

Analysis of Responses to our Consultation on Conditions and Guidance for AS and A level Law



May 2016

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Executive summary

Our consultation about the Conditions and guidance for AS and A level Law took place between 5th February 2015 and 6th March 2016.

The consultation questions were available to either complete online or to download. A copy of the consultation is available at www.gov.uk/government/consultations/as-and-a-level-reform-regulations-for-law.

There were six responses to the consultation – four from organisations and two from individuals. One organisation did not comment directly on our proposals, but instead provided general comments on the process for reform of GCSEs, AS and A levels. Our analysis is therefore based on the other responses we received.

The other respondents broadly supported our proposals. We set out the responses in more detail below

Introduction

The consultation on the Conditions and guidance for AS and A level Law.

This report is a summary of the views expressed by those who responded to our consultation on the Conditions and guidance for AS and A level Law which took place between 19 February 2016 and 18 March 2016.

Background

New GCSE, AS and A level qualifications are being introduced in England. We have consulted on and announced our policy on the general design of these new qualifications. We have also set out our policy and technical arrangements for the subjects where first courses began in September 2015¹, and for the subjects, which will be introduced for first teaching from September 2016².

Following an earlier consultation, we took decisions on the design of the reformed AS and A level qualifications in Law that are to be introduced for first teaching from September 2017.³

This consultation focused on the regulatory arrangements that we must put in place to make sure that awarding organisations design, deliver and award the new AS and A levels in Law in line with our policy decisions.

¹ New GCSEs in English language, English literature and mathematics, as well as new AS and A levels in art and design, biology, business, chemistry, computer science, economics, English language, English language and literature, English Literature, history, physics, psychology and sociology.

² New GCSEs in art and design, biology, chemistry, citizenship studies, classical Greek, combined science, computer science, dance, drama, food preparation and nutrition, French, geography, German, history, Latin, music, physical education, physics, religious studies and Spanish. New AS and A levels in classical Greek, dance, drama and theatre, French, geography, German, Latin, music, physical education, religious studies and Spanish.

³ www.gov.uk/government/consultations/developing-new-gcse-as-and-a-levels-for-first-teaching-in-2017

Who responded?

We received a total of six responses to our consultation. The responses were from organisations and individuals based in England or Wales.

Table 1: Breakdown of consultation responses

Personal / Organisation response	Respondent type	Number
Organisation	Awarding Organisation	3
Personal	Individual	2
Organisation	Union	1

Approach to analysis

We published the consultation on our website. Respondents could choose to respond using an online form, by email or by posting their answers to the consultation questions to us. The consultation included six questions.

This was a consultation on the views of those who wished to participate and while we made every effort to ensure that as many respondents as possible had the opportunity to reply, it cannot be considered as a representative sample of the general public or of any specific group.

Data presentation

We present the responses to the consultation questions in the order in which they were asked.

The consultation asked six questions and each had a different focus. Respondents could choose to answer all or just some of the questions.

For some of the questions, respondents could indicate the extent to which they agreed with our proposals, using a 5-point scale (Strongly agree, Agree, Neither agree nor disagree, Disagree and Strongly disagree), as well as providing comments on our proposals.

During the analysis phase we reviewed every response to each question.

Views expressed – consultation response outcomes

In this section we report the views, in broad terms, of those who responded to the consultation document. We have structured this around the questions covered in the consultation document and provide analysis of the data broken down by stakeholder.

A consultation is not the same as a survey and the responses only reflect the views of those who chose to respond. Typically these will be those with strong views and/or particular experience or interest in a topic. What follows is a fair reflection of the views expressed by respondents to the consultation.

A list of the organisations that responded to the consultation is included in Appendix A.

Our approach to regulating AS and A level Law

Question 1: To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should introduce a Condition which requires exam boards to comply with the relevant subject content and assessment objectives?

All of the respondents who answered this question either agreed or strongly agreed with our proposals. Two of the respondents commented that the Condition would support consistency and comparability across exam boards.

Question 2: To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should introduce guidance which clarifies how exam boards should interpret our assessment objectives?

All of the respondents who answered this question either agreed or strongly agreed with our proposal. One respondent commented that guidance would help ensure consistency of assessment across all exam boards. One respondent commented that guidance was helpful but should not be used to compensate for poorly drafted assessment objectives.

Our proposed Conditions and guidance

Question 3: Do you have comments on our proposed Conditions and requirements for AS and A level Law?

Two respondents did not have any comments on our proposed Conditions and requirements.

One of the respondents commented that AO1, as drafted, did not provide for the assessment of students 'knowledge and understanding' of the nature of law. The response suggested that AO1 should be re-worded to provide for this.

The same respondent commented in relation to AO3 that 'analysis of concepts' is a higher order skill which is not required to be assessed at AS as it relates to A level only. Also in relation to AO3, the respondent commented that 'issues' should also appear in the wording of AO3 for AS. The respondent argued that 'concept' should be replaced by 'issues' in the wording of AO3 for AS.

Another of the respondents suggested that AO3 should be amended. The respondent suggested that 'issues' should be included in AO3 for AS as well as for A level, arguing that 'issues' appeared in the subject content at AS level as well as A level. To include it in AO3 for AS would be helpful for learners and teachers.

One respondent stated that Conditions and requirements were unnecessary but did not provide any further explanation.

Question 4: Do you have any comments on our proposed guidance for AS and A level Law?

Three of the respondents did not have any comments to make. Two of the respondents highlighted a typographical error in the guidance.

One of the respondents took the opportunity to reiterate concerns previously expressed in response to question 3 which related to AO3 for AS. The respondent stated that 'concepts' was not appropriate for AS and all references to 'concepts' should be removed from the interpretations and definitions for AO3 at AS.

Equality Impact Assessment

Question 5: We have not identified any ways in which our proposals would impact (positively or negatively) on persons who share a protected characteristic. Are there any potential impacts we have not identified?

Question 6: Are there any additional steps we could take to mitigate any negative impact resulting from these proposal on persons who share a protected characteristic?

Question 7: Do you have any other comments on the impacts of the proposals on students who share a protected characteristic?

All respondents answered no to these questions and provided no further comments.

Appendix A: List of organisational consultation respondents

When completing the questionnaire, respondents were asked to indicate whether they were responding as an individual or on behalf of an organisation.

Below we list those organisations that submitted a response to the consultation.

Association of School and College Leaders

AQA

OCR

WJEC

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