



Department
for Education

Reformed GCSE, AS and A level subject content

Government consultation response

February 2016

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Introduction

On 10 September 2015 the Department for Education published a consultation on proposed content for GCSEs in ancient history, classical civilisation, electronics, film studies, media studies and statistics, and AS and A levels in accounting, ancient history, archaeology, classical civilisation, electronics, film studies, law, media studies and statistics. The proposed GCSE subject content aims to provide students with more fulfilling and demanding courses of study; new A level content aims to encourage development of the knowledge and skills needed for progression to undergraduate study and employment. The consultation sought views on the following questions:

- whether the revised GCSE content in each subject is appropriate:
 - whether there is a suitable level of challenge
 - whether the content reflects what students need to know in order to progress to further academic and vocational education
- whether the revised AS and A level content in each subject is appropriate:
 - whether the content reflects what students need to know in order to progress to undergraduate study
- whether any of the proposals have the potential to have a disproportionate impact, positive or negative, on specific students, in particular those with 'relevant protected characteristics' (The relevant protected characteristics are disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.)
- whether any adverse impact be reduced and how could the subject content of GCSEs and/or A levels be altered to better advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who do not share it

The consultation ran for eight weeks until 5 November 2015. It received 179 responses from schools, further and higher education institutions, employers, subject associations, curriculum and assessment experts, and the general public. Awarding organisations also met with some subject associations to help us understand expert views in more detail.

Ofqual, the independent regulator, consulted in parallel on GCSE, AS and A level assessment arrangements for these subjects. Ofqual's response to its consultation will be available at: www.gov.uk/government/consultations/.

The Department has considered the evidence gathered and has worked with awarding organisations to publish final subject content for GCSEs in ancient history, classical civilisation, electronics, film studies, media studies and statistics, and AS and A levels in accounting, ancient history, archaeology, classical civilisation, electronics, film studies, law, media studies and statistics.

We have published an equalities impact assessment alongside this consultation response. The impact assessment responds to the consultation responses on the equalities questions above, and the issues raised in these responses were considered when finalising the subject content.

Of the responses we received for the September consultation¹:

- 81 were submitted directly from teachers
- 17 were submitted on behalf of schools
- eight were submitted on behalf of awarding organisations
- three were submitted by young people
- 10 were submitted on behalf of Academies
- one was submitted by a parent
- 10 were submitted on behalf of colleges and further education institutions
- four were from employers/business sector
- six were submitted on behalf of subject associations
- 19 were submitted on behalf of higher education establishments
- two were submitted on behalf of organisations representing school teachers and lecturers
- zero were submitted on behalf of local authorities
- 18 were submitted by other respondents

A full list of the organisations that have responded can be found at the annex.

¹ Respondents were asked to select which of these groups best described them in the context of their response.

Overview of reforms

The government is reforming GCSEs and A levels to make sure that they prepare students for further and higher education, and employment. We are reforming GCSEs to ensure they set expectations which match those of the highest performing countries, with rigorous assessment that provides a reliable measure of students' achievement. The new A levels will be linear qualifications that encourage the development of the knowledge and skills students need for progression to undergraduate study. The content provides for awarding organisations to develop new stand-alone AS qualifications taught over one or two years that can be co-taught with the new linear A level. Students may want to benefit from this change and only take an AS qualification to add breadth to their A level study. However, it will continue to be possible for students to take an AS in some subjects before deciding which to continue to A level.

Reforms to these qualifications are already underway. [GCSE subject content](#) in English literature, language and mathematics was published in November 2013, and the new qualifications were taught from September 2015. Specifications for these GCSEs can now be found on awarding organisations' websites. [GCSE subject content](#) in ancient languages, geography, history, modern foreign languages, biology, chemistry and physics, which will be taught from September 2016, was published in April 2014.

At AS and A level, [subject content](#) in art and design, biology, business, chemistry, computer science, economics, English language, English literature, English language and literature, history, physics, psychology and sociology was published in April 2014. These new qualifications were taught from September 2015. Specifications for these AS and A levels can be found on awarding organisations' websites.

Responsibility for reviewing AS and A level subject content for ancient languages, modern foreign languages and geography which will be taught from September 2016, and mathematics and further mathematics which will be first taught from September 2017, was remitted to a new independent body, the A level Content Advisory Board (ALCAB).² AS and A level [content](#) for these subjects was published in December 2014.

In April 2014 the Secretary of State announced that a further set of GCSEs and A levels would be reformed and introduced for first teaching from 2016. We published reformed GCSE [subject content](#) for art and design, computer science, dance, music, and physical education, and AS and A level [subject content](#) for dance, music, and physical education in January 2015. In February we published reformed GCSE [subject content](#) for religious

² Following a request from the Department, the Russell Group of universities set up ALCAB to review subject content in these subjects, together with ancient and classical languages.

studies, citizenship studies and drama, and AS and A level [subject content](#) for drama and theatre, and religious studies. These subjects will be first taught in schools from September 2016.

Content is being and has been developed for a further set of GCSEs, AS and A levels to be taught from 2017. Development of these subjects has been led by awarding organisations, working closely with subject associations, subject experts and, for A levels in particular, representatives from higher education institutions.

The department published GCSE [subject content](#) for design and technology GCSE in November 2015 and [GCSE subject content](#) in astronomy, business, economics, engineering, geology, psychology, in December 2015, and sociology in March 2016, for first teaching in 2017.

At AS and A level, [subject content](#) for design and technology, environmental science, mathematics, further mathematics and music technology were published in December 2015, and history of art in January 2016, for first teaching in 2017.

This document is our response to the consultation which ran between September and November 2015 on [revised content](#) for ancient history, classical civilisation, electronics, film studies, media studies and statistics GCSEs and accounting, ancient history, archaeology, classical civilisation, electronics, film studies, law, media studies and statistics AS and A levels, for first teaching from 2017.

Between November and December 2015, the department consulted on [revised content](#) for geology and politics AS and A levels and physical education short course GCSE for first teaching from 2017. We will publish the outcomes from this consultation later this year.

The reforms of academic qualifications that are underway are the most significant changes since the introduction of GCSEs. These are just one part of our ambitious reform programme to give young people the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in life. The priority now is to give schools time and space to provide excellent and inspiring teaching of the new qualifications. We therefore do not intend to reform any further qualifications in 2018 beyond the lesser taught languages that we have already committed to.

Summary of responses received and the Government's response

This section sets out the views that we have heard in response to the consultation on 2017 GCSEs and A levels. It also sets out the decisions that have been taken to finalise the content in these subjects.

The written responses and the views expressed by subject experts during the consultation period and throughout the development process have been important in shaping and strengthening the content. Awarding organisations and the Department have also worked closely with Ofqual to ensure that the subject content can be regulated.

Some respondents who provided written responses to the consultation chose only to answer a subset of the questions that were posed. Therefore, response figures for each subject differ depending on which questions people answered. For example, we received 44 responses to our question on classical civilisation AS and A level whereas there were 33 responses for classical civilisation GCSE. Throughout the report, percentages are expressed as a measure of those answering each question, not as a measure of all responses.

This analysis does not include issues mentioned by respondents which were outside the scope of the GCSE and AS and A level subject content consultation. For example, issues raised on stopping the qualification in food technology, where a decision was taken in July 2015 and confirmed in December 2015.

Some responses were relevant to Ofqual's parallel consultation on GCSE, AS and A level regulatory requirements and assessment arrangements. These issues will be addressed by Ofqual in its consultation response and are therefore not reported here.

