

CONSULTATION

Consultation on proposed changes to the assessment of GCSEs, AS and A levels in 2021

Proposals to modify the assessment requirements for some GCSEs, AS and A levels in response to disruption to education caused by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

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Proposals at a glance

We are consulting on proposed changes to the way some GCSEs, AS and A levels we regulate should be examined in summer 2021 and to the arrangements for non-exam assessments undertaken by students who will be taking exams next summer.¹ The proposals are made in the context of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. This has resulted in loss of education during the spring and summer terms of the academic year 2019/2020. In line with the government's policy intentions we are planning for exams and assessments to be taken by students next year.

We are seeking views on our proposals to change the assessment requirements for some subjects to:

- free up teaching time and, in some instances, reduce what needs to be taught; and
- take account of any public health restrictions relating to coronavirus (COVID-19) that might be in place during the next academic year

This consultation includes proposals and questions on the following areas:

- adaptations to exams and assessments that could free up teaching time
- adaptations to exams and assessments to address obstacles that could be created by any public health safeguards
- sampling of subject content
- the use of more optional questions in exams
- changing the length of exams
- changing the exam timetable

Our proposals for each subject are set out in tables showing all GCSE and GCE AS and A level subjects.

Audience

This consultation is likely to be of interest to:

- students who are expecting to take GCSE, AS and A level exams in summer 2021 and their parents and carers
- teachers of these subjects
- school and college leaders and heads of other types of exam centre
- exams officers
- the exam boards that will provide the exams
- higher education institutions, employers and others who rely on the qualifications

¹ Ofqual regulates GCSEs, AS and A levels that are primarily taken by students in England

Consultation arrangements

Duration

This consultation will be open for two weeks starting on 2 July 2020 and ending on 16 July 2020. We recognise this is a much shorter period than we would normally allow for consultation, but we believe it is necessary and reasonable in the current situation. Although exams in 2021 are some months away, students, teachers and the exam boards are seeking information now to enable them to plan and prepare for the next academic year.

Respond

Please respond to this consultation by completing the online response at <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/proposed-changes-to-the-assessment-of-gcses-as-and-a-levels-in-2021>

For information on how we will use and manage your data, please see annex A.

Introduction

The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic led to the closure of schools and colleges on 20 March 2020 to all but vulnerable students and children of critical workers. Schools and colleges started to re-open on 15 June to students who are preparing to take GCSEs and A levels in summer 2021. The government announced on 19 June 2020 that £1 billion of funding would be available to schools to tackle the impact of lost teaching time. As part of this, the government has announced funding for a National Tutoring Programme for the most disadvantaged pupils.

The Secretary of State [wrote to Ofqual](#) on 18 June 2020. He made it clear that his overarching aim was to do everything possible to ensure that no student is prevented from fulfilling their potential by the pandemic. Against that background he set out the government's broad policy objectives in relation to GCSE, AS and A level exams and assessments next year and sought our advice in light of these objectives. Our advice in response to the Secretary of State will, in part, be informed by the responses to this consultation.

It is government policy that exams and assessments should go ahead in the next academic year. Government's policy objectives are that:

- students taking exams and assessments next year can progress successfully to the next stage of their education or to employment
- every effort should be made to maintain the standard and rigour of the qualifications, to the extent this is possible, given the unique circumstances
- students taking A levels should be able to progress successfully to higher education
- students taking GCSEs should be able to progress successfully to A levels or to other level 3 qualifications
- the content, specified by DfE, which forms the foundation of the subjects should not be changed

The Secretary of State acknowledged that, despite the catch-up measures being put in place, students might not have covered some elements of their course at all, or to the depth usually expected, by the time they take their exams next summer; and that it is possible the pandemic will cause some further disruption to education in the next academic year. He therefore asked us to consider potential adaptations to the assessments, including a pragmatic use of content sampling in question papers and increasing the use of optional questions to give students more choice. The Secretary of State also asked us to explore the possibility that some or all of the exams might start later in the summer term than usual to allow more time for teaching.

The Secretary of State has also sought our advice in relation to vocational and technical qualifications. We have published [a position paper](#) outlining what we have heard from the sector about the assessment of vocational and technical qualifications in the academic year 2020/21, and the principles we believe should apply. This consultation covers GCSEs, AS and A levels only.

We recognise that students, teachers and the exam boards need as much information about next year's assessment and exam arrangements as possible, to prepare for the next academic year. We are aiming to provide our advice to the

Secretary of State and to announce our decisions on any adaptations to GCSE, AS and A level exams and assessments for next summer, by early August.

Our proposals assume that, in line with the Secretary of State's letter to us, while there might be some on-going disruption, students will be able to continue with their education in the next academic year and that exams and assessments will take place next year.

The Secretary of State has asked us to advise him in the coming months how we might ensure students' outcomes are protected through our approach to grading next year, as we did to protect the interests of students who took the reformed qualifications for the first time. Our approach – using statistical predictions to guide the first awards of reformed qualifications – worked well to protect the interests of students taking the reformed qualifications and we will consider its use next year.

We will provide further information in due course.

Consultation details

We are seeking views on whether and, if so how, the exam and assessment arrangements for each GCSE, AS and A level should be adapted for students taking the qualifications in summer 2021.

We are putting forward these proposals in the context of our statutory objectives which include to:

- maintain standards of the qualifications we regulate; and
- promote public confidence in those qualifications

We also have duties to have regard to the reasonable requirements of students, employers and higher education, among other things.

Students expecting to take GCSE, AS or A levels exams and assessment in summer 2021 will have had their education disrupted by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. The extent to which students' education has continued while schools and colleges have largely been closed will have varied significantly.

Some students will have engaged with the educational opportunities provided by their school or college. Others will have studied independently. However, some students will have lacked the technology, support and/or motivation to continue with their studies or will have been living in conditions that would have made it difficult for them to do so. Disabled students and students with special educational needs might have lacked the support with their education that is normally available to them. Some students will have been ill or caring for others. The extent to which students' education might be disrupted in the next academic year is also likely to vary. It is possible that there will need to be further national or local school and college closures for public health reasons.

In developing our proposals, we have drawn on the feedback we have gathered from teachers of their experiences of teaching the qualifications since reformed GCSEs, AS and A levels first started to be taught from 2015. We have sought ideas from subject associations and from the exam boards. We have heard from teachers who are anxious about their students' ability to catch up and cover the full range of subject content, but also from teachers who believe this is possible and that the

exams and assessments should not be changed. We have also heard from students about the impact of the pandemic on their education.

As we set out in more detail in the equality impact analysis section of this consultation, exams and assessments are designed to assess what students know, understand and can do. While reasonable adjustments can be made to allow disabled students to undertake their exams and assessment in different ways, if the qualifications are to be valid and be valued, exams and assessments cannot be changed to reflect that different students will have had different opportunities to learn or to develop and demonstrate their knowledge and skills. Those who use qualifications for selection and admissions decisions, for example employers and higher education, can, of course, take these factors into account.

Our proposals to change exam and assessment requirements

We are proposing changes to the exam and assessment requirements that would free up more teaching time to support recovery and, in limited cases, sample of less of the subject content in next year's exams. We have also considered the changes that might be needed if social distancing measures are in place, either for all students or for those who are clinically vulnerable or who live in a household with someone who is clinically vulnerable. While the current safeguards might be further relaxed we cannot know for sure whether they might need to be re-introduced during the next academic year, either nationally or locally. We therefore believe it is wise and will provide greater certainty and assurance to teachers and students if we allow now for assessments and exams to be changed to accommodate social distancing measures if necessary.

We are consulting on a package of measures that together will have an impact on mitigating the disruption to most students' education. As we set out below, our proposals vary by subject to reflect their particular requirements and constraints.

Adaptations to exams and assessments that could free up teaching time

We have proposed, for some subjects, adaptations to the exam and assessment requirements that we believe would free up teaching time. This time could be used to help ensure all content was taught or to revisit content already covered before schools and colleges closed. Some of the proposed changes would also mitigate difficulties that could be caused by social distancing constraints. We have not proposed changes to all subjects and, individually, some of the proposed changes are quite modest. However, we believe that, overall, the changes will reduce the pressures on teachers and students in the next academic year.

In putting together our proposals, we have considered the most commonly taken combinations of GCSE subjects.

The changes we are proposing are intended to apply to exams taken in 2021 only and, in respect of non-exam assessments, only for students who will be taking their exams in summer 2021.

We are also seeking views on changing the 2021 exam timetable, with a view to creating more teaching time.

We have already told the exam boards that they could, if they wish, vary the requirement for GCSE computer science that schools and colleges must set aside 20 hours in the timetable during which students should complete a programming project under supervision. This requirement will anyway be removed after 2020/21 when programming skills will be directly assessed in the exams. The 2020/21 requirement is in place to make sure students are given an opportunity to develop their programming skills. Students' ability to programme is indirectly assessed in their exams; the project itself is not assessed. We have allowed the exam boards to relax this requirement in response to requests from schools and colleges to allow their students to undertake the programming project outside of their school or college. By making such provision teachers will be able to use in other ways the 20 hours that would otherwise have been set aside in the next academic year for the programming project.

We are proposing changes to exam and assessment arrangements in some other subjects that we believe could free up some teaching time, but without compromising the validity of the qualification. Schools and colleges decide on the sequence in which they teach the content for each qualification. We have taken this into account.

For example, we are proposing that:

- the spoken language assessment requirement in GCSE English language should be changed so that teachers are not required to record a sample of their students taking this assessment. We have heard from teachers that the recording takes time to arrange and manage. The recordings are used by the exam boards to monitor teachers' assessments. The outcomes of the assessment are reported separately as an endorsement to the 9 to 1 grade. In light of the exceptional circumstances we believe it would be reasonable to suspend exam board monitoring of this assessment in 2020/21, so recordings would not be needed. We will also clarify that a student can present to their teacher alone – a larger audience is not essential. We believe that these changes would also make the assessment experience more comfortable for some students, without significantly compromising the validity of the qualification or its standard
- the requirement on centres to confirm that GCSE biology, chemistry, physics and combined science students have been given the opportunity to undertake practical science work is changed so that teachers could, if they wish, allow their students to observe others undertaking the practical work. This could be a demonstration by the teacher or students could observe the practical work being undertaken remotely, for example by watching a demonstration on-line or on video. While it would always be preferable for students to undertake the work themselves, we believe it would be acceptable in these exceptional circumstances to vary the requirements for 2020/21, allowing teachers more freedom to decide how to use the available teaching time
- we change the requirements for GCSE, AS and A level art and design. In these qualifications students are required to complete both a portfolio of work and a task set by the exam board under timed, supervised conditions. 10-15 hours must be set aside for the completion of the task (depending on the qualification). The portfolio contributes 60% of the marks and the task 40%. Students might need access to specialist equipment within their school or college to complete their work – it cannot simply be undertaken at home. We

propose that, to reduce the pressures of time that the closure of schools and colleges will have created, in 2020/21 students should be assessed on their portfolio only

We set out the full set of proposed changes, subject by subject, later in the document and invite views on our proposals.

