Ofqual Board

Paper 48/14

Date:
24 September 2014

Title:
Reform Programme Update

Report by:
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Responsible Director:
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Paper for information

Open paper

Issue

1. This paper is to give the Board an update on the progress of the Reform Programme. Papers on completing A level and GCSE Reform, Enquiries about Results and Code of Practice are being presented separately.

Recommendation

2. The Board is asked to note the update on progress of the Reform Programme.

General Qualifications

3. The plan for this workstream is shown in Annex 1. Key milestones achieved since the last update include :

- First teaching 2015 accreditation is on-going, resubmissions are being considered as required.
- The consultation on 'Completing GCSE and A level Reform' closed at the end of July and a paper has been submitted to the Board.

- The Policy position on the Setting Grade Standards consultation was published on the 12th September

First Teaching 2015

GCSE English Language

4. The consultation on the grading of the speaking component for English Language will close on 26 September.

Accreditation

5. An overview of progress on accreditation has been provided as part of the Chief Operating Officer's report.

6. The schedule of FT (first teaching) 2015 qualification accreditations is provided in Annex 2.

7. The FT 2015 accreditation process is currently being evaluated and lessons learned will inform the planning for FT 2016, where we have 22 GCSE qualifications to accredit (FT 2015 – 3) and 14 A/AS level qualifications to accredit (FT 2015 – 13).

National Reference Tests

8. The consultation with prospective suppliers of the draft ITT broadly confirmed our proposed approach. The ITT will be issued in September. A recommendation on the preferred supplier and contract award will be put to the Ofqual Board in December.

First Teaching 2016

GCSE Remaining Ebacc Subjects

9. The decision on tiering of GCSEs in Modern Foreign and Ancient Languages will be published on 18 September. The assessment of practical skills in Science at A level is being discussed with expert groups and this will inform recommendations at GCSE level for consideration by an electronic Board (to be arranged in October).

Remaining A Level and GCSE Subjects

10. The policy consultation was published on 16 July and will close on 22 September. Consultation analysis is in progress and meetings with DfE, exam boards and ALCAB have been arranged in October to consider potential changes to content following DfE's consultation. Recommendations will be presented to the Ofqual Board in December.

11. A supplementary consultation is planned for launch on September 25 for the following subjects.

- Citizenship (GCSE)
- Design and Technology (GCSE)
- Drama (GCSE and A/AS level)
- Food, Cooking and Nutrition (GCSE)

- Religious Studies (GCSE and A/AS level)

Board members will have had an opportunity to both consider (electronically), recommendations on DfE's proposed content for these subjects and the length of the Ofqual consultation.

Completing A Level and GCSE Reform

12. A separate paper is being presented as agenda item 49/14

Enquiries About Results (EARs) and Appeals

13. A separate paper seeking approval to the contents of the policy consultation is presented as agenda item 51/14

Code of Practice

14. A separate paper is being presented as agenda item 52/14

Regulatory Strategy

15. Validity audits of awarding organisations offering Tech Levels completed on 12 September. We aim to share our findings with DfE at a workshop in October. We will also at the same time write individual letters including follow up actions with the awarding organisations that were subject to audit.

16. A separate paper on lifting of the Accreditation requirement is being presented separately as agenda item 50/14.

17. The QCF policy consultation was published on July 24, alongside the consultation on raising the participation age & guided learning hours. Stakeholder events are planned in September to start the engagement process with Awarding Organisations and gather further feedback. We plan to come to Ofqual Board in December to communicate outcomes of each consultation, prior to the removal of the QCF regulations and technical consultation on new conditions.

18. Planning has continued on the new Regulatory Strategy approach. Funding is being sought from BIS to take forward in a timely manner the development of the qualification life-cycle risk analysis and identification of critical failure points from a validity perspective.

19. The intention of this work is to support the development of guidance for awarding organisations to secure validity. It should also highlight where in the future we may need to focus our research effort to develop methodologies and approaches for us to establish our requirements on compliance with the regulatory framework.

20. We also plan to develop our audit framework and toolkit. This will define the sampling approach including the types of audit we will undertake and establish internal guidance on evidence collection.

Ways of Working

21. Tier 1 and 2 organisation structure plan is on track and the 90 day consultation completed on 13 August.

22. Tier 3 planning is progressing according to plan. Structures and Job Descriptions are being defined by the Tier 1 and 2 leadership team with support from the programme team. Further detailed process definition workshops are being conducted to develop the ways of working for Ofqual.