Ancient history GCSE

We received 26 responses on the suitability of the ancient history GCSE subject content, of which 17 agreed the draft content was appropriate.

Is the revised GCSE content in ancient history appropriate?	Total	Percent
Yes:	17	66%
No:	5	19%
Not Sure:	4	15%

15 respondents to this question provided comments. The comments contained a lot of suggestions on new content to include as well as support for the revised content in terms of level of challenge and progression.

There were seven responses with concerns about the requirements in the content related to the timescales of the different types of study (50 years for the period study and 200 years for the longer-period study). Comments included that: the date range chosen was arbitrary; it seemed too wide-ranging in scope and required depth and breadth which may not be feasible in all contexts; it would make the topics difficult to create and would limit the choice of topics – precluding some interesting and substantial topics; and it would mean that the volume of work was excessive for GCSE level. Suggestions were made to mitigate the issue by ensuring that the evidence and sources were appropriate for GCSE level, and that the awarding organisations should make it very clear what should be studied.

The amount of content, which was broadly linked with the above issue, was another particular concern with five respondents commenting on this – one respondent suggested the longer period study should be amended to 150 years rather than 200. Two respondents felt that the volume of work was excessive for GCSE level and over-stretching for a subject which already has a low intake. However, one respondent disagreed with the others and felt that the weight of material may seem daunting but the examples provided were challenging yet not unreasonable.

Six other respondents made specific suggestions to change the content. For example one respondent commented that they would welcome a requirement for a society other than Rome and Greece to be studied in order to help students understand the nature of the ancient world better and to prepare them for progression to further study. Another respondent felt that the focus of military topics as part of the content would appeal less to female students as would removing a current unit on the study of an important female figure.

Government response on ancient history GCSE

Concerns were raised in the consultation that the length of the periods of study set out in the content could limit the choice of topics, precluding interesting and substantial areas. Changes have been made to the content to reduce the longer period study from 'at least 200' to 'at least 150 years'. This change should ensure that the topics identified for the longer period of study in specifications are not unduly limited, while also ensuring breadth by allowing students to study a longer period of ancient history. Changes were, however, not made to the 50 year requirement because it was felt that at least 50 years was suitable for the period study. The requirement here is for 'at least' 50 years so that topics which are longer than this can be included if appropriate. Topics shorter than 50 years can potentially be studied in the depth study.

As outlined below in more detail, in response to comments on AS and A level ancient history content, the 'cultural' aspect has now been included. For example, the 'cultural' aspect has been included as one of a number of aspects students will need to understand about the periods studied alongside, for example, military, political, religious, social, and technological factors.

Some respondents suggested that the overall requirements would be too heavy and therefore too challenging. As outlined above, the number of years required in the longer period study has been amended to help to address this point. While the volume of content could be stretching, the changes are in line with the policy aim of increasing the demand of all reformed GCSEs to set expectations that match those in the highest performing countries. Awarding organisations will ensure that the volume of content is suitable for GCSE level and that it can be taught in the time allocated for a GCSE qualification.

The other detailed comments made by respondents to the consultation were varied with little consensus. The suggestions made were considered but no further significant changes were made.

Classical civilisation GCSE

We received 33 responses on the suitability of the classical civilisation GCSE subject content, of which 16 agreed the draft content was appropriate.

Is the revised GCSE content in classical civilisation appropriate?	Total	Percent
Yes:	16	49%
No:	10	30%
Not Sure:	7	21%

20 of the respondents to this question provided comments. There were mixed responses on the scope of the proposed units and thematic approach with concerns and supportive comments in fairly equal measure. Six respondents said overall they were happy that the proposed content is suitable in terms of challenge and progression.

Eleven respondents commented on the comparative element required in the content. Seven people supported the inclusion of the element. However, four argued that it would be difficult to teach, too complex for GCSE and difficult to envisage how it would work in practice. One respondent was unsure of whether the comparative element must be 20% of the qualification or if it could be included in a particular unit.

One respondent commented that most of the requirements work well together in particular both visual/material and literature. However one respondent was concerned that the subject was too literature heavy and two respondents felt that the compulsory study of material/visual culture or art/architecture may be problematic for the non subject specialist teachers of classical civilisation. Two respondents were concerned that the percentages set out in the content would be too restrictive. One felt that the content was too detailed and knowledge based, and could result in students not understanding the breadth of the subject.

There were 13 responses with varied individual comments on the detail of the content. For example, two respondents felt some of the amounts of literature set out were not equivalent, arguing for example that 2000 lines of epic literature felt much more onerous than 500 lines of extended verse. Another felt that the amount of material culture specified was not sufficient.

Government response on the classical civilisation GCSE

Respondents raised concerns that the comparative thematic study may be too complex for GCSE students. While the content will be demanding, the changes are in line with the policy aim of increasing the demand of all reformed GCSEs to set expectations that match those in the highest performing countries. Awarding organisations have, in response to the comments, however slightly amended the requirements for the comparative element by removing the requirement to know and understand ‘the difference between sources materials, the different characteristics of the literary and visual/material evidence, and the impact this has on their usefulness as sources and how they can be interpreted.’ Awarding organisations felt that this particular requirement would be too challenging for GCSE students.

In response to the concerns that the percentages set out in the content would be too restrictive, awarding organisations have considered the comments made and have amended the content to reduce the percentage of literature required from 40% to 30%. This will provide schools with greater flexibility whilst ensuring it remains the biggest single compulsory element of the qualification, with visual/material culture at 20%.

Minor changes to the content have also been made to ensure that the number of examples for material/visual culture to be studied for each 20% of the qualification is approximately equivalent to the amount of literature required. Students will now be required to study four (increased from two) examples of one type, or two (increased from one) examples of two types of building or defined space; and eight (increased from four) examples of one type, or four (increased from two) examples of two types of artefact or artwork.

As outlined below in more detail, in response to comments on AS and A level ancient history and classical civilisation content, the ‘historical context’ has now been included as one of a number of contexts students will need to know and understand about in relation to the literary and material remains studied, alongside their ‘social and cultural contexts’.

The other detailed comments made by respondents to the consultation were varied with little consensus. The suggestions made were considered but no further significant changes were made in response to these.

Electronics GCSE

There were 11 responses on the suitability of this content. Seven respondents agreed that the content was appropriate.

Is the revised GCSE content in electronics appropriate?	Total	Percent
Yes:	7	64%
No:	0	0%
Not Sure:	4	36%

Of the 11 respondents who answered this question, seven (64%) felt the content was appropriate and four (36%) were not sure. There were only five written responses; two of which simply commented that the respondent's school did not offer the subject.

The remaining three comments were positive, for example that the content includes a good mix of theory and practice, that the level of theory is compatible with both maths and physics and is appropriate for progression to A level and academically challenging.

Government response on the electronics GCSE

Responses to the consultation did not raise any issues with the content, and so no changes have been made in response to the consultation on content.

A number of changes have been made throughout the content in relation to the skills required. This was in response to comments from Ofqual that the content needed to be clearer in ensuring that the skills outlined could be validly assessed, and to better provide clarity about the non-examined assessment.

Film studies GCSE

We received 41 responses on the suitability of the film studies GCSE subject content, of which seven agreed the draft content was appropriate.

