

Developing GCSEs in Design and Technology for First Teaching in 2017



July 2015

Ofqual/15/5725

Contents

Executive summary	3
Balance of exam and non-exam assessment.....	4
How to respond	5
Evaluating the responses	5
1. Introduction	6
The scope of this consultation	6
Our previous consultation on design and technology	7
2. Subject-specific proposals	9
Design and technology	9
3. Equality analysis	12
Ofqual's role, objectives and duties.....	12
Equality analysis relating to proposed changes to GCSE design and technology.	12
Assessment arrangements.....	13
Responding to the consultation	16
Your details	16
Questions	20
Accessibility of our consultations	23
Appendix A: Ofqual's role, objectives and duties.....	25

Executive summary

New GCSEs, AS and A levels are being introduced in England. The new qualifications are being introduced in three phases, with the first new qualifications being taught from September 2015,¹ and the second phase from 2016.² We are now beginning the final phase of GCSE and A level reform. We expect all GCSE and A level subjects not included in the first two phases to be reformed in this phase for first teaching in 2017 if they are to continue to be made available.

This consultation covers GCSE design and technology and is the first consultation we are carrying out on the subjects due to be taught from 2017.³ It should be read in conjunction with our earlier consultations on the subjects that will be taught from September 2015⁴ and 2016.⁵ We expect to consult in shortly on the arrangements for the assessment of most of the subjects due to be taught from September 2017. A full list of these subjects is available on our website.⁶

We have previously consulted on the arrangements for the assessment of GCSE design and technology.⁷ However, the subject content has been substantially revised since our previous consultation and we are consulting on the arrangements for the assessment of this subject based on the revised subject content. The Department for

¹ New GCSEs to be taught from 2015: English language, English literature, mathematics. New AS and A levels to be taught from 2015: English language and literature, English language, English literature, physics, chemistry, biology, art and design, computer science, sociology, economics, history, business, psychology.

² New GCSEs to be taught from 2016: French, German, Spanish, ancient languages, history, geography, science, biology, chemistry, physics, art and design, dance, music, computer science, physical education, drama, religious studies, citizenship studies, food preparation and nutrition. New AS and A levels to be taught from 2016: modern foreign languages, ancient languages, mathematics, further mathematics, geography, dance, music, physical education, drama and theatre, religious studies.

³ www.gov.uk/government/consultations/gcse-as-and-a-levels-new-subjects-to-be-taught-in-2015

⁴ <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20141110161323/http://comment.ofqual.gov.uk/gcse-reform-june-2013/>

⁵ 2016, Part 1: www.gov.uk/government/consultations/gcse-as-and-a-levels-reform-of-subjects-for-september-2016

2016, Part 2: www.gov.uk/government/consultations/gcse-as-and-a-levels-new-subjects-to-be-taught-in-2016

2016, Part 3: www.gov.uk/government/consultations/religious-studies-gcse-as-and-a-levels-new-qualifications-for-2016

⁶ www.gov.uk/government/news/further-decisions-for-completing-gcse-as-and-a-level-reform

⁷ www.gov.uk/government/consultations/gcse-as-and-a-levels-new-subjects-to-be-taught-in-2016

Education is consulting on the revised subject content in parallel with this consultation.⁸

Balance of exam and non-exam assessment

We are applying a common set of principles for non-exam assessment to all GCSEs as they are reformed. Where subject content can be validly assessed by exams, set and marked by exam boards, this should be the method of assessment. Where other forms of assessment must be used to assess essential subject skills or knowledge, the non-exam assessment must:

- (a) strike a balance between valid assessment of essential knowledge and skills, sound assessment practice and manageability;
- (b) be designed to fit the requirements of the particular subject, including the relative weighting of exams and other components assigned to it; and
- (c) be designed so that the qualification is not easily distorted by external pressures from the wider system.

Having considered the proposed subject content for GCSEs in design and technology and applied our principles, we are of the view that the subject content for these qualifications requires a mixture of assessment by exam and non-exam assessment. We are proposing a 50/50 split between the two.

