

# Evaluation of the Introduction of Controlled Assessment

Report on qualitative and quantitative  
research

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# Contents

<b>Executive summary .....</b>	<b>2</b>
Summary of key findings .....	2
<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>10</b>
Background .....	10
Subject focus: the CA requirements .....	11
Methodology .....	13
This report .....	17
<b>1. Views of Controlled Assessment .....</b>	<b>19</b>
Does Controlled Assessment achieve its aims? .....	19
Benefits of Controlled Assessment .....	29
Drawbacks of Controlled Assessment .....	33
<b>2. Guidance and information .....</b>	<b>41</b>
Sources of guidance and support .....	41
Views of AO guidance in summary .....	46
Ratings of AO guidance, by subject .....	47
Ratings of AO guidance, by AO .....	49
Other issues raised about the AO guidance .....	50
Improving the guidance .....	51
<b>3. Subject requirements .....</b>	<b>52</b>
Clarity of Controlled Assessment requirements .....	52
Perceived clarity of the guidance by subject .....	55
Perceived clarity of the guidance by AO .....	57
Levels of control .....	58
Levels of control by subject .....	62
Levels of control by AO .....	66
<b>4. Centres' implementation of controlled assessment .....</b>	<b>67</b>
Centre approaches to CA .....	68

Changes in centres' approaches over time .....	76
<b>5. Overcoming problems with CA.....</b>	<b>80</b>
<b>6. Conclusions and recommendations.....</b>	<b>82</b>
Summary of conclusions and recommendations.....	82
Key findings by subject .....	6
Recommendations for AOs .....	85
Recommendations for AOs regarding specific subjects .....	84
Recommendations for centres .....	85
Glossary .....	87
<b>Appendices</b>	
Quantitative questionnaire	
Qualitative discussion guide	

# **Executive summary**

# Executive summary

The three qualifications regulators in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, Ofqual, DfES and CCEA, commissioned Ipsos MORI in April 2011 to explore the experiences of teachers implementing Controlled Assessment (CA) in nine GCSE subjects: English, English Language, English Literature, French, Geography, History, ICT, Design and Technology: Resistant Materials, and Business studies. These subjects were selected by Ofqual as the focus of the research following an initial consultation with stakeholders to identify the subjects that the research should cover.

The CA requirements for each subject differ, and prior to the qualitative and quantitative research, the qualifications offered in each subject by the five Awarding Organisations (AOs) covering England, Wales and Northern Ireland were reviewed by subject experts. This review recorded the differences in the specifications to help interpret the survey findings and understand the impacts of these differences.

A series of 25 qualitative in-depth interviews was carried out with a range of stakeholders, including representatives from headteacher groups and teaching unions, a range of subject teachers and headteachers, and representatives from each of the five AOs covering England, Wales and Northern Ireland. A quantitative survey of 809 subject heads and teaching staff was then conducted, to better understand centre practice and to gauge how widespread any issues around implementation were and how these could be addressed.

The principal aim of the research was to understand the differing approaches to CA implementation, the types and scale of any problems experienced, and the extent to which these relate to the implementation of a new form of assessment – and may naturally be resolved over time as teachers get more familiar with the process – or whether problems are more fundamentally concerned with the design of the assessments and centres' capacity to accommodate them.

## Summary of key findings

In general, the quantitative and qualitative research suggests that the principles of CA are well received and that, on the whole, stakeholders and teachers of the nine subjects covered by this research are broadly supportive of the idea of CA. Stakeholders pointed to a sense that coursework was no longer seen as fit for purpose, and a widespread feeling that something had to change. Most of the teachers surveyed feel that CA guards against malpractice, provides a fair assessment of pupil performance, and assesses a broad range

of skills. Stakeholders stressed that CA should complement final examinations, by testing a different set of skills, and most teachers of the nine subjects covered by this research felt that it does so.

