



## Developing new GCSEs, AS and A level qualifications for first teaching in 2017

### Analysis of the consultation on assessment arrangements

#### Part 2 of 3

Second draft report (second edition)  
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## Executive summary

### Background

From 10 September to 5 November 2015, Ofqual undertook a consultation on *Developing new GCSE, AS and A level qualifications* for first teaching in 2017. This was the second in a series of three consultations and covered the following subjects and qualifications:

- Reformed GCSEs: ancient history; classical civilisation; electronics; film studies; media studies and statistics; and
- Reformed A levels and AS qualifications: accounting; ancient history; archaeology; classical civilisation; electronics; film studies; law; media studies and statistics.

Other subjects and qualifications being reformed for first teaching from 2017 were subject to separate consultations in 2015. A list of these subjects is presented in Appendix 2.

The consultation sought views and feedback on the proposed assessment arrangements (exam and/or non-exam based as appropriate), assessment objectives, and whether GCSEs in these subjects should be tiered. It also sought feedback on the equality impact of the proposals in relation to individuals who share a protected characteristic<sup>1</sup>.

Following a tendering process, Pye Tait Consulting was contracted by Ofqual to undertake the analysis of responses to this consultation. Responses were logged by Ofqual and handed over to Pye Tait Consulting for impartial analysis and anonymous reporting in line with the Data Protection Act 1998 and Market Research Society (MRS) Code of Conduct.

Ofqual invited responses through a variety of media, including submission of an online, electronic or paper copy of the completed consultation questionnaire; via email or other hard copy correspondence.

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<sup>1</sup> Protected characteristics include: Age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion and belief; sex; and sexual orientation.

## Overview of Responses

In total, 152 valid consultation responses were analysed to inform this report, of which 148 (97%) were received in the form of completed questionnaires and four as free-format letters and/or supporting correspondence.

- Response levels vary considerably for each subject, ranging from six respondents (GCSE ancient history) to 59 respondents (AS and A level media studies);
- The majority of respondents (70%) provided personal (individual) views and the remainder (30%) provided official (organisation-level) views;
- Of the 106 personal responses received, the majority (82%) are from teachers, 11% from education specialists and the remainder from students and other individuals; and
- Of the 46 organisation-level responses received, more than half (59%) are from schools or colleges, 30% from representative bodies, 9% from awarding organisations and 2% from academy chains.

Further information about the profile of respondents is provided in Appendix 1.

### Key Findings

- Based on responses to the Likert-scale questions ('strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree'), the majority of respondents are in agreement with Ofqual's proposals with respect to the majority of subjects. These findings, however, should be treated with caution given the considerable differences in base respondent numbers per subject.
- Most respondents generally support Ofqual's proposals not to tier these subjects, with the main arguments being that this will open up opportunities for all students to achieve the best possible grades and that there is already a successful track record of these subjects not having been tiered in the past.
- The most common area of disagreement relates to Ofqual's proposals to reduce the proportion of non-exam assessment for certain subjects following their reform.
- Subjects where there is greatest concern associated with reducing the proportion of non-exam assessment include film studies and media studies at

all levels (GCSE, AS and A level), as well as GCSE statistics. The main cause for objection to Ofqual's proposals is that these subjects involve a great deal of practical work which is best suited to non-exam assessment, in turn supporting students in their onward progression to higher education and employment.

- For the above-mentioned subjects, personal responses from teachers, as well as official responses from subject associations, are the main sources of objection to these proposals.
- A number of specific suggestions have been given for enhancing the assessment objectives in certain subjects – primarily by awarding organisations and subject associations. These are set out in the main body of the report.
- Comments on the equality impact of Ofqual's proposals principally focused on the need to ensure sufficient provisions are in place to support students with mental health and learning disabilities such as dyslexia, specifically where exam-based assessments can prove more challenging than coursework.

In the remainder of this section, a mixture of numbers and percentages are used to describe the breakdown of respondents. Numbers are used for subjects that attracted fewer than ten responses, while percentages are used in all other cases.

## **AS and A level accounting**

Seven respondents provided views in relation to AS and A level accounting. Most (six) agree that both qualifications should be assessed entirely by exams, with one disagreeing.

All respondents consider the proposed assessment objectives to be appropriate. There is also general favourability towards the proposed weightings of these objectives, with five out of seven respondents in agreement at AS and A level.

## **GCSE ancient history**

Based on the views of six respondents, half (three) agree that GCSEs in ancient history should be assessed entirely by exams, while two disagree. Four agree that there should be an assessment of learners' spelling, punctuation, grammar and specialist terminology, and the same number also agreeing that the subject should not be tiered.

Most respondents (five) feel that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate. Half (three) agree with the weightings given to these objectives, while the remainder neither agree nor disagree.

## **AS and A level ancient history**

Thirteen respondents provided views on the assessment of AS and A levels in ancient history. Almost all (93%) agree that both of these qualifications should be assessed entirely by exams.

Half of respondents (50%) believe that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate, while 25% disagree. Views are also divided around the proposed weightings of these objectives, with 41% in agreement at AS level and 50% in agreement at A level. In both cases 41% disagree.

## **AS and A level archaeology**

Based on the views of 12 respondents, almost all (92%) agree that AS qualifications in archaeology should be assessed entirely by exams. For the A level, 58% agree with the proposed split of exam and non-exam assessment, while a third (33%) disagree.

Most respondents (90%) feel that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate. Almost three quarters (73%) agree with the proposed weightings of these objectives at both AS and A level, with 18% disagreeing.

## **GCSE classical civilisation**

Fifteen respondents provided views in relation to GCSEs in classical civilisation. A third (33%) agree with Ofqual's proposal that the subject should be assessed entirely by exams, while 40% are ambivalent and 27% disagree. A third (33%) also agree that the subject should not be tiered, with 40% disagreeing on this issue.

The majority of respondents (80%) believe that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate and two thirds (66%) agree with the proposed weightings of these objectives.

## **AS and A level classical civilisation**

Based on the views of 22 respondents, the majority agree that AS and A level qualifications in classical civilisation should be assessed entirely by exams (87% agree at AS level and 73% at A level).

Almost two thirds (64%) feel that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate at both levels, while 23% disagree. In terms of the proposed weightings of these objectives, 73% agree that they are appropriate at AS level and 82% agree at A level.

## **GCSE electronics**

Eight respondents provided views on the proposed assessment arrangements for GCSE electronics. The majority (five) agree with the proposed split of exam and non-exam assessment, with three disagreeing. Five also agree that the subject not be tiered, while two disagree.

Most respondents (seven) feel that the proposed assessment objectives, as well as the proposed weightings of those objectives, are appropriate.

## **AS and A level electronics**

A total of 12 respondents provided views on assessment arrangements for AS and A level electronics. Two thirds (67%) agree with the proposed split of exam and non-exam assessment for the AS qualification, while 17% disagree. With respect to the A level, a slightly higher proportion (75%) agree with the proposed split of exam and non-exam assessment, however 25% disagree.

The majority (73%) consider the proposed assessment objectives to be appropriate for both qualifications. Three quarters (75%) agree with the proposed weightings of these objectives at AS level, extending to 83% at A level.

## **GCSE film studies**

Ofqual's proposals for the assessment of GCSE film studies attracted 25 responses. The majority (80%) disagree with the proposed split of exam and non-exam assessment, with 60% in strong disagreement. Just over three quarters (76%) agree that the subject should not be tiered.

More than half of respondents (54%) disagree that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate, while 41% agree. More than two thirds (68%) also disagree with the proposed weightings of these objectives (24% agree).

## **AS and A level film studies**

A total of 37 respondents provided views in relation to AS and A level film studies. The majority (81%) disagree with the proposed split of exam and non-exam

assessment at AS level, while 14% agree. The findings are similar with respect to the A level, with 78% expressing disagreement and 17% in agreement.

Views are divided as to whether the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate at both AS and A level (45% disagree and 38% agree). More than half of respondents (52%) disagree with the proposed weightings of these objectives at AS level and 54% disagree at A level.

## **AS and A level law**

Based on the views of 14 respondents, 71% agree that AS and A levels in law should be assessed entirely by exams (21% disagree).

The majority (85%) believe that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate at both levels. More than three quarters (77%) agree with the proposed weightings of these objectives at AS level and 85% agree at A level.

## **GCSE media studies**

Ofqual's proposals for the assessment of GCSE media studies attracted 42 responses. The majority (88%) disagree with the proposed split of exam and non-exam assessment (57% strongly disagree). Most (71%) agree that the subject should not be tiered.

There are mixed views as to whether the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate (48% agree and 31% disagree). More than two thirds (68%) disagree with the proposed weightings of these objectives, while 27% agree.

## **AS and A level media studies**

A total of 59 respondents provided views in relation to AS and level media studies. The majority (84%) disagree with the proposed split of exam and non-exam assessment (only 10% agree). The findings are similar with respect to the A level (85% disagree and 9% agree).

Slightly more than half of respondents (53%) feel that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate at both AS and A level (30% disagree). Views are divided as to whether the proposed weightings of these objectives are appropriate. Approximately half (51%) disagree at AS level, compared with 37% who agree. Similarly, 53% disagree at A level, compared with 35% who agree.

## **GCSE statistics**

Based on the views of 17 respondents, more than half (53%) disagree that GCSEs in statistics should be assessed entirely by exams, compared with 42% who agree. The majority (82%) agree that the subject should be tiered in line with Ofqual's proposal.

Respondents are generally favourable towards the proposed assessment objectives, with the majority (60%) in agreement that they are appropriate compared with 20% who disagree. Similarly, 57% agree with the proposed weightings of these objectives, compared with 32% who disagree.

## **AS and A level statistics**

Thirteen respondents provided views with respect to AS and A level statistics. Among these, the majority (62%) agree that both qualifications should be assessed entirely by exams. This compares with 31% who disagree at AS level and 37% who disagree at A level.

More than half of respondents (59%) agree that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate at AS and A level, although there are mixed views concerning the proposed weightings of these objectives. At AS level, half (50%) disagree, compared with 33% who agree. At A level, 42% disagree, compared with 41% who agree.

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Background and context

In February 2013 the Secretary of State for Education initiated reform of GCSE, AS and A level qualifications.

The reform of GCSEs is intended to make them more challenging so pupils are better prepared for further academic or vocational study, or for work. They should also provide a basis for schools and colleges to be held accountable for the performance of their students<sup>2</sup>.

The reform of AS and A levels is to make sure they properly equip students for higher education and to provide a strong foundation for onward employment. Post-16 courses of study aim to be internationally comparable in developing knowledge, skills and understanding<sup>3</sup>.

Ofqual is responsible for ensuring that the reformed GCSE, AS and A level qualifications are of the right standard and have regard to Government policy aims. GCSE and AS/A level qualifications are being reformed in three phases. The first phase will begin teaching in September 2015, the second phase from September 2016 and the third phase from September 2017.

The third phase includes 13 GCSEs, one GCSE short course and 16 AS/A level qualifications which will begin first teaching in September 2017. The first AS awards for these qualifications will take place in summer 2018 and the first GCSE and A level awards will be given in summer 2019. A full list of these subjects and qualifications is presented in Appendix 2.

Ofqual hosted three public policy consultations in 2015 relating to the phase three qualifications<sup>4</sup>. Each consultation covered a specific tranche of subjects and sought views on assessment arrangements (including exam and/or non-exam based assessment, as appropriate), assessment objectives, and whether the GCSEs in these subjects should be tiered. Ofqual also sought feedback on the equality impact of the proposals in relation to individuals who share a protected characteristic<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/reforming-qualifications-and-the-curriculum-to-better-prepare-pupils-for-life-after-school/supporting-pages/gcse-reform>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/reforming-qualifications-and-the-curriculum-to-better-prepare-pupils-for-life-after-school/supporting-pages/a-and-as-level-reform>

<sup>4</sup> Live dates for Ofqual's consultations covering the phase three subjects and qualifications: Consultation 1 – live from 16<sup>th</sup> July to 24<sup>th</sup> September 2015; consultation 2 – live 10<sup>th</sup> September until 5<sup>th</sup> November 2015; consultation 3 – live from 29<sup>th</sup> October until 4<sup>th</sup> January 2016.

<sup>5</sup> Protected characteristics are as follows: Age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion and belief; sex; and sexual orientation.

This report relates to the second tranche of the phase three qualifications:

- Reformed GCSEs: ancient history; classical civilisation; electronics; film studies; media studies and statistics; and
- Reformed A levels and AS qualifications: accounting; ancient history; archaeology; classical civilisation; electronics; film studies; law; media studies and statistics.

Other subjects and qualifications being reformed for first teaching from 2017 were subject to separate consultations in 2015. A list of these subjects is presented in Appendix 2.

The findings of this consultation will inform Ofqual's decisions on the structure and assessment of these qualifications.

The Department for Education (DfE) is leading on the development of subject content, with Higher Education Institutes (HEIs). The DfE has therefore conducted a separate consultation on the subject content for these qualifications.

Ofqual plans to consult separately on the technical regulatory requirements that exam boards wishing to design, deliver and award these qualifications must meet. It is intended that the exam boards will develop new qualifications in the subjects listed above ready for first teaching by schools and colleges from September 2017. The exam boards' specifications, to be taught from that date, should be available to schools and colleges from autumn 2016.

## 1.2 Summary of proposals

This section presents a summary of Ofqual's proposals as part of this consultation. Full details are provided in the consultation document: *Developing new GCSE, AS and A level qualifications for first teaching in 2017 (part 2)*<sup>6</sup>.

### 1.2.1 Changes to assessment arrangements

In order to strike a better balance between exam and non-exam assessment, Ofqual proposes three main changes to the way reformed qualifications in these subjects should be assessed:

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<sup>6</sup> The consultation document is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/developing-new-gcse-as-and-a-levels-for-first-teaching-in-2017>

1. To define the percentage of marks to be allocated to exam and non-exam assessment, removing or reducing any current flexibility and promoting comparability between exam boards;
2. To reduce or maintain the proportion of non-exam assessment that has been previously permitted in GCSEs, AS and A levels; and
3. To remove non-exam assessment from subjects where the content can be assessed by exam.

Where non-exam assessments are used, Ofqual will work with the exam boards to make sure that appropriate and robust arrangements are put in place. These will include the introduction of external marking where practical, strengthening the moderation of teacher marking where that is used, and other measures aimed at reducing incidents of malpractice.

### **1.2.2 Changes to assessment objectives**

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

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

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

- Fulfil their core purpose of describing the abilities that a student taking the relevant qualification should be required to demonstrate;
- Specify only the abilities that students should be required to demonstrate, not the content itself;
- Relate to each qualification as a whole, and so address the full range and balance of abilities that are relevant;

- Are sufficiently precise and detailed that they can be used consistently for setting and evaluating assessments;
- Provide a degree of flexibility in their application to enable alternative approaches where these are legitimate; and
- Promote progression between GCSEs, AS and A levels.

### **1.2.3 Tiering of GCSEs**

Ofqual previously confirmed that new GCSEs should only be tiered where a single set of assessments cannot, in a valid and manageable way, assess students across the full ability range<sup>7</sup>.

## **1.3 Overview of the consultation, analysis and reporting**

### **1.3.1 Acquisition of responses**

The consultation document explained the proposed assessment arrangements and featured a questionnaire for individuals or organisations to complete and return. In addition, or as an alternative to completing the questionnaire, Ofqual invited responses via email or letter.

Responses were logged by Ofqual and handed over to Pye Tait Consulting for impartial analysis and anonymous reporting in line with the Data Protection Act 1998 and Market Research Society (MRS) Code of Conduct.

Responses were received in a combination of ways, including:

- Completion of an online version of the consultation questionnaire;
- Submission of an electronic copy (Word/PDF) or printed copy of the consultation questionnaire;
- Email (with or without the enclosure of an electronic copy of the consultation questionnaire in MS Word/PDF format); and
- Letter (with or without the enclosure of a completed hard copy of the consultation questionnaire).

