the whole course has been taught and in person. Without these actions having taken place, these students may not have been taught all of the formulae needed for the exams, meaning their results would not be an accurate representation of the year groups grades. The sheet would put all students on an equal level.” (Student)

A number of responses indicated that while a formulae sheet may help, it is not enough to make up for the disruption to students' education and stressed the need for additional support. Some of them also provided specific proposals such as the temporary reintroduction of the intermediate tier, redistribution of exam marks between questions and the introduction of non-exam assessment.

“This is essential, but on its own will not be enough to level the playing field in mathematics. Some choice of topics and questions also needs to be implemented as different students across different schools will have missed chunks of the course during the pandemic.” (Teacher)

“What about an optional section, removal of topics, intermediate tier temporarily reintroduced, change grade boundaries?” (Teacher)

“Formulae sheet should be available - but final grades should be based upon course work/assessments throughout the year as well as shortened or pre-informed formal exams.”(Academy chain)

Some of the respondents proposed the extension of the provision of a formulae sheet for the next several cohorts also impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

“If it is done this year, it should be available to all pupils in future years who have had their learning and understanding in mathematics affected by the pandemic or it will be unfair.” (Parent or carer)

Another reason some felt the provision of a formulae sheet is important was the beneficial effect it might have on disadvantaged or older students, on those with pre-existing mental health conditions or those who experienced a deterioration of mental health due to the pandemic. These respondents felt the formulae sheet would reduce the stress of exams and shift the focus away from memorisation.

“Mental health has been adversely impacted for many children, which can affect memory and recall. A formulae sheet is a very sensible adjustment.” (Parent or carer)

“It would offer support for those students who have lost confidence or who now suffer from anxiety. There are many who did not have these issues pre-pandemic.” (Teacher)

“I think it would be a good idea as it would massively help people who have learning disabilities such as dyscalculia or dyslexia who find it hard to do the math with the formula in front of them, let alone having to memorise it.” (Student)

On the other hand, there were respondents who characterised this intervention as unnecessary, citing the importance of memorisation and the fact that the pandemic had no direct effect on memorisation capabilities.

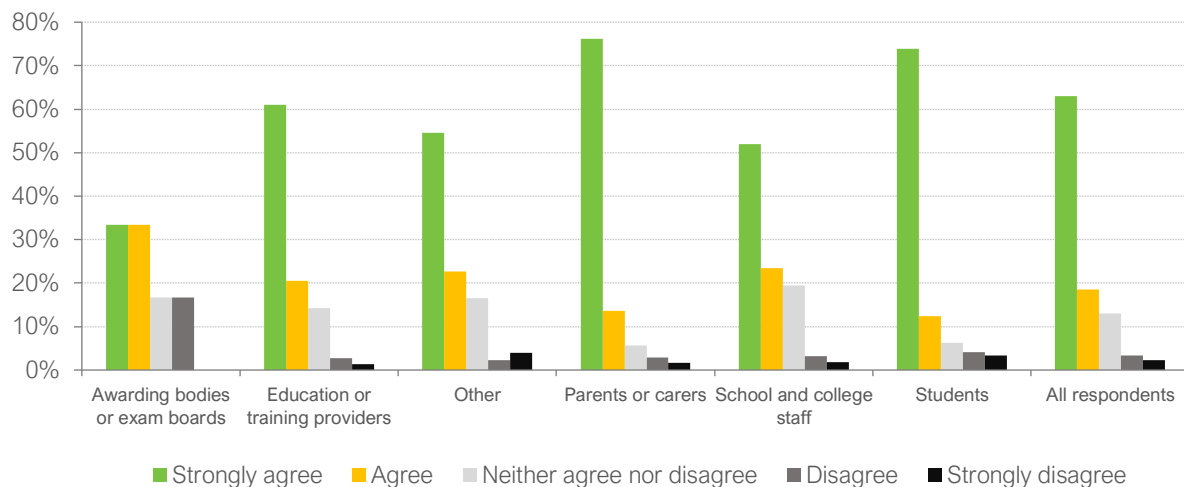
“It is a requirement of the course that students recall certain equations. This has been determined to be an important skill and should be assessed as such. Withholding this information (as in normal years) will test those students who have worked to catch up on material and are aware of the requirements of examinations.” (Teacher)

“Yes it gives an advance and easing flow, but equations are something students have time to work on. As much as students as myself would like to have equations, this can be too easy and can impact individuals’ knowledge, which is not preparing them well for university. They must learn equations but content should be told in advance.” (Student)

“I feel this would cheapen the qualification, learning of formulae should not have been severely impacted by the pandemic in the same way, say, as a practical subject.” (Teacher)

### To what extent do you agree or disagree that a revised equation sheet covering all relevant equations should be provided in the exam room for GCSE physics and combined science in 2022?

#### Responses by Respondent Type



Most respondents agreed with the proposal, with 63% strongly agreeing and 19% agreeing across all respondent types. Thirteen percent of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with the proposal, and very few respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the proposal (6% of respondents). Across respondent types, parents or carers had the highest proportion of respondents strongly agreeing or agreeing with the proposal (90%), followed by students (86%). Between 13% and 19% of education or training providers, other respondents and school and college staff neither agreed nor disagreed with the proposal, while parents or carers (6%) and students (6%) were less likely to neither agree nor disagree. Two exam boards recognised to offer GCSE, AS and A levels agreed with the proposal, and one disagreed.