Tiering

We have previously confirmed that new GCSEs should only be tiered where a single set of assessments cannot in a valid and manageable way assess students across the full ability range. We propose that GCSE design and technology should be untiered because assessments can be designed to be accessible to the full range of students.

Assessment objectives

We have worked with subject and assessment experts to develop assessment objectives that are as clear, specific and precise as possible and cover the full range of abilities for the subject. We are seeking feedback on the proposed assessment objectives for this subject and their weightings.

⁸ www.gov.uk/government/consultations/gcse-reform-design-and-technology

How to respond

If you have an interest in GCSE design and technology we hope you will respond to this consultation. The closing date for responses is 26th August 2015.

You can respond to this consultation in one of the following ways:

- Complete the online response.⁹
- Email your response to consultations@ofqual.gov.uk
Please include the consultation title (GCSE design and technology) in the subject line of the email and make clear who you are and in what capacity you are responding.
- Post your response to GCSE Design and Technology, Ofqual, Spring Place, Coventry Business Park, Herald Avenue, Coventry, CV5 6UB, making clear who you are and in what capacity you are responding.

Evaluating the responses

To evaluate responses properly, we need to know who is responding to the consultation and in what capacity. We will therefore only consider your response if you complete the information page.

Any personal data (such as your name, address and any other identifying information) will be processed in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and our standard terms and conditions.

We will publish the evaluation of responses. Please note that we may publish all or part of your response unless you tell us (in your answer to the confidentiality question) that you want us to treat your response as confidential. If you tell us that you wish your response to be treated as confidential, we will not include your details in any published list of respondents, although we may quote from your response anonymously.

Please respond by 26th August 2015.

⁹ <http://surveys.ofqual.gov.uk/s3/gcse-reform-regulations-for-design-and-technology>

1. Introduction

The scope of this consultation

- 1.1 In this consultation we are seeking views on the assessment arrangements and assessment objectives for GCSEs in design and technology, and on whether the qualification should be tiered.
- 1.2 The Department for Education is consulting in parallel on the subject content for the qualification. If you wish to comment on the proposed content for GCSEs in design and technology please respond to that consultation.¹⁰ We encourage you to read the proposed content before you respond to this consultation, as our proposals relate to qualifications designed to support the teaching and assessment of that content.
- 1.3 We will make decisions on the structure and assessment of design and technology GCSEs in light of responses to this consultation. We will then consult on the technical regulatory requirements that exam boards wishing to design, deliver and award the qualifications must meet.
- 1.4 It is intended that the exam boards will develop the new qualifications ready for first teaching by schools and colleges from September 2017.¹¹ The exam boards' specifications, to be taught from that date, should be available to schools and colleges from autumn 2016.
- 1.5 We do not repeat here the reasons why GCSEs are being reformed, the options we have considered about the qualifications' structure and assessments, or the full range of decisions that we have already taken. This information can be found on our website.¹²
- 1.6 We set out in Appendix 1 of our September 2016 consultation¹³ some of the documents relating to the background to these important reforms and progress

¹⁰ www.gov.uk/government/consultations/gcse-reform-design-and-technology

¹¹ New GCSEs to be taught from 2016: French, German, Spanish, ancient languages, history, geography, science, biology, chemistry, physics, art and design, dance, music, computer science, physical education, drama, religious studies, citizenship studies, food preparation and nutrition. New AS and A levels to be taught from 2016: modern foreign languages, ancient languages, mathematics, further mathematics, geography, dance, music, physical education, drama and theatre, religious studies.

¹² www.ofqual.gov.uk/qualifications-and-assessments/qualification-reform

¹³

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20141110161323/http://comment.ofqual.gov.uk/developing-new-qualifications-for-2016-part-2/>

so far. Appendix 1 of our September consultation also sets out information on the purpose and key features of reformed GCSEs, AS and A levels.