Adaptations to exams and assessments to address obstacles that could be created by any public health restrictions

The extent to which public health safeguards will continue, or might need to be re-introduced or strengthened, in the next academic year is not yet certain. However, some subject requirements, particularly those that require group activities, could be more difficult for students to undertake and teachers to supervise if safeguards such as social distancing continue. We have identified the subjects for which we believe there could be particular challenges and we have suggested how these might be addressed. For some subjects the proposals are permissive, in other words alternative assessment arrangements would be allowed but not required. This would allow teachers to decide how best to respond, given their facilities and any public health restrictions in place at the time. We believe it is wise to consider such measures now, rather than wait to respond should the need arise.

Examples of the alternative arrangements we propose to allow or require include:

- relaxing the requirement in A level dance that currently requires students to perform as part of a quartet (as well as to do a solo performance) to allow students to perform 2 solos
- relaxing the requirement in GCSE, AS and A level design and technology in order to allow students to watch teachers demonstrate the use of machinery rather than to use the machinery themselves (which, as this would require supervision, could be difficult under certain public health constraints)
- allowing GCSE drama students to watch a streamed or recorded live performance rather than seeing a live performance in a theatre

We set out the full set of proposed changes, subject by subject, later in the document and invite views on our proposals.

Sampling of subject content

The content for each qualification is determined by the government. In his letter the Secretary of State confirmed he was not minded to specify changes to the Department for Education (DfE) content that forms the foundation of the qualifications, because schools and colleges will, to date, have taught the elements of their chosen courses in the order that best suits them, and because to change the content for one year could have an impact on the qualification in future years. However, he also asked us to look at options for pragmatic use of content sampling in question papers and increasing the use of optional questions.

We have discussed with the DfE which subjects they would like us to focus on for this purpose, given that Ministers are responsible for determining subject content, and any changes to the sampling of content may have an impact on what is taught. They have confirmed that they do not want us to make any changes to the way content is sampled for GCSE English language, English literature, maths and the sciences because these core subjects are so fundamental to students' ability to progress successfully to further study.

In many other GCSE subjects which are taken by large numbers of students, we have proposed changes which will free up teaching time without making any changes to the way subject content is sampled. At AS and A level, we have agreed with the DfE that we should not make any changes to the sampling of subject content for the reasons set out later. In GCSE history, ancient history and geography, however, we have been unable to identify ways of mitigating the impact of lost teaching time on students that do not involve some changes of this kind. We have, therefore, agreed with the DfE, in line with the Secretary of State's letter, to identify options to sample less of the subject content in these 3 subjects in 2021. Such an approach will give schools and colleges some choice over the content they teach and therefore help teachers and students to cover that content in appropriate depth.

History and geography GCSEs are taken by many students. The provisional entry figures for 2020 show they are largest entry GCSE subjects after English language, English literature, maths and combined science. History had a provisional entry of 275,910 students and geography a provisional entry of 256,805 students for 2020. Of the top 14 GCSE combinations in 2018 – that is all combinations for which there were 900 or more students – all included either history or geography or both.

Some students take ancient history as an alternative to history. While the entry numbers are much lower for ancient history than history (the provisional entry figures for 2020 were 912), as the subject has the same status as history for performance measure purposes the government has agreed that similar content changes should be made.

Most students taking GCSEs in 2021 would, therefore, benefit from their centres having a greater choice over what to teach in GCSE history, ancient history and/or geography. The exam boards' specifications in these subjects combine and assess the required subject content in different ways. Each centre decides the order in which it teaches the content.

We have set out in annex C how for each GCSE history and ancient history specification we could introduce a choice of topics on which students would be required to answer questions in their exams, with 1 topic remaining mandatory in each specification. Reflecting the differences in the way the specifications are designed, the proposals are different for each. We believe that, in the circumstances, this is acceptable and the fairest way to mitigate the impact of coronavirus (COVID-19) for students taking GCSE history or ancient history exams in summer 2021 and that the proposed changes will not have an undue impact on students' successful progression to A level.

Question: To what extent do you agree or disagree that centres should have a choice of topics on which their students will answer questions for GCSE history and GCSE ancient history exams in 2021?

Question: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed assessment arrangements for GCSE history and GCSE ancient history exams in 2021 as set out in annex C?

Question: Do you have any comments on the proposal to allow centres a choice of topics on which their students will answer questions for GCSE history and GCSE ancient history exams and/or on any of the proposed assessment arrangements for particular specifications in 2021?

(When you respond [using the questionnaire](#) these questions will appear on the relevant subject specific pages.)

For GCSE geography we propose that the content relating to fieldwork should not be assessed in 2021; that centres should not be required to confirm that they have provided opportunities for students to undertake fieldwork and that there should be no questions in the exams that relate to students' fieldwork experience. We recognise that fieldwork is an important feature of the qualification. However, we also recognise that fieldwork might be difficult for students to complete in the next academic year. Many centres would likely have used the 2019/20 summer term for fieldwork. Public health restrictions might make it difficult for students to complete fieldwork when they return for the start of the next academic year.

We have considered changing the fieldwork requirement so it could be completed within the grounds of a centre – rather than off-site – but on-site opportunities would vary greatly according to the size and location of the school or college.

It is, of course, possible that some students taking their exams next summer will have completed their fieldwork before schools and colleges closed in March and that they might benefit less from the proposed change. However, overall, we believe removing the fieldwork requirement and exam questions would be the fairest approach and the one that is more appropriate in the circumstances. We have set out in annex C how the removal of fieldwork questions would affect each specification.

Question: To what extent do you agree or disagree that students taking GCSE geography exams in 2021 should not be required to undertake or be assessed on fieldwork?

Question: Do you have any comments on the proposal to remove the fieldwork requirement and exam questions relating to fieldwork from GCSE geography exams in 2021?

(When you respond [using the questionnaire](#) these questions will appear on the subject specific pages.)

Question level optionality

Exams do not, of course, usually test students' knowledge of all the content of the qualification. They instead cover a sample of the content. Because teachers do not know which aspects of the content will be sampled, they usually seek to teach all topics.

As requested by the Secretary of State, we have considered whether, in addition to the proposals for GCSE history and ancient history set out above (which will ensure

that students can be aware before the exams that they should answer questions on specific units and/or that they only take the appropriate exam paper) the exam boards should re-design their exam papers so that students in 2021 have a greater choice of questions than usual to answer. In this case students would not have advance notice of which elements of the subject content would be covered in the exam (question level optionality).

Under this approach, teachers might decide that, to save teaching time, they would teach perhaps 8 of 10 aspects of the content in the expectation that students would still be able to answer sufficient exam questions. Or students could decide themselves to revise only certain aspects of the content.

There is, however, a risk that students who had covered only some aspects of the content would not realise they lacked the knowledge needed to answer a particular question. They could make a poor choice in the exam which could lose them marks. We have summarised research evidence of this risk in annex D. This could be a particular problem for students who had practised on past papers, in which similar question choices did not feature.

If there were more optional questions, the papers would be longer than usual. Students who use modified papers, for example in Braille or large print, and students who are slower at reading, might find it difficult to work their way through lengthened papers.

Students who had been taught the full range of content would be able to draw on their wider knowledge of the subject when answering questions in the exam. This might enable them to achieve higher marks than students who had been taught only a part. Students who were taught and had revised all of the content would also be advantaged by having a greater choice of questions to answer.

A further concern about providing students with wider choice than normal in an exam is the risks this would introduce when the exam boards set standards. Examiners would not know until they marked students' papers whether students found the optional questions equally easy or difficult to answer. There is, therefore, a risk that students who answered questions on topic A would systematically perform better – and achieve more marks – than students who answered questions on topic B, or vice versa. Again, this could work to the advantage of some students and to the disadvantage of others. Annex D explores evidence of this risk in more detail.

Changing the format of exams would mean that past papers on which students would usually practise and the published revision guides which they might use would be of less value. Students might find the unfamiliar format of the 2021 exams unsettling. Teachers would need to familiarise themselves with the changed style of exam, placing extra burden on them at a time we are seeking to reduce this. The risk of this could, of course, be reduced if the exam boards produced additional sample papers in the 2021 style. This would place extra demands on the exam boards – in addition to developing new style exam papers in a greatly compressed timeframe as well as awarding calculated grades this summer and running an additional exam series in the autumn. The more changes an exam board has to make to its exam papers, the greater the risk of an exam paper containing a mistake which could have a negative impact on students taking the exam.

While we know it is likely that students will have covered different topics to different depths because of the disruption to teaching, for the reasons set out above we do

not believe that introducing extra question choice will benefit students. We believe that doing so could, in fact, make the assessments less fair overall and disadvantage weaker students and those most significantly affected by the disruption to their education.

We do not, therefore, propose that exams in 2021 should include more optional questions than usual, except in the specific case of GCSEs in history and ancient history where students would know in advance which units would be optional.

Question: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the 2021 exams should not include more optional questions than usual?

Question: Do you have any comments on the use of optional exam questions in the 2021 exams?

Changing the number and the length of the exams

We have considered whether we should require the exam boards to reduce the number of exams students take in each subject. This would either mean that less content was sampled or that the papers taken would need to be longer than normal.

If less of the subject content was sampled, there is a risk that students who had not been taught all of the subject content would be disadvantaged relative to those who had, because the topics they had been taught might not feature in the questions asked. If the content was sampled as usual, but in fewer exams, the exams would have to be longer. While this might have little impact on many students, it could put extra pressure on disabled students who would anyway be given extra time in which to take their exams.

If the exams were longer and public health safeguards remain in place next year, schools and colleges might find the exam series more difficult to manage. They might be required to clean exam desks and chairs between morning and afternoon exam sessions, for which there would be less time if the exams were longer. However, if there were fewer exams overall the exam timetable could be more manageable, shorter and, therefore, more easily delayed. This would free up more time for teaching.

Even in a normal year some students are unable to take all of the exams in a subject. If a student has taken at least 25% of the overall assessments, and can demonstrate that, because of an event that was outside of their control, such as illness or family bereavement, they were unable to sit the remaining assessments, an exam board can use the special consideration facility to award them a grade. If there was just one paper then it is likely that more students would be unable to take any assessments, for example because they were ill on the day of their exam. If coronavirus (COVID-19) is still in circulation next summer this might increase the risk of students being unable to take one or more of their exams.

In addition, substantive changes to the format of exams might be unsettling to students and would carry an increased risk of errors, as set out above.

We do not, therefore, propose that the number or length of exams taken in 2021 should be different to previous years.

Question: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the number of exams taken for each subject in 2021 should be the same as usual?

Question: Do you have any comments on the number of exams taken for each subject in 2021?

Question: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the exams taken in 2021 should not be longer than usual?

Question: Do you have any comments on the length of exams in 2021?

Making exams more accessible for students

We have considered whether exams should be made more accessible for students in 2021, for example by allowing them to have access to equation and formulae sheets in GCSE sciences and to the poetry anthology in GCSE English literature. We have heard from students who would welcome such support. However we have also heard concerns that some students would find such materials distracting.

The government does not support such adjustments, as they would change the way in which students would engage with key aspects of the content, for which it is responsible, so we are not consulting on this option.

Changes to the exam timetable

The government has asked us to consider whether the exam timetable could be delayed to allow more time for teaching.

We have asked the exam boards to consider whether GCSE exams could start after half term – which would mean the exams would not start until 7 June 2021 – and whether it would still be feasible to issue GCSE results on the planned date of 26 August 2021. We recognise that to allow time for marking, GCSE results might also have to be delayed.

We are also considering whether such a change would be appropriate for the A level exam timetable. We are seeking views on the advantages and disadvantages of delaying the start of A level – and AS – exams and the impact of any delay in issuing results.