Despite this widespread support for CA, the teachers surveyed are divided about how easy it has been to implement the new form of assessment in their centre: on average, across teachers of the nine subjects surveyed, 45% of teachers say it has been easy to implement, and 41% that it has been difficult. The difficulties are more pronounced for French, Geography and History teachers: French and Geography teachers were more likely than the average across other subject teachers surveyed to say that it has been difficult to implement CA in their centre (54% French teachers and 53% Geography teachers found it difficult to implement); History teachers were also more likely than teachers of several other subjects to say that CA has been difficult to implement (46% found it difficult)<sup>1</sup>. Conversely, teachers of English and Business studies were relatively likely to say they had found it easy to implement (61% and 57%, respectively, found it easy)<sup>2</sup>.

For most subject teachers, the biggest drawbacks of CA are logistical: accommodating pupils who are absent and miss assessments and those entitled to extra time; scheduling difficulties; and strains on schools' ICT resources. Stakeholders also consistently cited these issues as being very problematic. There are also some wider concerns about CA; both the stakeholder research and the teacher survey revealed concerns about the impact of CA on teaching and learning time, while stakeholder participants in the depth interviews consistently raised concerns about the appropriateness of CA for modern foreign languages (MFL<sup>3</sup>), and a few stakeholders talked about the reduced opportunity for students to develop key skills in refining and editing their work. While the balance of opinion among the teachers surveyed was positive, it is clear from the qualitative work that some stakeholders and teachers have deep-seated concerns about CA.

We discuss these key concerns in more detail below, and the recommendations that teachers and/or stakeholders raised in relation to each:

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<sup>1</sup> A separate regression analysis carried out on the factors associated with teachers reporting difficulties in implementing CA found that French teachers were four times more likely than Business studies teachers (the reference category) to find it difficult to implement, and History teachers were twice as likely to report difficulties. No other subjects differed substantially in terms of reported difficulties. The regression findings will be published separately in a forthcoming report.

<sup>2</sup> This finding echoes the results of CHAID analysis carried out on the results, which segmented teachers on the basis of their reported difficulties in implementing CA, found that teachers of English, English Language, Business Studies, and Design and Technology were less likely to report difficulties than teachers of other subjects. The CHAID findings will be published separately in a forthcoming report.

<sup>3</sup> The quantitative survey covered French teachers. In the depth interviews, stakeholders tended to refer to Modern Foreign Languages (MFL) in general when discussing issues relating to CA.

- An average of 38% of teachers across the nine subjects surveyed said the AO guidance was unclear as to how they should deal with students who miss assessments through absence<sup>4</sup>. In addition, 28% were unclear about how to accommodate pupils entitled to extra time. When rating the levels of control for various aspects of CA in the qualification specifications produced by AOs, teachers were more likely to say the levels of control were too low for managing pupil absence, and accommodating those entitled to extra time, than for other aspects of the assessments. The stakeholders interviewed felt that schools were taking different approaches to these issues, and that the lack of consistency in this aspect of CA practice threatens to undermine the reliability of the new assessments. Stakeholders also felt that these issues had not been adequately addressed in AO guidance issued to date, and clarifying these issues in the guidance is likely to be important.
- CA poses logistical challenges for schools, particularly around managing access to limited resources such as ICT equipment and sometimes classroom space<sup>5</sup>. When asked about factors that had helped or hindered the implementation of CA, the most commonly mentioned problem was limited resources (by 37% of teachers on average across the nine subjects covered), and finding classroom space (mentioned by 33% on average). Many teachers prefer students to write up their tasks using computers, which creates pressure on school ICT resources, and requires careful timetabling. To try to limit the stress on students, and manage their resources most effectively, many schools try to spread CA across Years 10 and 11 so that students are not doing CA in several subjects concurrently. When asked how their centre's management of CA could be improved, the most commonly cited answers related to better timetabling (29%) and management (21%). These logistical challenges are more pronounced for larger schools. Guidance to help schools consider how to tackle the logistical challenges involved in implementing CA may be of value.
- Teachers also felt that CA had wider impacts on teaching in some respects. Stakeholders felt that the perceived need for advance scheduling of assessments throughout the GCSE years, and the amount of time taken up in each subject by CA, meant a narrowing of teaching, and fewer opportunities for activities such as off-site trips that deepen students' understanding and interest. In several subjects the loss of

<sup>4</sup> The regression analysis also showed that a lack of clarity in the guidelines about how teachers should manage pupil absence was one of the key factors associated with respondents reporting they had found it difficult to implement CA. Regression findings will be published separately in a forthcoming report.

