

Analysis of Responses to our Consultation on Conditions and Guidance for GCSE, AS and A level Electronics



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Executive Summary

Our consultation about the Conditions and guidance for GCSE, AS and A level electronics took place between 19 February 2016 and 18 March 2016. The consultation questions were available to complete online or to download. A copy of the consultation is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/gcse-as-and-a-level-reform-regulations-for-electronics>.

There were three responses to the consultation, all from organisations. One respondent, who was an 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 two responses.

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

Introduction

The consultation on the Conditions and guidance for GCSE, AS and A level electronics

This report is a summary of the views expressed by those who responded to our consultation on the Conditions and guidance for GCSE, AS and A level electronics, 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 GCSE, AS and A level qualifications in electronics that are to be introduced for first teaching from September 2017³.

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 GCSEs, AS and A levels in electronics 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 <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/developing-new-gcses-as-and-a-levels-for-first-teaching-in-2017>

Who responded?

We received three responses to our consultation. All of these were from organisations. One was based in England and Wales and two indicated they represented organisations from across the UK.

Table 1: Breakdown of consultation responses

Personal / organisation response	Respondent type	Number
Organisation response	Awarding organisation	1
Organisation response	Union	1
Organisation response	Representative group	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.

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 any specific group.

Data presentation

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

The consultation asked 16 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 free-form narrative comments on our proposals.

For these questions, we set out respondents' views using the 5-point scale. Where respondents provided further comments, we present these separately.

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.

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 GCSE, AS and A level electronics

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?

Both respondents strongly agreed with our proposals.

Respondents commented that this approach would ensure that compliance was 'policed' in practice.

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?

Both respondents strongly agreed with our proposals.

Respondents to this question commented that this was essential to ensuring comparable standards across exam boards.

Question 3: To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should introduce rules for exam assessment to ensure exam boards take a consistent approach to assessing mathematical skills in GCSE, AS and A level electronics?

Both respondents strongly agreed with our proposals.

Respondents commented that this was essential to ensuring comparable standards across exam boards.

Question 4: To what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposed approach to assessing mathematical skills in exams for GCSE, AS and A level electronics?

One respondent agreed and one strongly agreed with our proposal.

One respondent commented that whilst the approach seems sensible, it is important that the approach to assessing mathematical skills in GCSE, AS and A level exams should be consistent across directly comparable subjects, such as Design & Technology.

Question 5: To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should introduce a Condition which permits non-exam assessment, specifies the proportion of exam- and non-exam assessment, and allows us to set more detailed rules and guidance on non-exam assessment?

Both respondents strongly agreed with our proposals.

Respondents to this question commented that this was sensible and appropriate and that given the nature of the subject, non-exam assessment should be mandatory.

Question 6: To what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposed approach to allocating non-exam assessment marks to assessment objectives in GCSE, AS and A level electronics?

Both respondents strongly agreed with our proposals, commenting that the approach seems appropriate.

Question 7: To what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposed approach to setting non-exam assessment tasks in GCSE, AS and A level electronics?

One respondent agreed and one strongly agreed with our proposals.

Respondents commented that the proposed approach seems appropriate, but it is essential that the process by which the exam board demonstrates that it has identified and managed any risks is rigorous.

Question 8: To what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposed approach to authenticating non-exam assessment in GCSE, AS and A level electronics?

One respondent strongly agreed with our proposal; one disagreed.

The respondent that disagreed commented that it is very hard to see how an approach that allows “remote supervision” [which is allowed under our definition of *Immediate Guidance or Supervision*] of a student’s work can guarantee authentication at a suitably rigorous level.

Question 9: To what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposed approach to marking of non-exam assessment in GCSE, AS and A level electronics?

One respondent agreed and one strongly agreed with our proposals.

Respondents commented that the proposed approach seems reasonable, but depends crucially on the rigour with which assessment strategies are scrutinised.

Our proposed Conditions and guidance

Question 10: Do you have any comments on our proposed Conditions and requirements for GCSE electronics?

Question 11: Do you have any comments on our proposed guidance for GCSE electronics?

Both respondents said they had no comments to make on our Conditions and guidance under these questions.

Question 12: Do you have any comments on our proposed Conditions and requirements for AS and A level electronics?

Question 13: Do you have any comments on our proposed guidance for AS and A level electronics?

Both respondents said they had no comments to make on our Conditions and guidance under these questions.

Equality Impact Assessment

Question 14: We have not identified any ways in which the proposals for GCSE, AS and A level electronics would impact (positively or negatively) on persons who share a protected characteristic. Are there any potential impacts we have not identified?

Question 15: Are there any additional steps we could take to mitigate any negative impact resulting from these proposals on persons who share a protected characteristic?

Question 16: Do you have any other comments on the impacts of the proposals on students who share a protected characteristic?

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

Other issues

As noted above, one respondent did not comment directly on our proposals. Instead, they noted that it was important that relevant subject associations are consulted in individual subjects, that qualifications reforms needed to take account of the needs of all relevant stakeholders, and that reforms should be phased in gradually over time.

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.

ASCL

Engineering Professors' Council

WJEC

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