The proposals on which we are consulting would remove the requirement that, for some subjects, non-exam assessments are completed shortly before exams start. We are proposing that some of the usual non-exam assessments would not be taken at all, for example in art and design, or that the assessments could be taken in different ways and at different times, for example GCSE modern foreign languages. This would free up time immediately before the exam timetables starts, allowing teachers to decide how to use the teaching time available.

We do not prescribe the detailed exam timetable, but we do require that GCSE, AS and A level exams are only available in May and June (with the exception of GCSEs in English language and maths that can also be taken in the autumn). If the timetable was to be delayed so the end of the exam period went into July we would need to change our rules. We are, therefore, seeking views on timetable options.

Question: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the GCSE timetable should start after half term in 2021 if results can still be released on 26 August 2021?

Question: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the GCSE timetable should start after half term in 2021 even if this necessitates a delay in the release of results?

Question: What would be the advantages and disadvantages of delaying the start of GCSE exams in 2021?

Question: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the A level and AS timetable should start after half term in 2021 if results can still be released on 19 August 2021?

Question: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the A level and AS timetable should start after half term in 2021 even if this necessitates a delay in the release of results?

Question: What would be the advantages and disadvantages of delaying the start of A level and AS exams in 2021?

Proposals for each GCSE subject

In this section we summarise the current exam and assessment requirements for each GCSE subject and the exam and assessment arrangements we are proposing for next year. For the avoidance of doubt, we propose that these changes should apply only to students who will be awarded the qualifications in summer 2021.

GCSE subject	Current assessment arrangements	Proposed assessment arrangements for 2021
Ancient history	100% examination.	100% examination. Choice of topics on which students have to answer questions. (See annex C.) Rationale: Content sampling to reduce pressure on teaching time.
Art and design	100% NEA - 60% portfolio, 40% externally set assignment.	100% NEA – portfolio only. Permit exam boards to carry out moderation by photographic / digital portfolio. Rationale: To reduce pressures on teaching time and on the use of specialist resources.
Astronomy	100% examination.	100% examination.
Biblical Hebrew	100% examination.	100% examination.
Biology	100% examination. At least 8 practical activities that cover required apparatus and techniques.	100% examination. Permit observation of demonstrations / simulations to cover required apparatus and techniques.

GCSE subject	Current assessment arrangements	Proposed assessment arrangements for 2021
		Rationale: To reduce pressures on teaching time and to accommodate potential on-going public health restrictions.
Business	100% examination.	100% examination.
Chemistry	100% examination. At least 8 practical activities that cover required apparatus and techniques.	100% examination. Permit observation of demonstrations / simulations to cover required apparatus and techniques. Rationale: To reduce pressures on teaching time and to accommodate potential on-going public health restrictions.
Citizenship studies	100% examination. Centres required to submit statement regarding student involvement in citizenship action, which is covered in exam questions.	100% examination. Require exam boards to provide guidance on citizenship action in socially distanced context. Rationale: To accommodate potential on-going public health restrictions.
Classical civilisation	100% examination.	100% examination.
Classical Greek	100% examination.	100% examination.
Combined science	100% examination. At least 16 practical activities that cover required apparatus and techniques.	100% examination. Permit observation of demonstrations / simulations to cover required apparatus and techniques. Rationale: To reduce pressures on teaching time and to accommodate potential on-going public health restrictions.
Computer science	100% examination. Completion of a supervised programming project in 20 timetabled hours.	100% examination. Permit programming project to be done in unsupervised time. Rationale: To allow teachers to decide how best to use their teaching time. The project does not contribute directly towards the grade.
Dance	40% examination, 60% NEA. Requirement to complete a Performance Assessment of 1	40% examination, 60% NEA. Reduce requirement to complete a Performance Assessment of 1 or

GCSE subject	Current assessment arrangements	Proposed assessment arrangements for 2021
	<p>or more dances with a combined duration of at least 3.5 minutes. Requirement to complete a Choreography Assessment of either a complete solo dance of at least 2 minutes or a complete group dance of at least 3 minutes in response to an exam board set brief. Requirement for student to explain their choreographic intent and how that was developed. For both the Performance Assessment and the Choreography Assessment, requirement to submit complete and unedited audio-visual recordings of the performed dances from the perspective of the audience. NB: The choreographed dance does not have to be performed by the student. Both NEA components may be marked by the teacher and moderated by the exam board or marked directly by the exam board.</p>	<p>more dances to a combined minimum duration of at least 1.5 minutes (if all solo performance) or 2 minutes (if including performance as part of a group). No requirement to perform as part of a group. Solo only performances should, collectively, be designed to address the full range of content expectations with the exception of 'sensitivity/ physical relationship to other dancers'. For the Performance Assessment, requirement to submit complete and unedited audio-visual recording of the performed dances from the perspective of the audience. Reduce requirement to complete a Choreography Assessment to either a complete solo dance of at least 1.5 minutes in duration or a complete group dance of at least 2 minutes in duration, in response to an exam board set brief. For the Choreography Assessment, permit exam boards to accept a portfolio of evidence for the choreographed dance to illustrate the intended final piece, the choreographic intent and how that was developed. Portfolio may include audio-visual recordings of complete performance / physical demonstration of key motifs with explanation of how they inform final piece / original and non-original photographs, images, drawings or sketches with annotations to illustrate intentions / written accounts / video diary. NB: The choreographed dance or physical demonstration of key motifs does not have to be performed by the student. Both NEA components may be marked by the teacher and moderated by the exam board or marked directly by the exam board.</p> <p>Rationale: To reduce pressures on teaching time and to accommodate</p>

GCSE subject	Current assessment arrangements	Proposed assessment arrangements for 2021
		potential on-going public health restrictions.
Design and technology	50% examination, 50% NEA. NEA is a portfolio and prototype of an iteratively designed response to an exam board set brief.	50% examination, 50% NEA. Permit exam boards to accept mock-ups and/or clear/detailed intentions of prototypes. Permit demonstration of using machinery / tools / processes. Rationale: To reduce pressures on teaching time and to accommodate potential on-going public health restrictions.
Drama	40% examination, 60% NEA. Requirement for statement confirming students have been given the opportunity to see a live performance. Requirement to participate in a Devised Performance as either a performer or designer for at least 2 minutes (for monologue), and / or 3 minutes (for duologue), and / or 4 minutes (group). Requirement to participate in a Text Based Performance as either a performer or designer for at least 2 minutes (for monologue), and / or 3 minutes (for duologue), and / or 4 minutes (group). Restriction prohibiting participation in a monologue for both the Devised Performance and the Text Based Performance . For both the Devised Performance and Text Based Performance , students must evidence their contribution to the creation and development of ideas, application of theatrical skills to realise artistic intentions, and analysis and evaluation of their own work, as appropriate to task. For both the Devised Performance and Text Based Performance , requirement to	40% examination, 60% NEA. Modify live performance statement, to allow this to be achieved through streamed or recorded performances. Require exam boards to permit students to analyse and evaluate the work of others based on live theatre and / or streamed or recorded performances. Reduce requirement to participate in a Devised Performance as either a performer or designer to at least 1.5 minutes (for monologue), and / or 2 minutes (for duologue or group). For the Devised Performance , permit exam boards to accept a portfolio of evidence to illustrate the intended final piece, the student's contribution to the creation and development of ideas, and their analysis and evaluation of their own work, as appropriate to the task. Portfolio may include audio-visual recordings of complete performance / physical demonstrations of key aspects with explanation of how they inform final piece / original and non-original photographs, images, drawings or sketches with annotations to illustrate intentions for performance or design / scripts / written accounts / video diary. Reduce requirement to participate in a Text Based Performance as either a performer or designer to at least 1.5

GCSE subject	Current assessment arrangements	Proposed assessment arrangements for 2021
	<p>submit complete and unedited audio-visual recording of that performance from the perspective of the audience. At least 1 of the NEA components must be marked directly by the exam board.</p> <p>Requirement to study 1 complete and substantial performance text and a minimum of 2 key extracts from a second contrasting performance text.</p>	<p>minutes (for monologue), and/or 2 minutes (for duologue or group). For the Text Based Performance, require students to evidence their application of theatrical skills to realise artistic intentions, contribution to the creation and development of ideas, and analysis and evaluation of their own work, as appropriate to the task. Permit evidence to include either a complete and unedited audio-visual recording of the Text Based Performance and/or presentation of each discrete aspect/each student's individual contribution. For performance, permit audio-visual recording of acting performance alone without need for fully designed set / lighting / costumes. For designers, permit portfolio of evidence that may include prototype of product / original photographs, drawings or annotated sketches of designs /annotated scripts / video or written account / physical demonstrations. Permit participation in a monologue for both the Devised Performance and Text Based Performance. Permit both NEA components to be marked by the teacher and moderated by the exam board or marked directly by the exam board. Permit exam boards to assess 1 complete and substantial performance text and 1 key extract from a second contrasting performance text.</p> <p>Rationale: To reduce pressures on teaching time and to accommodate potential on-going public health restrictions.</p>
Economics	100% examination.	100% examination.
Electronics	80% examination, 20% NEA. NEA is a student set, teacher verified system design and realisation task.	80% examination, 20% NEA.
Engineering	60% examination, 40% NEA.	60% examination, 40% NEA.

GCSE subject	Current assessment arrangements	Proposed assessment arrangements for 2021
	NEA is a portfolio and prototype of an iteratively engineered response to an exam board set brief.	Permit exam boards to accept clear/detailed intentions of prototypes. Permit students to watch a demonstration of using machinery / tools / processes. Rationale: To reduce pressures on teaching time and to accommodate potential on-going public health restrictions.
English language	100% examination. Separate reported grade for spoken language. Requirement for spoken language statement. Requirement for teacher to submit sample of audio-visual recordings of spoken language assessment for exam board monitoring. Spoken language assessment to take place before an audience.	100% examination. Separate reported grade for spoken language. Requirement for spoken language statement. No requirement for teacher to submit sample of audio-visual recordings of spoken language assessment for exam board monitoring. Spoken language assessment permitted to take place before a single teacher who can represent an 'audience'. Spoken language assessment may be conducted by the teacher at any time during the course. Rationale: To ensure flexibility for teachers and to free up the time that would normally be spent by teachers recording student presentations. To accommodate potential on-going public health restrictions.
English literature	100% examination.	100% examination.
Film studies	70% examination, 30% NEA. Requirement to produce an extract from a genre-based film or an extract from a genre-based screenplay with shooting script, both in response to an exam board set brief, with evaluative analysis of own work.	70% examination, 30% NEA. Permit exam boards to accept a prototype/mock-up, with supporting evidence as necessary, of an extract from a genre-based film or to produce an extract from a genre-based screenplay with shooting script, both in response to an exam board set brief, with evaluative analysis of own work. Supporting evidence may include original and non-original photographs, images, drawings or sketches with annotations to illustrate intentions /