- 1.7 Our proposals for assessment in this subject are based on the principles we have applied in other subjects. For further details on the assessment of new GCSEs, please see our earlier consultation *Developing New GCSEs, A Levels and AS Qualifications for First Teaching in 2016 – Part 2*.¹⁴ In that document we set out the principles we have used in full and detail the approach we have taken when applying them.

Our previous consultation on design and technology

- 1.8 We previously consulted on the assessment arrangements in GCSE design and technology,¹⁵ based on an earlier version of the subject content document.

- 1.9 Our proposals were as follows:

(a) GCSEs in design and technology should be assessed through 50 per cent non-exam assessment and 50 per cent assessment by exam.

(b) GCSEs in design and technology should remain untiered (as is the case in current GCSEs).

- 1.10 We also set out proposed assessment objectives based on the earlier version of the subject content document:

Assessment objectives		Proposed weighting
AO1	Investigate design possibilities and considerations for development.	15%
AO2	Design and make products / prototypes that meet needs and solve problems.	35%
AO3	Justify design decisions and analyse and evaluate products / prototypes made by themselves and others.	20%
AO4	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of designing, making and technical principles.	30%

¹⁴

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20141110161323/http://comment.ofqual.gov.uk/developing-new-qualifications-for-2016-part-2/>

¹⁵ www.gov.uk/government/consultations/gcse-as-and-a-levels-new-subjects-to-be-taught-in-2016

- 1.11 An analysis of the responses we received to our earlier consultation is available on our website.¹⁶
- 1.12 We did not announce our decisions on the assessment arrangements for GCSE design and technology following on from the outcome of our earlier consultation. This was because the Department for Education decided, following its consultation, to revise the subject content further.¹⁷ In coming to our proposals on the assessment arrangements for GCSEs in design and technology set out in this consultation, we considered the feedback we received from respondents to our earlier consultation.

¹⁶ www.gov.uk/government/consultations/gcse-as-and-a-levels-new-subjects-to-be-taught-in-2016

¹⁷ www.gov.uk/government/consultations/gcse-and-a-level-reform--2

2. Subject-specific proposals

Design and technology

GCSE

- 2.1 The Department for Education is consulting on the content for GCSE qualifications in design and technology in parallel with this consultation.¹⁸

Proposed assessment arrangements

- 2.2 In current GCSEs in design and technology, 60 per cent of the assessment is non-exam assessment.
- 2.3 The new content, which requires students to design and make products and prototypes, could not be validly assessed by exam alone. Non-exam assessment will allow for the direct assessment of the student's ability to apply knowledge, understanding and skills as part of the iterative design process of exploring, creating and evaluating, over an extended period of time.
- 2.4 The draft content places a greater emphasis on the knowledge and understanding requirements for this subject than is currently the case. We therefore propose that non-exam assessment should account for 50 per cent of the marks for new GCSEs in design and technology. We note that the majority of respondents to our previous consultation, in which we also proposed that 50 per cent of the marks should be assessed through non-exam assessment, disagreed with our proposals. Many of them argued that the 60 per cent non-exam assessment in current GCSEs in design and technology should be retained.
- 2.5 We understand the concerns raised by respondents to our earlier consultation. This is a subject in which the practical element is very important. However, what we are proposing is only a small reduction of non-exam assessment when compared with current qualifications. We believe a 50/50 balance reflects the balance set out in the subject content between the knowledge, understanding and skills students require, which can be assessed by exam, and their ability to actually design and make products and prototypes.

Tiering

- 2.6 Currently GCSEs in design and technology are not tiered. We propose that the new GCSEs in design and technology should also not be tiered, because one

¹⁸ www.gov.uk/government/consultations/gcse-reform-design-and-technology

set of assessments should allow all students to be able to demonstrate their knowledge and skills in the subject.

Proposed assessment objectives

- 2.7 The proposed assessment objectives are clearer than the current ones for the subject. We propose that the current permitted weighting ranges should be replaced with absolute weightings to enhance comparability between different qualifications in this subject.