Programme Management

Funding

23. A business case has been submitted to BIS for £0.67m required to implement phase 1 of the regulatory strategy and the IT platform. DfE have agreed for Ofqual to allocate £0.5m of funds previously allocated to Reference Tests this year to the IT Transformation programme. The GQ programme remains on track with programme ownership moving into the GQ Directorate.

Programme Risks

24. The table below summarises the main risks faced by the Reform programme:-

Risk	Impact	Mitigation	On Corporate Register
Funding for current planned activities including the immediate development work relating to the regulatory strategy is insufficient	Regulatory strategy implementation delayed IT Transition delayed Expenditure may exceed budget available	Business case for additional funding from BIS for IT infrastructure and additional resources to take forward some development aspects of the regulatory strategy development has been submitted Continuing development of procurement documents for the IT tendering exercise but will not issue the ITT until funding is confirmed	Yes
Critical gaps emerge in capability and capacity due to delays in recruitment to leadership team or loss of key personnel arising from uncertainty over final organisational design	Delays to the implementation of Reform projects	Effective and flexible search and recruitment strategy People Strategy; leadership development, continuing training programmes, development of guiding policies focused on our people More frequent and varied communications Ofqual's strengthening approach to leadership Strengthening of our research capability and expertise and using this to provide key assessment insight across the organisation – bite size learning Enhance the wider skill set of the organisation	Yes

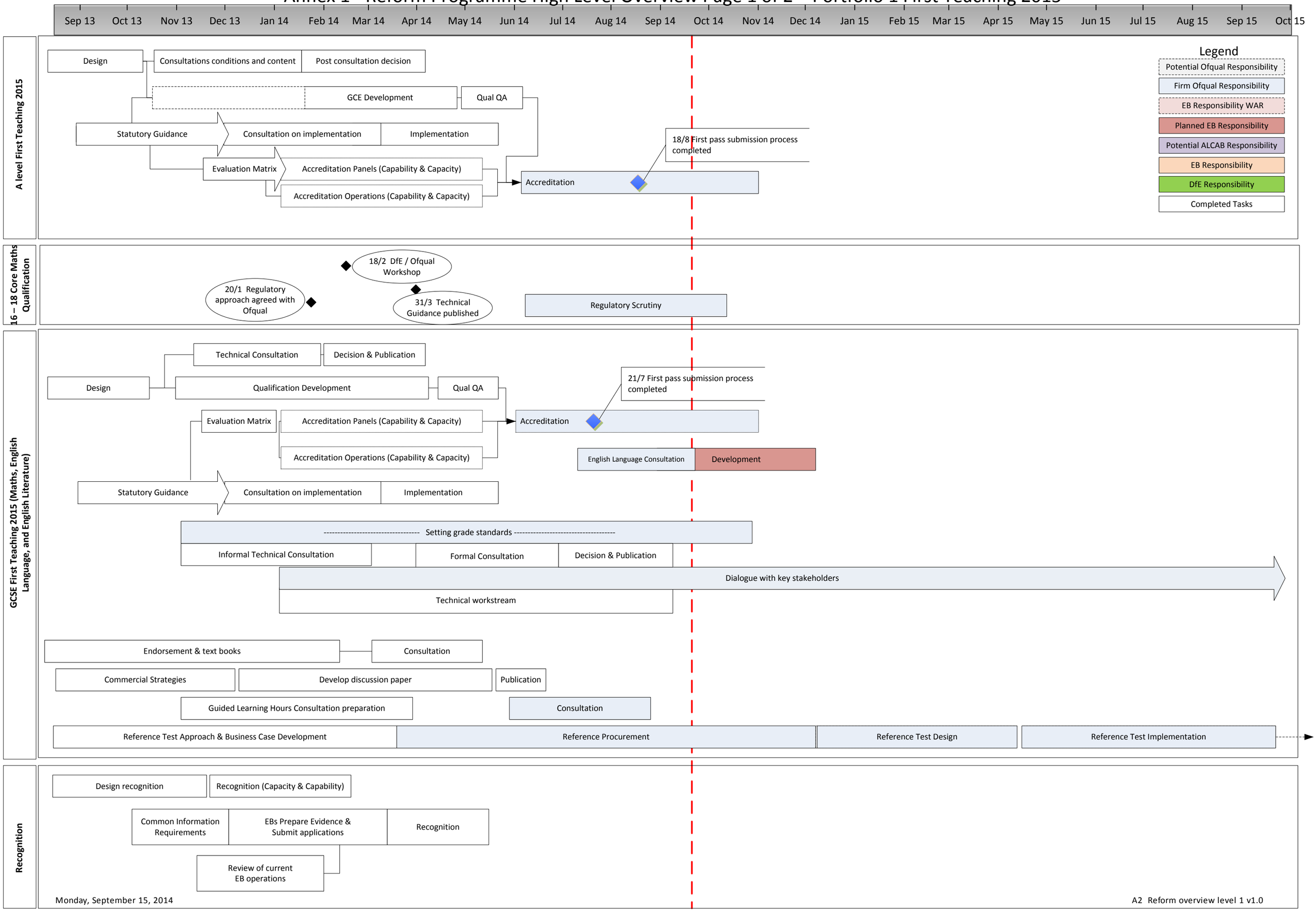
		through working better, peer review and driven by a multi-discplinary approach	
Schools and colleges lose confidence in the reformed qualifications and do not implement them properly	Perception of poorer quality qualifications post Reform Reputational Risk	Ongoing discussions with stakeholders and AOs about implementation issues Regular coherent and consistent communications through a range of channels to reach as many schools and colleges as possible, and to build confidence in the qualifications system Gateway process to review system readiness Ofqual need to ensure DfE has robust assessment of system readiness	No - external
Ofqual does not have the in-house technical resources to deliver the Reform programme	Delivery becomes slower, or costlier, or of poorer quality	Optimise use of in-house experts, back-filling if necessary Selective use of external experts to develop technical products Close monitoring of budget via Finance and PMO functions	No – being managed locally