Is the revised GCSE content in film studies appropriate?	Total	Percent
Yes:	7	17%
No:	22	54%
Not Sure:	12	29%

Of those who responded 'no' or 'not sure' the biggest concern, raised by 11 respondents, was that the proposed content was too challenging, detailed and prescriptive. Five respondents suggested the amount of theoretical content should be reduced, which they felt was too challenging for GCSE level and too prescriptive. Three respondents suggested the number of films should be reduced, although there was no consensus about what an appropriate number might be. A further three respondents felt the requirements set out in the content for which films could and must be studied was too prescriptive and should be amended or removed.

Nine respondents however, including some who responded 'no' or 'not sure' welcomed the increased rigour and challenge, the greater emphasis on film aesthetics and theory, and the requirement for students to critically engage with a broad and diverse range of high quality films

11 respondents thought there were areas of content missing. Of these, nine respondents expressed concern at the removal of content related to the film industry, particularly the production, marketing, distribution and exhibition of films, and felt there should be greater emphasis on understanding how institutional influences affect the ways in which audiences access and understand films. However one respondent supported the removal of this content noting it was more appropriate for inclusion in media studies. Two respondents from universities suggested a greater emphasis on foreign and/or historical films. There was no consensus on what other areas were missing and amendments were needed. Suggestions included greater emphasis on developing film skills and the inclusion of authorship and intellectual property rights and issues relating to these.

Three respondents questioned whether students would be required to study the screenplays for each of the six films studied. If so they were concerned this might overload the content as it would be a lot to study and prove restrictive as films could only be studied where there was a screenplay available.

Three respondents expressed concern that the requirement to analyse films from the perspective of film criticism might encourage students to write basic film reviews and suggested making amendments to ensure students would take a critical analytical approach.

Six respondents opposed the requirement that all students would now need to produce a film or screenplay individually rather than as part of a group, which they felt would be detrimental to less able and less academic students.

Government response on the film studies GCSE

Concerns were raised in the consultation that the content was too focused on knowledge and understanding or theory and therefore too demanding. While the content could be stretching, the changes are in line with the Government's policy aim of increasing the demand of all reformed GCSEs to be robust and rigorous, and to set expectations that match the best education systems in the world. The level of prescription, including the number of films to be studied, was also felt to be right and necessary to ensure appropriate breadth and depth of study for all students, and no significant change have therefore been made.

Prior to the consultation, content relating to the film industry was removed, particularly the production, marketing, distribution and exhibition of film, to avoid overlap with media studies. This change refocused film studies on the close analysis of film which stakeholders felt was appropriate for the subject, rather than the wider context of the media industry. In response to comments in the consultation that there should be greater emphasis on understanding institutional influences on film, changes have been made to the content to clarify that students will need to understand how the different institutional contexts have influenced the films studied.

In response to suggestions from respondents that more historical/foreign films should be studied, the minimum number of films from the United States (US) has been reduced from three to at least two to allow for an additional foreign or British film to be studied. Of the US films that are studied, one will be independent and at least one will be made before 1960. Students will also study at least one film from 1961-90, at least one British and at least one foreign (non English language) film. It was felt that, overall, this was an appropriately diverse range, taking into account the views of other stakeholders that as the US film industry is the dominant film industry globally it justifies critical study for GCSE students. To ensure students have sufficient historical understanding of film, however, including an understanding of film pre 1930, students will be expected to study key developments in the history of film and how the chosen films reflect these.

In response to the question raised in the consultation as to whether students would be required to study the full screenplay (if there is one) for any or all of the six films studied, awarding organisations confirmed that the content does not require this.

Awarding organisations have also made a number of other minor amendments to clarify content, for example to further clarify the intention that students will be taking a critical analytical approach to film rather than writing basic films reviews. The other detailed comments made by respondents to the consultation were varied with little consensus. The suggestions made were considered but no further significant changes were made in response to these.

On the issue of including collaborative group work, Ofqual has raised concerns that the proposals that were made in this subject to include group work would create challenges

for effective assessment, particularly in the ability to isolate individual contributions and allow for reliable assessment. However, we are aware that in some situations it would not be possible to produce film extracts without, for example, other students operating lighting or sound equipment. While content does state that work must be individually produced, changes have been made to clarify that other unassessed students and others can act or appear in the work submitted by the student, or operate lighting and sound equipment under the direction of the assessed candidate.

Media studies GCSE

We received 46 responses on the suitability of the media studies GCSE subject content, of which 15 agreed the draft content was appropriate.

Is the revised GCSE content in media studies appropriate?	Total	Percent
Yes:	15	33%
No:	23	50%
Not Sure:	8	17%

30 respondents provided comments with some recurring issues emerging.

The most common concern was around the inclusion of specified key theorists and theoretical content (15 respondents raised this issue). While there was an acknowledgment of the importance of media theory in the subject in general, and the increase in demand that this has added, ten respondents believed that the theoretical content has meant that the qualification is now too demanding for GCSE pupils. Comparisons were made with subjects like English literature which has significantly less theoretical content, and there were suggestions that the enhanced level of demand is now equivalent to current expectations of AS or even A level candidates.

Three respondents said that they believed that the amount of new theoretical content would make the qualification difficult to teach and might result in a scattergun approach with insufficient depth with pupils learning theory by rote, rather than ensuring understanding and engagement with the theories or concepts. Eight respondents had concerns about the emphasis on named theorists/theories which does not reflect the changing nature of the subject and the ways in which theories are applied, that many of the ideas were not media-specific, and that some of the proposed theoretical content does reflect current thinking on the subject.

There were also some concerns about the removal of film from the content, with five respondents stating that they believe that it would not be possible to reflect the development of the subject without coverage of film in the theoretical content, and four believing that the removal of film from the practical content would lead to candidates not being able to develop key production skills.

12 respondents were concerned that the scaling back of collaborative working during the practical work does not reflect the collaborative approach to working within the media industry. Some respondents also said that they believe less opportunity for collaborative problem-solving would lead to less individual responsibility for high-order skills.

Government response on the media studies GCSE

While there were some concerns that the content was too demanding or too theoretical, some responses to the consultation supported earlier comments from stakeholders that it is essential at GCSE to have a good understanding of some of the main theoretical concepts underpinning the subject. The theoretical aspects of the content have therefore been maintained. Furthermore, while the content could be stretching, the changes are in line with the Government's policy aim of increasing the demand of all reformed GCSEs to be robust and rigorous, and to set expectations that match the best education systems in the world.

In response to the points made in the consultation about the way in which the theoretical content was set out, some changes have been made. The content now clarifies that, rather than applying all four areas of the theoretical framework to each of the nine media forms studied; only the most relevant aspects of the framework should be applied. Additionally, to ensure the appropriate level of depth, the content has been amended so that students will be required to apply all four aspects of the theoretical framework to at least one audio visual, one print and one online media form. In response to comments that the theories and theorists named were not appropriate, these have been reviewed and changes made to ensure that they are the most appropriate for the specific theoretical area. The changes made will allow a balance between established and more contemporary theories, with sufficient scope for specifications to be updated to reflect emerging theoretical content.

On the points raised in the consultation about the removal of film from the content, film is still included as one of the nine media forms which must be studied. However, to avoid overlap with film studies students can study individual feature films but only in the context of a cross media study. For the same reason, film is no longer part of the practical element of the qualification. The content still provides students with the opportunity to apply their theoretical knowledge and understanding in a practical way through tasks such as the production of a television programme.

On the issue of including collaborative group work, as with film studies GCSE Ofqual has raised concerns that the proposals that were made in this subject to include group work would create challenges for effective assessment, particularly in the ability to isolate individual contributions and allow for reliable assessment. However, we are aware that in some situations it would not be possible to produce some media products without, for example, other students operating lighting or sound equipment. While content does state that work must be individually produced, changes have been made to clarify that other unassessed students and others can act or appear in the work submitted by the student, or can operate lighting and sound equipment under the direction of the assessed candidate.