Assessment objectives		Proposed weighting
AO1	Investigate, identify and define opportunities for design and technology activity.	15%
AO2	Apply design and technology knowledge and principles to create prototypes that are fit for purpose.	35%
AO3	Analyse and evaluate design decisions and outcomes, for prototypes and products made by themselves and by others.	20%
AO4	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of designing, making and technical principles.	30%

Current assessment objectives

Assessment objectives		Weighting
AO1	Recall, select and communicate knowledge and understanding in design and technology including its wider effects.	25–35%
AO2	Apply knowledge, understanding and skills in a variety of contexts and in designing and making products.	45–55%
AO3	Analyse and evaluate products, including their design and production.	15–25%

Consultation questions

Question 1: To what extent do you agree or disagree that for GCSEs in design and technology, based on the proposed subject content, 50 per cent of the available marks should be allocated to exams, and 50 per cent to non-exam assessment?

Question 2: To what extent do you agree or disagree that GCSEs in design and technology should not be tiered?

Question 3: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate for GCSEs in design and technology?

Question 4: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for GCSEs in design and technology?

Question 5: Do you have any further comments relating to the assessment of this subject?

3. Equality analysis

Ofqual's role, objectives and duties

3.1 We are subject to the public sector equality duty. We have set out in appendix A how this duty interacts with our statutory objectives and other duties.

Equality analysis relating to proposed changes to GCSE design and technology

3.2 We have considered the potential impact on students who share protected characteristics¹⁹ of the application of the principles and features that will apply to all new GCSEs, AS and A levels. Our equality impact analyses for our earlier consultations on GCSE, AS and A level reform are therefore of interest and we encourage you to read them.²⁰

3.3 We do not repeat here all of the evidence we have considered, as this can be found in our earlier reports. We focus instead on the specific issues that are relevant to the subject on which we are now consulting.

3.4 During this consultation we will continue to seek and consider evidence and feedback to our proposals that might help us identify any potential subject-specific impacts on students who share a protected characteristic.

3.5 Exam boards are required to consider the accessibility of their qualifications at the design stage and to remove any unjustifiable barriers.

¹⁹ For the purposes of the public sector equality duty, the 'protected characteristics' are disability, racial group, age, religion or belief, pregnancy or maternity, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment.

²⁰ <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20141031163546/http://ofqual.gov.uk/documents/equality-analysis-report-on-reforms-to-gcse-from-2015/>

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20141031163546/http://www.ofqual.gov.uk/files/2012-06-18-equality-analysis-of-the-a-level-reform-consultation.pdf>

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/398244/2015-01-26-developing-new-gcse-a-level-and-as-qualifications-for-first-teaching-in-2016-eia.pdf

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/403540/developing-new-gcse-a-level-and-as-qualifications-for-first-teaching-in-2016-parts_2-and-3-equality-analysis.pdf

Assessment arrangements

GCSEs in design and technology

- 3.6 Design and technology is a subject that contains a practical element. We are proposing that the subject should be assessed by a combination of exam and non-exam assessment, with 50 per cent of the marks allocated to each.
- 3.7 Some disabled students might not be able to undertake elements of the non-exam assessment because of their disability. Using our powers under the Equality Act 2010, we have specified that a disabled student can be exempt from a maximum of 40 per cent of the marks available for a GCSE, AS or A level qualification and have their marks from the assessments they are able to take scaled up. However, students can only be exempted from whole components, and then only when they cannot access any part of the component in question.
- 3.8 If, within a specification, there was a discrete component that assessed the student's practical skills in the subject, worth no more than 40 per cent of the marks, an exemption could be given for that assessment. The student would take the remaining components. This would allow a disabled student who was unable to undertake the practical assessment to be granted an exemption from the assessment and to have their marks from the remaining aspects of the qualification scaled up.
- 3.9 Exam boards will decide how to design the qualifications they offer, within the rules we put in place. If the non-exam assessment formed one whole component comprising 50 per cent of the marks, a student could not be exempted from it because of the 40 per cent exemption limit. Exam boards could distribute the 50 per cent non-exam assessment marks between two components, allowing an exemption to be given for one component. For example, one component could focus on the design of the product and the other on the making of that product. However, a student who could not access, and therefore gain any marks from, the second non-exam assessment component would be disadvantaged.
- 3.10 We have considered whether we should set the percentage of marks available for non-exam assessment in design and technology at 40 per cent or less to allow a student to be exempted from the whole non-exam assessment. We do not believe that this would be appropriate because the practical aspect of the qualification, to be assessed by non-exam assessment, is a fundamental part of the qualification. The proposed approach would not be more disadvantageous to disabled students unable to complete the non-exam assessment than the current model in which 60 per cent of the marks are allocated to non-exam assessment.