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<sup>7</sup> Ofqual set out the technical issues and arguments for and against tiering as part of its June 2013 consultation on new GCSEs.

The scale and format of consultation responses is presented in Section 2.

### **1.3.2 Analysis and reporting**

This report presents the findings from the formal consultation questionnaire and summarises views and feedback raised via emails and letters. A combination of tables, charts and textual analysis is used to collate and set out the findings.

Chapters 3 to 17 present the findings for each subject in turn. Each chapter begins with a summary of the subject-specific proposals, followed by the Likert-scale question responses in visual chart form (i.e. those questions asked on a scale from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree'). Percentages may not always add up to precisely 100% due to the effect of rounding.

Within each chart, the base number of responses to each question is shown in brackets. It should be noted that base numbers shown in the charts only include responses to the Likert-scale questions and do not take account of any additional free-format responses.

Each chart is followed by a descriptive account of all respondents' views and opinions as they relate to the assessment arrangements for that subject. A selection of quotations is also included to illustrate the main findings.

Given the relatively low volume of responses received for most subjects (see Table 7) cross-tabulations of responses to the Likert-scale questions (e.g. by type of respondent) have not been performed as this would not be sufficiently robust and meaningful. However, the descriptive analysis of respondents' supporting comments does draw these distinctions where possible.

A mixture of numbers and percentages are used to describe the breakdown of respondents. Numbers are used for subjects that attracted fewer than ten responses, while percentages are used in all other cases.

## 2. Summary of consultation responses

### 2.1 Overview

In total, 152 valid consultation responses were analysed to inform this report, of which 148 (97%) were received in the form of completed questionnaires and four as free-format letters.

Response levels for each subject vary considerably, ranging from four respondents (GCSE engineering and GCSE sociology) to 42 respondents (AS and A level design and technology).

The majority of respondents (70%) provided personal (individual) views and the remainder (30%) provided official (organisation-level) views (Table 1).

**Table 1 Personal or official response**

Personal response	106	70%
Official response	46	30%

Base: 152 respondents

Of the 106 personal responses received, the majority (82%) are from teachers, 11% from education specialists and the remainder from students and other individuals (Table 2).

**Table 2 Type of personal respondent**

Student	5	5%
Parent or carer	0	0%
Teacher (but not responding on behalf of a school)	87	82%
Educational specialist	12	11%
Other <sup>8</sup>	2	2%

Base: 106 respondents

Of the 46 organisation-level responses received, more than half (59%) are from schools or colleges, 30% from representative bodies, 9% from awarding organisations and 2% from academy chains (Table 3).

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<sup>8</sup> Types listed as 'other' included a food technologist working within the food industry; as well as a non-qualified teacher fulfilling a lecturing role.

**Table 3 Type of official respondent**

Awarding organisation	4	9%
Local authority	0	0%
School or college	27	59%
Academy chain	1	2%
Private training provider	0	0%
University or other higher education institution	0	0%
Employer	0	0%
Government department, agency or organisation	0	0%
Other representative or interest group	14	30%

Base: 46 respondents

*NB: The four Awarding Organisations that responded are recognised by Ofqual to provide 'general' (as opposed to 'vocational') qualifications.*

Based on 27 official responses from schools and colleges, a mix of school and college 'types' are represented (Table 4).

**Table 4 Type of school or college**

Comprehensive or non-selective academy	10	37%
State selective or selective academy	2	7%
Independent	3	11%
Special school	0	0%
Further education college	1	4%
Sixth form college	11	41%

Base: 27 respondents

Based on 14 responses from representative bodies, more than half (57%) are from subject associations or learned societies (Table 5).

**Table 5 Type of other representative or interest group**

Group of awarding organisations	0	0%
Union	1	7%
Employer or business group	1	7%
Subject association or learned society	8	57%
Equality organisation or group	0	0%
Other <sup>9</sup>	4	29%

Base: 14 respondents

<sup>9</sup> Types self-classified as 'other' included two charities, a professional body and an industry skills council.

Further information about the profile of consultation respondents is presented in Appendix 1.

## 2.1 Responses by subject and qualification

The breakdown of total responses by subject is shown in Table 6. Where one individual/organisation provided a response in relation to more than one subject, each response from the same individual/organisation has been included within the total count per subject.

GCSE, AS and A level qualifications in media studies collectively attracted the highest proportion (33%) of responses.

**Table 6 Total responses by subject and qualification**

<b>Total responses</b>	<b>303</b>	<b>100%</b>
AS and A level accounting	7	2%
GCSE ancient history	6	2%
AS and A level ancient history	13	4%
AS and A level archaeology	12	4%
GCSE classical civilisation	15	5%
AS and A level classical civilisation	23	8%
GCSE electronics	8	3%
AS and A level electronics	12	4%
GCSE film studies	25	8%
AS and A level film studies	37	12%
AS and A level law	14	5%
GCSE media studies	42	14%
AS and A level media studies	59	19%
GCSE statistics	17	6%
AS and A level statistics	13	4%

Table 7 shows the breakdown of total responses by subject and type of official respondent. Table 8 shows the same breakdown by type of personal respondent.

**Table 7 Total responses by subject and type of official respondent**

	<b>Total responses</b>	Awarding organisation	School or college	Academy chain	Other representative or interest group
<b>Total responses</b>	<b>109</b>	26	55	2	26
AS and A level accounting	4	1	2	-	1
GCSE ancient history	2	1	-	-	1
AS and A level ancient history	3	1	1	-	1
AS and A level archaeology	6	1	3	-	2
GCSE classical civilisation	4	1	2	-	1
AS and A level classical civilisation	5	2	2	-	1
GCSE electronics	3	1	1	1	-
AS and A level electronics	5	1	3	1	-
GCSE film studies	12	2	7	-	3
AS and A level film studies	15	2	9	-	4
AS and A level law	5	3	2	-	-
GCSE media studies	12	3	7	-	2
AS and A level media studies	17	3	12	-	2
GCSE statistics	8	3	1	-	4
AS and A level statistics	8	1	3	-	4

**Table 8 Total responses by subject and type of personal respondent**

	<b>Total responses</b>	Student	Teacher (but not responding on behalf of a school)	Educational specialist	Other (please state below)
<b>Total responses</b>	<b>195</b>	15	161	17	2
AS and A level accounting	3	-	2	1	-
GCSE ancient history	4	1	2	1	-
AS and A level ancient history	10	1	8	1	-
AS and A level archaeology	6	1	4	1	-
GCSE classical civilisation	11	-	9	2	-
AS and A level classical civilisation	18	-	15	2	1
GCSE electronics	6	-	6	-	-
AS and A level electronics	8	-	8	-	-
GCSE film studies	13	1	12	-	-
AS and A level film studies	22	1	21	-	-
AS and A level law	9	1	7	-	1
GCSE media studies	30	3	26	1	-
AS and A level media studies	41	4	33	4	-
GCSE statistics	9	1	6	2	-
AS and A level statistics	5	1	2	2	-

## 3. AS and A level accounting

### 3.1 Overview

Ofqual proposes that reformed AS and A levels in accounting should continue to be assessed entirely by exams

The proposed assessment objectives and weightings are presented in Table 9.

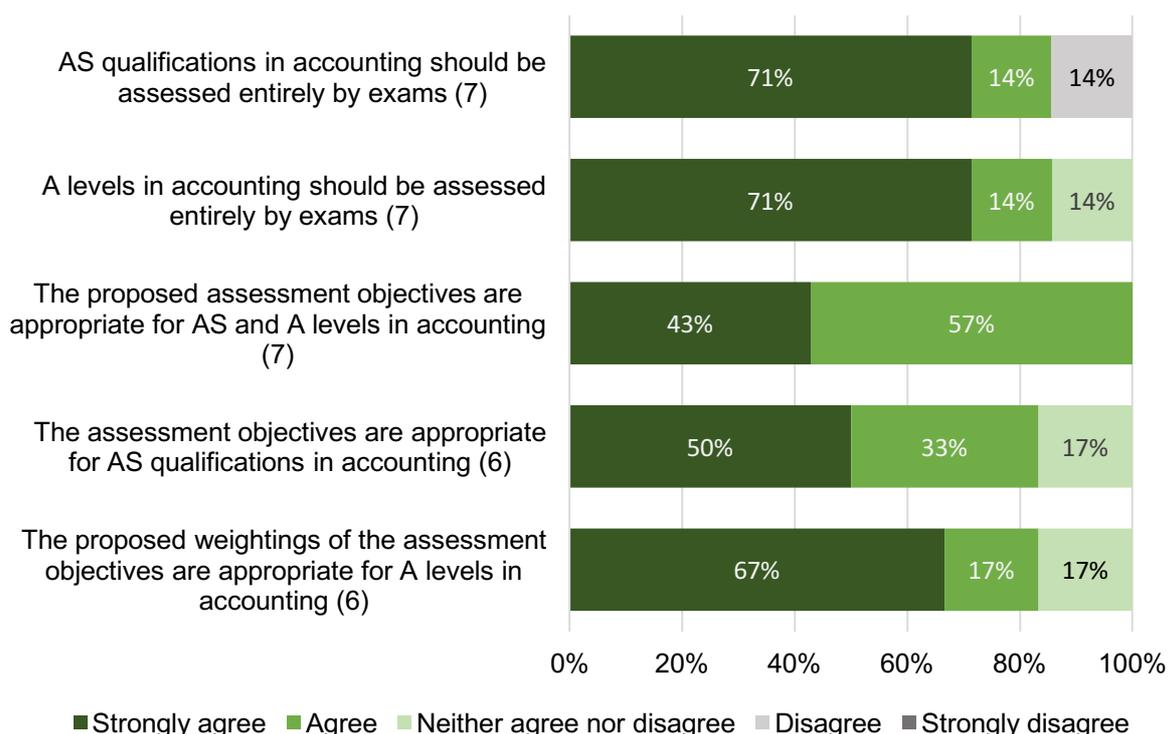
**Table 9 AS and A level accounting – assessment objectives**

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

Seven respondents provided views in relation to AS and A level accounting. Most (six) agree that both qualifications should be assessed entirely by exams, with one disagreeing.

All respondents consider the proposed assessment objectives to be appropriate. There is also general favourability towards the proposed weightings of these objectives, with five out of seven respondents in agreement at AS and A level (Figure 1).

**Figure 1 Summary of responses – AS and A level accounting**



### 3.2 Assessment arrangements

Respondents in favour of exam-based assessment generally feel that the nature of the subject, i.e. involving calculations and analysis of data, are well suited to this method of assessment at both AS and A level.

*“All the content and skills can be assessed through a written examination.”*  
 Awarding organisation

*“It is difficult to judge financial ability of students, with confidence, in coursework.”*  
 Personal response - teacher

The one respondent who disagreed with the proposed assessment arrangements (a professional body) is of the view that a small amount of coursework would enable easier transition from GCSE to A level; furthermore if assessment is to be wholly exam-based, then a combination of methods, i.e. objective testing, essays, mini-scenarios, etc. would be preferable..

### 3.3 Assessment objectives

Two respondents provided further comments, noting that the proposed assessment objectives appear to be keeping with the current objectives, which are proven to work well.

### 3.4 Weightings of the assessment objectives

Three respondents provided their rationale for agreeing with the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives. For AS accounting, the strong emphasis on knowledge and application (compared with the higher level skills of analysis and evaluation) is welcome; while at A level it is considered appropriate that analysis carries more weight as a suitable onward step and that this would be comparable with other reformed A level qualifications.

*“The weighting of 30-40% of the assessment on AO1 is realistic and reflects the requirement of the subject at this level. The balance between AO2 (application) and AO3 (analysis and evaluation) is also appropriate at AS with a higher emphasis on application at this level, as would be expected after a single year of study. However, the proposed weighting of AO3 is higher for the new AS than it is for the current AS, reflecting feedback from HE and professional body stakeholders that there needed to be greater emphasis on the higher level AO3 skills during the first year of study.”*

Awarding organisation

## 4. GCSE ancient history

### 4.1 Overview

Current GCSEs in ancient history are assessed through a mixture of exam assessment (75 per cent of the marks) and non-exam assessment (25 per cent of the marks). From 2017, Ofqual proposes that this subject should be assessed entirely by exams and that it should not be tiered.

The proposed assessment objectives and weightings are presented in Table 10.

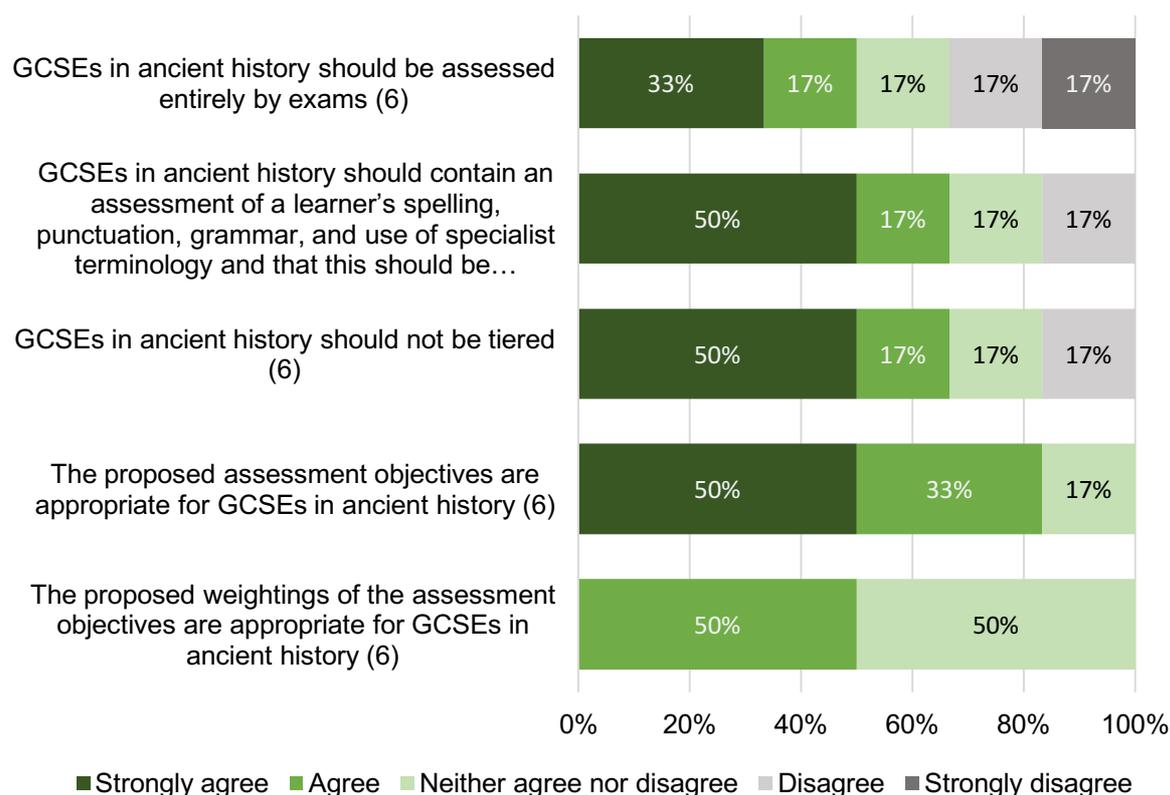
**Table 10 GCSE ancient history – assessment objectives**

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

Based on the views of six respondents, half (three) agree that GCSEs in ancient history should be assessed entirely by exams, while two disagree. Four agree that there should be an assessment of learners' spelling, punctuation, grammar and specialist terminology, and the same number also agreeing that the subject should not be tiered.

Most respondents (five) feel that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate. Half (three) agree with the weightings given to these objectives, while the remainder neither agree nor disagree (Figure 2).