Statistics GCSE

We received 19 responses on the suitability of the statistics GCSE subject content, of which eight people agreed the draft content was appropriate.

Is the revised GCSE content in statistics appropriate?	Total	Percent
Yes:	8	42%
No:	4	21%
Not Sure:	7	37%

There were 19 responses to this subject in the consultation. Of those, the majority of respondents (eight) thought the content was appropriate, seven respondents were not sure, and four did not think the content was appropriate.

Seven respondents wrote positive comments about the content. Six commented that the content provides the right level of challenge, and a coherent basis of the key ideas needed for a range of subjects that students might go on to study at A level or in higher education. One said it was a strong syllabus which gives good grounding in basic principles of statistical methods.

Five respondents raised concerns about the level of difficulty of the content, commenting that there was too much content for a GCSE and that this could reduce accessibility, require additional teaching and lead to an emphasis on techniques and procedures at the expense of developing a rigorous understanding of the statistical enquiry cycle. They proposed sections of content to remove, with some arguing that some of the new topics added to the GCSE should be removed as they are currently in the first stats unit of A level maths and the core maths qualifications. One respondent expressed concerns about the difficulty of the mathematical content and another that the level of challenge is too high at foundation.

The majority of respondents gave specific comments on the content, suggesting topics that should be moved from GCSE as they would be more appropriate in AS/A level stats, or suggesting new topics to include. For example, one respondent recommended removing non-equal width histograms, one including content on normal distribution and the implications for statistical testing, and another removing calculation and interpretation of Pearson's product moment correlation coefficient formula.

Government response on the statistics GCSE

There were mixed comments in the consultation in relation to whether the content was too large and too demanding or provided the right level of demand. While the content could be stretching, the changes are in line with the Government's policy aim of increasing the demand of all reformed GCSEs to be robust and rigorous, and to set expectations that match the best education systems in the world.

It is also important that the level of challenge of the content is appropriate for students of differing abilities. In response to concerns raised in the consultation therefore, awarding organisations have removed some of the content from foundation tier to be confined to the higher tier where consultation feedback has shown that it is more appropriate for this level. These changes ensure a better balance between the tiers to make sure appropriate assessments can be set that will form a valid differentiation of candidates across the ability spectrum. Examples of sections that have been removed from foundation tier and confined to higher tier only include: level of control; the use of control groups; weighted mean; standard deviation; weighted index; the differences between experimental and theoretical values in terms of possible bias; the characteristics of a binomial distribution; the characteristics of a Normal distribution; and applying Petersen capture/recapture formula to calculate an estimate of the size of a population. Furthermore, in response to a specific suggestion in the consultation, the requirement to calculate and interpret Pearson's product moment correlation coefficient formula has been amended so that students instead have to interpret it in the context of the problem and understand the distinction between Spearman's rank correlation and Pearson's product moment correlation coefficients.

Awarding organisations have made additional minor amendments to the content, for example adding a new piece of content that requires students to 'know and apply the formal notion for conditional probability' in response to the consultation, and some of the formulas have been clarified and additional ones added where appropriate to reflect changes to the content. The other detailed comments made by respondents to the consultation were varied with little consensus. The suggestions made were considered but no further significant changes were made in response to these.

The other changes to the content have been made in response to a steer by Ofqual that the way it was drafted (especially the sections that relate to the statistical enquiry cycle, collecting data and using computer based statistical software) did not make clear how these techniques would be assessed. Awarding organisations have made changes to the way the content is worded to resolve this issue. For example, the section that relates to the statistical enquiry cycle has been clarified, and that sampling will be assessed through students demonstrating (in a written examination) an understanding of the underlying principles of the techniques.

Accounting AS and A level

We received 14 responses on the suitability of the accounting AS/A level subject content, of which four agreed the draft content was appropriate.

Is the revised AS and A level content in accounting appropriate?	Total	Percent
Yes:	4	29%
No:	5	36%
Not Sure:	5	36%

One of the 'not sure' and three of the 'no' responses related to food technology which was not part of this consultation. Another of the 'not sure' responses said that it was not their subject.

Of the nine respondents on accounting, four provided comments to explain their answers. Of those who answered 'yes', three respondents explained why they considered that the content is appropriate.

One respondent highlighted that A level accounting is not a prerequisite for study of the subject at undergraduate level, for a vocational course or for professional examinations as a school leaver or graduate but that the subject content would provide a firm foundation for further study. One respondent commented on the increased amount of content and asked if exam dates were to be moved back to allow for the extra time needed to teach the increased material.

The remainder of the comments were detailed comments on the content. For example, two respondents welcomed the level of emphasis on double-entry bookkeeping and the inclusion of ethical considerations, and one of these respondents suggested that ethics/ethical behaviour should also be included in the AS level to create an awareness for candidates, but in less detail than at A level. Two respondents requested more detail on budgets, specifically which ones are to be examined. Other comments included suggestions for moving content from A level to AS such as budgets, and including share issues in calculation/completion of accounting entries, while another asked for more detail on some topic areas such as changes to a partnership.

Government response on the accounting AS and A level

One respondent was concerned that the content was too large for an AS and A level. This was considered by awarding organisations but the amount of content was felt to be appropriate for an AS and A level in accounting and in line with other AS and A levels. Representatives from higher education and professional institutions who worked with awarding organisations in the drafting of the content were fully supportive of A level accounting continuing and its role in preparing pupils for further study at university, further education or in the workplace.

The majority of respondents that provided comments relevant to accounting gave detailed suggestions for altering the content, including some on moving content from the AS to the A level. The stakeholders that awarding organisations consulted prior to the consultation felt the current AS failed to cover some key areas, especially in relation to management accounting. Amendments were therefore made prior to consultation to the balance of subject content between the AS and A level to reflect this and to ensure that the AS is a more robust accounting qualification than at present, with a more balanced coverage of financial and management accounting. Awarding organisations have therefore only made minor amendments to ensure the size of the qualification at AS is appropriate. They have removed the requirements to 'prepare financial statements for businesses with incomplete records' and 'prepare financial statement for partnerships' from to the AS level but retained it at A level.

Other suggestions made in the consultation were varied and were considered but no significant changes were made in response to them. For example, while awarding organisations acknowledged that an appreciation of ethics at AS would be useful, they were concerned it would be extremely difficult to assess at this level without students having also studied the regulatory framework or the requirements of financial reporting which underpin a number of ethical considerations. Therefore ethics remains in the content for A level only.

Awarding organisations have made other minor amendments to the content to respond to comments from Ofqual about assessment and to ensure the subject can be regulated.

Ancient history AS and A level

We received 27 responses on the suitability of the ancient history AS/A level subject content, of which 14 agreed the draft content was appropriate.

Is the revised AS/A level content in ancient history appropriate?	Total	Percent
Yes:	14	52%
No:	7	26%
Not Sure:	6	22%

21 respondents to this question provided comments.

One respondent felt that the addition of modern historians' viewpoints on the ancient world will better prepare students for university and provide them with skills on historiography that perhaps the course is currently lacking. However, five respondents were concerned about the inclusion of interpretations and the focus on modern historians. Arguments included, for example, that it was felt to be problematic and would dilute the core of the subject which is studying and understanding ancient sources, and would be difficult to assess. Two of these respondents also commented that it would be expensive for teachers to acquire the latest articles/monographs on ancient resources and that many schools would struggle to find the appropriate selection of materials or monographs.

