

# GCSE Food Preparation and Nutrition: Decisions on Conditions and Guidance



In March 2015 we published a consultation about the rules and guidance we proposed to put in place for reformed GCSEs (graded 9 to 1) in food preparation and nutrition.

This consultation set out draft Subject Level Conditions, requirements and guidance which would apply to all reformed GCSEs in food preparation and nutrition.

We have reviewed the responses to the consultation and are now announcing our decisions. We are also publishing a more detailed analysis of the responses alongside this document.<sup>1</sup>

## Conditions and requirements

### Content requirements

We proposed that all reformed GCSEs in food preparation and nutrition should comply with the subject content requirements published by the Department for Education,<sup>2</sup> and with our assessment objectives.

Most respondents did not comment on this proposal, but those who did supported it, noting that it was consistent with our rules for other reformed GCSEs. No respondents raised any significant concerns with this aspect of our proposals.

We have therefore decided to confirm our proposals in this area.

### Assessment requirements and statistical moderation

We have previously confirmed that reformed GCSEs in food preparation and nutrition will be assessed through a mixture of 50 per cent exams and 50 per cent non-exam assessment.

In our consultation, we proposed the following:

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<sup>1</sup> [www.gov.uk/government/consultations/gcse-reform-regulations-for-food-preparation-and-nutrition](http://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/gcse-reform-regulations-for-food-preparation-and-nutrition)

<sup>2</sup> [www.gov.uk/government/publications/gcse-food-preparation-and-nutrition](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/gcse-food-preparation-and-nutrition)

- The non-exam assessment should comprise two tasks, which would require students to:
  - plan a menu of three dishes, then prepare, cook and present it in a 4-hour period (the 'Food Preparation Assessment', worth 35 per cent of the total marks); and
  - investigate and evaluate the working characteristics, functional and chemical properties of ingredients to achieve a particular result related to the preparation and cooking of food, and produce a report of 1,500 to 2,000 words setting out their findings (the 'Food Investigation Assessment', worth 15 per cent of the total marks).
- Exam boards would set the non-exam assessment tasks, releasing the task for the Food Investigation Assessment in September of the academic year of award and the task for the Food Preparation Assessment in January of the academic year of award.
- Exam boards should have flexibility to mark the non-exam assessment themselves, or to moderate marks awarded by teachers.

Respondents raised a number of concerns with our proposed approach, as follows:

- A 4-hour practical exam was excessive for a GCSE qualification and would be too demanding for students.
- The release dates for the non-exam assessment tasks needed to be earlier in the course.
- Taken together, our proposals could create significant manageability problems (and additional costs) for schools.

We are persuaded by respondents' arguments and have made changes to our proposals in response to them – reducing the length of the Food Preparation Assessment to 3 hours and bringing forward its release date to November of the year of award. We remain of the view that this task should take place towards the end of the course of study because it is designed to act as a showcase for the skills that students have learned.

## **Guidance**

We proposed to introduce guidance clarifying the interpretation of our assessment objectives and the expected length of the report that students should produce in the Food Investigation Assessment.

Most respondents did not comment on our guidance on assessment objectives. Those who did supported it. We have therefore decided to adopt this guidance in full.

A small number of respondents were concerned that the report for the Food Investigation Assessment was too long and could discourage less academically minded students from taking up the subject.

Our view remains that our guidance is appropriate for a report that makes up 15 per cent of a GCSE qualification. In any event, exam boards are free to take a different approach, provided they can justify it to us.

## **Next steps**

We have published final *Subject Level Conditions*<sup>3</sup> and *Subject Level Guidance*<sup>4</sup> for GCSE food preparation and nutrition.

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<sup>3</sup> [www.gov.uk/government/publications/gcse-9-to-1-subject-level-conditions-for-food-preparation-and-nutrition](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/gcse-9-to-1-subject-level-conditions-for-food-preparation-and-nutrition)

<sup>4</sup> [www.gov.uk/government/publications/gcse-9-to-1-subject-level-guidance-for-food-preparation-and-nutrition](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/gcse-9-to-1-subject-level-guidance-for-food-preparation-and-nutrition)