GCSE subject	Current assessment arrangements	Proposed assessment arrangements for 2021
		<p>storyboards / screenplay / shooting script.</p> <p>Rationale: To reduce pressures on teaching time and to accommodate potential on-going public health restrictions.</p>
Food preparation and nutrition	<p>50% examination, 50% NEA. NEA 1, food science investigation, 8-10 hours, released 1 September before award. NEA 2, 3 dishes in 3 hours, released 1 November before award.</p>	<p>50% examination, 50% NEA. Remove NEA 1. Cover content in the teaching. NEA 2, permit exam boards to release task early and to reduce requirement to 2 dishes in 2 hours. Permit demonstrations of preparation and cooking techniques by teachers.</p> <p>Rationale: To reduce pressures on teaching time and to accommodate potential on-going public health restrictions.</p>
Geography	<p>100% examination. Fieldwork statement confirming fieldwork has been carried out on at least 2 occasions outside the classroom and school grounds.</p>	<p>100% examination.</p> <p>Removal of requirement to undertake fieldwork and to answer questions in the exam relating to fieldwork. (See annex C.)</p> <p>Rationale: Content sampling to reduce pressures on teaching time and to accommodate potential on-going public health restrictions.</p>
Geology	<p>100% examination. Requirement for minimum of 2 days of work in the field. Fieldwork and practical activities that cover required geological skills and techniques.</p>	<p>100% examination. Retain requirement for total fieldwork time but permit this to be conducted in shorter sessions/activities.</p> <p>Permit observation of demonstrations / simulations to cover required geological skills and techniques.</p> <p>Rationale: To reduce pressures on teaching time and to accommodate potential on-going public health restrictions.</p>
History	<p>100% examination.</p>	<p>100% examination.</p>

GCSE subject	Current assessment arrangements	Proposed assessment arrangements for 2021
		<p>Choice of topics on which students have to answer questions. (See annex C.)</p> <p>Rationale: Content sampling to reduce pressures on teaching time.</p>
Latin	100% examination.	100% examination.
Maths	<p>100% examination.</p> <p>2 calculator papers, 1 non-calculator paper (all exam boards except Eduqas).</p> <p>1 calculator paper, 1 non-calculator paper (Eduqas).</p>	100% examination.
Media studies	<p>70% examination, 30% NEA.</p> <p>Requirement to complete an individual media production (single product) in response to an exam board set brief.</p>	<p>70% examination, 30% NEA.</p> <p>Permit exam boards to accept a prototype/mock-up, with supporting evidence as necessary, of an individual media production (single product) in response to an exam board set brief.</p> <p>Supporting evidence may include original and non-original photographs, images, drawings or sketches with annotations to illustrate intentions / storyboards / television screenplay / shooting script / radio script and directions.</p> <p>Rationale: To reduce pressures on teaching time and to accommodate potential on-going public health restrictions.</p>
Modern foreign languages	<p>75% examination (listening, reading, writing).</p> <p>25% NEA (speaking).</p> <p>Some exam paper instructions in assessed language.</p> <p>Requirement for words to be used outside of the vocabulary lists.</p>	<p>100% examination (listening, reading, writing).</p> <p>Make the spoken language assessment an endorsement (the outcome of the spoken language assessment will be reported alongside the 9 to 1 grade). Require exams boards to produce common assessment criteria for teachers to use when assessing their students.</p> <p>Remove requirement to use words outside of vocabulary lists (permit glossing where necessary). (No change to the grammatical knowledge required nor to the level of accuracy needed for the highest grades.)</p>

GCSE subject	Current assessment arrangements	Proposed assessment arrangements for 2021
		<p>Rationale: To reduce pressures on teaching time by relaxing the spoken language assessment requirements</p>
<p>Music</p>	<p>40% examination, 60% NEA. Requirement to complete a Performance Assessment of at least 2 pieces of music with combined minimum duration of at least 4 minutes. At least 1 minute must be performed as part of an ensemble. For the Performance Assessment, requirement to submit complete and unedited recording of the live performance and, where available, the score or lead sheet for that performance. Requirement to complete a Composition Assessment of at least 2 separate pieces of music with a combined duration of at least 3 minutes. At least 1 piece must be in response to an exam board set brief and at least 1 piece must be freely composed. For the Composition Assessment, requirement to submit complete recording of each composition with a score, lead sheet or written account of the composition, produced by the student. NB: The student does not have to perform their own compositions. Both NEA components may be marked by the teacher and moderated by the exam board or assessed directly by the exam board.</p>	<p>40% examination, 60% NEA. Reduce requirement to complete a Performance Assessment to 1 or more pieces of music with a combined duration of at least 1.5 minutes (if all solo performance) or 2 minutes (if including performance as part of an ensemble). No requirement to perform as part of an ensemble. For the Performance Assessment, requirement to submit complete and unedited recording of the live performance and, where available, the score or lead sheet for that performance. Reduce requirement to complete a Composition Assessment to 1 or more pieces of music with a combined duration of at least 2 minutes. Compositions may be in response to an exam board set brief and/or be freely composed, with no requirement to do both. For the Composition Assessment, requirement to submit complete recording of each composition with a score, lead sheet or written account of the composition, produced by the student. NB: The student does not have to perform their own composition(s). The recording(s) may be computer generated. Both NEA components may be marked by the teacher and moderated by the exam board or marked directly by the exam board.</p> <p>Rationale: To reduce pressures on teaching time and to accommodate potential on-going public health restrictions.</p>
<p>Physical education</p>	<p>60% examination, 40% NEA. NEA is performance assessment – 3 activities – 1 individual, 1</p>	<p>60% examination, 40% NEA.</p>

GCSE subject	Current assessment arrangements	Proposed assessment arrangements for 2021
	team, 3 rd can be either team or individual. Also, a written performance analysis task. Visiting moderation of activities that can be done in centres.	Permit exam boards to reduce requirement to 2 activities and allow both to be individual. Permit remote moderation using videoed evidence for all activities. Rationale: To accommodate potential on-going public health restrictions.
Physical education (short course)²	60% examination, 40% NEA. NEA is performance assessment – 2 activities – 1 individual, 1 team. Visiting moderation of activities that can be done in centres.	60% examination, 40% NEA. Permit exam boards to reduce requirement to 1 individual activity. Permit remote moderation using videoed evidence for all activities. Rationale: To accommodate potential on-going public health restrictions.
Physics	100% examination. At least 8 practical activities that cover required apparatus and techniques.	100% examination. Permit observation of demonstrations / simulations to cover required apparatus and techniques. Rationale: To reduce pressures on teaching time and to accommodate potential on-going public health restrictions.
Psychology	100% examination.	100% examination.
Religious studies	100% examination.	100% examination.
Religious studies (short course)	100% examination.	100% examination.
Sociology	100% examination.	100% examination.
Statistics	100% examination.	100% examination.

Question: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed assessment arrangements for each GCSE subject in 2021?

Do you have any comments on the proposed assessment arrangements for each GCSE subject in 2021?

(When you respond [using the questionnaire](#) you will be invited to answer these questions in respect of individual subjects, with the exception of GCSE history, ancient history, and geography. The specific questions for GCSE history, ancient history, and geography are set out earlier in this document.).

² Centres concerned about making up for lost teaching and learning time on the full GCSE qualification could consider switching their students to the short course.

Proposals for each GCE AS and A level subject

In this section we summarise the current exam and assessment requirement for each GCE AS and A level subject and the exam and assessment requirements we are proposing for next year. Generally we have proposed fewer changes for AS and A levels than we have for GCSEs. This is because AS and A level students are older, they are likely to be more motivated to study the narrower range of subjects of their choice and they should be better independent learners. For the avoidance of doubt, we propose that these changes should apply only to students who will be awarded the qualifications in summer 2021.

GCE AS and A level subject	Current assessment arrangements	Proposed assessment arrangements for 2021
Accounting AS and A level	100% examination.	100% examination.
Ancient history AS and A level	100% examination.	100% examination.
Art and design AS and A level	100% NEA - 60% portfolio, 40% externally set assignment.	100% NEA – portfolio only. Permit exam boards to carry out moderation by photographic / digital portfolio. Rationale: To reduce pressures on teaching time and on the use of specialist resources.
Biblical Hebrew A level	100% examination.	100% examination.
Biology AS	100% examination. Completion of practical activities covering apparatus and techniques to support questions in the exam papers.	100% examination. Permit observation of demonstrations / simulations of practical activities to cover required apparatus and techniques. Rationale: To reduce pressures on teaching time and to accommodate potential on-going public health restrictions.

GCE AS and A level subject	Current assessment arrangements	Proposed assessment arrangements for 2021
<p>Biology A level</p>	<p>100% examination.</p> <p>Completion of at least 12 practical activities to demonstrate competency against the Common Practical Assessment Criteria (CPAC) for the separately reported Practical Endorsement.</p>	<p>100% examination.</p> <p>Change the requirements for the Practical Endorsement to allow assessment of the Common Practical Assessment Criteria (CPAC) across the minimum number of practical activities required to demonstrate competence.</p> <p>Permit exam boards to monitor centres' application of CPAC by remote means.</p> <p>Rationale: To reduce pressures on teaching time and to accommodate potential on-going public health restrictions.</p>
<p>Business AS and A level</p>	<p>100% examination.</p>	<p>100% examination.</p>
<p>Chemistry AS</p>	<p>100% examination.</p> <p>Completion of practical activities covering apparatus and techniques to support questions in the exam papers.</p>	<p>100% examination.</p> <p>Permit observation of demonstrations / simulations of practical activities to cover required apparatus and techniques.</p> <p>Rationale: To reduce pressures on teaching time and to accommodate potential on-going public health restrictions.</p>
<p>Chemistry A level</p>	<p>100% examination.</p> <p>Completion of at least 12 practical activities to demonstrate competency against the Common Practical Assessment Criteria (CPAC) for the separately reported Practical Endorsement.</p>	<p>100% examination.</p> <p>Change the requirements for the Practical Endorsement to allow assessment of the Common Practical Assessment Criteria (CPAC) across the minimum number of practical activities required to demonstrate competence.</p> <p>Permit exam boards to monitor centres' application of CPAC by remote means.</p>

GCE AS and A level subject	Current assessment arrangements	Proposed assessment arrangements for 2021
		Rationale: To reduce pressures on teaching time and to accommodate potential on-going public health restrictions.
Classical civilisation AS and A level	100% examination.	100% examination.
Classical Greek AS and A level	100% examination.	100% examination.
Computer science AS	100% examination.	100% examination.
Computer science A level	80% examination, 20% NEA.	80% examination, 20% NEA.
Dance AS	<p>50% examination, 50% NEA.</p> <p>Requirement to complete a Performance Assessment of a solo dance that the student has choreographed of between 2 to 3 minutes in duration and a dance as part of a duet or trio of between 2 to 3 minutes in duration, in response to an exam board set task.</p> <p>Requirement to complete a Choreography Assessment of a solo dance of between 2 to 3 minutes, in response to an exam board set task. Requirement for student to explain their choreographic intent and how that was developed.</p> <p>For both the Performance Assessment and the Choreography Assessment, requirement to submit complete and unedited audio-visual recordings of the performed</p>	<p>50% examination, 50% NEA.</p> <p>Reduce requirement to complete a Performance Assessment to a solo dance that the student has choreographed of between 1.5 to 3 minutes in duration, and a second dance that may be performed as a solo or as a group (up to 3 dancers) of between 1.5 to 3 minutes (if solo) or 2 to 3 minutes (if as a group), in response to an exam board set task.</p> <p>For the Performance Assessment, requirement to submit complete and unedited audio-visual recording of the performed dances from the perspective of the audience.</p> <p>Reduce requirement to complete a Choreography Assessment to a solo dance of between 1.5 to 3 minutes in duration, in response to an exam board set task.</p> <p>For the Choreography Assessment, permit exam boards to accept a programme note or portfolio of evidence for the choreographed dance</p>