**Figure 2 Summary of responses – GCSE ancient history**



## 4.2 Assessment arrangements

Respondents agreeing that AS and A level ancient history should be assessed entirely by exams (including one awarding organisation) confirmed that this approach would be the most appropriate and valid way to assess knowledge, understanding and skills developed through the subject. One teacher added that non-exam assessment might be difficult to incorporate given timetable constraints, while another feels that non-exam assessment would in fact provide greater flexibility for students and teachers.

A student responding the consultation feels that an element of non-exam assessment should be included and set at 20%. This is on the basis that students ought to show their ability to write longer essays to demonstrate thorough understanding of the subject matter.

## 4.3 Assessment of spelling, punctuation, grammar and specialist terminology (SPaG)

Respondents in favour of assessing SPaG view these as essential skills for academic work, thereby justifying their place in the assessment process

One respondent disagreeing with this view (a Union) feels that with the exception of specialist terminology, the assessment of spelling, punctuation and grammar “has no merit” as “it is not relevant to subject knowledge”.

*“The subject criteria for GCSE ancient history have been heavily based on GCSE history. Given the similarities, it makes sense to have marks available for spelling, punctuation, grammar, and use of specialist terminology and to ensure that the weighing is the same as well. The DfE has also suggested that subjects which currently assess Spelling Punctuation and Grammar (SPaG) should retain this when redeveloped.”*

Awarding organisation

#### **4.4 No tiering**

Based on the comments provided,

An awarding organisation pointed out that evidence from Item Level Data for the current specification shows that the current un-tiered arrangement works well and are able differentiate well between different candidates’ responses. A Union respondent added that if the questions are set correctly, it will be possible to determine differences in levels of knowledge and ability through the answers given.

#### **4.5 Assessment objectives**

No comments were provided.

#### **4.6 Weightings of the assessment objectives**

Two respondents proposed changes to the weightings, as follows:

- AO1 should be 40% instead of 45% and AO2 should be 30% instead of 25% (awarding organisation) and
- AO2 should be 30% instead of 25% and AO3 should be 25% instead of 30% (personal response, teacher);

## 5. AS and A level ancient history

### 5.1 Overview

Ofqual proposes that AS and A level qualifications in ancient history should continue to be assessed entirely by exams.

The proposed assessment objectives and weightings are presented in Table 11.

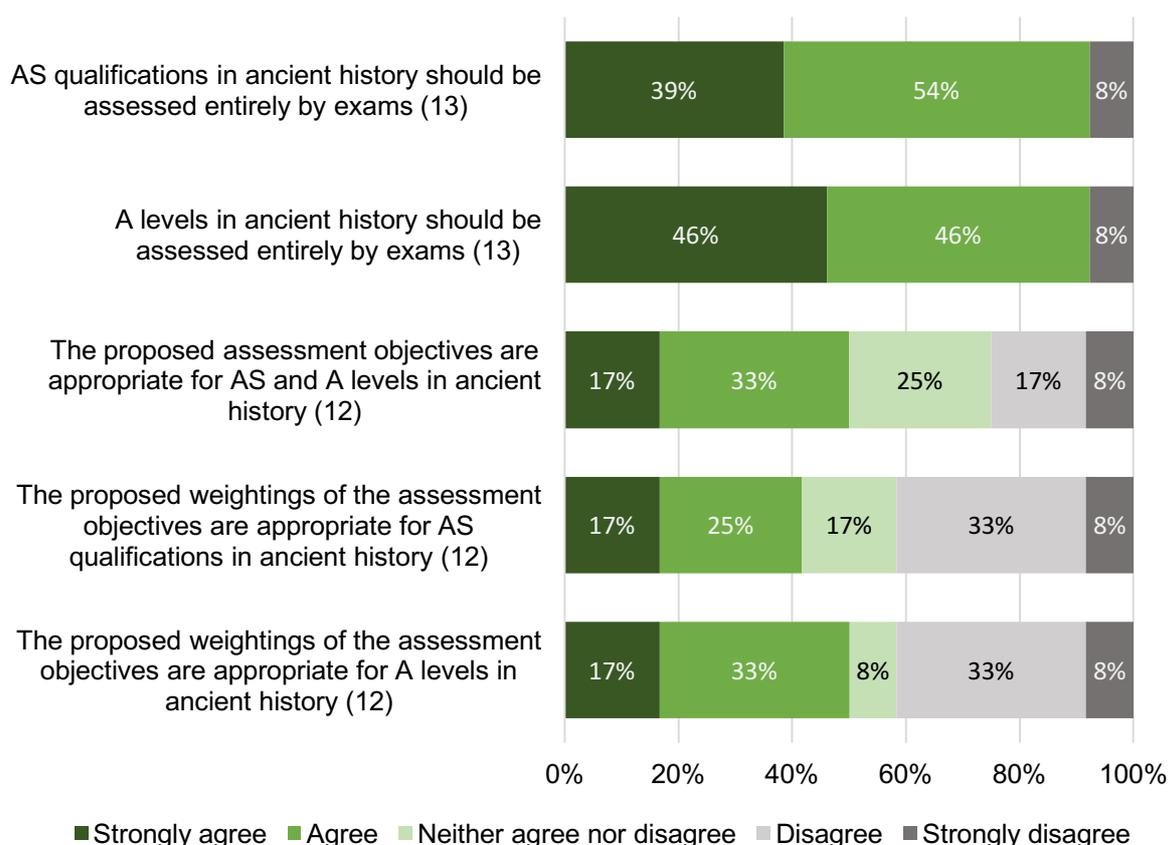
**Table 11 AS and A level ancient history – assessment objectives**

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

Thirteen respondents provided views on the assessment of AS and A levels in ancient history. Almost all (93%) agree that both of these qualifications should be assessed entirely by exams.

Half of respondents (50%) believe that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate, while 25% disagree. Views are also divided around the proposed weightings of these objectives, with 41% in agreement at AS level and 50% in agreement at A level. In both cases 41% disagree (Figure 3).

Figure 3 Summary of responses – AS and A level ancient history



## 5.2 Assessment arrangements

Of those respondents agreeing with exam-only assessment for AS and A level ancient history, five reflected on this approach working well in the past and are therefore in favour of maintaining the status quo. An Additional four feel that non-exam assessment is not viable for this subject, with one stressing that questions would need to be carefully worded so that they are accessible for students of all abilities.

*“It is possible to validly test the appropriate assessment objectives through examinations - there is no requirement for coursework.”*

Awarding organisation

*“Our students have a diverse range of starting points, but nonetheless all are able to find their own successes without coursework.”*

Sixth form College

One respondent in favour of including some non-exam assessment (a student) believes this should be set at 20% and would allow students to develop skills in analysing sources and providing extended responses. The respondent noted that this would also offer good practise for longer essay writing required at university.

### 5.3 Assessment objectives

Three respondents agreeing with the proposed assessment objectives for AS and A level ancient history (including an awarding organisation) believe that the introduction of AO4 at A level is an appropriate differentiator from the AS qualification.

*“The introduction of AO4 at A level is to be welcomed, to prevent slavish, uncritical use of such source material.”*

Union

Teachers disagreeing the proposed objectives raised a number of concerns, notably that:

- AO4 will discourage students from taking the subject;
- AO4 will make an already rigorously academic subject even more difficult;
- AO4 will mean less time being spent on studying sources; and
- The wording of AO2 and AO3 is very similar, making it unclear how marks would be separated.

### 5.4 Weightings of the assessment objectives

One awarding organisation commented that the proposed weightings will enable smooth progression from GCSE ancient history.

Specific suggestions from other respondents are as follows:

- The weightings of AO1 and AO2 are too low, while the weighting of AO3 is too high – especially at AS level (2 x teachers);
- AO1 should be lifted to the maximum percentage (teacher); and
- Definitive percentage weightings, rather than percentage ranges, should be specified (Union).

*“The AS level needs greater weighting given to AO1 and AO2 to cater for the full range of attainment levels.”*

Personal response – teacher

*“AO1 (knowledge) appears to have a significantly lower weighting than at present. As the most straightforward of the AOs, this approach could hinder less able candidates excessively.”*

Personal response – teacher

## 6. AS and A level archaeology

### 6.1 Overview

Current AS levels in archaeology are assessed entirely by exams and Ofqual proposes that this arrangement should continue.

Current A levels in archaeology are assessed through a mixture of exam assessment (80 per cent of the marks) and non-exam assessment (20 per cent of the marks). Ofqual proposes that this arrangement should also continue.

The proposed assessment objectives and weightings are presented in Table 12 (A level) and Table 13 (AS) respectively.

**Table 12 A level archaeology – assessment objectives**

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

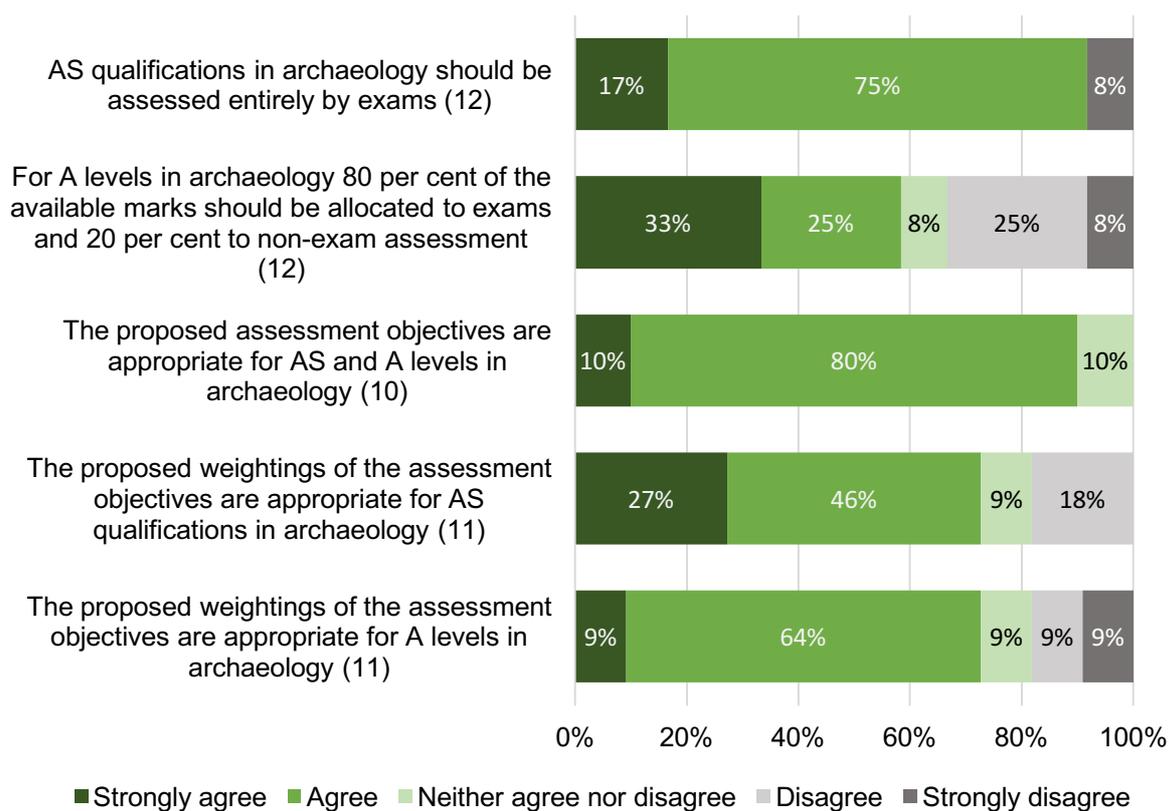
**Table 13 AS archaeology – assessment objectives**

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

Based on the views of 12 respondents, almost all (92%) agree that AS qualifications in archaeology should be assessed entirely by exams. For the A level, 58% agree with the proposed split of exam and non-exam assessment, while a third (33%) disagree.

Most respondents (90%) feel that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate. Almost three quarters (73%) agree with the proposed weightings of these objectives at both AS and A level, with 18% disagreeing (Figure 4).

**Figure 4 Summary of responses – AS and A level archaeology**



## 6.2 Assessment arrangements

Eight respondents agreeing with AS archaeology being assessed entirely by exams consider coursework at this level to be unfeasible given the amount of course content to be covered. One respondent (a student) would like to see non-exam assessment at AS comparable to the A level, to enable assessment of archaeological investigations undertaken as part of the course.

Five respondents agreeing with the assessment arrangements at A level (including an awarding organisation) provided supporting arguments. Four commented that personal investigation is vital in assessing students’ core skills and understanding, including research skills. Furthermore, a subject association noted that most of its members were happy with the ratio of 80:20 in favour of exam-based assessment, although some members would like the non-assessment component to be weighted higher – a view echoed by two other respondents to the consultation.

*“Most of the content can be assessed through examination, however non-exam assessment is the best method to assess students’ ability to analyse and interpret primary data. The interpretation of primary archaeological data to draw conclusions about past societies is a fundamental aspect of the subject and therefore needs to be assessed to ensure that the resulting outcomes are a valid reflection of the subject itself.”*

Awarding organisation

Respondents in favour of a higher proportion of non-exam assessment to that proposed by Ofqual, argue that practical and investigative work is integral to the subject, especially at university level and as part of a career in the field,.

*“[The value of non-exam assessment] depends how fieldwork is defined- at the moment it is too dependent on the whim of one principal examiner and moderation is not consistent from year to year leading to variable results and many centres closing the subject.”*

Personal response – teacher

## 6.4 Assessment objectives

Although respondents are generally in favour of the proposed assessment objectives, four (including an awarding organisation and a subject association) suggest the following changes:

- A/AS level – AO1 first bullet point: Remove ‘including the range of sources and techniques used by archaeologists to investigate the archaeological record’ (awarding organisation);
- A level – AO2: Include ‘interpretation of primary and secondary data’ (personal response, teacher);
- A level – AO2 first bullet point: Include ‘recording’ (personal response, teacher);
- A/AS level – AO2: Term ‘archaeological skills and methods’ is too vague and requires clearer specification (subject association);
- A level – AO2 first bullet point: Remove ‘selection, abstraction, interpretation and translation’ (awarding organisation); and
- A/AS level – AO3: This objective needs to include more on archaeological evidence and interpretation (subject association).

- A/AS level: Suggested addition: 'Communicate effectively, using archaeological terminology and conventions (teacher).'

## **6.5 Weightings of the assessment objectives**

For AS archaeology, one respondent would like to see a higher weighting given to AO2 (interpretation), while at A level, one respondent feels there is too much emphasis on the skills and methods of archaeologists.

With respect to both the AS and A level qualifications, one respondent observed that the skills overlap for each assessment objective, which could "make it hard to separate out one examined unit for each objective."

## 7. GCSE classical civilisation

### 7.1 Overview

Current GCSEs in classical civilisation are assessed through a mixture of exam assessment (75 per cent of the marks) and non-exam assessment (25 per cent of the marks). From 2017, Ofqual proposes that this subject should be assessed entirely by exams and that it should not be tiered.

The proposed assessment objectives and weightings are presented in Table 14.