Similar to the comments on ancient history GCSE, three respondents considered the requirement for the period study to be at least 75 years to be arbitrary and that it could be limiting in terms of topics.

There were four respondents who commented on the relationship between ancient history A level and classical civilisation A level, and the current classic qualification including the removal of the social and cultural history from the ancient history A level and the creation of two separate qualifications. Comments were that this may deter students due to a lack of variety, make ancient history a much more political and military subject and therefore less attractive for women to study, would stop literature, such as plays, from being incorporated and would narrow the curriculum.

There were a number of other individual comments on the content, for example, that the volume of content was too large.

Government response on the ancient history AS and A level

The new requirement to study the views of ancient historians and how the ancient world was interpreted by them was added on the advice of academics from higher education that it was highly desirable for progression to higher education. Awarding organisations have carefully considered the comments that were raised in relation to this but remain of the view that this can be assessed and taught without diluting the nature of the subject, by ensuring that questions on this area remain grounded in the use of ancient sources. Changes have, however, been made in relation to concerns that some schools would not be able to access or afford monographs by these modern historians. The reference to monographs has been removed so that students would be required to understand 'the views of a range of historians regarding the events which have been studied'. With the reference to monographs removed, schools can meet the requirement through using textbooks or extracts from articles as appropriate.

Awarding organisations considered the comments in relation to the requirement for the period study to cover at least 75 years. However, they felt that this was an appropriate amount of time for a period study and as at GCSE the requirement is for 'at least' 75 years so that topics which are longer than this can be included if appropriate. Topics shorter than 75 years can potentially be studied in the depth study.

In relation to the concern regarding the relationship of the ancient history qualification with classic civilisation and the removal of cultural content from the ancient history AS and A level, the content both for ancient history and classic civilisation qualifications at GCSE, AS and A level, is now sufficiently distinct. Ancient history focuses on understanding historical events in the context of the ancient world, whereas classical civilisation focuses on understanding specific cultural objects (art, literature, and architecture) and what they can tell us about the ancient world. Awarding organisations have therefore, in response to the consultation, amended the content to include cultural issues in the ancient history AS and A level. For example, in the depth study students will be required to study different factors, such as the social, economic, political, cultural, religious, technological and military involved in a particular historical event or situation.

Archaeology AS and A level

We received 16 responses on the suitability of the archaeology AS/A level subject content, of which 10 people agreed the draft content was appropriate.

Is the revised GCSE content in archaeology appropriate?	Total	Percent
Yes:	10	63%
No:	3	20%
Not Sure:	3	20%

The majority of respondents supported the revised content with four explicitly stating the content provided appropriate breadth, depth and academic rigour and would support progression to higher education. Two respondents however expressed concern that aspects of the content may be too challenging for A level students particularly the complex theory and the archaeological investigation requirements.

Five respondents were concerned that the content requirements were overly prescriptive and restrictive particularly in relation to the expectations around the number of periods and sites that needed to be studied. Two of these respondents suggested that the number of sites could be reduced and/or made into a more flexible range for example prescribing 'three to five' or 'at least four'. One respondent also queried whether there would/could be overlap in the contexts studied between the breadth and depth studies.

Five respondents thought there were areas of content missing and/or specific further changes were needed, however, there was no consensus on what amendments were needed. Suggestions included greater emphasis on environmental archaeology, the addition of landscapes as a type of archaeological evidence, and changes to the terminology used in the content - for example referring to sex and ancestry rather than gender and ethnicity.

Government response on the archaeology AS and A level

Awarding organisations carefully considered the responses to the consultation and what further changes were needed. As the majority of respondents felt the reformed content was appropriate, only minor changes have been made to improve clarity or add specific areas of content awarding organisations agreed were missing and appropriate for inclusion.

The level of challenge of the content was considered, but was felt to be comparable to current specifications and appropriate for an A level in this subject to allow students to progress to higher education courses in archaeology or other subjects.

The level of prescription was also felt to be right and necessary to ensure appropriate breadth and depth of study for all students, and no significant changes have therefore been made. In response to a question about whether some overlap in contexts/sites studied would be acceptable however, minor amendments have been made to the content to clarify that this would be acceptable. At A level students may study the same (or some of the same) contexts and sites for their two breadth studies. This means as a minimum students at AS study four contexts and 20 sites and students at A level study five contexts and 25 sites.

Awarding organisations have made a number of changes to include specific areas of content suggested by respondents including, amongst others, adding 'landscape' as a type of archaeological evidence, and emphasising the long term interaction between environmental change and human evolution. Of the other specific amendments suggested by individuals, awarding organisations did not feel changes were necessary.

Classical civilisation AS and A level

We received 44 responses on the suitability of the classical civilisation AS and A level subject content, of which 12 agreed the draft content was appropriate.

Is the revised AS/A level content in classical civilisation appropriate?	Total	Percent
Yes:	12	27%
No:	25	57%
Not Sure:	7	16%

38 respondents to this question provided comments.

A high number of respondents (24) expressed concern over the proposed compulsory element of philosophy/thought, and to a slightly lesser extent, visual/material culture. Five of these responses explicitly said that the philosophy/thought/art aspects should be made optional. One respondent suggested the possibility of embedding this within other topics, another suggested including a module which analyses history and philosophical questions related to it. Six respondents said that making philosophy mandatory would deter students from choosing the subject, and five respondents said that the subject may be dropped because teachers would not feel confident teaching it. Two respondents commented on the relevance to higher education, arguing that higher education courses in classics do not currently require students to have studied both philosophy/thought and material/visual culture.

Another consistent theme throughout the responses was the omission of ancient history in the proposed content. 13 respondents were concerned that it would considerably narrow the scope of the subject and make it less attractive to students. Two of these respondents commented that removing the ancient history element would leave students unprepared for undergraduate study, for example, one respondent questioned how students would read Herodotus, Thucydides, and Plutarch without considering their historical components, and another commented that most universities consider ancient history and classics as parts of the same departments. Six of these respondents also said that removing ancient history would be a disadvantage to students as many schools simply cannot offer both ancient history and classic civilisation.

Other comments from respondents echoed those at GCSE, including three respondents who indicated that the percentage weighting of 40% for literature was too high.

Government response on the classical civilisation AS and A level

In response to the main concern over the proposed compulsory element of philosophy/thought, awarding organisations discussed this change with stakeholders in more detail. Through these discussions they understood that respondents were concerned that students would all be required to study classical philosophy such as metaphysics, which may put some students off taking the subject and which some teachers may not be able to teach. Awarding organisations explained that the content does not require this, but instead allows for a variety of topics which can be studied such as classical ideas about religion and belief and classical political theory, as well as more traditional philosophy such as epistemology. To avoid confusion therefore this topic has been renamed 'classical thought' rather than 'philosophy and thought'.

On the specific comments that removing the ancient history element will leave students unprepared for undergraduate study, as outlined in relation to ancient history above, awarding organisations have included the historical context in classical civilisation. For example, students will now be required to understand 'sources in their social, historical and cultural context'.

In response to the concerns that the percentages set out in the content would be too restrictive, as at GCSE awarding organisations have amended the content so that the minimum percentage of literature in the qualification is reduced from 40% to 30%, to provide greater flexibility to schools. They have also reduced the minimum percentage for classical thought and visual/material culture from 20% to 15% for each.