### Do you have any comments on the proposal to provide a revised equation sheet covering all relevant equations in the exam room for GCSE physics and combined science in 2022?

There were 809 responses to this question. The majority of those who supported the proposal said that providing students with a revised equation sheet will help them apply their understanding rather than simply recall. They emphasised that exams should test application skills rather than rote learning. Some also said that this would help students feel less pressure and save them time during revision so

that they can focus on more important skills like rearranging, understanding, and applying. Some believed that, given the advances in digital technology, there is no added value to students learning these equations by heart when they can easily look them up on the Internet.

“The focus of calculations in GCSE physics and combined science should be mathematical skill and application rather than a memory test for equations. The differentiation between students’ ability should not be impacted by rote learning and ability to remember equations as that does not indicate mathematical or scientific skill. It also gives students more time during their revision to focus on the important aspects of using their mathematical and scientific skills and applying their knowledge. It also allows the content to be more accessible and marking based on working not rote memory. This should be continued past 2022, as students unfairly lose marks from incorrect memory (something they would just look up in real life) even though their ability to perform the calculation is secure. The students are still able to be tested on relationships as it further solidifies that link between the equations and their relationships between variables as they will be able to work it out with this understanding and apply their knowledge and the given equation in a way that is more realistic and suited to the uses outside of schools/exams.”  
(Teacher)

Many respondents were concerned that providing a revised equation sheet would be unfair to some students. Some said that this would lower the standards and would disadvantage students who have spent time memorising these equations. Others were concerned that this would remove any benefit of low tariff questions for students who rely on recalling equations to get marks.

“By not providing the physics equation sheet you allow marks to be gained from knowing them which allows people’s grades to rise. If you remove these possible marks, it will unfairly disadvantage middle range students. Most students have already learnt the majority of their equations.” (Student)

Some respondents also said that it would be unfair to students from other years who were not given the extra equations during the exam, and it will change the type of questions asked in physics and combined science, making it harder for students to prepare using past papers. Contrary to this, many respondents felt that providing students with a revised equation sheet in physics and combined science exams should be a permanent change, not just for the 2022 cohort. These respondents expressed the view that students are given an equation sheet in A levels and beyond.

“As students are not required to recall equations at any level above GCSE, I would support this as a permanent change, but not a temporary change.” (Teacher)

Many also said that there is a need for an equation sheet in the other sciences, namely biology and chemistry.

“I think that GCSE chemistry and combined science chemistry papers should also have a formula sheet for the quantitative chemistry topic so students can focus on the use and application of the various formulae they have learned about.” (Senior Leadership Team)

“This would also be useful for the equations required for GCSE chemistry and biology.”  
(Teacher)

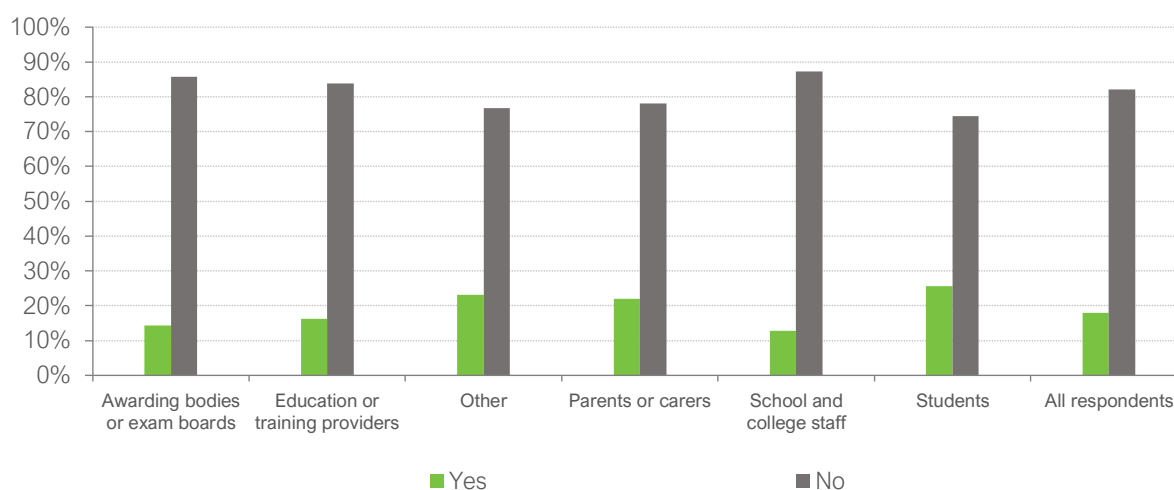
## Equality impact assessment

### QUESTIONS COVERED IN THIS SECTION

In developing the proposals included in the consultation, there was consideration of the impact that these might have on students because of their protected characteristics. In this section of the consultation, respondents were asked whether the 2022 exams arrangements might have any other equality impacts on students with particular protected characteristics and what these could be. Respondents were also asked to identify ways to remove or mitigate the negative impact identified, if any.

### Are there other potential equality impacts that we have not explored? If yes, what are they?

#### Responses by Respondent Type



Most respondents (82%) believed there were no potential equality impacts that the consultation did not explore. Students were the respondent type with the highest proportion of respondents who said there were other potential equality impacts (26%), followed by other respondents (23%) and parents or carers (22%). On the other hand, school and college staff were the most likely to have said there were no other potential equality impacts (88% of respondents answering “no”). All four exam boards recognised to offer GCSE, AS and A levels responded “no” to this question.