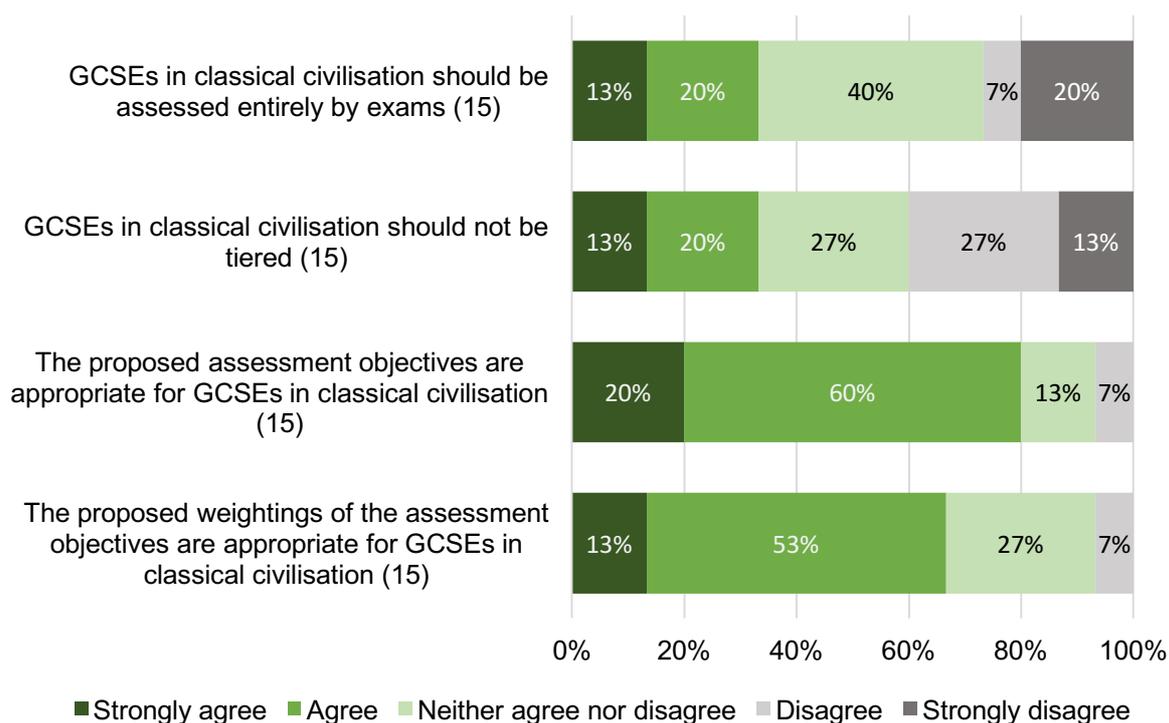
**Table 14 GCSE classical civilisation – assessment objectives**

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

Fifteen respondents provided views in relation to GCSEs in classical civilisation. A third (33%) agree with Ofqual's proposal that the subject should be assessed entirely by exams, while 40% are ambivalent and 27% disagree. A third (33%) also agree that the subject should not be tiered, with 40% disagreeing on this issue.

The majority of respondents (80%) believe that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate and two thirds (66%) agree with the proposed weightings of these objectives (Figure 5).

Figure 5 Summary of responses – GCSE classical civilisation



## 7.2 Assessment arrangements

Respondents agreeing with the proposed assessment arrangements provided a range of supporting views. Three expressed criticism of coursework, describing it as unreliable, hard to deliver, and potentially “open to abuse”. One awarding organisation feels that examinations are wholly appropriate and valid for the subject at this level, while one teacher added that some students find coursework more challenging than exams, therefore favouring a more balanced mix of exam and non-exam assessment.

Eight respondents commented that the inclusion of some form of non-exam assessment could offer a number of benefits, notably by:

- Offering more flexibility for students to demonstrate key strengths and their understanding;
- Enabling students to display their ability in a particular topic through considered work;
- Teaching students a range of valuable academic skills;
- Giving students the opportunity to perform research and preparing them well for further study; and

- Providing students with reassurance and confidence, as well as lowering the pressure that can be felt by some students in relation to final exams.

### 7.3 No tiering

Three respondents (including an awarding organisation) provided comments in support of Ofqual's proposal that GCSE classical civilisation should not be tiered. Firstly, it was pointed out that that un-tiered study will enable valid assessment of students of all abilities; secondly that students tend to enter this subject with similar levels of base knowledge; and thirdly that only a very small number of candidates take the foundation tier qualification.

Five respondents argued in favour of tiering, pointing out that this would make the subject more accessible for students of all abilities. One added that un-tiered exams might disadvantage very able students by not stretching them as far as they can go.

### 7.4 Assessment objectives

Almost all respondents agree with the proposed assessment objectives and two respondents, including an awarding organisation, consider them to be an improvement over the current objectives, i.e. clear, concise and rigorous.

One respondent disagreeing with the objectives commented in relation to the content, stating that there should be an option to study a purely historical topic for greater breadth of knowledge.

*"They seem to represent the essence of the subject well."*

Teacher

### 7.5 Weightings of the assessment objectives

Respondents generally consider that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives look reasonable, should deliver sound assessments, are broadly in line with existing weightings and will support onward progression to AS and A level study.

*"We feel that the assessment objective weightings are appropriate and will allow us to show progression to the AS and A Level qualifications through the greater weighting of the higher level skills available in AO2."*

Awarding organisation

## 8. AS and A level classical civilisation

### 8.1 Overview

Ofqual proposes that AS and A level qualifications in classical civilisation should continue to be assessed entirely by exams.

The proposed assessment objectives and weightings are presented in Table 15.

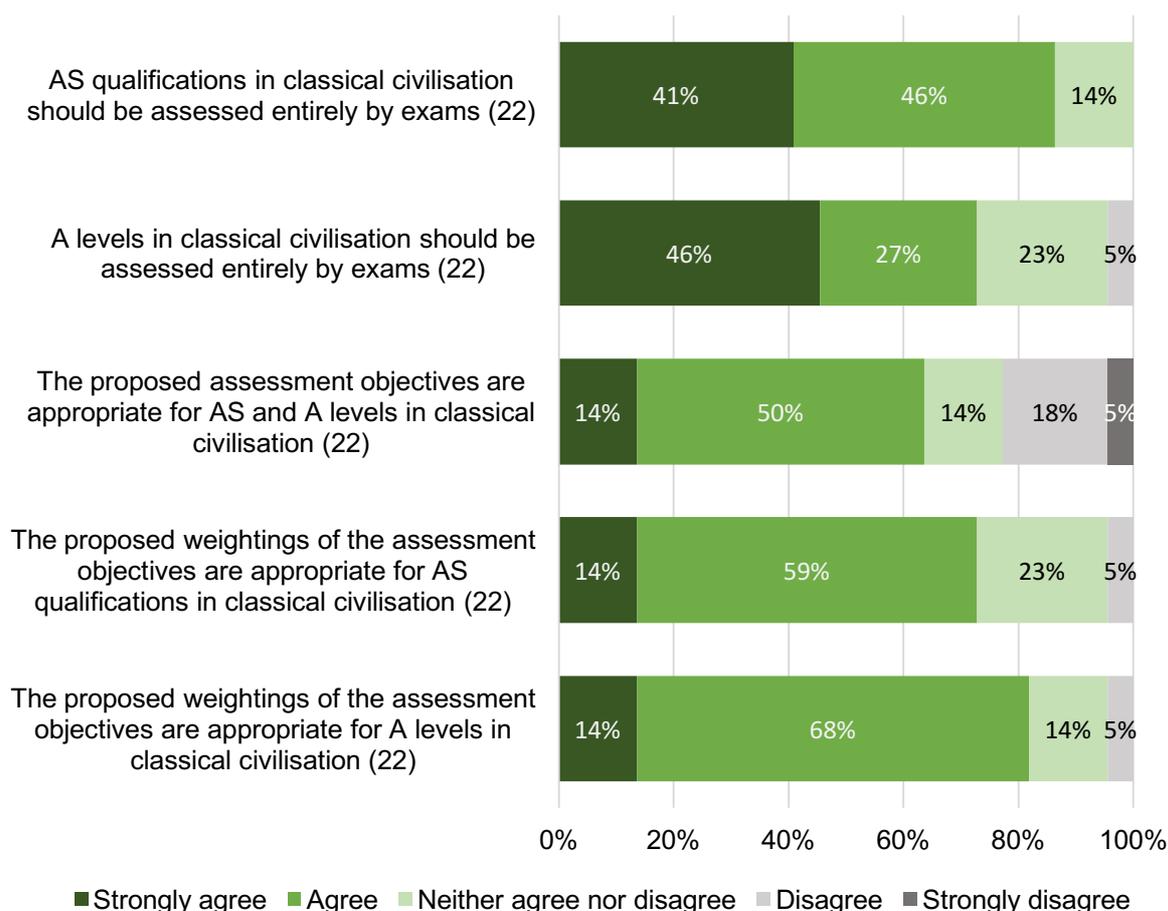
**Table 15 AS and A level classical civilisation – assessment objectives**

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

Based on the views of 22 respondents, the majority agree that AS and A level qualifications in classical civilisation should be assessed entirely by exams (87% agree at AS level and 73% at A level).

Almost two thirds (64%) feel that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate at both levels, while 23% disagree. In terms of the proposed weightings of these objectives, 73% agree that they are appropriate at AS level and 82% agree at A level (Figure 6).

**Figure 6 Summary of responses – AS and A level classical civilisation**



## 8.2 Assessment arrangements

Five respondents, including two awarding organisations, are of the view that exam-based assessment for AS and A level classical civilisation is well suited to the content, builds on existing arrangements which work well (for example summative assessments at the end of each year) and represents an approach followed by comparable subjects. Four other respondents are of the view that coursework would take up too much time, can be unreliable and would represent an additional burden for teachers.

With respect to the A level, one respondent (Sixth Form College) expressed disappointed that there is no opportunity for students to develop extended research and writing skills in preparation for onward study at university.

## 8.3 Assessment objectives

Four respondents, including one awarding organisation, consider the assessment objectives to be sensible and appropriate for the study of AS and A level classical civilisation, representing an improvement on the existing objectives.

Two respondents, including an awarding organisation, pointed out that the proposed assessment objectives do not appear to be completely in line with the proposed subject criteria.

*“The assessment objectives are generally appropriate given the draft proposed content. However the current wording for both AO1 and AO2 does not make clear that, at AS level, only one of visual/material culture and philosophy/thought is required for study from the current proposed criteria.”*

Awarding organisation

Two respondents consider that the objectives are too broad and do not leave sufficient choice for teachers.

Suggested changes to the wording of the objectives, are as follows:

- AO1: Amend this to reflect the stated aims and objectives: “Understand classical literature, thought and material culture in its context; including how issues and values relevant to the society in which they were created are reflected in ancient sources and materials” (personal response, teacher);
- AO1: Omit the word “perspectives” as it does not provide sufficient clarity for stakeholders and users (personal response, teacher); and
- AO2: This is too vague and needs clarification (personal response, teacher).

## 8.4 Weightings of the assessment objectives

Most respondents, including two awarding organisations, view the weightings for AS and A classical civilisation to be appropriate. One respondent feels that the weighting for AO2 is too high.

*“The suggested assessment objective weighting ranges are exactly the same as the current AS Level weightings and will allow us to demonstrate progression from GCSE and progression to A Level.”*

Awarding organisation

Some respondents commented on the weightings of individual content components specified in the DfE draft subject content for AS classical civilisation, rather than the weightings of the assessment objectives. Given the link between one and the other, it should be noted that any subsequent changes to the content may require revisions to the wording and/or the weightings, of the assessment objectives.

*“There should be an option to study topics on literature, history, society, philosophy, architecture, art etc, all with equal weighting in the assessment.”*

Teacher – personal response

## 9. GCSE electronics

### 9.1 Overview

Current GCSEs in electronics are assessed through a mixture of exam assessment (75 per cent of the marks) and non-exam assessment (25 per cent of the marks). From 2017, Ofqual proposes that 80 per cent of the total marks should be assessed by exams and 20 per cent through non-exam assessment. Ofqual proposes that the subject should not be tiered.

The proposed assessment objectives and weightings are presented in Table 16.

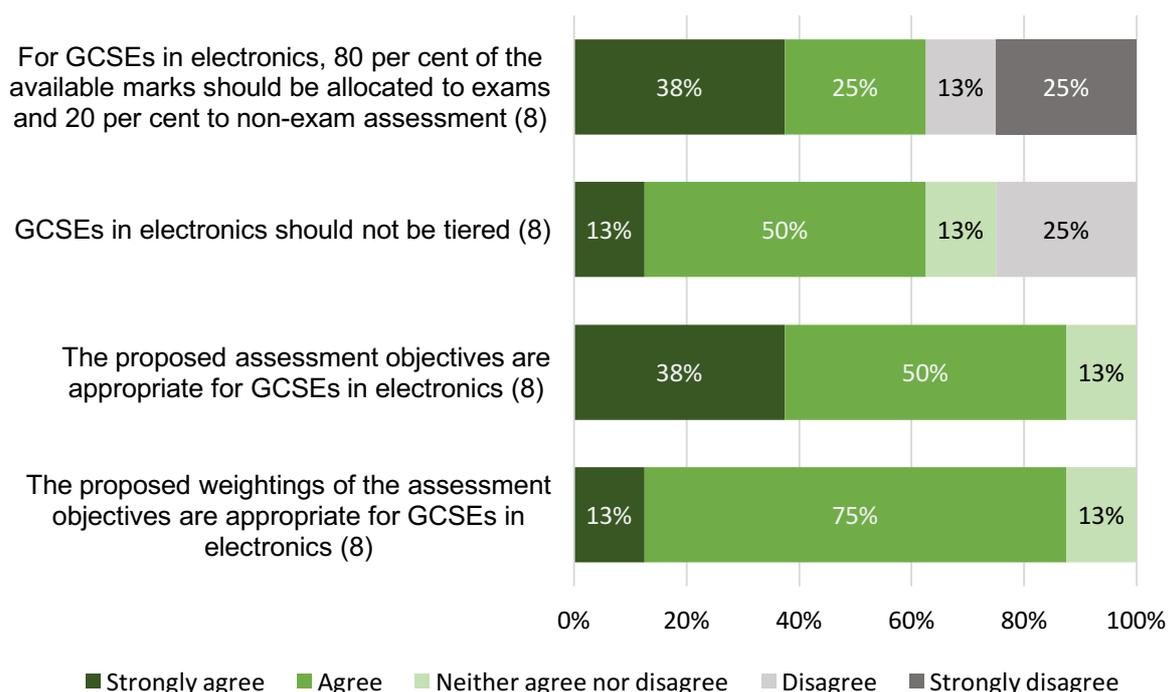
**Table 16 GCSE electronics – assessment objectives**

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

Eight respondents provided views on the proposed assessment arrangements for GCSE electronics. The majority (63%) agree with the proposed split of exam and non-exam assessment (38% disagree). The same proportion (63%), also agree that the subject not be tiered, while 25% disagree.

Most respondents (88%) feel that the proposed assessment objectives, as well as the proposed weightings of those objectives, are appropriate (Figure 7).

**Figure 7 Summary of responses – GCSE electronics**



## 9.2 Assessment arrangements

All respondents, including an awarding organisation, argue that electronics is a practical subject and that the content (for example application of theory, prototyping, modelling, testing, modification and evaluation) cannot be assessed by exams alone.

*“Non-examination assessment in electronics will not be an easy option. It will be a practical application of a science, with a design and problem-solving element.”*

Personal response - teacher

While some respondents agree with the proposed 20% weighting of non-exam assessment, others would prefer a higher weighting for this component (with one teacher suggesting 30-35%).

There are no respondents of the view that non-exam assessment in GCSE engineering should be weighted at less than 20%.

## 9.3 No tiering

All respondents are of the view that exams in GCSE electronics need to be accessible to students of all abilities and that the assessment questions need to have sufficient scope to differentiate across the whole ability spectrum. The majority of respondents feel that this is possible to achieve with un-tiered exams.

*“As long as the questions differentiate between grades then there is no need to have tiered papers.”*

Personal response – teacher

## **9.4 Assessment objectives**

Three respondents who provided views on the assessment objectives commented that they appear suitable and should provide a solid foundation for further study.

## **9.5 Weightings of the assessment objectives**

Only one respondent (a teacher) commented on the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives, stating that they appear well balanced.

## 10. AS and A level electronics

### 10.1 Overview

In current AS and A level qualifications in electronics, between 26 and 30 per cent of the marks are awarded through non-exam assessment. From 2017, Ofqual proposes that 80 per cent of the total marks should be assessed by exams and 20 per cent by non-exam assessment.