As at GCSE, minor changes were made to the content to better ensure that the number of examples for material/visual culture to be studied for each 20% of the A level are approximately equivalent to the amount of literature required. Students will now be required to study ten (increased from eight) examples of one type, or five (increased from four) examples of two types of architecture; and twenty (increased from sixteen) examples of one type, or ten (increased from eight) examples of two types of artefact or artwork. Similar changes have been made to the amount of literature required at AS to ensure it can be studied in the teaching time of an AS – so that students are required to study, for each 20% of the qualification, 3200 lines of epic (reduced from 4000), 800 lines of extended verse (reduced from 1000) or 560 lines of shorter verse (reduced from 700).

Other minor amendments were made to the content for clarity, including clarifying that the specifications can combine material from within or across the areas of study.

Electronics AS and A level

We received 12 responses on the suitability of the electronics AS and A level subject content, of which 10 agreed the draft content was appropriate.

Is the revised AS/A level content in electronics appropriate?	Total	Percent
Yes:	10	83%
No:	0	0%
Not Sure:	2	17%

There were seven text responses. One of these stated the course was not taught at their school. All apart from one of the remaining responses were positive, suggesting that the content was rigorous and appropriate, and would stretch students.

One of the respondents suggested there was some overlap with first year degree courses, but that this was not problematic as a degree course would be able to deliver depth to the topics. Another commented that there was some overlap with GCSE electronics, though they also suggested that perhaps only a minority of students will study the subject at both GCSE and A/AS level, and that anyway the A/AS level content goes into greater depth.

One of the written responses suggested that the content has too much emphasis on the minutiae, and tries to cover the whole spectrum of electronics. This respondent also felt the content does not consider the various branches into which electronics has grown. This respondent also felt there was too much emphasis on calculation.

Two respondents also made suggestions to make specific changes to content, making suggestions to include new content such as: digital ramp and flash analog-to-digital converter (ADC), and when to use a digital meter as opposed to an analogue meter.

Government response on the electronics AS and A level

Following consultation, awarding organisations looked in detail at the balance of content to ensure the core aspects of electronics at that level are included. Having reviewed the content in light of this and the comments made in the consultation, a small number of changes have been made.

The content has been amended so that the requirement to know and understand PISO and SIPO registers and synchronous counters is now only required at A level. This is because following review, subject experts agreed this content was more appropriate at A level and not at AS. Awarding organisations have also removed the requirement to know and understand the different properties and uses of clocked (synchronous) systems and unclocked systems. This is to avoid repetition as the content is already covered in the bullet above. Awarding organisations have also added a new requirement for students to know and understand the difference between digital ramp and flash ADC, in response to comments in the consultation that this content was missing.

A number of changes have been made through the content in relation to the skills required. This was in response to comments from Ofqual that the content needed to be clearer in ensuring the skills outlined could be validly assessed, and to better provide clarity about the non-examined assessment.

Film studies AS and A level

We received 46 responses on the suitability of the film studies AS and A level subject content, of which nine agreed the draft content was appropriate.

Is the revised AS/A level content in film studies appropriate?	Total	Percent
Yes:	9	20%
No:	29	63%
Not Sure:	8	17%

Like the respondents for the GCSE, the biggest concern raised by 12 respondents was that the proposed content was too challenging, detailed and prescriptive. Ten respondents suggested the amount of and prescriptions around theoretical content should be reduced, and two of these respondents suggested the number of films should be also reduced. Five respondents felt the requirements set out in the content for which films could and must be studied was too prescriptive and should be amended or removed to allow for greater choice and a wider (and different) range of films to be studied.

13 respondents however, including some who responded 'no' or 'not sure', welcomed the increased rigour and challenge, the greater emphasis on film aesthetics and theory, and the requirement for students to critically engage with a broad and diverse range of high quality films.

13 respondents thought there were areas of content missing. Of these 12 respondents expressed concern at the removal of content related to the film industry, particularly the production, marketing, distribution and exhibition of films, and felt there should be greater emphasis on understanding how institutional influences affect the ways in which audiences access and understand films. Six respondents felt there should be increased emphasis on understanding film genre and five wanted greater focus on studying documentary. Four respondents thought there should be greater emphasis on independent research skills potentially through a research project. Two HEIs suggested a greater emphasis on foreign and/or historical films. Aside from these there was no other consensus on what areas were missing and what amendments were needed. Suggestions included: the addition of negotiated reading under spectatorship, and the inclusion of authorship and intellectual property rights (IP) and issues relating to these.

Six respondents queried whether students would be required to study the screenplays for each of the six films studied. If so they were concerned this might overload the content as it would be a lot to study and prove restrictive as films could only be studied where there was a screenplay available. Five respondents questioned the requirement to study

Auteurism and Auteurs which they felt was outdated as a theory/concept. One respondent felt there was an overemphasis on short film including the requirement at A level that students needed to produce a short film and felt instead there should be an option to create an extract for a feature-length film.

15 respondents opposed the requirement that all students would now need to produce a film or screenplay individually rather than as part of a group, which they felt would be detrimental to less able and less academic students.

Government response on the film studies AS and A level

The level of challenge of the content, including the number of films and theoretical content was considered, but it was felt to be appropriate for an AS and A level in film studies and in line with other AS and A levels. As outlined in the consultation, the new content includes theoretical content, this is appropriate as it will ensure that students can develop the knowledge and understanding needed to allow students to progress to university courses in film studies or other subjects. It was also felt that the level of prescription, including the number of films to be studied, was right and necessary to ensure appropriate breadth and depth of study.

As with film studies GCSE, prior to the consultation content relating to the film industry, particularly the production, marketing, distribution and exhibition of film, had been removed to avoid overlap with media. This change refocused film studies on the close analysis of film which stakeholders felt was appropriate for the subject. In response to comments in the consultation that there should be greater emphasis on understanding institutional influences on film, changes have been made to the content to clarify that students should understand how the different institutional contexts have influenced the films studied.

In response to calls from respondents that more historical/foreign films should be studied, amendments have been made to clarify the content and ensure that students can and will study a variety of films. As at GCSE, the minimum number of films from the United States (US) has been reduced from three to at least two to allow for an additional foreign or British film to be studied. The content has also been amended to clarify students can study more than one film from a particular historical time period. The content ensures students will study different types of films (including at least one documentary film), and films from a range of countries (both inside and outside US/Europe) and time periods (from silent era to contemporary). It was felt that together the minimum requirements set out in the content will ensure an appropriately diverse range of films are studied and that greater prescription or emphasis on films of a particular type, time period or geographical region was unnecessary. Within these minimum requirements, the content is flexible enough to accommodate different chosen emphasises or focuses, for example a greater emphasis on foreign, historical or documentary films.

In response to the question raised in the consultation as to whether students would be required to study the full screenplay (if there is one) for any or all of the six/twelve films studied at AS or A level, awarding organisations confirmed that the content does not require this.

Awarding organisations have also made a number of other minor changes to amend or clarify content requirements including in response to issues raised by consultation respondents. The requirement that students should understand film genre has been made to be made more explicit in the content, and negotiated reading has been included under spectatorship.

The other detailed comments made by respondents to the consultation were varied. The suggestions made were considered but no further significant changes were made in response to these. For example it was felt that auteur theory was an appropriate theory for critical study at A level, and that the requirement to produce a whole short film was important in differentiating practical requirements for A level from GCSE and AS.

As with film studies GCSE, in relation to group work the content has also been amended to state that work must be individually produced, and changes have been made to clarify that other unassessed students and others can act or appear in the work submitted by the student, or operate lighting and sound equipment under the direction of the assessed candidate.