There were 1,109 responses to this question. Respondents most frequently brought up the potential impact on students experiencing mental health or wellbeing issues, either because they had an existing condition prior to the pandemic or because of the impact of the pandemic.

“Students whose mental health has been impacted due to COVID-19. This could be due to a range of issues such as anxiety, social isolation, health issues unable to be treated due to hospital restrictions and so on. This has to be considered as it is an area where schools help to support students on a daily basis and has clearly increased this academic year.” (Teacher)

Many respondents also expressed concern that the amount of time that students spent isolating or shielding varied significantly, and that has created inequalities.

“Depending on the school and the area where you live, a large proportion of students have had to self-isolate due to contacts in school. Those disadvantaged didn't have the resources to attend blended lessons. It is very unfair for the same group of students to sit the same exams when some have missed weeks and months of in-school teaching due to self-isolation, and others haven't missed any because they were lucky not to be in the same class as a COVID-19 positive individual.” (School or college)

Many respondents also expressed the need to consider the experiences of students who were directly affected by COVID-19, including students who had lost family, friends, or other loved ones due to the pandemic, as this impacted their learning ability and their mental health.

“Students who have lost or have had family members fall ill as a result of COVID-19 would have their learning impacted due to grievances also affecting their emotional and mental wellbeing.” (Teacher)

Some respondents, in their answers to later questions on additional activities and costs associated with changing the exam and assessment arrangements, mentioned that normal mitigation measures needed to be put in place for students impacted by COVID-19 as well as students with specific needs, including learning difficulties, SEND, and mental health conditions, many of which have been caused or exacerbated by the pandemic.

“We will undoubtedly end up with considerably more students requiring special arrangements such as low-density rooms due to anxiety, etc. This brings a consequent rise in invigilation and other support costs.” (School or college)

“Please also allow SEND students to have their normal mitigations in addition to the other changes.” (Parent or carer)

“Extra costs in creating resources for the blind.” (Parent or carer)

“Likely increase in students requiring access arrangements and special consideration due to mental health difficulties.” (Teacher)

Differences across schools and colleges also emerged as a theme among the responses. Respondents believe that inequalities emerged due to the variation in resources that schools and colleges had, differences in the quality of online teaching, variations in topics covered in some subjects, and disruption to education. Relatedly, some noted that the type of school and college should be considered. Of those respondents, many believed that provisions and support were skewed in favour of private schools and colleges compared to state schools and colleges.

“The time missed from school varies enormously from student to student, and from private to state school. State schools have received significantly less support and direct teaching over the last year than students attending online learning from private education. This MUST be taken into account and reflected in their data.” (Parent or carer)





## Do you have any suggestions for how any potential negative impacts on particular groups of students could be mitigated?

There were 971 responses to this question. The most cited suggestion to mitigate negative impact on a particular group of students was to reduce content covered in the exams and to provide students with the option to choose between different questions. Respondents believed that this will help students with mental health issues as it would, in their opinion, reduce stress.

“I think the best course of action is changing the exams for this year to have more choice on topics or being told what topics are coming up. This is because it will benefit those who have been disproportionately negatively impacted by the pandemic, and while more privileged students may not need these changes, standardisation and ensuring the disadvantaged students are given a fair chance are important.” (School or college)

Many respondents also suggested the need to provide more flexibility during the exams. These included holding the exams in smaller rooms, providing students with extra time to complete their assessments, allowing students to complete their exams on computers, and permitting them to take more material (such as formulae, texts or notes) into the exams. Respondents believed that these provisions would be helpful for students with disabilities, learning difficulties, or those who have mental health problems.

“The use of remote learning has centred the student experience on word processing considerably and they have not had as much practice of submitting handwritten work because of the use of Google Classroom Suite, Microsoft Teams etc. In English literature, having open text exams or the option to have two pages of quotations per text studied would help provide equity for those who are English as an additional language (EAL) students and remove pressures on those who have experienced challenges in the last 2 years that have affected their learning.” (Teacher)

“Timing of exams - some students who have not worked as effectively from home are now struggling with focus and ability to write/ concentrate for extended periods of time. Shorter exams and additional assessments for students who may have been more disadvantaged than others in the pandemic to see if they could qualify for a prompt or some extra time would be a worthwhile support mechanism.” (Teacher)

Many respondents also suggested the use of teacher assessed grades (TAGs), which in their view would mitigate the negative impacts on students with learning difficulties, with disabilities, and those who have missed a lot of school due to repeated self-isolation. Some believed that TAGs should be used instead of exams, whereas others believed that it should constitute a percentage of the grade.

“There needs to be circumstances where teacher judgement on how the student would have performed in the absence of the pandemic can be taken into account to avoid prejudice to disadvantaged and SEND students.” (Teacher)

Many respondents highlighted the need for the normal use of special consideration for students whose performance in an assessment is affected by an event that arises immediately before or during their assessments. A lot of respondents also said that there is a need for further support for students, including more resources for mentoring and tutoring.

“Schools should be able to provide attendance-related records with those students highlighted. If it is seen from their results that they have significantly underachieved compared to what was predicted, they could be given a small 'exceptional circumstances' allowance as has previously been given to those with specific illnesses etc.” (Teacher)

“Provide students who have struggled with lockdown learning with the option of extra support and help - offer summer school or lessons over the summer specifically for people in at risk groups to allow them to catch up and ask questions in a no-pressure environment.” (Student)

Some respondents believed that schools and colleges need further funding to be able to meet the needs of the students given the circumstances they faced in the last couple of years. Specifically, some said that schools and colleges should be able to provide disadvantaged students with access to tools, like laptops and Internet access, to remove learning and engagement barriers.