<sup>5</sup> Again, these findings echo the results of regression analysis, which found that issues relating to limited resources (both rooms and technical equipment such as ICT) were some of the factors most strongly associated with higher rates of finding CA difficult to implement.

teaching and learning time was the single biggest drawback to CA: 28% of French teachers, 24% of Geography teachers, and 24% of History teachers considered this to be the biggest problem with CA. When asked about how they feel the problems with CA could best be addressed, it is striking that most of the suggestions relate to the scale and scope of CA, rather than the way centres have implemented it; the most common suggestions include fewer tasks, shorter tasks, relaxing the time limit, or less strictly controlled tasks. The findings suggest that many teachers feel that changes to the tasks themselves are needed to make CA more manageable, rather than changes in the way their centre is working. Indeed, 61% teachers surveyed report that their centre has already changed its approach, usually to good effect, and 26% have suggestions about how their centre can better manage CA in the future. In line with this, several stakeholders also felt that the amount of time required for CA tasks was 'disproportionate' for many subjects, particularly where it carries a lesser weighting in the final subject marks (see Table I.1).

- CA was considered to be unfit for purpose in relation to modern foreign languages by many stakeholders interviewed in the qualitative research. While the French teachers surveyed were, on balance, positive about CA, French teachers consistently gave poorer ratings of CA than the average for other subjects. Stakeholders raised a number of concerns that may explain the lower than average ratings for French: some stakeholders feel that CA tests students' memory rather than their subject knowledge or skills, that students can easily regurgitate information they have learnt at home, and that practices such as preparing for oral examinations in silence mean that CA is inadequate for languages<sup>6</sup>. It is notable that a higher proportion of French teachers than any other subject suggested abolishing CA when asked how the problems with CA in their subject could be rectified, with mixed views on alternative assessment approaches: 19% of French teachers, compared with an average of 12%, suggest bringing back coursework, and 17% of French teachers suggest having final examinations only compared with an average of 4% across all teachers surveyed.
- While teachers generally rate the CA guidance from AOs as clear and helpful, an average of 28% of teachers across the nine subjects surveyed felt they should contain more detailed information. When asked about the factors that had impeded the smooth implementation of CA, 17% spontaneously said a lack of clarity around the AO guidance had been a problem, one of the most commonly-mentioned issues.

<sup>6</sup> This issue was raised in a complaint letter; the teacher concerned was working with an OCR specification.

The stakeholder interviews revealed that teachers feel the guidance is open to interpretation in some places, particularly around what constitutes a ‘high’ level of control. Teachers were subsequently concerned that they were ‘short-changing’ their students by interpreting the AO guidance too strictly, and worried about the lack of consistency between centres undermining the reliability of assessments. Some stakeholders were concerned about what they perceived as a disparity between the written guidance and the information they had received in person from AO representatives, which created an impression to teachers that AOs were not properly managing the process. In rating the guidance, teachers are consistently more positive about the guidance produced by AQA, and least positive about OCR’s guidance. Ratings for Edexcel and CCEA generally fall between these extremes.

- Many stakeholders feel that there is too much guidance that there is very little information that is appropriately targeted for different levels of staff within schools. For example, while there are various guidance documents, there is nothing targeted at school leaders that contains the information management staff need.
- Teachers and stakeholders feel that CA can have a negative impact on pupil well-being; many centres aim to spread the controlled assessment load across the GCSE years, so that students are not completing CA in several subjects concurrently. The implication is that students regularly complete controlled assessments over the course of Years 10 and 11. The increase in pupil stress was one of the main drawbacks of CA identified by teachers in the survey, although a small number consider that CA is less stressful than coursework for students, because schools take more care to co-ordinate across subjects to spread the assessment load across the academic year than they did with coursework.

