

CONSULTATION DECISIONS AND RESPONSE ANALYSIS

Guided Learning in Functional Skills

Decisions on changes to our conditions to increase the Guided Learning hours for Functional Skills qualifications

ofqual

Introduction

Our consultation on planned changes to our Conditions to apply an increase to the number of hours of Guided Learning (GL) for reformed Functional Skills qualifications (FSQs) in English and maths took place between 9 April 2019 and 30 April 2019. We proposed to make a minor change to our rules and guidance for reformed FSQs, giving effect to the Department for Education's (DfE) decision to set the number of hours of GL for reformed FSQs in English and maths at 55 hours.

This consultation did not relate to determining the number of hours of guided learning. This had already been agreed, as per the ministerial letter published in December 2018. This consultation solely related to the changes to the Conditions and requirements, in order to give effect to this decision.

As the consultation related to the detail of our Conditions, the primary audience for this consultation was awarding organisations.

Decisions

As there were no objections to our proposals, we have decided to implement the draft Conditions as set out in the consultation. This will require all awarding organisations to develop reformed Functional Skills English and maths qualifications with 55 hours of GL.

Once the Conditions take effect, awarding organisations will need to make appropriate changes to any related documentation, including those submitted for technical evaluation, for the reformed FSQs.

Our proposed changes do not apply to legacy FSQs.

We have included an analysis of the responses we received below.

Implementation timescale

Reformed Functional Skills qualifications in English and maths are available for first teaching from September 2019. The updates to the conditions in respect of the hours of Guided Learning will take effect on 9 August 2019.

Who responded?

We received 9 responses to our consultation.

Respondent type	Number
Awarding Organisation	5
College or training provider	3
Other representative or interest group	1

Analysis of consultation responses

Awarding Organisations

The awarding organisations that responded to our consultation welcomed the opportunity to comment on the draft Conditions. They acknowledged that the updated Conditions were necessary to reflect the decision that the Department had taken for reformed FSQs to be developed with 55 hours of GL. One awarding organisation noted that the approach would ensure consistency across awarding organisations.

Three awarding organisations questioned the requirement to keep under review the number of hours assigned for each of Total Qualification Time (TQT) and GL. This was due to the fact that the Department for Education has specified the number of hours of GL, and therefore there was some confusion about why a review by the awarding organisation would be necessary. As our proposed Conditions state, an awarding organisation must keep under review the number of hours assigned for TQT and GL following any change made to these figures, as a result of updated subject content, a revision to the Total Qualification Time Criteria, or any review by Ofqual. Awarding organisations noted the need for the Department to communicate any review of the GL allocation, to allow awarding organisations to comply with this condition in a timely way. One awarding organisation thought that our Conditions could be misinterpreted, allowing awarding organisations to review and then change the number of hours for GL themselves, however our proposed Conditions make clear that qualifications must be assigned 55 hours of GL.

College or training provider

Of the three responses from colleges, none offered comment on the suitability of our proposed revised Conditions, and the responses received were beyond the scope of the consultation.

Other representative or interest group

This respondent welcomed the increase to the number of hours of GL, noting the improvements to the qualifications and their status amongst employers.

Out of scope responses

Some of the responses we received included queries or comments that were outside of the scope of our consultation. These related to the funding for the reformed qualifications, their use in apprenticeships, and the calculation and allocation of hours of GL and TQT.

Equalities impact assessment

We have not identified any equalities impacts (either on students who share protected characteristics or more widely) which would result from the proposed changes.

Regulatory impact assessment

We have not identified any regulatory impacts which would result from the proposed changes.



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