“Connection issues have been a problem for many disadvantaged students, some form of free wireless Internet provision for students to use which continues beyond the pandemic to allow for online resources to be used to catch up.” (Teacher)

A few respondents discussed other themes such as the need to put in place better mechanisms to identify vulnerable students and increase mental health provisions and the number of counsellors. A few also mentioned the need to unify schools’ and colleges’ approach to online teaching, and to hold interim assessments and mock exams.

“Counsellor in every school to help with mental health issues and stress caused by the pandemic. Some students still suffer from severe obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD) for example with stress worrying about family members and because of being long-term off school due to vulnerable family members. Schools should be given more money for more teaching staff in school to have more frees in their teaching timetable to help support those at home or with gaps. Teaching staff can do that but not on current timetable allocations.” (Teacher)

“I think providing a sample copy of a fake exam paper, in the layout of the real exams for 2022, would help disabled students who would find the change in exam layout stressful, and this could impact their performance on the day. This could be done for all subjects, but especially ones like physics and maths if equation sheets are introduced (so students would know what the paper would look like and what equations will be given), and also for subjects where there is a choice of content.” (Student)

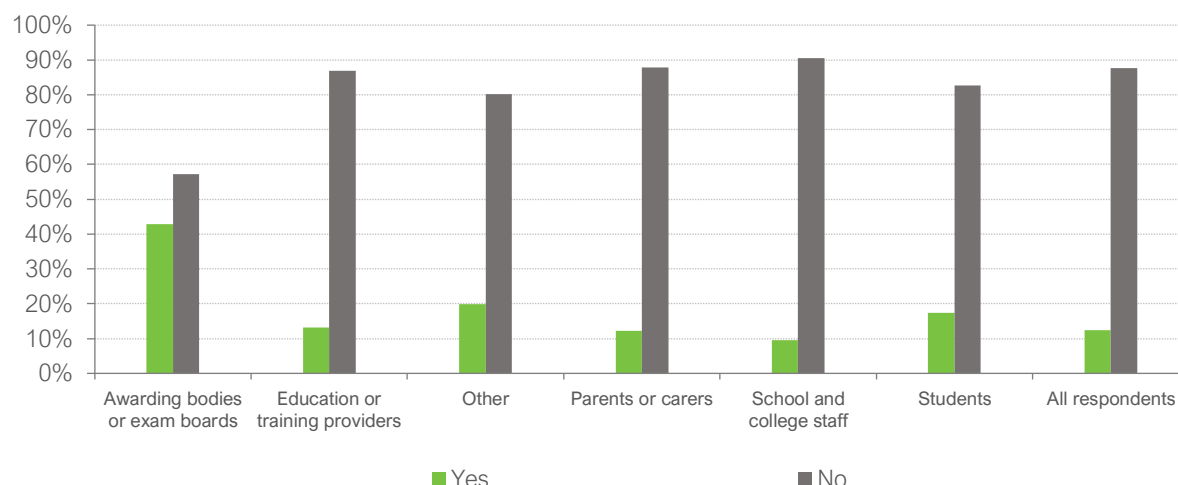
## Regulatory impact assessment

### QUESTIONS COVERED IN THIS SECTION

This section asks respondents if there are additional activities associated with changing exam and assessment arrangements in summer 2022 that have not been identified in the consultation, if there are additional costs incurred by the proposed changes to the exam and assessment arrangements and if there are alternative approaches to reduce burden and costs.

### Are there additional activities associated with changing the exam and assessment arrangements for students taking GCSE, AS and A level qualifications in summer 2022 that we have not identified above? If yes, what are they?

#### Responses by Respondent Type



Most respondents (88%) believed there were no additional activities associated with changing exam and assessment arrangements that were not explored in the consultation. Awarding bodies or exam boards had the highest proportion of respondents who said there were additional activities not already identified (43% of respondents), followed by other respondents (20%). On the other hand, school and college staff were the most likely to have said there were no other additional activities not identified (91% of respondents answering “no”). Two exam boards recognised to offer GCSE, AS and A levels responded “yes” to this question, while two responded “no”.

There were 728 responses to this question. The majority of responses did not directly address the question and instead used the opportunity to flag issues that respondents thought were not covered sufficiently elsewhere in the consultation. The summary below therefore focuses initially on the minority of responses that were clearly in scope and then summarises some of the other issues raised even where they were out of scope of this specific question.

One common theme (and the most frequent theme raised by school and college staff) was whether the full cost implications for teachers had been identified, including time required to adjust practice materials, time spent updating teaching plans and increased stress due to uncertainty around proposed changes. There were concerns that arrangements in 2020 and 2021 created significant additional unpaid work for teachers and that all changes create additional workloads.

“The cost of the TAG process in terms of photocopying and making resources to schools and individual departments. The impact of workload for teachers. I had marked and moderated 888 scripts in 4 weeks this year with no additional time nor money (as I would have when I mark externally for the exam boards). This had massive impact on workload, stress and on my other students. This amounted to almost a fortnight's teaching time marking in addition to normal timetabled lessons. Also, no time was given for all the TAG administration which had to be done in lunchtimes and after school.” (Teacher)

“Replanning schemes of work and planning of the year outline, mock exam content and revision.” (Teacher)

“New planning and re-sequencing of curriculum will add to teacher workloads.” (Teacher)

“We will need to put on additional classes and revision classes to help support our pupils to complete the course and revise effectively as we will not have time during the normal school lessons.” (School or college)

Respondents across all respondent types (especially parents and students) were concerned about a lack of information regarding arrangements for exams missed due to students contracting COVID-19 or having to self-isolate at the time of exams. This was raised both as an additional source of costs and as a concern that respondents felt was not addressed elsewhere in the consultation.