GCE AS and A level subject	Current assessment arrangements	Proposed assessment arrangements for 2021
	<p>dances from the perspective of the audience.</p> <p>Both NEA components are marked directly by the exam board.</p>	<p>to illustrate the choreographic intent and how that was developed. Portfolio may include audio-visual recordings of physical demonstration of key motifs with explanation of how they inform final piece / original and non-original photographs, images, drawings or sketches with annotations to illustrate intentions / written accounts / video diary.</p> <p>Permit both NEA components to be marked by the teacher and moderated by the exam board or marked directly by the exam board.</p> <p>Rationale: To reduce pressures on teaching time and to accommodate potential on-going public health restrictions.</p>
<p>Dance A level</p>	<p>50% examination, 50% NEA.</p> <p>Requirement to complete a Performance Assessment of a solo dance of between 2 to 3 minutes in duration and a dance as part of a quartet of between 3 to 4 minutes in duration, in response to an exam board set task.</p> <p>Requirement to complete a Choreography Assessment of a group dance for 3 to 5 dancers of between 3 to 4 minutes in duration, in response to an exam board set task. Requirement for student to explain their choreographic intent and how that was developed.</p> <p>For both the Performance Assessment and the Choreography Assessment, requirement to submit complete and unedited audio-visual recordings of the performed dances from the perspective of</p>	<p>50% examination, 50% NEA.</p> <p>Reduce requirement to complete a Performance Assessment to a solo dance of between 1.5 to 3 minutes in duration and a second dance that may be performed as a solo or as a group (up to 4 dancers) of between 1.5 to 4 minutes (if solo) or 2 to 4 minutes (if as a group), in response to an exam board set task.</p> <p>For the Performance Assessment, requirement to submit complete and unedited audio-visual recording of the performed dances from the perspective of the audience.</p> <p>Reduce requirement to complete a Choreography Assessment to a group dance for 2 to 5 dancers of between 2 to 4 minutes in duration, in response to an exam board set task.</p> <p>For the Choreography Assessment, permit exam boards to accept a portfolio of evidence for the choreographed dance to illustrate the intended final piece, the</p>

GCE AS and A level subject	Current assessment arrangements	Proposed assessment arrangements for 2021
	<p>the audience. NB: The choreographed dance does not have to be performed by the student.</p> <p>Both NEA components are marked directly by the exam board.</p>	<p>choreographic intent and how that was developed. Portfolio may include audio-visual recordings of complete performance / physical demonstration of key motifs with explanation of how they inform final piece / original and non-original photographs, images, drawings or sketches with annotations to illustrate intentions / written accounts / video diary. NB: The choreographed dance or physical demonstration of key motifs does not have to be performed by the student.</p> <p>Permit both NEA components to be marked by the teacher and moderated by the exam board or marked directly by the exam board.</p> <p>Rationale: To reduce pressures on teaching time and to accommodate potential on-going public health restrictions.</p>
<p>Design and technology AS</p>	<p>50% examination, 50% NEA.</p> <p>NEA is a portfolio and prototype of an iteratively designed response to an exam board set brief.</p>	<p>50% of examination, 50% NEA.</p> <p>Permit mock-ups and/or clear/detailed intentions of prototypes.</p> <p>Permit demonstration of using machinery / tools / processes.</p> <p>Rationale: To reduce pressures on teaching time and to accommodate potential on-going public health restrictions.</p>
<p>Design and technology A level</p>	<p>50% examination, 50% NEA.</p> <p>NEA is a portfolio and final prototype(s) based on a design brief developed by the student.</p>	<p>50% examination, 50% NEA.</p> <p>Permit mock-ups and/or clear/detailed intentions of prototypes.</p> <p>Permit demonstration of using machinery / tools / processes.</p> <p>Rationale: To reduce pressures on teaching time and to accommodate potential on-going public health restrictions.</p>

GCE AS and A level subject	Current assessment arrangements	Proposed assessment arrangements for 2021
<p>Drama and theatre AS</p>	<p>40% examination, 60% NEA.</p> <p>Requirement for live performance statement.</p> <p>Requirement to participate in a Text Based Performance as either a performer, director or designer for a duration of at least 2 minutes (for monologue), and / or 4 minutes (for duologue), and / or 5 minutes (group).</p> <p>Requirement for student to evidence their contribution to the creation and development of ideas, application of theatrical skills to realise artistic intentions, and analysis and evaluation of their own work, as appropriate to task.</p> <p>Requirement to submit complete and unedited audio-visual recording of that performance from the perspective of the audience.</p> <p>The NEA component may be marked by the teacher and moderated by the exam board or marked directly by the exam board.</p> <p>Requirement to study 1 complete and substantial performance text and a minimum of 2 key extracts from 2 different texts.</p>	<p>40% examination, 60% NEA.</p> <p>Requirement for live performance statement but permit this to be achieved through streamed or recorded performances.</p> <p>Require exam boards to permit students to analyse and evaluate the work of others based on live theatre and / or streamed or recorded performances.</p> <p>Reduce requirement to participate in a Text Based Performance as either a performer, director or designer to a duration of at least 1.5 minutes (for monologue), and/or 3 minutes (for duologue or group).</p> <p>For the Text Based Performance, requirement for student to evidence their application of theatrical skills to realise artistic intentions, contribution to the creation and development of ideas, and analysis and evaluation of their own work, as appropriate to the task. Permit evidence to include a complete and unedited audio-visual recording of the Text Based Performance and/or presentation of each discrete aspect/each student's individual contribution. For performance, permit audio-visual recording of acting performance alone without need for fully designed set / lighting / costumes. For directors and designers, permit portfolio of evidence that may include prototype of product(s) / original photographs, drawings or annotated sketches of designs /annotated scripts / video or written account / physical demonstrations.</p> <p>The NEA component may be marked by the teacher and moderated by the exam board or marked directly by the exam board.</p>

GCE AS and A level subject	Current assessment arrangements	Proposed assessment arrangements for 2021
		<p>Permit exam boards to assess 1 complete and substantial performance text and 1 or more key extracts from (a) different text(s).</p> <p>Rationale: To reduce pressures on teaching time and to accommodate potential on-going public health restrictions.</p>
<p>Drama and theatre A level</p>	<p>40% examination, 60% NEA.</p> <p>Requirement for live performance statement.</p> <p>Requirement to participate in a Devised Performance as either a performer, director or designer for a duration of at least 2 minutes (for monologue), and / or 5 minutes (for duologue), and / or 6 minutes (group).</p> <p>Requirement to participate in a Text Based Performance as either a performer, director or designer for a duration of at least 2 minutes (for monologue), and / or 5 minutes (for duologue), and / or 6 minutes (group).</p> <p>Restriction prohibiting participation in a monologue for both the Devised Performance and the Text Based Performance.</p> <p>For both the Devised Performance and Text Based Performance, requirement for student to evidence their contribution to the creation and development of ideas, application of theatrical skills to realise artistic intentions, and analysis and evaluation of their own work, as appropriate to task.</p>	<p>40% examination, 60% NEA.</p> <p>Requirement for live performance statement but permit this to be achieved through streamed or recorded performances.</p> <p>Require exam boards to permit students to analyse and evaluate the work of others based on live theatre and / or streamed or recorded performances.</p> <p>Reduce requirement to participate in a Devised Performance as either a performer, director or designer to a duration of at least 1.5 minutes (for monologue), and / or 3 minutes (for duologue or group).</p> <p>For the Devised Performance, permit exam boards to accept a portfolio of evidence to illustrate the intended final piece, the student's contribution to the creation and development of ideas, and their analysis and evaluation of their own work, as appropriate to the task. Portfolio may include audio-visual recordings of complete performance / physical demonstrations of key aspects with explanation of how they inform final piece / original and non-original photographs, images, drawings or sketches with annotations to illustrate intentions for performance or design / scripts / written accounts / video diary.</p>

GCE AS and A level subject	Current assessment arrangements	Proposed assessment arrangements for 2021
	<p>For both the Devised Performance and Text Based Performance, requirement to submit complete and unedited audio-visual recording of that performance from the perspective of the audience.</p> <p>At least 1 of the NEA components must be marked directly by the exam board.</p> <p>Requirement to study 2 complete and substantial performance texts and a minimum of 3 key extracts from 3 different texts.</p>	<p>Reduce requirement to participate in a Text Based Performance as either a performer, director or designer to a duration of at least 1.5 minutes (for monologue), and/or 3 minutes (for duologue or group).</p> <p>For the Text Based Performance, requirement for student to evidence their application of theatrical skills to realise artistic intentions, contribution to the creation and development of ideas, and analysis and evaluation of their own work, as appropriate to the task. Permit evidence to include a complete and unedited audio-visual recording of the Text Based Performance and/or presentation of each discrete aspect/each student's individual contribution. For performance, permit audio-visual recording of acting performance alone without need for fully designed set / lighting / costumes. For directors and designers, permit portfolio of evidence that may include prototype of product(s) / original photographs, drawings or annotated sketches of designs /annotated scripts / video or written account / physical demonstrations.</p> <p>Permit participation in a monologue for both the Devised Performance and Text Based Performance.</p> <p>Permit both NEA components to be marked by the teacher and moderated by the exam board or marked directly by the exam board.</p> <p>Permit exam boards to assess 2 complete and substantial performance texts and 1 or more key extracts from (a) different text(s).</p> <p>Rationale: To reduce pressures on teaching time and to accommodate</p>

GCE AS and A level subject	Current assessment arrangements	Proposed assessment arrangements for 2021
		potential on-going public health restrictions.
Economics AS and A level	100% examination.	100% examination.
Electronics AS and A level	80% examination, 20% NEA. NEA is a student set, teacher verified extended system design and realisation task.	80% examination, 20% NEA.
English language AS	100% examination.	100% examination.
English language A level	80% examination, 20% NEA.	80% examination, 20% NEA.
English language and literature AS	100% examination.	100% examination.
English language and literature A level	80% examination, 20% NEA.	80% examination, 20% NEA.
English literature AS	100% examination.	100% examination.
English literature A level	80% examination, 20% NEA.	80% examination, 20% NEA.
Environmental science AS and A level	100% examination. Completion of practical activities covering skills and techniques to support questions in the exam papers.	100% examination. Permit observation of demonstrations / simulations of practical activities to cover required skills and techniques. Rationale: To reduce pressures on teaching time and to accommodate potential on-going public health restrictions.
Film studies AS	70% examination, 30% NEA. Requirement to produce an extract from a film or an extract from a screenplay with digitally photographed storyboard, both in response to an exam board set	70% examination, 30% NEA Permit exam boards to accept a prototype/mock-up, with supporting evidence as necessary, of an extract from a film or to produce an extract from a screenplay accompanied by a prototype/mock-up, with supporting

GCE AS and A level subject	Current assessment arrangements	Proposed assessment arrangements for 2021
	brief, with evaluative analysis of own work.	<p>evidence as necessary, of a digitally photographed storyboard, both in response to an exam board set brief, with evaluative analysis of own work.</p> <p>Supporting evidence may include original and non-original photographs, images, drawings or sketches with annotations to illustrate intentions / storyboards / screenplay / shooting script.</p> <p>Rationale: To reduce pressures on teaching time and to accommodate potential on-going public health restrictions.</p>
<p>Film studies A level</p>	<p>70% examination, 30% NEA.</p> <p>Requirement to produce a short film or a screenplay for a short film with digitally photographed storyboard, both in response to an exam board set brief, with evaluative analysis of own work.</p>	<p>70% examination, 30% NEA.</p> <p>Permit exam boards to accept a prototype/mock-up, with supporting evidence as necessary, of a short film or to produce a screenplay for a short film accompanied by a prototype/mock-up, with supporting evidence as necessary, of a digitally photographed storyboard, both in response to an exam board set brief, with evaluative analysis of own work.</p> <p>Supporting evidence may include original and non-original photographs, images, drawings or sketches with annotations to illustrate intentions / storyboards / screenplay / shooting script.</p> <p>Rationale: To reduce pressures on teaching time and to accommodate potential on-going public health restrictions.</p>
<p>Further maths AS and A level</p>	100% examination.	100% examination.
<p>Geography AS</p>	<p>100% examination.</p> <p>Requirement for 2 days of fieldwork.</p>	100% examination.