The proposed assessment objectives and weightings are presented in Table 17.

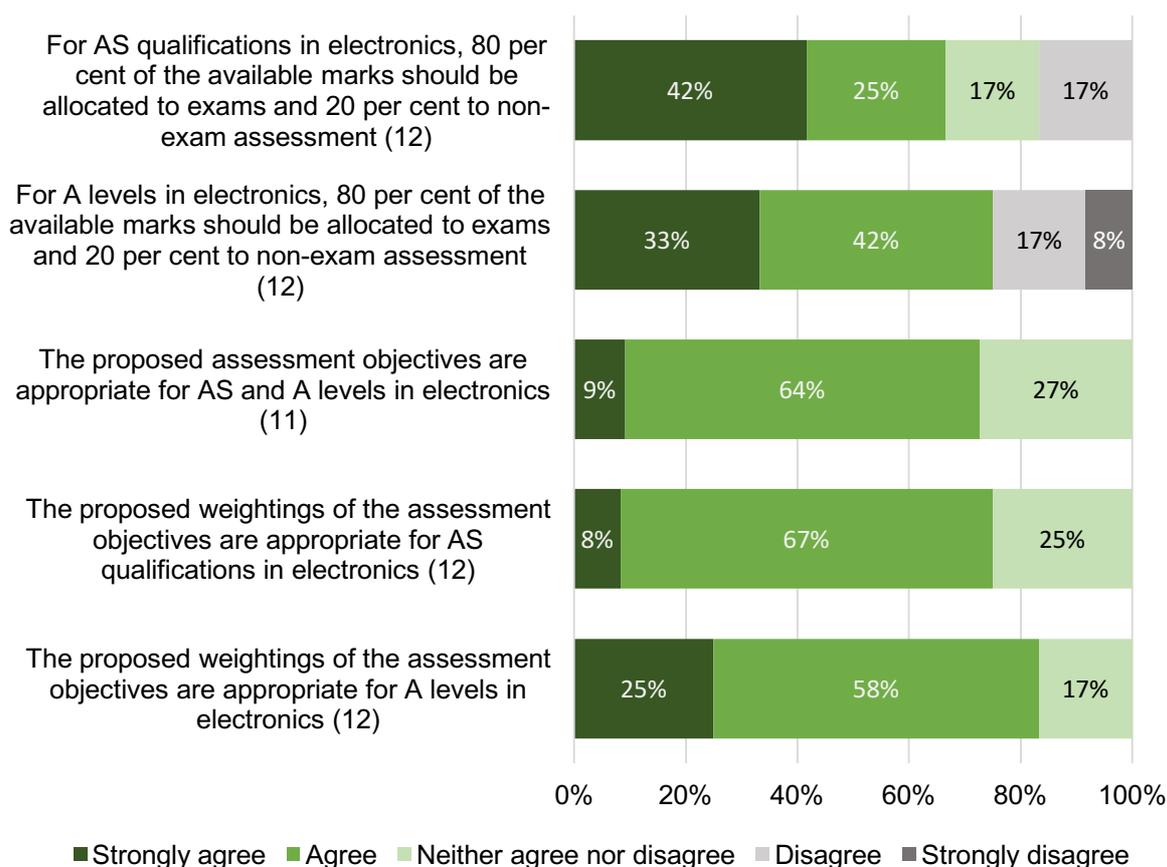
**Table 17 AS and A level electronics – assessment objectives**

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

A total of 12 respondents provided views on assessment arrangements for AS and A level electronics. Two thirds (67%) agree with the proposed split of exam and non-exam assessment for the AS qualification, while 17% disagree. With respect to the A level, a slightly higher proportion (75%) agree with the proposed split of exam and non-exam assessment, however 25% disagree.

The majority (73%) consider the proposed assessment objectives to be appropriate for both qualifications. Three quarters (75%) agree with the proposed weightings of these objectives at AS level, extending to 83% at A level (Figure 8).

**Figure 8 Summary of responses – AS and A level electronics**



## 10.2 Assessment arrangements

Nine respondents, including an awarding organisation, agree that AS and A level electronics cannot be assessed purely by exams due to the need to demonstrate practical skills in addition to theoretical knowledge.

*“Non-exam assessment is a valuable method for developing and assessing students’ understanding in electronics. Skills such as problem solving can be effectively assessed through coursework. The students’ ability to analyse the behaviour of a real circuit can only be assessed through coursework, and in addition the student has to make decisions about what measurements to take in order to analyse the circuit’s behaviour.”*

Personal response - teacher

Four respondents would prefer to see a higher weighting for non-exam assessment to that proposed by Ofqual, with one in favour of maintaining the current 27% and two respondents preferring 30%.

### **10.3 Assessment objectives**

Two respondents commented that the proposed assessment objectives are similar to those currently in use, noting that these work well and contain an appropriate balance between theory and practice.

### **10.4 Weightings of the assessment objectives**

One respondent observed that the proposed weightings are similar to those currently in use and that the greater emphasis at A level on the application of knowledge and understanding (compared to the AS qualification) is appropriate.

## 11. GCSE film studies

### 11.1 Overview

Current GCSEs in film studies are assessed through a mixture of exam assessment (50 per cent of the marks) and non-exam assessment (50 per cent of the marks). From 2017, Ofqual proposes that 70 per cent of the available marks should be allocated to exams and 30% to non-exam assessment. Ofqual also proposes that this subject should not be tiered.

The proposed assessment objectives and weightings are presented in Table 18.

**Table 18 GCSE film studies – assessment objectives**

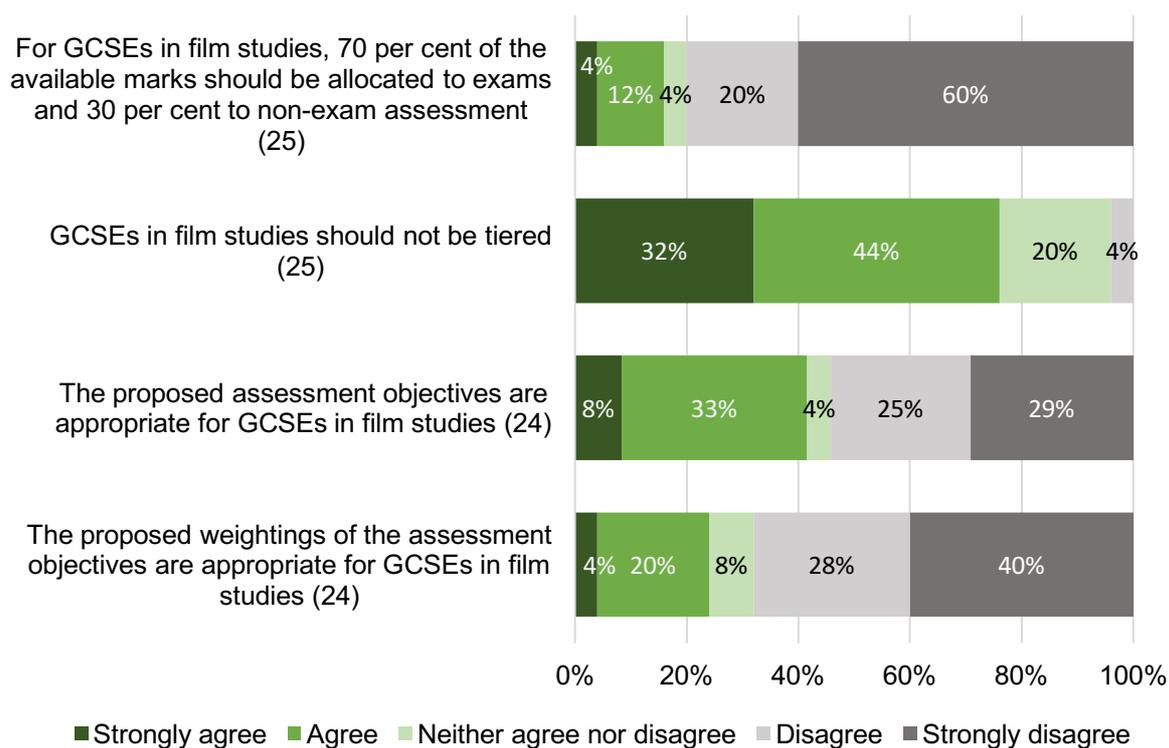
Number	Assessment objectives	Weighting
AO1	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of how meanings and responses are generated <sup>10</sup> in film.	30%
AO2	Apply knowledge and understanding of key elements of film and key film contexts, using appropriate terminology, to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ analyse films and their relationship to screenplays;</li> <li>▪ compare films;</li> <li>▪ reflect on and evaluate own work.</li> </ul>	50%
AO3	Apply knowledge and understanding of key elements of film through production of an extract from a genre-based film or screenplay.	20%

Ofqual’s proposals for the assessment of GCSE film studies attracted 25 responses. The majority (80%) disagree with the proposed split of exam and non-exam assessment, with 60% in strong disagreement. Just over three quarters (76%) agree that the subject should not be tiered.

More than half of respondents (54%) disagree that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate, while 41% agree. More than two thirds (68%) also disagree with the proposed weightings of these objectives (24% agree) – Figure 9.

<sup>10</sup> “how meanings and responses are generated in film” – this widely used academic term reflects the way that meanings and responses result from an interaction between film-maker and spectator, a process that is initiated and 'generated' by the film itself.

**Figure 9 Summary of responses – GCSE film studies**



## 11.2 Assessment arrangements

Views on assessment arrangements for this subject vary by type of respondent. Teachers and schools are overwhelmingly against Ofqual’s proposals for assessment; two subject associations are divided in their views; while two awarding organisations responding on this subject are both in favour.

Respondents in favour of the proposed ratio of exam to non-exam assessment feel that exams are appropriate for assessing students’ responses to film, including consideration of critical issues; and that the proposed ratio recognises the “fundamental relationship” between theory and practice.

The majority of respondents disagreeing with the proposals emphasised the importance of practical work and skills for this subject; specifically that they lend themselves most comfortably to non-exam assessment, and support progression to higher education courses with a practical and technical focus. Four respondents pointed out that exam-based assessment for this subject does not have a high degree of validity as it does not accurately reflect students’ knowledge and skills of film, but simply their ability to express their knowledge in writing.

*“Non-examination assessment is a key opportunity for students to engage with topics and subject content on an individual and group-level, to exercise their own thinking, research, planning and creativity, and this process is extremely valuable in understanding the structures, ideologies and mechanics of film. It is also a substantial task to carry out within school and should be awarded with marks that reflect the significant proportion of time and effort that this work will clearly take up, as well as its value for students.”*

Personal response - teacher

*“Pushing the weighting more towards written answers will disadvantage talented and creative students who struggle with writing but who have creative flair, people and organisational skills.”*

Personal response - teacher

Some respondents provided alternative suggestions, with four stating that the current 50/50 split should be maintained, while two would accept a compromise of 40/60 in favour of exam assessment.

### **11.3 No tiering**

All respondents providing comments on Ofqual’s proposal that GCSE film studies should not be tiered (including one who chose to disagree to the multiple-choice question) affirmed that GCSE film studies should be open and accessible to all.

One awarding organisation and subject association pointed out that existing specifications are not tiered and that there is no evidence that this approach has previously disadvantaged candidates.

*“The GCSE content and structures should ensure fairness, and should allow for differentiation through the scope and range of responses and means of assessment rather than through tiers.”*

Teacher – personal response

### **11.4 Assessment objectives**

Respondents agreeing with the proposed assessment objectives did not provide further comments, while those disagreeing set out a range of concerns and suggestions.

Seven respondents, including one awarding organisation and two subject associations, feel that reference to “screenplays” should be removed from its current position within AO2, with six recommending that reference to “scripts” is added to AO1.

Four respondents, including both subject associations, suggest supplementing AO1 with the phrase "...and how film scripts and storyboards are used in the development of a film".

*"Whilst welcoming the requirement to analyse films, there seems no logic in linking this with screenplays. Screenplays, which can be obtained legally, bear little or no relationship to the development of scripts, from first script through shooting script. [They] are normally created a posteriori in order to reflect what we see on the screen."*

Two subject associations and one teacher – personal response

Another key concern, mentioned by four respondents, including one subject association, is the lack of any reference to institutional or industrial practice.

*"We regret that there is no mention of the industrial practice of filmmaking, including production, distribution and exhibition. We feel that any understanding of film, as well as being placed in a historical, cultural and technological perspective also needs to be examined through the study and understanding of institutional practice which will certainly be required for issues such as spectatorship and reception."*

Subject association

## 11.5 Weightings of the assessment objectives

Respondents agreeing with the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives, including one subject association and two awarding organisations, feel that they reflect the revised new subject content and are therefore appropriate.

Six respondents feel that AO3 should be given a higher weighting, with a subject association suggesting 50% instead of the proposed 20%. Two other respondents are of the view that the weightings should be more evenly balanced across all three objectives, with one suggesting that the weightings of AO1 and AO2 should be switched around.

## 12. AS and A level film studies

### 12.1 Overview

Current AS levels in film studies have between 40 and 50 per cent non-exam assessment, while A levels currently have between 45 and 50 per cent non-exam assessment. Ofqual proposes that AS and A level qualifications in film studies should attach 70 per cent of the available marks to exams and 30% to non-exam assessment.

The proposed assessment objectives and weightings are presented in Table 19.

**Table 19 AS and A film studies – assessment objectives**

Number	Assessment objectives	Weighting A level	Weighting AS
AO1	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of how meanings and responses are generated <sup>11</sup> in film.	35%	35%
AO2	Apply knowledge and understanding of key elements of film, key film contexts and key critical approaches, using appropriate terminology, to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ analyse films and their relationship to screenplays;</li> <li>▪ compare films;</li> <li>▪ reflect on and evaluate own work.</li> </ul>	45%	45%
AO3	Apply knowledge and understanding of key elements of film and key film contexts to the production of film <sup>12</sup> .	20%	20%

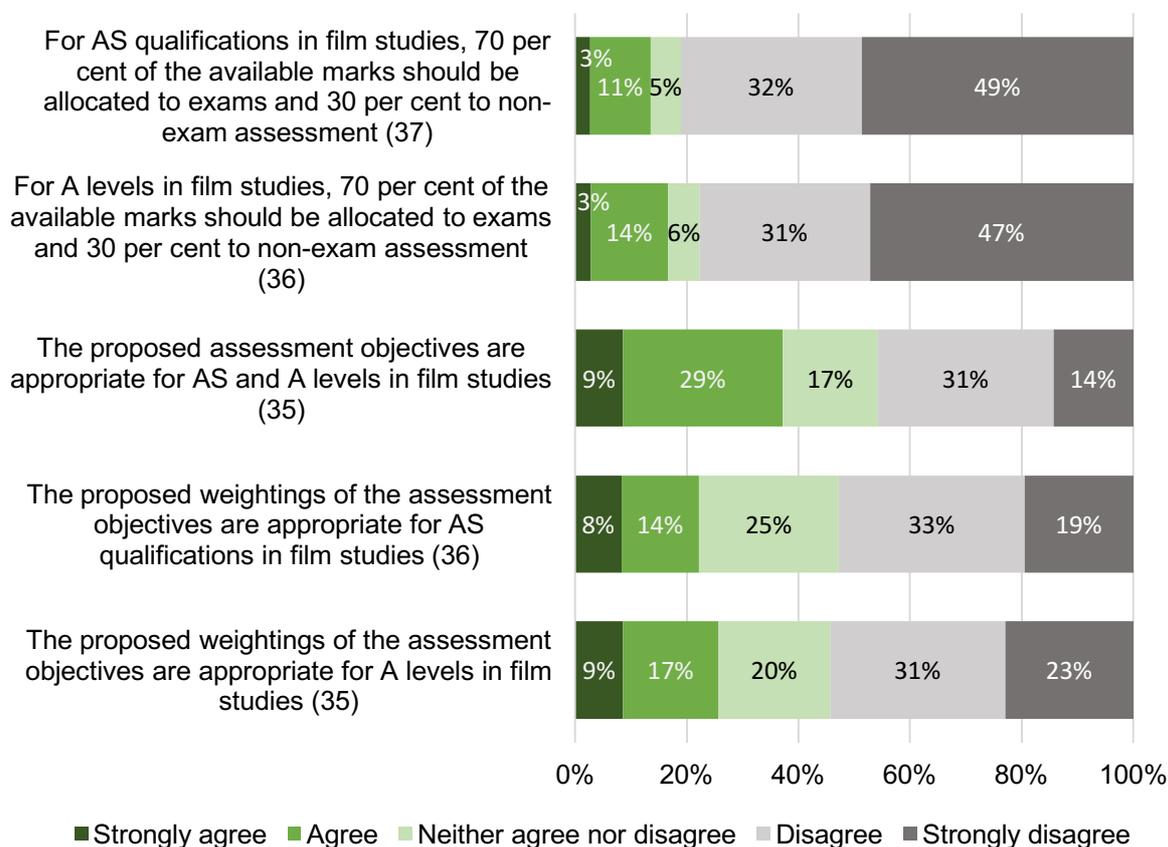
A total of 37 respondents provided views in relation to AS and A level film studies. The majority (81%) disagree with the proposed split of exam and non-exam assessment at AS level, while 14% agree. The findings are similar with respect to the A level, with 78% expressing disagreement and 17% in agreement.