“Contingency plan in case students are unable to sit exams, either as a whole cohort, school or individual level.” (School or college)

“Students should be allowed to take assessments at various points throughout the year in case they get COVID-19/have to isolate/schools have to close rather than sitting 9 subject exams in one month. Plan a contingency if exams don't go ahead and tell teachers in September what the contingency plan is.” (Teacher)

“Pupils could be ill for all the exams of a particular A level e.g. drama has only one exam.” (Parent or carer)

## **What, if any, additional costs do you expect you would incur if the proposed changes to the exam and assessment arrangements were introduced for summer 2022?**

There were 545 responses to this question. Respondents raised a number of different costs that could potentially be incurred due to the proposed changes for 2022 exams and/or the potential for ongoing disruption caused by the pandemic, though almost no respondents provided monetary estimates of these costs.

All four exam boards recognised to offer GCSE, AS and A levels responded to this question. Three out of four exam boards brought up the costs of printing additional hard-copy materials for exams (including material incorporated within question papers or as a separate resource for use during exams). One exam board also highlighted a range of potential additional costs:

- Deciding, authoring and communicating advance information (including additional support to centres in understanding advanced information – both proactive and reactive support).
- Changing papers from ‘normal’ to adapted and communicating these changes
- Communicating arrangements to teachers and other stakeholders and providing the necessary support to queries etc.

This exam board also said that communication costs were likely to be incurred regardless of the proposed changes, as it was important for exam centres to understand what version of exams and assessments to expect in 2022.

Another exam board noted there might be increases in fixed costs for subjects with optionality, which would lead to the introduction of more components. In addition to the costs of printing, this exam

board stated that there would be additional staff and resource costs to ensure compliance with the proposed changes and the total cost for this was not yet clear.

“We would need additional resources to deliver all the changes proposed, which would incur additional staff and associate costs. We are currently working through the needs and costs in each of these areas.” (Awarding body or exam board)

The third exam board focused on the costs of producing, quality assuring and communicating advance information for relevant exams.

“There would be additional costs associated with the production and quality assurance of advance notices accessible to all stakeholders prior to publication on our website. There are also costs associated with checking proposed advance notices align with the assessments which have already been prepared for 2022, and potentially of amending those assessments where necessary.” (Awarding body or exam board)

The fourth exam board also discussed the costs of producing advance information on a relatively short timeline, in addition to the sunk costs of assessment content already produced.

“We will incur additional cost to a normal series in producing the advanced notice, as this is not something we would usually produce for all qualifications listed. This will involve costs including content production and printing, amongst other. We will also need to write off any costs relating to assessment content already produced and intended to be delivered in Summer 2022, where it is not possible to use this content in full.” (Awarding body or exam board)

This exam board also stated that any changes to the timetabling or scheduling of exams or results that followed from the proposed changes would impact the cost of marking and the number of examiners required.

Teachers as well as schools and colleges discussed the expected increased costs of photocopying additional materials (such as formulae sheets) throughout the year. Teachers and Senior Leadership Team (SLT) members also brought up the costs of potential revision resources and the time required to adapt mock exams to cover the relevant material specified in advance information.

“Photocopying as old past papers could not be used as practice in the same way as usual.” (Teacher)

“Possible additional mock assessments so that students are familiar with the format. This means additional invigilation costs. Depending on how early decisions are released, we may face additional supply teacher costs depending on the extent to which staff are supported to manage with confidence and knowledge. Staff and students have been phenomenal this year, but that level of intensity has costs and late release of decisions add to the costs.” (Senior Leadership Team)

Parents and carers, schools and colleges, teachers and students pointed out the need for additional revision sessions (usually after school) or external tutoring to help students catch-up from lost learning time or reinforce knowledge taught remotely. Along similar lines, many teachers and students cited the costs to students’ and teachers’ physical and mental health due to uncertainties around exams and the stress of falling behind from self-isolation.

“I already feel we will incur costs as we are needing to look at tutors to help bridge the gap, this is unfair as we cannot afford to do this for every GCSE subject and feel our son would have performed much better in regular circumstances without getting tutors.” (Parent or carer)

“Largely it is the stress on the students with the risk of further isolations to occur and the impact on their mental wellbeing. I believe this will have a higher cost to the government because of the effect it will have on many people if exams occur instead of undertaking TAGs.” (School or college)

“The costs would only be in time. We would need to run many extra revision sessions after school to ensure that our students (from a deprived area who have been impacted by being less able to participate in live online lessons and are further behind than their more affluent counterparts) are able to catch up.” (Teacher)

Finally, a number of teachers and SLT members expressed disappointment that exam boards had charged schools and colleges the same fees while not delivering the same level of services and support as before the pandemic. Several respondents discussed how the responsibilities usually carried out by exam boards had been taken up by teachers (without compensation) as a result from moving from exams to TAGs. However, many of these responses were submitted before exam boards announced rebates to schools for 2021.