GCE AS and A level subject	Current assessment arrangements	Proposed assessment arrangements for 2021
		<p>Retain requirement for total fieldwork time but permit this to be conducted in shorter sessions/activities.</p> <p>Rationale: To reduce pressures on teaching time and to accommodate potential on-going public health restrictions.</p>
<p>Geography A level</p>	<p>80% examination, 20% NEA. Requirement for 4 days of fieldwork.</p>	<p>80% examination, 20% NEA. Retain requirement for total fieldwork time but permit this to be conducted in shorter sessions/activities.</p> <p>Rationale: To reduce pressures on teaching time and to accommodate potential on-going public health restrictions.</p>
<p>Geology AS</p>	<p>100% examination. Requirement for 2 days of fieldwork.</p>	<p>100% examination. Retain requirement for total fieldwork time but permit this to be conducted in shorter sessions/activities. Permit observation of demonstrations / simulations of fieldwork/ practical activities to cover required apparatus and techniques.</p> <p>Rationale: To reduce pressures on teaching time and to accommodate potential on-going public health restrictions.</p>
<p>Geology A level</p>	<p>100% examination. Requirement for 4 days of fieldwork. Completion of at least 12 fieldwork / practical activities to demonstrate competence against the Common Practical Assessment Criteria (CPAC) for</p>	<p>100% examination. Retain requirement for total fieldwork time but permit this to be conducted in shorter sessions/activities. Change the requirements for the Practical Endorsement to allow assessment of the Common Practical Assessment Criteria (CPAC) across the minimum number of practical</p>

GCE AS and A level subject	Current assessment arrangements	Proposed assessment arrangements for 2021
	the separately reported Practical Endorsement.	<p>activities required to demonstrate competence.</p> <p>Permit exam boards to monitor centres' application of CPAC by remote means.</p> <p>Rationale: To reduce pressures on teaching time and to accommodate potential on-going public health restrictions.</p>
History AS	100% examination.	100% examination.
History A level	80% examination, 20% NEA.	80% examination, 20% NEA.
History of art AS and A level	100% examination.	100% examination.
Latin AS and A level	100% examination.	100% examination.
Law AS and A level	100% examination.	100% examination.
Maths AS and A level	100% examination.	100% examination.
Media studies AS	<p>70% examination, 30% NEA.</p> <p>Requirement to complete an individual media production (single product) in response to an exam board set brief.</p>	<p>70% examination, 30% NEA.</p> <p>Permit exam boards to accept a prototype/mock-up, with supporting evidence as necessary, of an individual media production (single product) in response to an exam board set brief.</p> <p>Supporting evidence may include original and non-original photographs, images, drawings or sketches with annotations to illustrate intentions / storyboards / television screenplay / shooting script / radio script and directions.</p> <p>Rationale: To reduce pressures on teaching time and to accommodate</p>

GCE AS and A level subject	Current assessment arrangements	Proposed assessment arrangements for 2021
		potential on-going public health restrictions.
<p>Media studies A level</p>	<p>70% examination, 30% NEA. Requirement to complete an individual cross-media production in response to an exam board set brief.</p>	<p>70% examination, 30% NEA. Permit exam boards to accept prototypes/mock-ups, with supporting evidence as necessary, of an individual cross-media production in response to an exam board set brief. Supporting evidence may include original and non-original photographs, images, drawings or sketches with annotations to illustrate intentions / storyboards / television screenplay / shooting script / radio script and directions. Rationale: To reduce pressures on teaching time and to accommodate potential on-going public health restrictions.</p>
<p>Modern foreign languages AS and A level</p>	70% exam, 30% NEA (speaking)	70% exam, 30% NEA (speaking)
<p>Modern foreign languages (listening, reading, writing) A level</p>	100% examination.	100% examination.
<p>Music AS</p>	<p>40% examination, 60% NEA. Requirement to complete a Performance Assessment of 1 or more pieces of music with combined minimum duration of at least 6 minutes. For the Performance Assessment, requirement to submit complete and unedited recording of the live performance and, where available, the score or lead sheet for that performance. Requirement to complete a Composition Assessment of at</p>	<p>40% examination, 60% NEA. Reduce requirement to complete a Performance Assessment of 1 or more pieces of music to a combined minimum duration of at least 2.5 minutes. For the Performance Assessment, requirement to submit complete and unedited recording of the live performance and, where available, the score or lead sheet for that performance. Reduce requirement to complete a Composition Assessment to 1 or</p>

GCE AS and A level subject	Current assessment arrangements	Proposed assessment arrangements for 2021
	<p>least 2 separate pieces of music with a combined duration of at least 4.5 minutes. Compositions may be in response to an exam board set brief and/or freely composed.</p> <p>For the Composition Assessment, requirement to submit complete recording of each composition with a score, lead sheet or written account of the composition, produced by the student. NB: The student does not have to perform their own compositions.</p> <p>Both NEA components are marked directly by the exam board.</p> <p>The Performance Assessment must take place between 1 March and 31 May in the year of certification.</p>	<p>more pieces of music with a combined duration of at least 2.5 minutes. Compositions may be in response to an exam board set brief and/or freely composed.</p> <p>For the Composition Assessment, requirement to submit complete recording of each composition with a score, lead sheet or written account of the composition, produced by the student. NB: The student does not have to perform their own composition(s). The recording(s) may be computer generated.</p> <p>Permit both NEA components to be marked by the teacher and moderated by the exam board or marked directly by the exam board.</p> <p>Permit the exam board to review the period in which the Performance Assessment can be undertaken, within the year of certification.</p> <p>Rationale: To reduce pressures on teaching time and to accommodate potential on-going public health restrictions.</p>
<p>Music A level</p>	<p>40% examination, 60% NEA.</p> <p>Requirement to complete a Performance Assessment of 1 or more pieces of music with combined minimum duration of at least 6 minutes (25% weighting), at least 8 minutes (30% weighting), or at least 10 minutes (35% weighting).</p> <p>For the Performance Assessment, requirement to submit complete and unedited recording of the live performance and, where available, the score or lead sheet for that performance.</p> <p>Requirement to complete a Composition Assessment of at</p>	<p>40% examination, 60% NEA.</p> <p>Reduce requirement to complete a Performance Assessment of 1 or more pieces of music with a combined minimum duration to at least 2.5 minutes (25% weighting), at least 3 minutes (30% weighting), or at least 3.5 minutes (35% weighting).</p> <p>For the Performance Assessment, requirement to submit complete and unedited recording of the live performance and, where available, the score or lead sheet for that performance.</p> <p>Reduce requirement to complete a Composition Assessment to 1 or more pieces of music with a combined</p>

GCE AS and A level subject	Current assessment arrangements	Proposed assessment arrangements for 2021
	<p>least 2 separate pieces of music with a combined duration of at least 4 minutes (25% weighting), at least 2 separate pieces with a combined duration of 6 minutes (30% weighting), or at least 3 separate pieces with a combined duration of at least 8 minutes (35% weighting). Compositions may be in response to an exam board set brief and/or freely composed.</p> <p>For the Composition Assessment, requirement to submit complete recording of each composition with a score, lead sheet or written account of the composition, produced by the student. NB: The student does not have to perform their own compositions.</p> <p>Both NEA components are marked directly by the exam board.</p> <p>The Performance Assessment must take place between 1 March and 31 May in the year of certification.</p>	<p>duration of at least 2 minutes (25% weighing), 1 or more pieces of music with a combined duration of at least 3 minutes (30% weighting), or 2 or more pieces with a combined duration of at least 4 minutes (35% weighting). Compositions may be in response to an exam board set brief and/or freely composed.</p> <p>For the Composition Assessment, requirement to submit complete recording of each composition with a score, lead sheet or written account of the composition, produced by the student. NB: The student does not have to perform their own composition(s). The recording(s) may be computer generated.</p> <p>Permit both NEA components to be marked by the teacher and moderated by the exam board or marked directly by the exam board.</p> <p>Permit the exam board to review the period in which the Performance Assessment can be undertaken, within the year of certification.</p> <p>Rationale: To reduce pressures on teaching time and to accommodate potential on-going public health restrictions.</p>
<p>Music technology AS</p>	<p>60% examination, 40% NEA.</p> <p>Requirement to complete a Recording Assessment to capture, edit and produce an audio recording with a duration of at least 2 minutes, in response to an exam board set task.</p> <p>Requirement to complete a Composition Assessment to produce a technology-based composition with a duration of at least 2.5 minutes, in response to an exam board set task.</p>	<p>60% examination, 40% NEA.</p> <p>Reduce requirement to complete a Recording Assessment to edit and produce an audio recording with a duration of at least 1.5 minutes, in response to an exam board set task.</p> <p>For the Recording Assessment, require exam boards to provide sample recordings or to approve centre-selected sample recordings that are suitable for students to demonstrate their ability to edit and produce audio recordings.</p>

GCE AS and A level subject	Current assessment arrangements	Proposed assessment arrangements for 2021
	<p>Both NEA components are marked directly by the exam board.</p>	<p>Reduce requirement to complete a Composition Assessment to produce a technology-based composition with a duration of at least 1.5 minutes, in response to an exam board set task.</p> <p>Permit both NEA components to be marked by the teacher and moderated by the exam board or marked directly by the exam board.</p> <p>Rationale: To reduce pressures on teaching time and to accommodate potential on-going public health restrictions.</p>
<p>Music technology A level</p>	<p>60% examination, 40% NEA.</p> <p>Requirement to complete a Recording Assessment to capture, edit and produce an audio recording with a duration of at least 3 minutes, in response to an exam board set task.</p> <p>Requirement to complete a Composition Assessment to produce a technology-based composition with a duration of at least 3 minutes, in response to an exam board set task.</p> <p>Both NEA components are marked directly by the exam board.</p>	<p>60% examination, 40% NEA.</p> <p>Reduce requirement to complete a Recording Assessment to edit and produce an audio recording with a duration of at least 2 minutes, in response to an exam board set task.</p> <p>For the Recording Assessment, require exam boards to provide sample recordings or to approve centre-selected sample recordings that are suitable for students to demonstrate their ability to edit and produce audio recordings.</p> <p>Reduce requirement to complete a Composition Assessment to produce a technology-based composition with a duration of at least 2 minutes, in response to an exam board set task.</p> <p>Permit both NEA components to be marked by the teacher and moderated by the exam board or marked directly by the exam board.</p> <p>Rationale: To reduce pressures on teaching time and to accommodate potential on-going public health restrictions.</p>

GCE AS and A level subject	Current assessment arrangements	Proposed assessment arrangements for 2021
Philosophy AS and A level	100% examination.	100% examination.
Physical education AS and A level	70% examination, 30% NEA. NEA is performance / coaching assessment –1 activity - can be either team or individual. Also, a written performance analysis task. Visiting moderation of activities that can be done in centres.	70% examination, 30% NEA. Permit remote moderation using videoed evidence for all activities. Rationale: To accommodate potential on-going public health restrictions.
Physics AS	100% examination. Completion of practical activities covering apparatus and techniques to support questions in the exam papers.	100% examination. Permit observation of demonstrations / simulations of practical activities to cover required apparatus and techniques. Rationale: To reduce pressures on teaching time and to accommodate potential on-going public health restrictions.
Physics A level	100% examination. Completion of at least 12 practical activities to demonstrate competence against the Common Practical Assessment Criteria (CPAC) for the separately reported Practical Endorsement.	100% examination. Change the requirements for the Practical Endorsement to allow assessment of the Common Practical Assessment Criteria (CPAC) across the minimum number of practical activities required to demonstrate competence. Permit exam boards to monitor centres' application of CPAC by remote means. Rationale: To reduce pressures on teaching time and to accommodate potential on-going public health restrictions.
Politics AS and A level	100% examination.	100% examination.
Psychology AS and A level	100% examination.	100% examination.