ANNEXES LIST:-

Annex 1 Reform Programme Milestone Plan

Annex 2 Accreditation Submissions and Panel Tracker

Annex 1 - Reform Programme High Level Overview Page 1 of 2 – Portfolio 1 First Teaching 2015



Annex 1 Reform Programme High Level Overview Page 2 of 2 – Portfolio 2 First Teaching 2016 and Remaining Subjects

Feb 14 | Mar 14 | Apr 14 | May 14 | Jun 14 | Jul 14 | Aug 14 | Sep 14 | Oct 14 | Nov 14 | Dec 14 | Jan 15 | Feb 15 | Mar 15 | Apr 15 | May 15 | Jun 15 | Jul 15 | Aug 15 | Sep 15 | Oct 15 | Nov 15 | Dec 15

GCSE Remaining EBAC subjects

- MFL content and Regulatory Design
- Regulatory Consultation
- Geography / History content and Regulatory Design
- Preparation for Technical Consultation
- Technical Consultation
- MFL & AL Development
- Geography / History Development
- Accreditation First Submissions
- Accreditation Re - Submissions
- Statutory Guidance
- Accreditation Panels and Subject Templates
- Sciences content developed and agreed
- Regulatory Design
- Regulatory Consultation
- Technical Consult'n
- Statutory Guidance
- Sciences Development

Legend

- Completed Tasks
- Ofqual Responsibility
- EB Responsibility WAR
- Planned EB Responsibility
- ALCAB Responsibility
- EB Responsibility
- DfE Responsibility

A level Facilitating Subjects

- Advise on Content – Facilitating Subjects
- ALCAB interim advice
- ALCAB final advice
- ALCAB advice published
- ALCAB start review of consultation feedback
- ALCAB recommends further / no changes to content criteria
- Content Development
- Consultation
- Finalise & Publish
- Regulatory Design
- Consultation
- Post consult. decision
- Technical Consult'n
- Statutory Guidance
- Accreditation Templates
- Accreditation Panels (Capability & Capacity)
- Qualification Development incl. QA
- Accreditation

GCSE & A Level 2016 - Shortened Process

- Content Development and Design
- Consultation (phase 1)
- Finalise & Publish
- Design Review
- Consultation (phase 1)
- Post consult. decision
- Technical Consult'n
- Statutory Guidance
- Accreditation Panels and Templates
- Qualification Development incl. QA
- Accreditation
- Content Development
- Consultation (phase 2)
- Finalise & Publish
- Design Review
- Consultation (phase 2)
- Post consult. decision
- Technical Consult'n
- Statutory Guidance
- Accreditation Panels and Templates
- Qualification Development incl. QA
- Accreditation

A level & GCSE – Full Regulatory Process

- Regulatory framework Dev(GCE/GCSE)
- Completing GCSE & A level Reform consultation
- Discussion and Decision
- Implementation
- Consult and Develop Content
- Qualification Development
- Ongoing cycle of Technical Requirements, Statutory Guidance and Accreditation