## Key findings by subject

Key findings for each subject, mainly drawn from the survey of teachers, were:

- **French** teachers were particularly concerned about the loss of teaching and learning time with CA (28% spontaneously mentioned this as a drawback, compared with 19% across all teachers surveyed; when prompted on this issue, French teachers were more likely than the average across all teachers surveyed to feel that CA performs poorly in terms of allowing sufficient teaching and learning time). French teachers also raised other concerns around CA-based courses not preparing students for A-level and it being a memory test rather than assessing knowledge (see Table 2.5). In

line with concerns raised by stakeholders about the nature of CA tasks and how well they enable subject teaching, French teachers were more likely than any other subject teachers to say that ‘subject-related issues’ had made it difficult for them to implement CA in their centre (Table 4.1).

French teachers were less clear than other teachers about what is permitted between CA sessions: although a significant minority of teachers across all subjects considered these aspects unclear, French teachers were even less clear than teachers on average about whether they could teach between sessions, or whether candidates could develop new notes and resources (see Table 3.1). French teachers were also more likely than other subject teachers to feel the level of control is too high for the number of sessions, and the time allocations for sessions (Table 3.5). French teachers were more likely than other subject teachers to feel that levels of control are currently too low when it comes to providing candidate feedback; in general the qualitative work suggested that, where teachers felt levels of control were too low, it was because insufficient clarity about what was permissible led to inconsistencies in the application of the guidance between centres.

Around one in three French teachers says that CA is currently manageable for less than half their pupils (31%, compared with 17% on average across all teachers surveyed).

- **English** teachers were particularly positive about the fact that CA ensures that students carry out their own assessment work: 63% of English and English language teachers spontaneously mentioned this benefit, as compared with 37% of teachers on average. English and English Language teachers were more likely than the average across all teachers surveyed to cite absent pupils as an issue in the implementation of assessments. English teachers were more positive about the AO guidance than teachers of other disciplines, which is perhaps linked to their more positive impressions of CA.

There were some differences between the English specifications: English Literature teachers were more likely than other English teachers to feel that levels of control are too high for giving candidate feedback. English and English Language teachers were more likely than other teachers (including English Literature teachers) to say that levels of control are too low around the notes and resources that candidates can take into assessments.

- **D&T** teachers were more likely than average to say that there are no drawbacks to CA. Where D&T teachers raised issues about CA, it related to not stretching the most able pupils sufficiently well, and CA potentially reducing learners' enjoyment of the subject. However, D&T teachers did raise a number of concerns about the practical implementation of tasks: D&T teachers were more likely to consider the guidance as unclear on aspects such as storing confidential materials, supervising students while completing tasks, and the number and duration of sessions allowed (see Table 3.1). These are the aspects that teachers of most other subjects feel are relatively clear in the AO guidance, so reviewing the D&T guidance in relation to these aspects could be of value. D&T teachers were relatively likely to cite the design of the specification and resources available to them within the school as having helped in the implementation of CA.
- **Geography** teachers were more likely than the average across all teachers surveyed to highlight problems with timetabling and limited ICT resources. When prompted about the factors that might help or impede their implementation of CA, 71% of Geography teachers said that the resources available such as ICT equipment had made it difficult for them to implement CA, and 51% said other resources such as room availability had made it difficult (Table 4.1). Geography teachers are also more likely to say that levels of control are too high in relation to use of ICT facilities, and supervision of students while they complete tasks.
- **ICT** teachers are more likely than average to feel the AO guidance is not sufficiently clear or detailed. When asked about specific aspects of the guidance, ICT teachers were twice as likely as other teachers surveyed to say that they were unclear about the time allocated to each stage of the task (20% compared with 10% on average who were unclear about this), and they were less clear about how teachers should set and develop tasks (see Table 3.1). In line with this, ICT teachers were also more likely than teachers on average to say that levels of control are currently too low when it comes to the number and duration of assessment sessions.
- **Business studies** teachers are more likely than average to feel the AO guidance is not sufficiently clear or detailed. The types of issues that Business studies teachers had with the guidance were in line with the averages across all teachers surveyed, and there are no particular issues that stand out as needing to be addressed for Business studies in particular.