<sup>11</sup> “how meanings and responses are generated in film” – this widely used academic term reflects the way that meanings and responses result from an interaction between film-maker and spectator, a process that is initiated and 'generated' by the film itself.

<sup>12</sup> “production of film” – production either as a short film or as a screenplay for a short film and a digitally photographed storyboard of a key section (at A level); production either as a film extract or as a screenplay for a film extract and a digitally photographed storyboard of a key section (at AS).

Views are divided as to whether the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate at both AS and A level (45% disagree and 38% agree). More than half of respondents (52%) disagree with the proposed weightings of these objectives at AS level and 54% disagree at A level (Figure 10).

**Figure 10 Summary of responses – AS and A level film studies**



## 12.2 Assessment arrangements

Feedback and comments in relation to Ofqual’s proposals for AS and A level film studies are very similar to those received for GCSE film studies,

A total of 28 respondents would like to see more emphasis on non-exam assessment, pointing out that film studies requires skills that are best evidenced in practical work; that marks should reflect the time and effort spent on the practical work; and that those practical skills are vital for progression into the film industry.

*“One of the defining features of this subject is the ability of students to bring all their technical and creative skills together to produce a short film/extract. By reducing the marks available for this it feels as though the subject is being denied the very thing that sets it apart. The skills required to produce a film or film extract are many, covering research, planning, creative and technical production and evaluation-all high level skills.”*

Official response - school

Eight respondents provided details of their preferred ratio of exam to non-exam assessment, with three favouring at least 40% non-exam assessment and five respondents, including one subject association, favouring a 50:50 split.

*“Film studies is a practical subject which requires a theoretical grounding in order to make good films: While the theoretical grounding is vital, it is not more important than the ability to make the film's themselves. This is especially true for students who have decided to dedicate this much of their advanced study to this subject.”*

Official response - school

Five respondents agreeing with Ofqual's proposed 70:30 split between exam and non-exam assessment, including two awarding organisations and one subject association, believe this will allow the time necessary for the substantial range of subject content to be taught, and is therefore appropriate.

### **12.3 Assessment objectives**

The assessment objectives proposed for AS and A level film studies are almost identical to those proposed for GCSE film studies. The issues raised generally mirror those for the GCSE and are therefore not repeated here.

In addition, three respondents would like to see reference to 'research skills' included in the objectives, as is the case for existing A level film studies. One respondent is of the view that the production element (AO3) should not be compulsory at AS or A level.

*See also: GCSE film studies (section 11.4 – assessment objectives)*

### **12.4 Weightings of the assessment objectives**

Four respondents agreeing with the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives, including one awarding organisation, believe them to be appropriate and reflective of the subject content.

Eleven respondents disagreeing with the weightings mainly feel that the production element (AO3) should be increased, mirroring the arguments set out in relation to GCSE film studies. This is due to the perceived importance of practical skills and the time and effort needed to complete this part of the qualification. One subject association expressed “regret” at the proposed “low weighting” of AO3.

## 13. AS and A level law

### 13.1 Overview

Ofqual proposes that AS and A level qualifications in law should continue to be assessed entirely by exams.

The proposed assessment objectives and weightings are presented in Table 20.

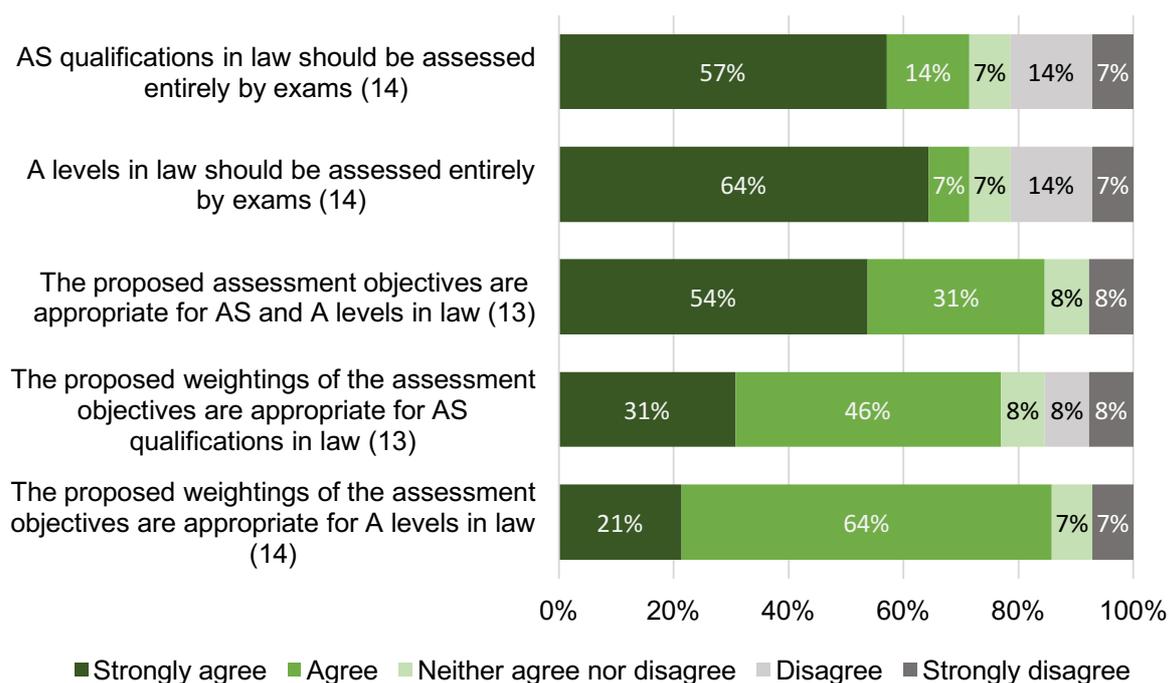
**Table 20 AS and A level law – assessment objectives**

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

Based on the views of 14 respondents, 71% agree that AS and A levels in law should be assessed entirely by exams (21% disagree).

The majority (85%) believe that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate at both levels. More than three quarters (77%) agree with the proposed weightings of these objectives at AS level and 85% agree at A level (Figure 11).

**Figure 11 Summary of responses – AS and A level law**



### 13.2 Assessment arrangements

Five respondents, including one awarding organisation, feel that exam assessment for AS and A level law prepares students well for university and their onward career. Two other awarding organisations, as well as a personal respondent, note that the proposed subject content will lend itself well to exams.

*“For those students who will go on to be solicitors or barristers, being able to respond well to exams is vital.”*  
 Personal response - teacher

*“This will be good preparation for university where assessment will be by examination.”*  
 Sixth form college

Three respondents who disagree with exam only assessment feel that coursework essays would enable students to broaden their research, as well as their critical analysis skills.

### 13.3 Assessment objectives

The majority of respondents agree with the assessment objectives and seven respondents, including two awarding organisations, describe them as excellent, appropriate, and reflective of legal skills used in practice.

*“The proposed assessment objectives are wholly appropriate for AS and A-levels in law. They are clearer and more specific than the current versions, focusing at A-level on the high order skills required by students who intend to progress to study law at undergraduate level.”*

Awarding organisation

*“The assessment of a student’s ability to present a legal argument (rather than reach a certain conclusion) is a skill considered important by higher education and this is now captured in the proposed objective AO2 as a skill that must be assessed. The assessment objectives are comparable with those of other reformed AS and A levels.”*

Awarding organisation

One teacher disagreeing with the proposals feels the objectives are too broad and that *“typical (current) A Level students will not retain the required breadth of information or, if they do, it will be at the price of any depth”*. The respondent went on to state that the AOs *“work on the assumption that every student who studies AS or A level law will go on and study law at degree level”* and that most schools or colleges *“will not have access to the specialist expertise required”*.

### **13.4 Weightings of the assessment objectives**

Four respondents confirmed their agreement with the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives. Of these, two awarding organisations agree without any caveats, while two other respondents feel that the weighting for AO1 should be reduced.

*“Higher education stakeholders have expressed a preference for students to demonstrate the skills of application, critical analysis and evaluation to prepare them for university study. The comparable proposed weighting for AO2 and AO3 (50% at AS level and 60% at A level) places an emphasis on these high order skills to provide a foundation for further study in law, other subjects or future employment.”*

Awarding organisation

## 14. GCSE media studies

### 14.1 Overview

Current GCSEs in media studies are assessed through a mixture of exam assessment (40 per cent of the marks) and non-exam assessment (60 per cent of the marks). From 2017, Ofqual proposes that 70 per cent of the available marks should be allocated to exams and 30% per cent to non-exam assessment. Ofqual also proposes that this subject should not be tiered.

The proposed assessment objectives and weightings are presented in Table 21.

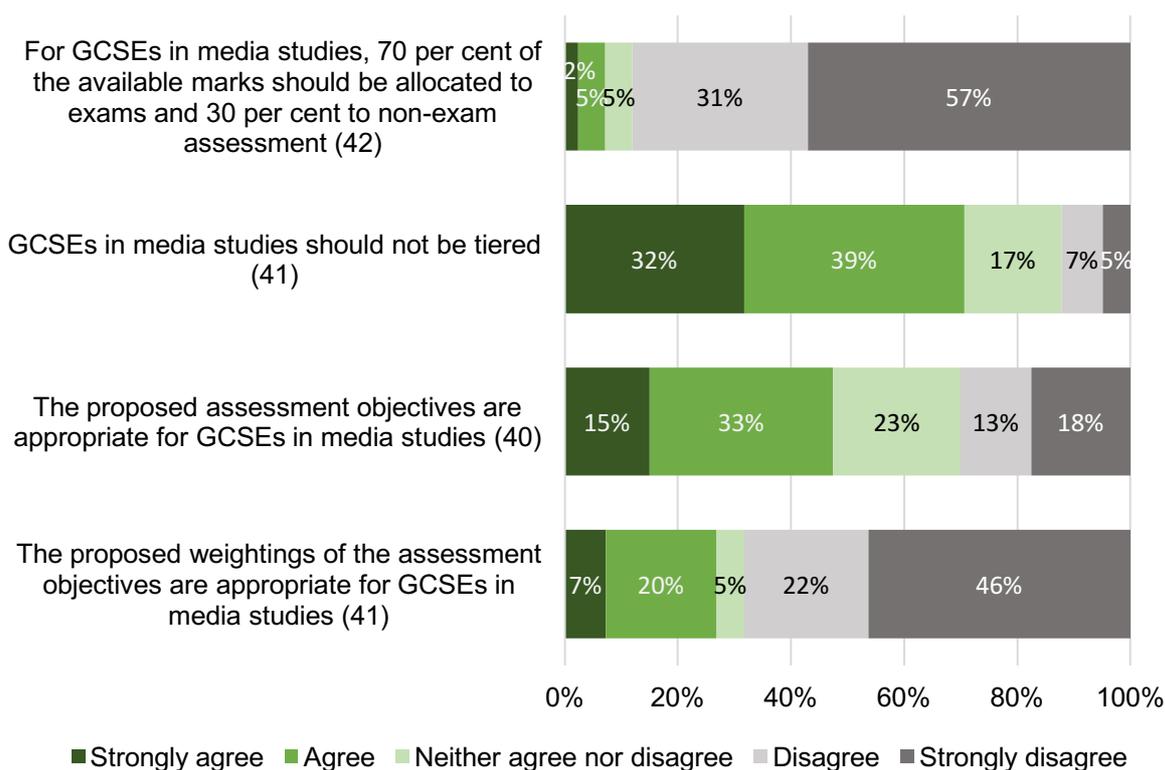
**Table 21 GCSE media studies – assessment objectives**

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

Ofqual’s proposals for the assessment of GCSE media studies attracted 42 responses. The majority (88%) disagree with the proposed split of exam and non-exam assessment (57% strongly disagree). Most (71%) agree that the subject should not be tiered.

There are mixed views as to whether the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate (48% agree and 31% disagree). More than two thirds (68%) disagree with the proposed weightings of these objectives, while 27% agree (Figure 12).

Figure 12 Summary of responses – GCSE media studies



## 14.2 Assessment arrangements

Three respondents agreeing with the proposed ratio of exam to non-exam assessment, including one awarding organisation, feel that this change in emphasis from current arrangements is appropriate and that “*evaluative and analytical elements currently assessed via coursework can equally well be assessed via exams*” (awarding organisation).

Of the 38 respondents who disagree with Ofqual’s assessment proposals for GCSE media studies, 14 (including a subject association) feel that non-exam assessment should represent at least 50%, with a further seven suggesting a 40% weighting. Justifications centre on media studies being a creative subject; that practical skills are vital for careers in this field; and that non-exam methods are essential for assessing a range of relevant practical work and skills.

Another subject association, as well as an awarding organisation ‘neither agreeing nor disagreeing’ with Ofqual’s proposals, are also disappointed with the proposed weighting of exam to non-exam assessment.

*“[The awarding organisation] is disappointed that the proportion of non-exam assessment is being reduced from 60% to 30%, because we know that production work is what engages many students and enthuses them about the subject. However we understand the rationale behind this decision.”*

Awarding organisation

*“Making the course predominately exam-based won't allow students the opportunity to gain the necessary skills they require to progress in their education. This will hinder their chances of getting on to such courses as: media production, broadcast journalism, film studies and photography at university. Turning the subject more academic will damage the subject's creative element.”*

Personal response - teacher

### **14.3 No tiering**

All respondents who provided supporting views (including those who chose to disagree in the multiple-choice question) confirmed through their comments that the entire grade range for GCSE media studies should be open to all.

### **14.4 Assessment objectives**

Seven respondents agreeing with the proposed assessment objectives find them to be clearer than the current objectives; also that they appear comprehensive, well thought through, and reflective of relevant skills needed by students at this level.

Of those who disagree, two respondents feel that the research and planning element (specified in the current AO3) should be included in the proposed objectives. Three respondents would also like to see an evaluative component (as contained in the current AO4). Additionally one respondent (a teacher) suggests changing the proposed AO3 into 'Create and evaluate media products for an intended audience'.

*“The new assessment objectives ignore, or at best side-line, the evaluative element that is a critical part of studying the media. The bedrock of media is the conventions of form and genre, and without evaluation and comparative analysis a key aspect of learning will be lost.”*

Personal response - teacher

One awarding organisation neither agreeing nor disagreeing with the proposed objectives, proposes changing AO3 to 'Create media products for an intended

audience, applying knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework to express and communicate meanings'.