“It will again fall on teacher time if exam boards are not required to provide additional sample materials. It should be obvious from the media and school reaction this year that exam boards have continued to take the same fees they always do for doing half the work. It would be good to see them step up and provide sample materials that are new rather than simply re-offer the same question.” (Senior Leadership Team)

“Exam boards did not produce any materials, digitally or printed, and they did not mark them. They did not pay any examiners for their time. They can offset any additional costs from this year.” (Teacher)

### **Do you have any suggestions for alternative approaches that could reduce burden and costs?**

There were 556 responses to this question. Respondents across all respondent types stressed the importance of prompt decision-making and communication of decisions regarding exams to schools, colleges and teachers to allow ample time for planning and preparation and to reduce uncertainty. A few respondents also mentioned that providing additional support to students (for example, through tutoring and providing them with teaching resources) throughout the school year can reduce the burden to them caused by the pandemic.

“Keep the whole process within schools with better assessment materials provided by the exam boards.” (Parent or carer)

“More guidance is needed from exam boards, but Ofqual needs to ensure that this guidance is released at the same time, is prepared in the same way and does not incur more costs.” (Senior Leadership Team)

“DfE or exam boards should provide amendments/new specification content as printed material that could be handed out to all teaching staff and students.” (Teacher)

“More free online exam question banks for schools to use to make mock papers in class tests.” (Teacher)

A few respondents also mentioned that providing additional support to students (for example, through tutoring and providing them with teaching resources) throughout the school year can reduce the burden to them caused by the pandemic.

“It would be great to have textbooks to help us outside of class to get more work done. Although the current year 11s have had a much harder struggle with their GCSEs than us, it doesn't mean we aren't affected and have lost out on a lot of learning and lessons. There should be small things in place like another lesson after or before school or tutoring by teachers which can be done by asking politely but should be done more often. Even just giving online resources, which are easy to access, will help us a lot.” (Student)

The majority of responses to this question were beyond the scope of the consultation proposals. Among these responses, the most common theme (particularly among students and parents or carers) was a suggestion to cancel exams for 2022 and replacing them with TAGs. On the other hand, a small number of schools and colleges, SLT members and teachers expressed concerns about TAGs and argued they should not be considered as a contingency plan for summer 2022.

“Instead of TAGs, there should be short common standardised tests regularly throughout the year, set and marked by exam boards.” (Senior Leadership Team)

Some respondents also suggested adopting a hybrid system including TAGs and exams to ensure fairness and reduce the burden on teachers, while others proposed revising the existing system to introduce new approaches to carrying out exams. Most of these respondents indicated these changes should be applied to summer 2022 exams and assessments.

“I would recommend using TAG to supplement the grades achieved in exams. This would enable a hybrid system which would support all students from various backgrounds and support the mental health of the students too.” (Teacher)

“A combination of TAG and external exam would be the fairest means of protecting this cohort of student from being unfairly disadvantaged in comparison with the previous two-year groups. The TAG element could be treated in the same way as non-exam assessment (marked internally, with exam board moderation) and used to form 25%/30%/50% of the overall grade. Whilst this would not reduce costs, it would help to make the approach fair for this year group and would mitigate against issues during the main exam period as students would then be likely to have the 25% minimum assessment for a special considerations award.” (Exams Officer)

“A combination of results in informal assessments and assessments throughout the 2/3 years students have studied for their GCSE/ A level examinations as well as TAGs. The situation of an exam hall adds significant pressure to the student, especially those who have missed valuable experience of exams and are not accustomed to this environment. If exams were completed in classrooms this would relieve this pressure.” (Student)

However, a small number of respondents expressed a desire to consider possible long-term reforms to the assessment of General Qualifications.

“Time to consider how students are assessed, modular assessments rather than end of course exams must be the way forward.” (Parent or carer)

Other responses included further modifying exams (such as offering more choice on exams or providing schools and colleges with the flexibility to drop topics based on individual circumstances) to help mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on students' learning.

“Reduce content for all GCSEs, A level, and AS subjects, instead of trying not to. Reduce content to be assessed by around 30% to make up for this entire first year of academic disruption for Year 10s and 12s. Shorten the exams, make the questions within the exam easier so that students who have not received the same quality of education as previous peers pre-COVID-19 aren't disadvantaged.” (Student)

“We are particularly concerned about those students in poorly performing or struggling centres who will have been taught less curriculum content and in total will have had significantly fewer teaching and learning opportunities than their peers from more advantaged contexts. We do not believe that it is fair to base arrangements for this year on the assumption that all students will have covered the whole curriculum by the time exams are taken next summer, when it is clear that this is unlikely to be the case. A smaller core curriculum should be identified and provided

to schools as quickly as possible so they can plan their teaching accordingly. This would also reduce the burden, on both students and teachers, of covering content that will not be assessed.” (University or higher education institution)

“Exam boards should set papers with multiple question options and schools can decide which questions to answer, or exam boards can liaise with schools to determine the topics to be examined and have different exam papers in different schools, with the burden of moderating on the exam boards as normal.” (School or college)

“Allowing more choice of questions or for a section to be missed out. Simple and easy to apply although allowing a choice of question would mean some rewriting of the instructions on the paper.” (Teacher)

A number of respondents commented on the costs of producing Teacher Assessed Grades in summer 2021 when exams were cancelled.