Law AS and A level

We received 19 responses on the suitability of the law AS and A level subject content, of which six agreed the draft content was appropriate.

Is the revised AS/A level content in law appropriate?	Total	Percent
Yes:	6	32%
No:	7	37%
Not Sure:	6	32%

There were 19 responses to this subject, of which six respondents said the content was appropriate, six respondents said they were not sure and seven said they did not think the content was appropriate.

Five respondents commented that the draft content will allow good progression to undergraduate study, and that it will allow students to gain a good understanding of distinct areas of (both private and public) substantive law.

Two respondents commented that the content will not allow adequate progression to higher education, arguing for example that it is an excellent course for those who don't have the intention to study law further, but that the first year of an undergraduate degree repeats the A level content.

Eight respondents commented on the balance of depth versus breadth in the content, and that there is an unmanageable volume of content. These respondents thought the breadth of the subject would not allow students to achieve the necessary depth of understanding, leading to superficial engagement which will fail to prepare students for undergraduate and some of these commented that it was too similar to the coverage in the average first year of an undergraduate syllabus. There were a number of different suggestions to amend depth and breadth of content. Two respondents suggested that the content should require study of one public and one private area over the two years of an A level, one that the content on the English Legal System should be reduced, and another that the English Legal System and Nature of Law; public law; and private law should be equally weighted.

Three respondents commented that the content was too focused on teaching students legal knowledge at expense of students developing intellectual skills, and one said that the content should treat the legal system and the constitution as dynamic and not static.

There were a number of other comments about the detail of the content. For example, two respondents suggested that the content should also include EU law and treaties and

not the Human Rights Act 1998, nor tribunals. One respondent suggested adding cyber-crime and removing capacity defences as they are too complex at this level, and to add an explicit reference to the rule of law, and another suggested including employment law.

Government response on law AS and A level

The majority of consultation respondents who commented on the law A level content made comments that related to the balance of breadth and depth, and about the volume of content, although there was no consensus about what changes should be made to address these concerns. Prior to consultation, awarding organisations engaged with a wide cross-section of higher education stakeholders on these issues. The preference articulated by the majority of higher education representatives engaged by awarding organisations was for a breadth of substantive law topics to be studied at AS and A level to prepare students for the study of law at undergraduate level.

The reformed AS and A level will require students to study the nature of Law and English Legal System as well as two substantive areas of law at AS level and three at A level, which is broader than the current criteria requires. Awarding organisations are confident that, having consulted widely with higher education, this approach is appropriate. Feedback from the majority of university representatives consulted was that the content adequately covers the major substantive topics of law, and will provide a good foundation for progression.

Following consultation, awarding organisations looked in detail at the balance of content to ensure it is of appropriate demand. To achieve this, they have moved some content from AS to A level study in the final content. They have moved 'express and implied terms' in the law of contract section, 'defences' in the law of tort section, and 'self defence' in the criminal law section from AS to A level study.

In response to the comment that the content is too focused on teaching students legal knowledge at the expense of students developing intellectual skills, the content does set out clearly the legal skills students will be required to demonstrate. Furthermore, the content should be read alongside the assessment objectives developed by Ofqual, which outline how students will be assessed against the content and the percentage of marks allocated, which now shows greater emphasis on higher order skills including presentation of legal arguments, analysis and evaluation.

There were a number of other comments about the detail of the content and little consensus amongst the suggestions for content to amend, include or remove. Some minor amends have been made in response to consultation suggestions, for example awarding organisations have added a specific reference to the rule of law in the English Legal System section so that students will now need to know and understand this important legal concept. However, in response to the suggestion that the content should include EU law and treaties, awarding organisations are content that the sources of EU law (including treaties) and its importance in relation to the law of England and Wales are included in the content on the English Legal System.

Media studies AS and A level

We received 48 responses on the suitability of the media studies AS and A level subject content, of which 17 agreed the draft content was appropriate.

Is the revised AS/A level content in media studies appropriate?	Total	Percent
Yes:	17	30%
No:	33	58%
Not Sure:	7	12%

48 respondents provided comments with some recurring issues emerging.

As with the GCSE content, the most common concern was around the inclusion of specified key theorists and theoretical content (31 respondents raised this issue). Like the GCSE, the importance of media theory was acknowledged. However, some respondents said that they believed that the range of theorists was somewhat narrow and arbitrary and not reflective of the broad multi-disciplinary nature of the subject which draws upon a wide and ever increasing range of changing perspectives, some of which are still emerging, and five respondents said that they believed that the prescriptive nature of the content leads to a risk that it will soon become outdated. Respondents also commented that the content should be less prescriptive and that while examples of appropriate theorists are valuable, it would be more helpful for this to be included in an appendix rather than in the body of the document, or left to teachers to decide on the theories most appropriate. Conversely, other respondents suggested that some key texts had been omitted from the content.

There were also concerns that applying such a detailed and extensive theoretical framework to the range of different media forms represents considerably more content than in other comparable reformed subjects. Six respondents said that the content was now too broad, and six said too demanding, with three stating that they believed that some of the new theoretical content overlaps with content often covered by undergraduate study.

11 respondents stated concerns about the removal of film theory from the content, noting its importance in the development of the subject. While there was general approval of the increased emphasis on historical content, three respondents noted that the removal of film from the content has adverse implications for the requirement to study historical developments prior to 1950, when there were fewer types of media texts available.

Two respondents said that they believed the removal of film from the practical studies

would lead to important skills not being taught. Others said that they felt that this might adversely affect progression to higher education – with six respondents stating that skills gained during practical exercises are crucial for those wishing to progress to undergraduate media studies.

18 respondents suggested that the reduced opportunity for collaborative group work does not reflect industry practice, and that this may affect the ability of A level candidates to seek employment in media industries after completing the qualification (compared with those who have taken vocational courses).

Government response on the media studies AS and A level

In response to the comments made in the consultation about the range of theories and theorists outlined in the content, these have been reviewed and changes have been made to ensure the theories or theorists are the most relevant and appropriate for the specific theoretical area, are coherent and the range of named theorists diverse. The changes made will allow a greater balance between established and more contemporary theories to address concerns raised in the consultation that the content may become outdated and not reflect contemporary thinking in relation to media studies.

In response to the concerns raised in the consultation about the way in which the theoretical content was set out in terms of breadth, some changes have been made. The content now clarifies that rather than applying all four areas of the theoretical framework to each of the nine media forms to be studied, only the most relevant aspects of the framework should be applied. Additionally, to ensure the appropriate level of depth, the content has been amended so that students will be required to apply all four aspects of the theoretical framework to at least one audio visual, one print, and one online media form.

Some respondents were concerned that the content was too demanding or too theoretical. We are confident that the level of demand provided by the content is appropriate for AS and A level media studies and in line with other AS and A levels. As outlined in the consultation, the new content includes new theoretical content. This is appropriate as it will ensure that students can develop the knowledge and understanding needed to prepare them for undergraduate study of the subject.

As outlined in the response to media studies GCSE above, while film is included as one of the nine media forms which must be studied, to avoid overlap with film studies students can only study individual feature films in the context of a cross media study. For the same reason, film is no longer part of the practical element of the qualification. The content still provides students with the opportunity to apply their theoretical knowledge and understanding in a practical way through other practical tasks such as the production of a television programme.