GCE AS and A level subject	Current assessment arrangements	Proposed assessment arrangements for 2021
Religious studies AS and A level	100% examination.	100% examination.
Sociology AS and A level	100% examination.	100% examination.
Statistics AS and A level	100% examination.	100% examination.

Question: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed assessment arrangements for each AS and A level subject in 2021?

Do you have any comments on the proposed assessment arrangements for each GCE AS and A level subject in 2021?

(When you respond [using the questionnaire](#) you will be invited to answer these questions in respect of individual subjects).

Equality impact assessment

As a public body, we are subject to the public sector equality duty. Annex B sets out how this duty interacts with our statutory objectives and other duties.

We have considered whether any of our proposals might impact (positively or negatively) on students who share particular protected characteristics.³

All students who were preparing to take GCSEs, AS and A levels next year will have been affected by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Most will have been directly affected by the closure of schools and colleges. Students who were studying independently, for example because they are home educated, might have been less directly affected by these closures, but they will, nevertheless, have been affected by changes to routine aspects of their lives.

There is no doubt that the disruption to some students' education will have been more severe than others. Some students will have had the opportunity to – and chosen to – engage in a full programme of remote learning facilitated by their school or college. Others will have not had such a full opportunity or will have chosen not to take it. Some students might not have been able to take up the opportunities that were available to them. Some schools teach GCSEs over three years rather than two. The impact of the lost education on students might also vary according to the period over which they were studying the GCSE content.

Those students whose education might have been and will continue to be most badly disrupted include:

- students with caring responsibilities
- those whose homes are not conducive to study
- students without access to the internet or a computer
- students with SEND who have not been able to access their normal learning support and/or who might be particularly vulnerable to coronavirus (COVID-19)
- students from Gypsy and Traveller communities
- students from BAME communities whose families might have been affected by coronavirus (COVID-19) or who themselves felt particularly vulnerable to the virus
- students whose first language is not English
- students in lower socio-economic groups

The government's planned measures to make up for missed education will target some such students. Nevertheless, there is concern – and we share that concern – that the attainment gap might grow in 2021. While we can bring about some adjustments to the way students are assessed and examined, as proposed in this consultation, it will always be the case that students who have been better prepared for the exams and assessments will likely perform better than others.

³ For the purposes of the public sector equality duty, the 'protected characteristics' are: disability, race, age, religion or belief, pregnancy or maternity, sex, sexual orientation, and gender reassignment.

In proposing changes to the exams and assessments for 2021 we have sought to guard against proposing changes that would further advantage students whose education has been less disrupted than that of others. However, changes to exams and assessments cannot address the differential impact on students of the disruption.

In proposing changes to exam and assessment arrangements we have taken care to consider how any changes might have an impact on SEND students who will have reasonable adjustments when taking their exams and assessments. We believe, for example, that changes that would make exam times or exam papers longer could be particularly problematic for some SEND students.

We have not identified any aspects of our proposed changes to the way GCSEs, AS or A levels are assessed in 2021 that would have a negative impact on students who share particular protected characteristics.

We have considered whether the proposed optionality for GCSE history would limit the breadth of topics studied so that students would not study the history of different nations or different groups of people. We are assured that this will not be the case

Questions:

Are there other potential equality impacts that we have not explored? What are they?

We would welcome your views on how any potential negative impacts on particular groups of students could be mitigated.

Regulatory impact assessment

Our aim in proposing changes to the exam and assessment arrangements for students taking their exams in summer 2021 is to free up time for teaching, to help schools and colleges manage any on-going public health safeguards and to make the exams and assessments more accessible to students, while ensuring the qualifications remain valid and meaningful.

We have developed these proposals with input from the exam boards and subject associations with the aim of putting in place arrangements that are both appropriate and manageable.

We anticipate that schools and colleges will experience some, but limited, burden from these proposals. They will need to take time to understand subject by subject the implications of the changes proposed and re-plan teaching and exam preparation in light of those changes. They may need to secure additional resources to support changes to teaching— such to support students to observe rather than themselves undertake science practical activities. We hope that these will be available free of charge, or at low cost for example from subject associations or as freely available web resources. Some of the changes, as outlined above, are intended to reduce burden on centres, to enable more time for teaching.

Exam boards will incur costs to understand and implement changes to some of assessments, although these proposals would not require them to undertake major

changes. We would not require the qualifications to be re-accredited. That would be disproportionate, as the changes are intended to be in place for one year only and as there are limited ways in which the exam boards could respond to the changes. Because we are not proposing significant changes to the format of exams we do not believe that it would generally be necessary for the exam boards to issue new sample assessment materials.

The exam boards would have to change the information they provide about their exam and assessment arrangements to help teachers and students understand any changed arrangements and to prepare appropriately. This would impose a cost on them.

We believe that students should not experience additional costs from the proposed changes and would welcome views on this.

Questions:

Are there additional activities associated with changing the exam and assessment arrangements for students taking the qualifications in summer 2021 that we have not identified above? What are they?

What additional costs do you expect you would incur if the proposed changes to the exam and assessment arrangements were introduced for summer 2021?

We would welcome your views on any suggestions for alternative approaches that could reduce burden and costs.

Annex A – your data

The identity of the data controller and contact details of our Data Protection Officer

This Privacy Notice is provided by The Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual). We are a 'controller' for the purposes of the General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679 and Data Protection Act 2018 ('Data Protection Laws'). We ask that you read this Privacy Notice carefully as it contains important information about our processing of consultation responses and your rights.

How to contact us

If you have any questions about this Privacy Notice, how we handle your personal data, or want to exercise any of your rights, please contact:

Data Protection Officer at dp.requests@ofqual.gov.uk

As part of this consultation process you are not required to provide your name or any personal information that will identify you however we are aware that some respondents may be happy to be contacted by Ofqual in relation to their response. If you or your organisation are happy to be contacted with regard to this consultation, please give your consent by providing your name and contact details in your response.

Our legal basis for processing your personal data

For this consultation, we are relying upon your consent for processing personal data. You may withdraw your consent at any time by contacting us using the details above.

How we will use your response

We will use your response to help us shape our policies and regulatory activity. If you provide your personal details, we may contact you in relation to your response.

Sharing your response

We may share your response, in full, with The Department for Education (DfE) and The Institute for Apprenticeships (IFA) where the consultation is part of work involving those organisations. We may need to share responses with them to ensure that our approach aligns with the wider process. If we share a response, we will not include any personal data (if you have provided any). Where we have received a response to the consultation from an organisation, we will provide the DfE and IFA with the name of the organisation that has provided the response, although we will consider requests for confidentiality.

Following the end of the consultation, we will publish a summary of responses and may publish copies of responses on our website, www.gov.uk/ofqual. We will not include personal details.

We will also publish an annex to the consultation summary listing all organisations that responded. We will not include personal names or other contact details.

Please note that information in response to this consultation may be subject to release to the public or other parties in accordance with access to information law, primarily the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA). We have obligations to disclose information to particular recipients or including member of the public in certain circumstances. Your explanation of your reasons for requesting confidentiality for all or part of your response would help us balance requests for disclosure against any obligation of confidentiality. If we receive a request for the information that you have provided in your response to this consultation, we will take full account of your reasons for requesting confidentiality of your response, but we cannot guarantee that confidentiality can be maintained in all circumstances.

Members of the public are entitled to ask for information we hold under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. On such occasions, we will usually anonymise responses, or ask for consent from those who have responded, but please be aware that we cannot guarantee confidentiality.

If you choose 'No' in response to the question asking if you would like anything in your response to be kept confidential, we will be able to release the content of your response to the public, but we won't make your personal name and private contact details publicly available.

How long will we keep your personal data

For this consultation, Ofqual will keep your personal data (if provided) for a period of 2 years after the close of the consultation.

Your data

Your personal data:

- will not be sent outside of the European Economic Area
- will not be used for any automated decision making
- will be kept secure

We implement appropriate technical and organisational measures in order to protect your personal data against accidental or unlawful destruction, accidental loss or alteration, unauthorised disclosure or access and any other unlawful forms of processing.

Your rights, e.g. access, rectification, erasure

As a data subject, you have the legal right to:

- access personal data relating to you
- have all or some of your data deleted or corrected
- prevent your personal data being processed in some circumstances
- ask us to stop using your data, but keep it on record

If you would like to exercise your rights, please contact us using the details set out above.

We will respond to any rights that you exercise within a month of receiving your request, unless the request is particularly complex, in which case we will respond within 3 months.

Please note that exceptions apply to some of these rights which we will apply in accordance with the law.

You also have the right to lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner (ICO) if you think we are not handling your data fairly or in accordance with the law. You can contact the ICO at ico.org.uk, or telephone 0303 123 1113. ICO, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF.

If there is any part of your response that you wish to remain confidential, please indicate so in your response.

Annex B – Ofqual’s role, objectives and duties

The Apprenticeship, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009

Ofqual has five statutory objectives, set out in the Apprenticeship, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009;

- 1) **The qualification standards objective**, which is to secure that the qualifications we regulate:
 - a) give a reliable indication of knowledge, skills and understanding; and b) indicate:
 - i) a consistent level of attainment (including over time) between comparable regulated qualifications; and
 - ii) a consistent level of attainment (but not over time) between qualifications we regulate and comparable qualifications (including those awarded outside of the UK) that we do not regulate
- 2) **The assessment standards objective**, which is to promote the development and implementation of regulated assessment arrangements which:
 - a) give a reliable indication of achievement, and
 - b) indicate a consistent level of attainment (including over time) between comparable assessments
- 3) **The public confidence objective**, which is to promote public confidence in regulated qualifications and regulated assessment arrangements
- 4) **The awareness objective**, which is to promote awareness and understanding of:
 - a) the range of regulated qualifications available,
 - b) the benefits of regulated qualifications to Students, employers and institutions within the higher education sector, and
 - c) the benefits of recognition to bodies awarding or authenticating qualifications
- 5) **The efficiency objective**, which is to secure that regulated qualifications are provided efficiently, and that any relevant sums payable to a body awarding or authenticating a qualification represent value for money.