One awarding organisation is of the view that the final wording should be reviewed once the results of both consultations on GCSE media studies (Ofqual and DfE) are available, in order to maximise the validity of the objectives.

Two respondents believe that 'research', 'planning' and 'evaluative' elements associated with practical work, need to be better captured by the objectives.

*"The fact that there are no marks available for research or planning, nor for evaluation, which are all fundamental aspects of any media process, demonstrates an over-reliance on theory rather than practice which will make the creation of media products at best a hollow exercise and at worst a travesty."*

Personal response - teacher

## 14.5 Weightings of the assessment objectives

Five respondents who agree with the proposed weightings (including two awarding organisations) generally believe that they represent a good balance of critical, analytical and creative skills.

Concerns raised by respondents disagreeing with the proposed weightings (including a subject association) mainly focus on the weighting of the practical component (AO3). Ten respondents suggest increasing the weighting to reflect the importance of practical and "real-world" skills for this subject.

*"The comparatively lower weightings of the assessment objectives relating to production are as problematic as the reduction in the proportion of marks awarded to non-exam assessment. We aim to develop students who have a range of well-honed skills in Media literacy, analysis and production, who can become the media professionals of the future, and in most cases this means having considerable production expertise. The reduction in value of the production component does not link with the requirement for experts with production skill in the real world, and the concept that understanding of texts is gained through creation."*

Personal response - teacher

## 15. AS and A level media studies

### 15.1 Overview

In current AS and A levels in media studies, up to a maximum of 40 to 50 per cent of the marks are allocated through non-exam assessment. From 2017, Ofqual proposes that 70 per cent of the available marks should be allocated to exams and 30% per cent to non-exam assessment.

The proposed assessment objectives and weightings are presented in Table 22.

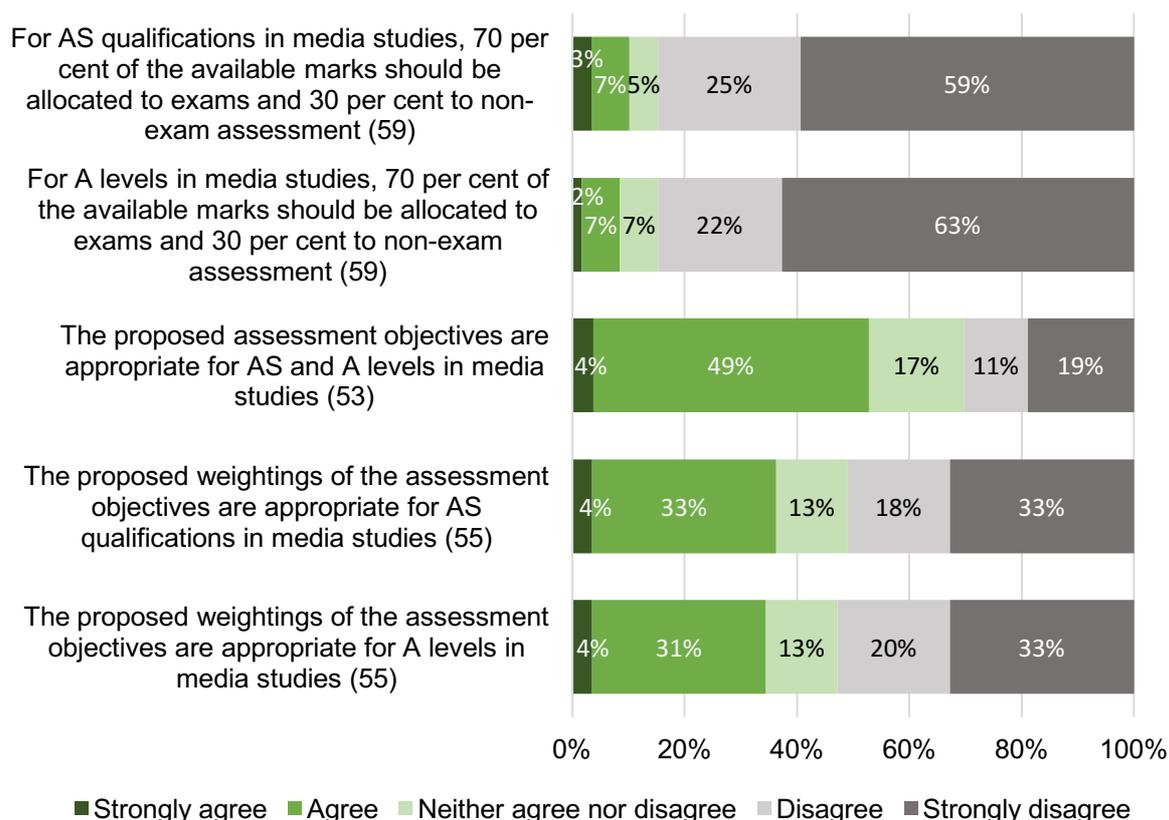
**Table 22 AS and A level media studies – assessment objectives**

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

A total of 59 respondents provided views in relation to AS and level media studies. The majority (84%) disagree with the proposed split of exam and non-exam assessment (only 10% agree). The findings are similar with respect to the A level (85% disagree and 9% agree).

Slightly more than half of respondents (53%) feel that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate at both AS and A level (30% disagree). Views are divided as to whether the proposed weightings of these objectives are appropriate. Approximately half (51%) disagree at AS level, compared with 37% who agree. Similarly, 53% disagree at A level, compared with 35% who agree (Figure 13).

**Figure 13 Summary of responses – AS and A level media studies**



## 15.2 Assessment arrangements

Of the minority of respondents agreeing with the proposed assessment arrangements for AS and A level media studies, two (including an awarding organisation) believe that the new arrangements should allow more time for the study of the academic content, whilst also ensuring that the practical work will become more “focused”.

An awarding organisation ‘neither agreeing nor disagreeing’ with the proposed arrangements expressed some disappointment on the basis that practical work is highly engaging for students (although they “understand the rationale” behind the changes set out in the consultation document).

Of the majority of respondents disagreeing with the proposed assessment arrangements for AS and A level media studies, 47 would prefer a higher weighting for non-exam assessment. Among these, 18 (including a subject association) suggest a 50/50 split between exam and non-exam assessment, while eleven would like to see at least 40% of marks attributed to non-exam assessment,

The main concerns are similar to GCSE media studies – principally that the subject is practical in nature; that skills considered vital for the subject cannot be easily

developed outside of practical tasks; and that concepts and theories are essentially brought to life through practical tasks. Some 16 respondents voiced concern that the reformed qualification will not equip students with the necessary skills to prepare them for higher education and careers in media.

*“Our creative industries are growing and need people with practical creative skills who also have an appreciation of the cultural and social significance of the media products they are making. The coursework project fosters this reflective approach to creative work and it is much harder to assess this reflection and learning retrospectively in an exam.”*

Personal response - teacher

*“Non-examination assessment is a key opportunity for students to engage with content on an individual and group-level, to exercise their own thinking, research, planning and creativity, and this process is extremely valuable in understanding the structures, ideologies and mechanics of various media sectors, as well as the procedures and systems used for the production of media texts. There should be an emphasis on developing media students who are well-rounded in their suite of skills and this can only be effectively achieved by treating the examination and non-examined components of the course in the same way.”*

Personal response - teacher

### 15.3 Assessment objectives

Three respondents agreeing with the proposed assessment objectives provided further comments, mainly that they will offer good breadth and depth.

As with GCSE media studies, one awarding organisation would like to see the wording of AO3 changed to 'Create media products for an intended audience, applying knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework to express and communicate meanings', while another awarding organisation would like to see the objectives reviewed following the outcomes of both consultations (content and assessment arrangements).

Respondents disagreeing with the proposed objectives would like to see references to 'planning' (3 respondents), 'research' (5 respondents), and 'evaluative components' (5 respondents), which are part of the current objectives but absent from the new proposals.

*Research skills are increasingly important in this Google-dominated world. The ability to identify sources, evaluate their reliability, to effectively summarise their arguments, and to synthesise conclusions based on evidence has never mattered more. It matters at university, and it matters in many jobs, and it matters when consuming media products. Understanding how the media misuse statistics, distort science, and generally serve the interests of their owners is a life skill for everybody.*

Personal response - teacher

*The new assessment objectives do not cover research, planning and evaluation skills, which are hugely important for lifelong learning and the ability of the individual to progress beyond school. The opportunity to develop these skills is a key strength of media studies. By removing them from the AOs, it is highly likely that less teaching time will be given over to them.*

Personal response - teacher

## **15.4 Weightings of the assessment objectives**

Respondents provided similar comments on the weightings of both AS and A level assessment objectives. Three respondents, including one awarding organisation, feel that the weightings are well thought out, appropriate and sensible.

The main focus of criticism, including from a subject association, is that the weighting for AO3 is too low given the perceived importance of practical work for this subject.

*“Too much of an onus has been placed on theory and not enough on practical, demonstrating a significant misunderstanding of the purpose and value of media studies. Although theory is important, it is only really of value when supporting practical production - media theory functions best when explored both within the context of textual study balanced with application. Making a range of products demonstrates the value of theory and the need for a contextual framework.”*

Personal response - teacher

## 16. GCSE statistics

### 16.1 Overview

Current GCSEs in statistics are assessed through a mixture of exam assessment (75 per cent of the marks) and non-exam assessment (25 per cent of the marks). Ofqual proposes that this subject should be assessed entirely by exams. Ofqual also proposes that tiering arrangements in GCSE statistics should be similar to those in place for GCSE mathematics<sup>13</sup> and GCSE science<sup>14</sup>.

The proposed assessment objectives and weightings are presented in Table 23.

**Table 23 GCSE statistics – assessment objectives**

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

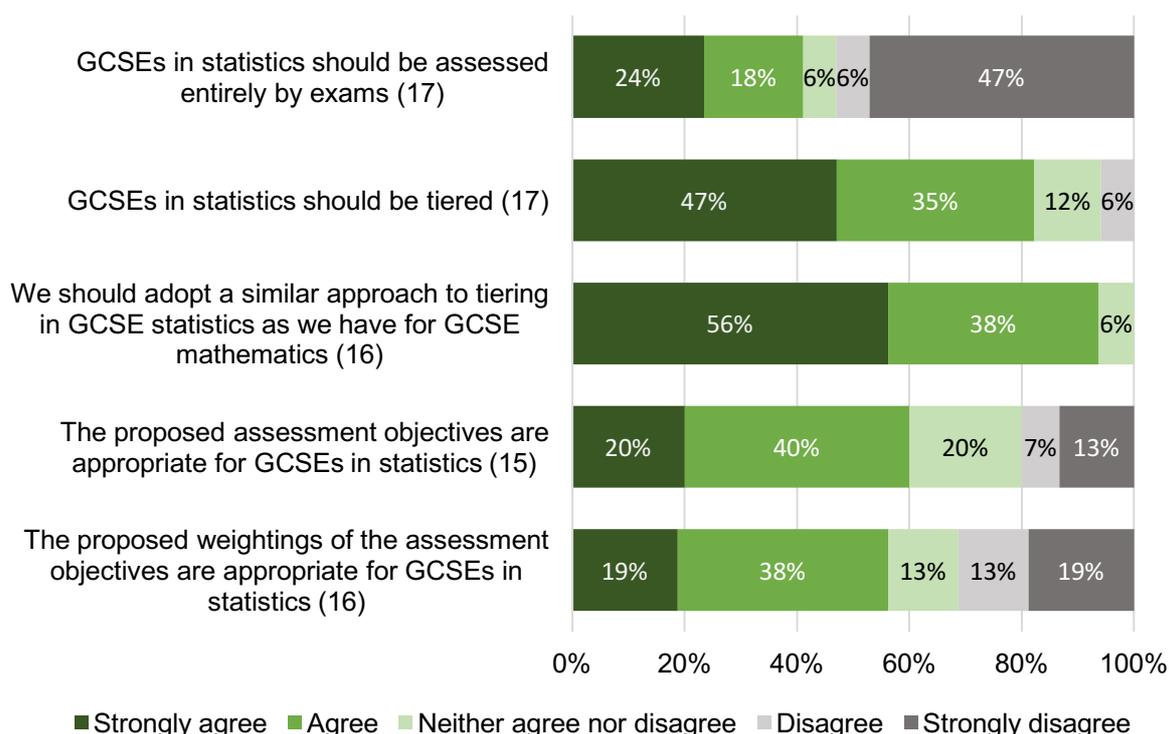
Based on the views of 17 respondents, more than half (53%) disagree that GCSEs in statistics should be assessed entirely by exams, compared with 42% who agree. The majority (82%) agree that the subject should be tiered in line with Ofqual's proposal.

Respondents are generally favourable towards the proposed assessment objectives, with the majority (60%) in agreement that they are appropriate compared with 20% who disagree. Similarly, 57% agree with the proposed weightings of these objectives, compared with 32% who disagree (Figure 14).

<sup>13</sup> [www.gov.uk/government/publications/gcse-9-to-1-subject-level-conditions-and-requirements-for-mathematics](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/gcse-9-to-1-subject-level-conditions-and-requirements-for-mathematics)

<sup>14</sup> [www.gov.uk/government/publications/gcse-9-to-1-subject-level-conditions-and-requirements-for-single-science](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/gcse-9-to-1-subject-level-conditions-and-requirements-for-single-science)

Figure 14 Summary of responses – GCSE statistics



## 16.2 Assessment arrangements

Two respondents agreeing with the proposed assessment arrangements for GCSE statistics are of the view that coursework has proven unreliable in the past and is not able to accurately reflect a student’s level of achievement. Two other respondents, including an awarding organisation, feel that all of the proposed content can be validly assessed via exams. Another awarding organisation is of the view that non-exam assessment may lead to “teaching to the task” and that grades may be predetermined by the selected dataset.

Four subject associations strongly disagree with the proposed assessment arrangements, with two arguing that the revised content cannot be validly assessed via exams alone, especially elements of the statistical enquiry cycle and the use of technology (other than calculators). They argue that statistics has a strong practical element, with one proposing that non-exam assessment should carry at least a 10% weighting, and another suggesting 20%.

*“We know that the weighting of statistics coursework proved problematic when it was part of GCSE mathematics; it was seen as an add-on to the rest of mathematics and too often treated as such. The same need not be the case for GCSE statistics where coursework (to develop knowledge of practical data analysis and investigations) is central to the subject.”*

Subject association

Six teachers and schools responding to the consultation are also critical of the proposed assessment arrangements, making the point that GCSE statistics requires practical skills that require non-exam assessment.

*“The DfE content document describes, in word and in spirit, statistics as a practical subject. This is consistent throughout the document from the aims and objectives, through the central place given to the statistical enquiry cycle, to the detailed content. The subject therefore fits Ofqual’d criteria for non-exam assessment.”*

Official response - school

### 16.3 Tiering

Almost all respondents who provided additional comments, including three subject associations and two awarding organisations, agree with the proposed tiered approach to GCSE statistics. They argue that the breadth of content cannot be accessible to all within one exam (five respondents), and that students work at different levels and should therefore answer questions appropriate to their ability level (six respondents).

One respondent favouring un-tiered assessment mentioned that the content would need to be changed for that to be made possible.

All respondents agree on adopting an approach to tiering that aligns with GCSE mathematics. Four, including two awarding organisations, feel there are sufficient similarities between the two subjects to warrant that approach. Two subject associations also share this view, pointing out how teachers and students are already familiar with this approach for mathematics and that introducing a different system may lead to confusion.