- **History** teachers were more likely than average to say that one of the benefits of CA is ensuring that students complete all aspects of the assessments. They were also more likely than teachers on average to say that CA is manageable for all their pupils. As with Business studies teachers, History teachers' responses about the drawbacks of CA and the types of issues they have encountered in implementing it do not differ significantly from the average across all teachers. Regression analysis shows that History, along with French, was associated with a greater probability of reporting difficulties in implementing CA.

# Introduction

## Background

Since 2009, Controlled Assessment (CA) – the completion of an internal assessment under supervised conditions – has replaced traditional coursework in GCSE subjects. CA is designed to ensure that work submitted by students for grading is genuinely their own (rather than heavily parent-, teacher- and/or internet-assisted). Levels of control are designated at three key stages – task setting, task taking and task marking – and each stage has a level of control (or supervision) – limited, medium or high.

Preparing for CA's roll out from September 2009 was a considerable logistical undertaking for centres and it is reasonable to expect that such a significant shift in assessment practice and organisation has not always been completely plain sailing for centres. However, two years on, key questions for regulators are to what extent emerging issues relating to CA will, effectively, resolve themselves, or whether there is something more systemic that needs to be reviewed.

With this in mind, the three regulators in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, Ofqual, DfES and CCEA commissioned Ipsos MORI to conduct research to provide robust evidence on:

- The *nature* of CA-related issues, and the *scale and extent* of their impact
- Perceptions of both the *negative effects of/challenges posed by CA*, and its *benefits*
- *Improvements* that centres feel would reduce or eradicate the problems being caused by CA, or enhance the benefits of CA.

These issues operate at three levels: the design of the CA approach as determined by the regulations, the specific requirements that Awarding Organisations lay down for the assessment of each subject, and the way in which centres and teachers implement the guidance they are given.

In order to explore these issues Ipsos MORI was commissioned to conduct a qualitative and quantitative exploration of CA; this report draws together results from the three main strands of the project which comprised:

- In-depth interviews with 20 stakeholders, including representatives from headteacher bodies, teaching unions, as well as headteachers and subject teachers; in addition, a

further 5 in-depth interviews were conducted with representatives from each of the five AOs;

- Analysis of 21 letters of complaint about CA that the three regulators and the AOs had received over the past 12 months, and 39 responses to an initial consultation run by the three regulators;
- A survey of 800 teachers across nine subjects where CA has been in operation for two years.

### **Subject focus: the CA requirements**

The CA requirements vary by subject. An expert review of the specifications for each subject, coupled with a stakeholder consultation, was used to select nine subjects to act as a focus for the current research. These subjects were chosen by Ofqual to give a variety of disciplines (arts, humanities and technical subjects), and a variety of forms of CA assessment (e.g. assessments carrying different weights). A summary of the characteristics of the subjects selected is illustrated in Table I.1 overleaf.

Table I.1 Controlled Assessment profiles for subjects surveyed

Subject	CA weighting %	Component/ unit	Task setting	(ALL)	<u>Task taking</u>			Task marking
					Research/data collection	Analysis and evaluation of findings		
Design and technology (D&T)	60		High	Medium			Medium	
ICT	60		High	Medium			Medium	
English	60	Spkg/listg	Limited	High			Medium	
		Reading	High	High			Medium	
		Writing	High	High			Medium	
English Language	60	Spkg/listg	Limited	High			Medium	
		Reading	High	High			Medium	
		Writing	High	High			Medium	
French	60	Comm in Speech	Limited	Medium			Medium	
		Comm in Writing	Limited	High			High	
Business studies	25		High		Limited	High	Medium	
English Literature	25		High		Limited	High	Medium	
Geography	25		High		Limited	High	Medium	
History	25		High		Limited	High	Medium	