We must therefore regulate so that qualifications properly differentiate between Students who have demonstrated that they have the knowledge, skills and understanding required to attain the qualification and those who have not.

We also have a duty under the Apprenticeship, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 to have regard to the reasonable requirements of relevant Students, including those with special educational needs and disabilities, of employers and of the higher education sector, and to aspects of government policy when so directed by the Secretary of State.

The Equality Act 2010

As a public body, we are subject to the public sector equality duty. This duty requires us to have due regard to the need to:

- a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited under the Equality Act 2010
- b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it
- c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it

The awarding organisations that design, deliver and award qualifications are required by the Equality Act, among other things, to make reasonable adjustments for disabled people taking their qualifications, except where we have specified that such adjustments should not be made.

When we decide whether such adjustments should not be made, we must have regard to:

- a) the need to minimise the extent to which disabled persons are disadvantaged in attaining the qualification because of their disabilities
- b) the need to secure that the qualification gives a reliable indication of the knowledge, skills and understanding of a person upon whom it is conferred
- c) the need to maintain public confidence in the qualification

We are subject to a number of duties and we must aim to achieve a number of objectives. These different duties and objectives can, sometimes conflict with each other. For example, if we regulate to secure that a qualification gives a reliable indication of a Student's knowledge, skills and understanding, a Student who has not been able to demonstrate the required knowledge, skills and/or understanding will not be awarded the qualification.

A person may find it more difficult, or impossible, to demonstrate the required knowledge, skills and/or understanding because they have a protected characteristic. This could put them at a disadvantage relative to others who have been awarded the qualification.

It is not always possible for us to regulate so that qualifications give a reliable indication of knowledge, skills and understanding and advance equality between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. We must review all the available evidence and actively consider all the available options before coming to a final, justifiable decision.

Qualifications cannot mitigate inequalities or unfairness in the education system or in society more widely that might affect, for example, Students' preparedness to take the qualification and the assessments within it. While a wide range of factors can have an impact on a Student's ability to achieve a particular assessment, our influence is limited to the qualification design and assessment.

We require awarding bodies to design qualifications that give a reliable indication of the knowledge, skills and understanding of the Students that take them. We also require awarding organisations to avoid, where possible, features of a qualification

that could, without justification, make a qualification more difficult for a Student to achieve because they have a particular protected characteristic. We require awarding organisations to monitor whether any features of their qualifications have this effect.

In setting our proposed requirements, we want to understand the possible impacts of the proposals on Students who share a protected characteristic. The protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnerships
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

With respect to the public sector equality duty under section 149 of the Equality Act, we are not required to have due regard to impacts on those who are married or in a civil partnership.

Annex C – proposed assessment arrangements for GCSE specifications in history, ancient history, and geography

GCSE History

Specification	Current Structure	Proposal
AQA	<p>Paper 1 – Period Study and Non-British Depth Study</p> <p>Paper 2 – Thematic Study and British Depth Study with Historic Environment</p>	<p>Students complete 3 out of 4 parts, as follows:</p> <p>Non-British Depth Study (compulsory for all)</p> <p>And 2 out of 3 of the following equally weighted parts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Period Study, and/or • Thematic Study, and/or • British Depth Study with Historic Environment
Eduqas	<p>Paper 1 - British Depth Study and Non-British Depth Study</p> <p>Paper 2 - Period Study and Thematic Study with Historic Environment</p>	<p>Students complete 3 out of 4 equally weighted parts, as follows:</p> <p>Non-British Depth Study (compulsory for all)</p> <p>And 2 out of 3 of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • British Depth Study, and/or • Period Study, and/or • Thematic Study with Historic Environment
OCR A	<p>Paper 1 – Period Study and Non-British Depth Study</p> <p>Paper 2 – Thematic Study</p>	<p>Students complete 3 out of 4 parts, as follows:</p> <p>Period Study (compulsory for all)</p>

	Paper 3 – British Depth Study with Historic Environment	And 2 out of 3 of the following equally weighted parts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-British Depth Study, and/or • Thematic Study, and/or • British Depth Study with Historic Environment
OCR B	<p>Paper 1 – Thematic Study and British Depth Study</p> <p>Paper 2 – Historic Environment</p> <p>Paper 3 – Period Study and Non-British Depth Study</p>	<p>Students complete 4 out of 5 parts, as follows:</p> <p>British Depth Study (compulsory for all)</p> <p>And 3 out of 4 of the following equally weighted parts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thematic Study, and/or • Historic Environment, and/or • Period Study, and/or • Non-British Depth Study
Pearson	<p>Paper 1 - Thematic Study with Historic Environment</p> <p>Paper 2 – British Depth Study and Period Study</p> <p>Paper 3 – Non-British Depth Study</p>	<p>Students complete 3 out of 4 parts, as follows:</p> <p>Non-British Depth Study (compulsory for all)</p> <p>And 2 out of 3 of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thematic Study with Historic Environment, and/or • British Depth Study, and/or • Period Study

GCSE Ancient History

Specification	Current Structure	Proposal
OCR	<p>Paper 1 - Compulsory Period Study (Persian Empire) and Optional Depth Studies (students take 1 of 3)</p> <p>Paper 2 - Compulsory Period Study (Foundations of Rome) and Optional Depth Studies (students take 1 of 3)</p>	<p>Students complete both compulsory period studies and 1 optional depth study. As follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compulsory Period Study (Persian Empire) • Compulsory Period Study (Foundations of Rome) • 1 out of 6 of the Optional Depth Studies.

GCSE Geography

Specification	Current Structure	Proposal
AQA	<p>Paper 1 - Living with the physical environment</p> <p>Paper 2 - Challenges in the human environment</p> <p>Paper 3 - Geographical applications</p>	<p>Paper 1 - unchanged</p> <p>Paper 2 - unchanged</p> <p>Paper 3 - remove fieldwork and questions related to fieldwork</p>

Eduqas A	<p>Paper 1 - Changing physical and human landscapes</p> <p>Paper 2 - Environmental and developmental issues</p> <p>Paper 3 - Applied fieldwork enquiry</p>	<p>Paper 1 unchanged</p> <p>Paper 2 unchanged</p> <p>Paper 3 - remove fieldwork and questions related to fieldwork</p>
Eduqas B	<p>Paper 1 - Investigating geographical issues</p> <p>Paper 2 - Problem solving geography</p> <p>Paper 3 - Applied fieldwork enquiry</p>	<p>Paper 1 unchanged</p> <p>Paper 2 unchanged</p> <p>Paper 3 Remove fieldwork and questions related to fieldwork</p>
OCR A	<p>Paper 1 - Living in the UK today</p> <p>Paper 2 - The world around us</p> <p>Paper 3 - Geographical skills</p>	<p>Paper 1 - unchanged</p> <p>Paper 2 - unchanged</p> <p>Paper 3 - remove fieldwork and questions related to fieldwork</p>
OCR B	<p>Paper 1 - Our natural world</p> <p>Paper 2 - People and society</p> <p>Paper 3 - Geographical exploration</p>	<p>Paper 1 - remove fieldwork and questions related to fieldwork (Physical fieldwork)</p> <p>Paper 2 - remove fieldwork and questions related to fieldwork (Human fieldwork)</p> <p>Paper 3 - unchanged</p>
Pearson A	<p>Paper 1 - The physical environment</p> <p>Paper 2 - The human environment</p>	<p>Paper 1 - unchanged</p> <p>Paper 2 - unchanged</p>

	Paper 3 - Geographical investigations, fieldwork and UK challenges	Paper 3 - remove fieldwork and questions related to fieldwork
Pearson B	<p>Paper 1 - Global geographical issues</p> <p>Paper 2 - UK Geographical issues</p> <p>Paper 3 - People and environmental issues</p>	<p>Paper 1 - unchanged</p> <p>Paper 2 - remove fieldwork and questions related to fieldwork</p> <p>Paper 3 - unchanged</p>

Annex D – research evidence on optional exam questions

The evidence shows that where optional questions are available, students choose the option that they think will be better for them, although they do not always do this successfully (Wang, Wainer, & Thissen, 1993)⁴. Powers and Bennett (1999)⁵ provide some evidence that students tend to choose questions that play to their strengths, with students doing better on questions they had picked as opposed to those they were assigned. However, there is also evidence that some students get better marks on questions they did not select, when allowed to attempt further questions after the end of the exam (Taylor & Nuttall, 1974)⁶.

It is likely that the skill of spotting an easier option relates to knowledge and ability in the subject (Harrison, 2018)⁷. Evidence suggests less able students are less likely to select easier questions, leading to them being disadvantaged. For example, Wang et al. (1995)⁸ asked students to select from two questions, but then to answer both. The students who selected the more difficult question performed less well on both questions, suggesting that students who were weaker in the subject were also less likely to choose the easier question. It could be that weaker students were less able rapidly to evaluate the demands of the question, or that their awareness of their own abilities was less developed (Bramley & Crisp, 2017)⁹. It is possible that optionality would be more helpful to the better-prepared candidates than to those it is intended to help.

Harrison (2018) and Bramley and Crisp (2019) recently investigated the comparability of scores from optional questions or sections (sets of questions) in a number of GCSE components using statistical methods. Differences of up to 5 marks (out of a maximum of 50) in equivalent scores between optional sections and 8 marks (out of a maximum of 75) between optional routes at the overall component level were observed in the middle score range (He & Black, in progress). Studies by Patrick and Pollitt (1991b)¹⁰, Bramley and Raikes (1997)¹¹, and Willmott and Hall

⁴ Wang, X., Wainer, H. and Thissen, D. (1995). On the viability of some untestable assumptions in equating exams that allow examinee choice. *Applied Measurement in Education* 8, 211–225.

⁵ Powers, D. E., & Bennett, R. E. (1999). Effects of allowing examinees to select questions on a test of divergent thinking. *Applied Measurement in Education*, 12, 257–279. doi:[10.1207/5324818AME1203_3](https://doi.org/10.1207/5324818AME1203_3).

⁶ Taylor, E. G., & Nuttall, D. L. (1974). Question choice in examinations an experiment in geography and science. *Educational Research*, 16, 143–150. doi:[10.1080/0013188740160210](https://doi.org/10.1080/0013188740160210).

⁷ Harrison, E. (2018). Assessing comparability of optional questions. AQA, Manchester. <https://research.aqa.org.uk/research-library/assessing-comparability-of-optional-questions>

⁸ Wang, X., Wainer, H. and Thissen, D. (1995). On the viability of some untestable assumptions in equating exams that allow examinee choice. *Applied Measurement in Education* 8, 211–225.

⁹ Bramley, T. & Crisp, V (2019). Spoilt for choice? Issues around the use and comparability of optional exam questions. *Assessment in Education* 26, 75-90.

¹⁰ Patrick, H., & Pollitt, A. (1991b). *AS mathematics 8480, summer 1990: Supplementary report III – question difficulty* (Internal report). Cambridge: University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate.

¹¹ Bramley, T., & Raikes, N. (1997). *A-level mathematics 9205 (summer 1995): Implications of question choice for grades* (Internal Report). Cambridge: University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate.

(1975)¹² have shown similar disparities between the scores of equally able candidates taking optional routes through papers.

¹² Willmott, A. S., & Hall, C. G. W. (1975). *O level examined: The effect of question choice* (Schools Council Research Studies). London: Macmillan.



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