# Appendix

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**Table A1. Number of respondents by type<sup>5</sup>**

<b>Respondent type</b>	<b>Number of respondents</b>
Academy chain	102
Awarding body or exam board	7
Awarding organisation employee	11
Consultant	13
Employer	11
Examiner	47
Exams officer or manager	61
Governor	14
Local Authority	25
Parent or carer	1,243
Private training provider	12
Senior Leadership Team	374
School or college	390
Student	1,434
Student (private, home-educated of any age)	59
Teacher (responding in a personal capacity)	2,822
University or higher education institution	5
Other	59
Other representative or interest group	36
<b>Total number of respondents</b>	<b>6,725</b>

<sup>5</sup> Respondents to the consultation self-identified the group they belonged to.

## Breakdown of the responses for each question<sup>6</sup>

**To what extent do you agree or disagree that centres should have some choice of topics on which their students will answer questions for GCSE English literature exams in 2022?**

Responses	Count	Percentage
Strongly agree	4,187	69%
Agree	1,140	19%
Neither agree nor disagree	585	10%
Disagree	79	1%
Strongly disagree	56	1%
<b>Total responses</b>	<b>6,047</b>	

**To what extent do you agree or disagree that centres should have some choice of topics on which their students will answer questions for GCSE history exams in 2022?**

Responses	Count	Percentage
Strongly agree	3,912	67%
Agree	1,059	18%
Neither agree nor disagree	735	13%
Disagree	65	1%
Strongly disagree	95	2%
<b>Total responses</b>	<b>5,866</b>	

<sup>6</sup> Percentages in the response tables presented in this section might not add up to 100 due to rounding.

**To what extent do you agree or disagree that centres should have some choice of topics on which their students will answer questions for GCSE ancient history exams in 2022?**

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Strongly agree	3,280	58%
Agree	1,030	18%
Neither agree nor disagree	1,200	21%
Disagree	46	1%
Strongly disagree	96	2%
<b>Total responses</b>	<b>5,652</b>	

**To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should allow centres to have some choice of content on which their students will answer questions in GCSE geography, on the lines set out in Annex B?**

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Strongly agree	3,838	65%
Agree	1,080	18%
Neither agree nor disagree	810	14%
Disagree	106	2%
Strongly disagree	113	2%
<b>Total responses</b>	<b>5,947</b>	



**To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should carry forward into academic year 2021 to 2022 the arrangements in place for 2021 to 2022, that allow centres to deliver practical work in GCSE biology, chemistry, physics, combined science, geology and astronomy, AS level biology, chemistry, physics and geology, and AS and A level environmental science by demonstration?**

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Strongly agree	3,031	52%
Agree	1,327	23%
Neither agree nor disagree	938	16%
Disagree	321	5%
Strongly disagree	240	4%
<b>Total responses</b>	<b>5,857</b>	

**To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should carry forward from academic year 2020 to 2021 into academic year 2021 to 2022 the arrangements that allow centres to assess the CPAC across the minimum number of practical activities required to enable students to demonstrate their competence in A level biology, chemistry, physics and geology?**

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Strongly agree	2,933	52%
Agree	1,171	21%
Neither agree nor disagree	1,342	24%
Disagree	94	2%
Strongly disagree	102	2%
<b>Total responses</b>	<b>5,642</b>	

**To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should carry forward from academic year 2020 to 2021 into academic year 2021 to 2022 the arrangements to allow the remote monitoring of centres' application of CPAC?**

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Strongly agree	2,478	46%
Agree	1,163	22%
Neither agree nor disagree	1,523	28%
Disagree	125	2%
Strongly disagree	92	2%
<b>Total responses</b>	<b>5,381</b>	

**To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should carry forward from academic year 2020 to 2021 into academic year 2021 to 2022 the arrangements to remove (where applicable) the exam board set task in GCSE, AS and A level art and design?**

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Strongly agree	2,814	51%
Agree	968	17%
Neither agree nor disagree	1,447	26%
Disagree	183	3%
Strongly disagree	130	2%
<b>Total responses</b>	<b>5,542</b>	

**To what extent do you agree or disagree that exam boards should provide advance information about the focus of the content of exams for the majority of GCSE, AS and A level subjects?**

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Strongly agree	4,788	73%
Agree	1,085	17%
Neither agree nor disagree	264	4%
Disagree	224	3%
Strongly disagree	170	3%
<b>Total responses</b>	<b>6,531</b>	

**To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should be flexible in the timing of the release of advance information in order to respond to the impact on education of any potential worsening of the pandemic?**

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Strongly agree	4,082	62%
Agree	1,285	20%
Neither agree nor disagree	344	5%
Disagree	430	7%
Strongly disagree	405	6%
<b>Total responses</b>	<b>6,546</b>	

**To what extent do you agree or disagree that for GCSE English literature, where we propose that centres should have some choice of topics on which their students will answer questions, the exam boards should not provide advance information about the focus of the content of exams in addition?**

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Strongly agree	2,086	36%
Agree	1,117	19%
Neither agree nor disagree	1,142	20%
Disagree	699	12%
Strongly disagree	721	13%
<b>Total responses</b>	<b>5,765</b>	

**To what extent do you agree or disagree that for GCSE history, where we propose that centres should have some choice of topics on which their students will answer questions, the exam boards should not provide advance information about the focus of the content of exams in addition?**

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Strongly agree	1,805	32%
Agree	1,035	18%
Neither agree nor disagree	1,391	25%
Disagree	669	12%
Strongly disagree	695	12%
<b>Total responses</b>	<b>5,595</b>	



**To what extent do you agree or disagree that for GCSE ancient history, where we propose that centres should have some choice of topics on which their students will answer questions, the exam boards should not provide advance information about the focus of the content of exams in addition?**