### 16.4 Assessment objectives

Respondents agreeing with the proposed assessment objectives (including two awarding organisations) generally feel that they span a good range of skills and capabilities. One respondent disagreeing with the objectives fears that *“the application of the proposed AOs will result in questions which address individual elements of the statistical enquiry cycle, without any requirement that candidates actually solve a real world problem.”*

The following specific changes have been suggested by awarding organisations:

- AO1: Change to 'Use and apply the terminology, notation and methodologies necessary at each the planning stage of the statistical enquiry cycle';
- AO2: Change to 'Describe standard statistical techniques for the collection of data and apply standard statistical techniques for the representation of data and the calculation of summary statistics'. It is noted that 'apply...collection of data' cannot be assessed via exams and 'visualisation of data' may be misinterpreted as meaning the formation of a mental picture, which cannot be assessed;
- Add an additional AO5: 'Use and apply the terminology, notation and methodologies for the calculation and interpretation of probability'.

Views are divided between four subject associations on the suitability of the proposed assessment objectives, with one agreeing without providing any further comments, one neither agreeing nor disagreeing, and two strongly disagreeing.

Two subject associations prefer the existing assessment objectives on the basis that the new ones are un-trialled, although one welcomes the inclusion of the statistical enquiry cycle.

*"There are concerns that further significant changes are to be implemented without trialling, and more unfamiliar assessment objectives may deter centres from offering the course".*

*Subject association*

Specific suggestions for the assessment objectives, as put forward by subject associations:

- AO1 (existing): Keep as is;
- AO2 (existing): Change to 'Describe and use appropriate methods to select, collect, organise, and record data';
- AO2 (new): Needs to specifically mention the use of technology for the calculation of statistics in order to be consistent with the DfE content;
- AO3 (existing): Keep as is;
- AO4 (existing): Change to 'Use statistical evidence and techniques to identify inferences, make deductions and draw conclusions'; and

- AO4 (new): Change ‘statistical methodologies’ to ‘statistical methods’.

## 16.5 Weightings of the assessment objectives

Four respondents agreeing with the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives consider them to be sensible and well balanced.

Two awarding organisations agree with the weightings, with one stating that they “*emphasise the interpretation of results and processes*”. The awarding organisation suggesting a fifth assessment objective believes the range of weights should be set as follows: AO1 (10%), AO2 (30%), AO3 (25%), AO4 (20%) and AO5 (15%).

Three subject associations disagree with the weightings, with a fourth neither agreeing nor disagreeing. Specific suggestions from subject associations are as follows:

- The weightings for AO3 and AO4 should be reduced and AO2 increased (this is on the basis that candidates “*need to have something to interpret and evaluate*”);
- Weighting ranges should be maintained (as opposed to ‘absolute weightings’) to avoid the risk of exam boards “*shoehorning questions into assessments to ensure the weightings are met*”; and
- Different weightings should be introduced for different tiers, as with GCSE mathematics.

## 17. AS and A level statistics

### 17.1 Overview

Current AS and A levels in statistics may be assessed wholly by exam, but have an option for a small amount of non-exam assessment. Ofqual proposes that these qualifications should be assessed entirely by exams.

The proposed assessment objectives and weightings are presented in Table 24.

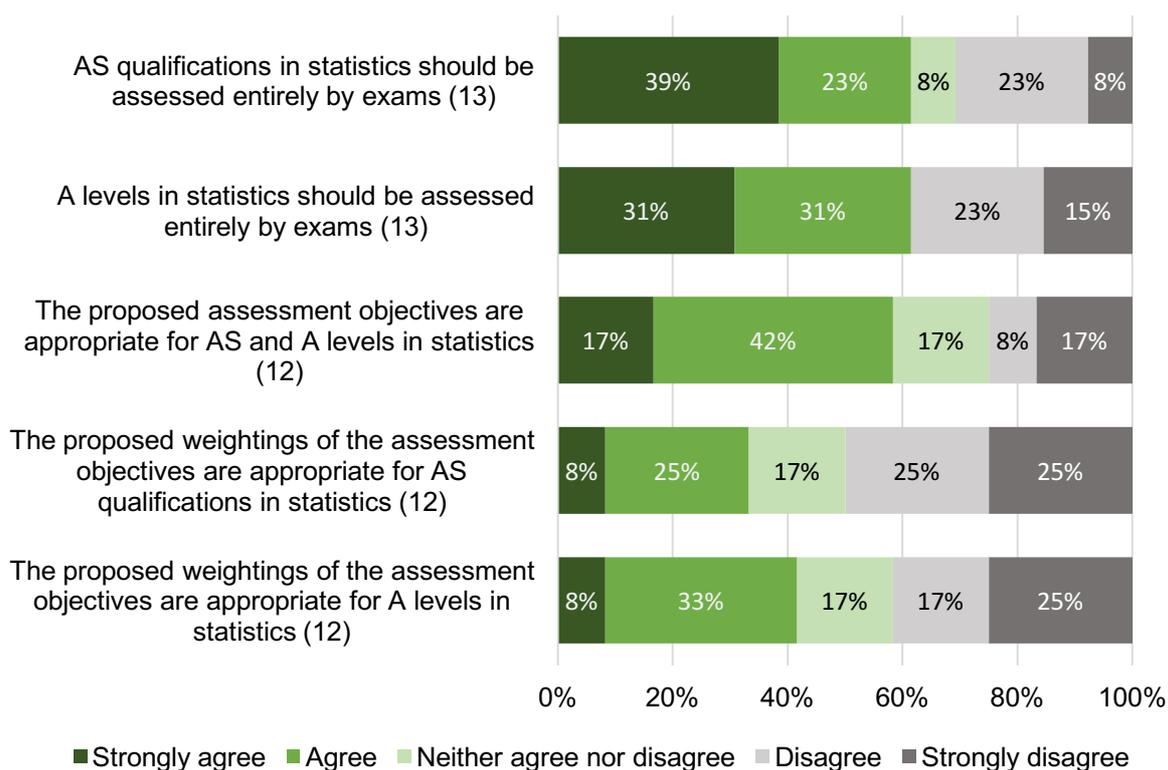
**Table 24 AS and A level statistics – assessment objectives**

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

Thirteen respondents provided views with respect to AS and A level statistics. Among these, the majority (62%) agree that both qualifications should be assessed entirely by exams. This compares with 31% who disagree at AS level and 37% who disagree at A level.

More than half of respondents (59%) agree that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate at AS and A level, although there are mixed views concerning the proposed weightings of these objectives. At AS level, half (50%) disagree, compared with 33% who agree. At A level, 42% disagree, compared with 41% who agree (Figure 15).

Figure 15 Summary of responses – AS and A level statistics



## 17.2 Assessment arrangements

Five respondents agreeing with the proposed assessment arrangements for AS and A level statistics share the view that exam-only assessments are fair, valid and appropriate, as well as expressing concerns about the “reliability” of coursework. One awarding organisation commented that *“all aspects of the subject can be validly assessed via exams”*.

*“We think that statistics coursework would not be worthwhile until the candidates have more knowledge than they would have at the stage of an AS course, which is the stage when their coursework would have to be undertaken.”*

Sixth Form College

Three subject associations disagree with the proposals on the basis that statistics is a practical subject requiring use of technology; that practical work is important for dealing with extended problems by going through a whole data handling cycle; and that the proposed assessment objectives represent a migration to a more ‘applied’ qualification, thereby requiring non-exam assessment to address this change. While one subject association suggests a non-exam assessment component of 10%, another would prefer it to be in the region of 20% to 25%.

### **17.3 Assessment objectives**

Three respondents agreeing with the proposed assessment objectives are confident that they cover all necessary capabilities and will allow progression from GCSE level.

One respondent disagreeing with the objectives believes that they are too vague and ambitious in comparison with the current objectives. Another respondent would like to see 'modelling', 'inference' and 'statistical reasoning' included, to better reflect the proposed subject content.

As with GCSE statistics, the following changes have been suggested by an awarding organisation:

- AO1: Change to 'Use and apply the terminology, notation and methodologies necessary at each the planning stage of the statistical enquiry cycle';
- Add an additional AO5: 'Use and apply the terminology, notation and methodologies for the calculation and interpretation of probability'.

While two out of three subject associations agree with the proposed objectives, the third repeated suggestions made in relation to GCSE statistics:

- AO2: Needs to specifically mention the use of technology for the calculation of statistics in order to be consistent with the DfE content;
- AO4: Change 'statistical methodologies' to 'statistical methods'.

### **17.4 Weightings of the assessment objectives**

Three respondents agreeing with the proposed weightings feel that they appear well balanced and reasonable, and that they should work well in practice.

The awarding organisation that suggested of a fifth assessment objective believes the weights should be set as follows: AO1 (10%), AO2 (30%), AO3 (25%), AO4 (20%) and AO5 (15%).

Two out of three subject associations disagree with the weightings, with the third neither agreeing nor disagreeing.

Specific suggestions from subject associations are as follows:

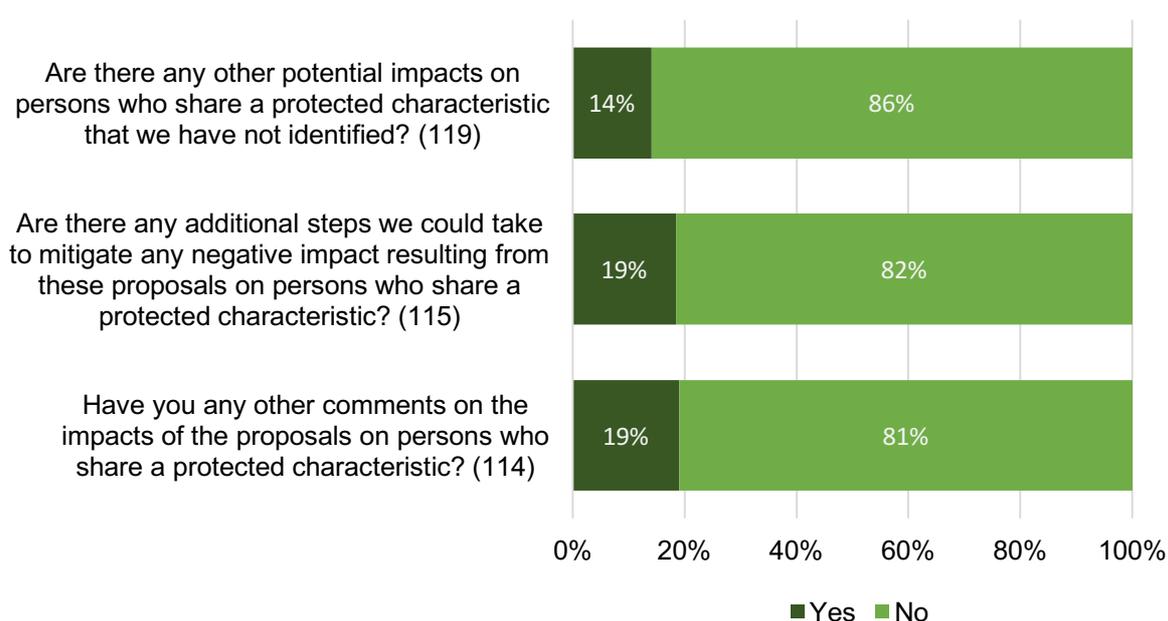
- The weightings for AO3 and AO4 should be reduced and AO2 increased (this is on the basis that candidates “*need to have something to interpret and evaluate*”); *and*
- Weighting ranges should be maintained (as opposed to ‘absolute weightings’) to avoid the risk of exam boards “*shoehorning questions into assessments to ensure the weightings are met*”;
- AO4 should be increased by 15%, with a reduction of 5% across all other AOs.

## 18. Equality impact

In total, 119 respondents answered the consultation questions on the potential impact of Ofqual’s proposals on persons who share a protected characteristic<sup>15</sup>.

A minority of respondents (14%) believe there could be additional potential impact on persons who share a protected characteristic beyond that which Ofqual had already identified. Just under a fifth (19%) confirmed there are additional steps Ofqual could take to mitigate any negative impact and the same proportion (19%) wished to provide supporting comments in this area (Figure 16).

**Figure 16 Summary of responses – equality impact**



Relevant comments and issues raised by respondents are set out below, ordered by subject. It should be noted that comments primarily relate to the protected characteristic of ‘disability’ and matters that could affect students with learning difficulties.

### *Film and media studies*

Three respondents identified potential negative impact on students of film and media studies at GCSE, AS, and A level through the shift of balance towards assessment by exams. They feel that that students with English as an additional language (EAL), as well as those with learning disabilities such as dyslexia, autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) risk being disadvantaged.

<sup>15</sup> Protected characteristics include: Age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion and belief; sex; and sexual orientation.

*“The document discusses only those who are disabled and that some may not be able to access the practical element. The current structure of the course contains such a range of briefs for the practical element that those excluded would be extremely small. However the proposals ignore the fact that many with a range of other disabilities (specifically learning disabilities such as ASD) find the practical element of the course the most accessible part and the examined element the least accessible part. It seems to me the proposals exclude more than they include.”*

Personal response - teacher

*“How about EAL and dyslexic students? You are asking them to sit an exam which judges their reading ability, not their media/film knowledge and skills. What about students with ADHD? They could make a brilliant piece of coursework but sitting quietly in a room for an extended period of time to write questions would be very difficult.”*

Personal response - teacher

In order to mitigate this potential negative impact, these respondents suggest increasing the non-exam assessment component, stating that other forms of assessment can be equally or even more valid to evaluate students' skills, knowledge and understanding of these subjects.

### *Classical civilisation*

One respondent is of the view that *“the proposed compulsory assessment of knowledge and understanding of visual/material culture would have a negative impact on students with visual impairments since they would have difficulty accessing images of the visual material and thus to demonstrate knowledge and understanding”*. The respondent explained that this element is currently optional and should remain optional

### *GCSE ancient history*

One respondent feels that the introduction of spelling, punctuation, grammar and specialist terminology (SPaG) in GCSE ancient history may negatively impact students who experience difficulties with comprehension of these elements.

*“There does not seem to be a concern that students who find SPAG challenging might have issues with comprehension as well as expression. Not only does this need to be taken into account when setting the exams to avoid penalising the students twice, there is also the issue that questions should take into account students with lower levels of comprehension. If questions are set which students cannot comprehend then they are not being given the chance to demonstrate their abilities - they are simply being tested on whether or not they can read the question.”*

Personal response - teacher

## Appendix 1. Additional profiling questions

**Table 25 Nation**

England	136	84%
Wales	12	7%
Northern Ireland	6	4%
Scotland	4	2%
Other EU country	4	3%
Non-EU country	1	1%

Base: 162 responses (multiple answers given in some cases)

EU/Non-EU countries listed by respondents comprise the Channel Islands, Ireland and Cyprus. It should be noted that some respondents indicated that they represented the United Kingdom or more than one UK home nation.

**Table 26 How respondents heard about the consultation**

Ofqual's newsletter or other communications	19	14%
Social media site	8	6%
Via internet search	10	7%
Our website	22	16%
From another organisation	55	39%
Other	26	19%

Base: 140 respondents

## Appendix 2. Overview of phase 3 consultations

Live dates for Ofqual's consultations covering the phase three subjects and qualifications are as follows:

### Consultation 1

***Live from 16<sup>th</sup> July 2015 to 24<sup>th</sup> September 2015***

- Reformed GCSEs: astronomy; business; economics; engineering; geology; psychology and sociology; and
- Reformed A levels and AS qualifications: design and technology; environmental science; history of art; music technology and philosophy.

### Consultation 2 (applicable to this report)

***Live 10<sup>th</sup> September 2015 until 5<sup>th</sup> November 2015***

- Reformed GCSEs: ancient history; classical civilisation; electronics; film studies; media studies and statistics; and
- Reformed A levels and AS qualifications: accounting; ancient history; archaeology; classical civilisation; electronics; film studies; law; media studies and statistics.

### Consultation 3

***Live from 29<sup>th</sup> October 2015 until 4<sup>th</sup> January 2016***

- Short course GCSE: physical education; and
- Reformed A levels and AS qualifications: geology; politics.

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