- 3.11 We have not identified anything about the proposed changes that would have an adverse impact on students because of their racial group, age, religion or belief, pregnancy or maternity, sexual orientation or as a result of gender reassignment.

Consultation questions

Question 6: We have identified that disabled students might not be able to complete the proposed non-exam assessment requirements for reformed GCSEs in design and technology. Are there any other potential impacts we have not identified that may impact (positively or negatively) on persons who share a protected characteristic?²¹ If so, what are they?

Question 7: Are there any additional steps we could take to mitigate any negative impact resulting from these proposals on persons who share a protected characteristic? If so, please comment on the additional steps we could take to mitigate negative impacts.

Question 8: Have you any other comments on the impacts of the proposals on persons who share a protected characteristic?

²¹ 'Protected characteristic' is defined in the Equality Act 2010. Here, it means disability, racial group, age, religion or belief, pregnancy or maternity, sex, sexual orientation and gender reassignment.

Responding to the consultation

Your details

To evaluate responses properly, we need to know who is responding to the consultation and in what capacity. We will therefore only consider your response if you complete the following information section.

We will publish our evaluation of responses. Please note that we may publish all or part of your response unless you tell us (in your answer to the confidentiality question) that you want us to treat your response as confidential. If you tell us you wish your response to be treated as confidential, we will not include your details in any published list of respondents, although we may quote from your response anonymously.

Please answer all questions marked with a star*

Name*

Position*

Organisation name (if applicable)*

Address

Email

Telephone

Would you like us to treat your response as confidential?*

If you answer yes, we will not include your details in any list of people or organisations that responded to the consultation.

Yes No

Is this a personal response or an official response on behalf of your organisation?*

Personal response (please answer the question 'If you ticked "Personal response"...')

Official response (please answer the question 'If you ticked "Official response"...')

If you ticked "Personal response", which of the following are you?

Student

Parent or carer

Teacher (but responding in a personal capacity)

Other, including general public (please state below)

If you ticked "Official response", please respond accordingly:

Type of responding organisation*

Awarding organisation

Local authority

School or college (please answer the question below)

Academy chain

Private training provider

University or other higher education institution

Employer

Other representative or interest group (please answer the question below)

School or college type

- Comprehensive or non-selective academy
 - State selective or selective academy
 - Independent
 - Special school
 - Further education college
 - Sixth form college
 - Other (please state below)
-

Type of representative group or interest group

- Group of awarding organisations
 - Union
 - Employer or business representative group
 - Subject association or learned society
 - Equality organisation or group
 - School, college or teacher representative group
 - Other (please state below)
-

Nation*

- England
- Wales
- Northern Ireland
- Scotland
- Other EU country: _____
- Non-EU country: _____

How did you find out about this consultation?

Our newsletter or another one of our communications

Our website

Internet search

Other

May we contact you for further information?

Yes No

Questions

Question 1: To what extent do you agree or disagree that for GCSEs in design and technology, based on the proposed subject content, 50 per cent of the available marks should be allocated to exams, and 50 per cent to non-exam assessment?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Please give reasons for your answer:

.....

.....

.....

Question 2: To what extent do you agree or disagree that GCSEs in design and technology should not be tiered?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Please give reasons for your answer:

.....

.....

.....

Question 3: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate for GCSEs in design and technology?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Please give reasons for your answer:

.....