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Strongly agree	1,527	29%
Agree	878	17%
Neither agree nor disagree	1,810	34%
Disagree	528	10%
Strongly disagree	555	10%
<b>Total responses</b>	<b>5,298</b>	

**To what extent do you agree or disagree that for GCSE geography, where we propose that centres should have some choice of content on which their students will answer questions, the exam boards should not provide advance information about the focus of the content of exams in addition?**

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Strongly agree	1,709	30%
Agree	1,053	19%
Neither agree nor disagree	1,435	25%
Disagree	698	12%
Strongly disagree	779	14%
<b>Total responses</b>	<b>5,674</b>	



**Are there any GCSE subjects for which advance information about the focus of the content of exams should NOT be given to students in advance of the exam?**

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Mathematics	356	33%
English language	236	22%
MFL (French, German, Spanish, Chinese, Italian, Russian)	158	15%
Dance	140	13%
Drama	140	13%
Food prep and nutrition	103	9%
Music	95	9%
Biblical Hebrew	89	8%
Religious studies	87	8%
Biology	77	7%
Citizenship studies	76	7%
Chemistry	72	7%
Other MFL (Arabic, Japanese, Modern Greek, Urdu, Gujarati, Persian, / Portuguese, Turkish)	70	6%
Business	70	6%
Physical education	68	6%
Astronomy	65	6%
Physics	65	6%
Combined science	59	5%
Computer science	56	5%
Design and technology	54	5%
Classical Greek	50	5%
Latin	47	4%
Film studies	46	4%
Physical education (short course)	43	4%
Statistics	37	3%

Media studies	31	3%
Sociology	29	3%
Psychology	23	2%
Economics	19	2%
Engineering	16	1%
Classical civilisation	15	1%
Geology	10	1%
Electronics	4	0%
<b>Total responses</b>	<b>1,085</b>	

**Are there any AS subjects for which advance information about the focus of the content of exams should NOT be given to students in advance of the exam?**

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Mathematics	132	27%
Dance	85	18%
Further mathematics	66	14%
Chemistry	64	13%
Biology	61	13%
Drama and theatre	50	10%
English language	49	10%
Film studies	49	10%
Accounting	48	10%
MFL (French, German, Spanish)	43	9%
Physics	43	9%
Classical civilisation	41	9%
Classical Greek	40	8%
Media studies	37	8%
Design and technology	31	6%
Physical education	30	6%

Statistics	29	6%
Music	29	6%
Ancient history	28	6%
Economics	26	5%
English language and literature	25	5%
Latin	23	5%
Electronics	22	5%
English literature	22	5%
Computer science	19	4%
Business	17	4%
History	17	4%
Religious studies	17	4%
Music technology	16	3%
Sociology	13	3%
Politics	11	2%
Environmental science	11	2%
Law	10	2%
Psychology	10	2%
Geography	9	2%
Philosophy	6	1%
Geology	3	1%
<b>Total responses</b>	<b>482</b>	

**Are there any A level subjects for which advance information about the focus of the content of exams should NOT be given to students in advance of the exam?**

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Mathematics	170	30%
Dance	100	18%
Further mathematics	78	14%
Chemistry	75	13%
Biology	69	12%
Physics	55	10%
Biblical Hebrew	51	9%
Drama and theatre	51	9%
English language	47	8%
MFL with speaking (French, German, Spanish, Chinese, Italian, Russian)	44	8%
Film studies	41	7%
English literature	39	7%
Accounting	37	7%
Classical civilisation	36	6%
Economics	34	6%
Classical Greek	33	6%
English language and literature	33	6%
Statistics	33	6%
Music	27	5%
History	27	5%
Business	27	5%
Physical education	25	4%
Media studies	24	4%
Ancient history	24	4%
Design and technology	23	4%
Psychology	20	4%

Politics	18	3%
Electronics	17	3%
Sociology	16	3%
Geography	16	3%
Latin	16	3%
Computer science	15	3%
History of art	15	3%
MFL without speaking (Arabic, Bengali, Greek, Gujarati, Japanese, Modern Hebrew, Panjabi, Persian, Polish, Portuguese, Turkish and Urdu)	14	2%
Religious studies	11	2%
Law	10	2%
Music technology	8	1%
Environmental science	6	1%
Philosophy	5	1%
Geology	5	1%
<b>Total responses</b>	<b>566</b>	

**To what extent do you agree or disagree that a formulae sheet should be provided in the exam room for GCSE mathematics in 2022?**

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Strongly agree	3,662	62%
Agree	1,091	19%
Neither agree nor disagree	781	13%
Disagree	219	4%
Strongly disagree	126	2%
<b>Total responses</b>	<b>5,879</b>	

**To what extent do you agree or disagree that a revised equation sheet covering all relevant equations should be provided in the exam room for GCSE physics and combined science in 2022?**

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Strongly agree	3,650	63%
Agree	1,075	19%
Neither agree nor disagree	752	13%
Disagree	193	3%
Strongly disagree	128	2%
<b>Total responses</b>	<b>5,798</b>	

**Are there other potential equality impacts that we have not explored?**

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	1,204	18%
No	5,520	82%
<b>Total responses</b>	<b>6,724</b>	

**Are there additional activities associated with changing the exam and assessment arrangements for students taking GCSE, AS and A level qualifications in summer 2022 that we have not identified above?**

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	829	12%
No	5,895	88%
<b>Total responses</b>	<b>6,724</b>	

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