Concerns were raised in the consultation that with less emphasis on film it might be difficult to meet the requirement to study historical developments prior to 1950, as relatively few media types existed before 1950. The content has therefore been amended to amend this requirement so that instead students would be required to study at least one media product produced before 1970. This will allow scope for a study of richer periods in the history of key mass media forms like the emergence of television during the 1960s.

As with film studies GCSE, in relation to group work the content has also been amended

to state that work must be individually produced, changes have been made to clarify that other unassessed students and others can act or appear in the work submitted by the student, or can operate lighting and sound equipment under the direction of the assessed candidate.

Statistics AS and A level

Of the 22 respondents who replied to this question, an equal number of respondents (eight) thought the content was appropriate and were not sure, while six did not think the content was appropriate.

Is the revised AS and A level content in statistics appropriate?	Total	Percent
Yes:	8	36%
No:	6	27%
Not Sure:	8	36%

Five respondents commented that the content would support students in maths and sciences A level, and would provide a strong basis for students to continue on to higher education in a range of disciplines including social science and medical subjects.

A key stakeholder commented that more work is needed to ensure the content supports students to progress to higher education in any quantitative discipline, with another respondent supporting this by commenting that some of the new topics will only be of relevance to those studying the more academic aspects of statistics at university rather than other subjects.

Two respondents questioned the appropriateness of an A level in statistics, commenting that it is not needed as statistics is now compulsory in A level maths, core maths is available and undergraduate courses in statistics prefer students to have studied A level maths.

The majority of respondents commented on the specific detail of the content. Three respondents commented that there was currently too much content to teach. In particular, respondents recommended sections that could be removed from the AS content as they would be more appropriate in A level teaching. For example three respondents recommended removing continuous distributions and exponential distribution from AS content, and two recommended that correlation and regression should be moved to AS. Others suggested new topics to include for example testing for the significance of a correlation coefficient, and choosing the appropriate hypothesis test to use in a given situation.

Six respondents mentioned the technology required for A level statistics including that the content should include the technology the students are expected to use in an exam.

There was also some debate about whether graphical calculators should be required or whether a basic scientific calculator was sufficient.

Government response on statistics AS and A level

Some of the responses to the consultation questioned the appropriateness of an A level in statistics. Following the consultation we engaged with stakeholders to better understand their comments. The overall feeling was that it is a positive development that the reformed A level mathematics content and the new core mathematics qualifications will contain more core statistical content than currently, which will allow students to develop statistical knowledge that should benefit them in variety of higher educational paths. However we are aware that an AS/A level in statistics does offer another important pathway, especially for those students planning to go on to study social science degrees or statistics at undergraduate level.

Correlation and regression have now been included in the AS level statistics content. Stakeholders had commented on the importance of these topics being taught to AS students due to their relevance and application in a wide range of other A level subjects, and the need to build on this content in the A level statistics content. To facilitate this change and address some stakeholder concerns about the amount of teaching time required to cover the content, some topics have been moved to A level only. These include topics such as exponential and Poisson distributions.

Other minor amendments have been made to the content. For example, bootstrapping has been removed from the content after stakeholders commented that this cannot be assessed to an appropriate standard for an A level examination without access to statistical software. Some content has also been added to respond to consultation suggestions including: mutually exclusive probability; using multiplication and addition rules for probabilities; choosing the appropriate hypothesis test to carry out in particular circumstances; using exact probabilities or, where appropriate a normal approximation; and calculating the risk of a type II error.

The other detailed comments made by respondents to the consultation were varied with little consensus. The suggestions made were considered but no further significant changes were made in response to these.

In a similar response to that of GCSE statistics, the other changes to the content have been made in response to a steer that the way it was drafted (especially the sections that relate to the statistical enquiry cycle) did not make clear how those techniques would be assessed. Changes have been made to the way the content is worded to resolve this issue. For example, the section that relates to the statistical enquiry cycle has been clarified, and sampling will be assessed through students demonstrating (in a written examination) an understanding of the underlying principles of the techniques.

A number of respondents mentioned the technology required for A level statistics, including that the content should include the technology the students are expected to use in an exam. In response to this a calculator statement to match that provided in A level mathematics has been included in the final content.

Next steps

Awarding organisations will now begin the process to develop specifications in these subjects, ready to submit to Ofqual for accreditation and to enable schools to prepare for first teaching in 2017.

Annex: list of respondents to the consultation

AQA	City and Islington Sixth Form College
Archbishop Sentamu Academy	Classical Association
Asperger Home Education	Classical Association Teaching Board
American Academy, Larnaca, Cyprus	Coleg Cambria
Association of School and College Leaders	Collyer's College
Association of Teachers of Mathematics	Congleton High school
Barton Peveril College	Council of UK Classics Departments
Bedford Modern School	Cowley International College
Belfast High School	Creative Skillset
Bexleyheath Academy	Dronfield Henry Fanshawe School
Brighton, Hove and Sussex Sixth Form College	Durham Sixth Form Centre
Bournemouth University	Duchess Community High School, Alnwick
Brookfield Community School	Exeter College (Media Section)
Camden School for Girls	Faculty of Classics, University of Oxford
Chadwell Heath Academy	Farnborough Hill, Hampshire
Channing School, Highgate	Field Studies Council
Chartered Institute of Management Accountants	The Film Space
Chichester College	Further Mathematics Support Programme
Children's Hospital School, Film Department	Framwellgate School, Durham
Cirencester College	Goldsmiths, University of London
Hereford Cathedral School	Maidstone Grammar School

The King's School, Peterborough	Mathematics in Education and Industry
Hills Road Sixth Form College	McAuley Catholic High School, Doncaster
Holy Family Catholic School and Sixth Form, Walthamstow	Manchester Creative and Media Academy
Holyhead School, Birmingham	Media Education Association
Hurtwood House School	Middlesex University
Keele University	Millfield School, Somerset
King Edward VI College, Nuneaton	New College, Swindon
King Edwards School, Witley	Nottingham University
Hills Road Sixth Form College	OCR Examinations
Holy Family Catholic School and Sixth Form, Walthamstow	The Parker Academy
Holyhead School, Birmingham	Parrs Wood High School
Hurtwood House School	Pearson
Keele University	Peter Symonds College, Winchester
King Edward VI College, Nuneaton	Preston Manor School
King Edwards School, Witley	Queen Mary, University of London
King Henry VIII School, Coventry	Queen Mary's College, Basingstoke
King's College London	Reading School
Loreto 6th form College, Manchester	The Red Maids' School, Weston-Super-Mare
Loughborough University	Reigate College, Surrey
The Mathematical Association	Robert Clark School, Dagenham
Royal Holloway, University of London	Truro-Penwith College
The Royal Statistical Society	Tudor Hall School, Banbury

Runshaw College, Swinley	University Archaeology UK
Samuel Ryder Academy, St Alban's	University of Cambridge
Sedbergh School, Cumbria	University of Durham
Simon Langton Girls' Grammar School	University of Kent
Sir John Deane's College	University of Law
The Sixth Form College Farnborough	University of Liverpool
South Downs College	University of Southampton, School of Electronics and Computer Science
Southfield School, Kettering	Varndean College, Brighton
Spalding High School	Voice the Union
St Joan of Arc Catholic School, Rickmansworth	Wac Arts College
St Margaret's School, Bushey	Watford Grammar School for Girls
St Paul's Catholic College, West Sussex	Wellington School, Bow
Sussex University	Whitefield School, Barnet
Tanglin Trust School	William Hulme's Grammar School
Torquay Boys' Grammar School	WJEC
Truro College	Ysgol Morgan Llwyd



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