.....

.....

Question 4: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for GCSEs in design and technology?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Please give reasons for your answer:

.....

.....

.....

Question 5: Do you have any further comments relating to the assessment of this subject?

- Yes No

.....

.....
.....

Question 6: We have identified that disabled students might not be able to complete the proposed non-exam assessment requirements for reformed GCSEs in design and technology. Are there any other potential impacts we have not identified that may impact (positively or negatively) on persons who share a protected characteristic?²² If so, what are they?

Yes No

.....
.....
.....

Question 7: Are there any additional steps we could take to mitigate any negative impact resulting from these proposals on persons who share a protected characteristic? If so, please comment on the additional steps we could take to mitigate negative impacts.

Yes No

.....
.....
.....

Question 8: Have you any other comments on the impacts of the proposals on persons who share a protected characteristic?

Yes No

.....
.....
.....

²² 'Protected characteristic' is defined in the Equality Act 2010. Here, it means disability, racial group, age, religion or belief, pregnancy or maternity, sex, sexual orientation and gender reassignment.

Accessibility of our consultations

We are looking at how we provide accessible versions of our consultations and would appreciate it if you could spare a few moments to answer the following questions.

Your answers to these questions will not be considered as part of the consultation and will not be released to any third parties.

Do you have any special requirements to enable you to read our consultations? (for example, screen reader, large text, and so on)

Yes No

Which of the following do you currently use to access our consultation documents? (select all that apply)

Screen reader / text-to-speech software

Braille reader

Screen magnifier

Speech-to-text software

Motor assistance (blow-suck tube, mouth stick, and so on)

Other

Which of the following document formats would meet your needs for accessing our consultations? (select all that apply)

A standard PDF

Accessible web pages

Large-type PDF (16 point text)

Large-type Word document (16 point text)

eBook (Kindle, iBooks, or similar format)

Braille document

Spoken document

Other

How many of our consultations have you read in the last 12 months?

1

2

3

4

5

More than 5

Appendix A: Ofqual's role, objectives and duties

Our statutory objectives include the qualifications 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.

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, among others, and to aspects of government policy when so directed by the Secretary of State.

As a public body we are subject to the public sector equality duty.²³ 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; and
- (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

The exam boards that design, deliver and award GCSEs, AS and A levels 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.

²³ Equality Act 2010, section 149.

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; and
- (c) the need to maintain public confidence in the qualification.

Legislation therefore sets out a framework within which we must operate. We are subject to a number of duties and we must aim to achieve a number of objectives. These different duties and objectives can, from time to time, 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 we can both secure 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, rational decision.

Qualifications cannot be used to mitigate inequalities or unfairness in the education system or in society more widely than 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 mark in an assessment, our influence is limited to the way the qualification is designed and assessed.

We require the exam boards to design qualifications to give a reliable indication of the knowledge, skills and understanding of those on whom they are conferred. We also require the exam boards 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 exam boards to monitor whether any features of their qualifications have this effect.

In setting the overall framework within which exam boards will design, assess and award the reformed GCSEs, AS and A levels, we want to understand the possible impacts of the proposals on persons who share a protected characteristic.

The protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion and belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation.

It should be noted that with respect to the public sector equality duty under section 149 of the 2010 Act, we are not required to have due regard to impacts on those who are married or in a civil partnership.

We wish to make our publications widely accessible. Please contact us at publications@ofqual.gov.uk if you have any specific accessibility requirements.



© Crown copyright 2015

This publication is licensed under the terms of the Open Government Licence v3.0 except where otherwise stated. To view this licence, visit <http://nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3> or write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: publications@ofqual.gov.uk.

Where we have identified any third party copyright information you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/ofqual.

Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at:

Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation

Spring Place
Coventry Business Park
Herald Avenue
Coventry CV5 6UB

2nd Floor
Glendinning House
6 Murray Street
Belfast BT1 6DN

Telephone 0300 303 3344

Textphone 0300 303 3345

Helpline 0300 303 3346