## Methodology

### Telephone depth interviews with stakeholders

The qualitative research consisted of 20 in-depth telephone interviews, each lasting 30-40 minutes. The interviews were conducted using a discussion guide, which was drawn up by Ipsos MORI in consultation with the three regulators. A copy of this guide is included in the appendix.

It was initially agreed that all 20 of these interviews would be conducted with individuals identified as key stakeholders (such as representatives from headteachers' bodies, teaching unions and so forth). Ofqual supplied Ipsos MORI with a list of stakeholder organisations across England, Wales and Northern Ireland that should be included in the research, and Ipsos MORI added other key education stakeholder organisations to this list. A specialist recruiter scheduled interviews with the key stakeholder organisations.

After the first few interviews had been completed, it was decided that in order to gain a deeper understanding of the issues involved in delivering CA on the ground it would also be necessary to speak to individuals directly involved in running CA in centres.

The final breakdown of depth interviews by participant type was as follows:

- Stakeholder: 13 (including 3 teaching unions, as well as headteacher and teacher/school representative groups).
- Maintained school: 5 interviews.
- Independent school: 2 interviews.

Please note that some stakeholders are also headteachers and teachers, and in the course of the interview spoke from both of these perspectives. The findings from this qualitative work fed into the questionnaire development for the subsequent quantitative survey.

In addition, a further five in-depth telephone interviews were conducted with representatives from each of the awarding organisations in the UK providing GCSEs. A copy of the discussion guide used for these interviews is appended.

### Analysis of complaint letters and consultation responses

Since the introduction of CA, awarding organisations and the three regulators have received various communications from teachers and other individuals involved in CA discussing the merits of and problems with this approach. Ipsos MORI analysed the letters from stakeholders in England, Wales and Northern Ireland and their contents inform this report.

The breakdown of letter type is as follows:

- Letters from centres: 11
- Letters regarding private candidates: 3
- Letters from other stakeholders: 6
- Other letters: 1

Ipsos MORI has systematically analysed the key messages from these letters. In general, we found that the messages contained in the letters reflected the opinions emerging from the qualitative interviews. Where appropriate, we draw on evidence and comments from these letters in our reporting.

Alongside the letters, Ipsos MORI was given access to responses provided by stakeholders to Ofqual's initial informal consultation about the research. The information from these responses has been analysed alongside the primary data collected and comprises 39 responses.

### **Quantitative telephone survey of 800 subject teachers**

The qualitative research and analysis of letters and consultation responses aimed to give an in-depth understanding of the way centres implemented CA and the types of issues they had encountered. A quantitative survey complemented the qualitative work by giving an understanding of how widely the opinions and concerns about CA that were raised in the qualitative stage were held among teachers working with CA.

#### *Sample design*

The regulators selected a range of subjects to cover in the quantitative research; this selection was intended to cover a range of CA requirements as well as different types of subject (e.g. arts, humanities, technical subjects). The subjects covered are: English, English Language, English Literature, French, Geography, History, Design and Technology (D&T), ICT, and Business studies. As some English teachers cover several English specifications, the sample was designed to pick up teachers who teach more than one English subject (e.g. those who teach English and English Language).

Given that the requirements for each subject vary by AO, quotas were set to ensure that we interviewed a minimum number of teachers working under each AO for each subject. The number of interviews achieved by subject and AO are shown in table I.2 below. The number of interviews achieved in each group is shown in Table 1 below. Please note that 33

interviews were conducted with teachers who taught both English and English Language specifications. As teachers will often cover both specifications, we have counted these teachers under both 'English' and 'English Language' throughout the report.

Quotas also ensured that the sample covered teachers working in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, and that interviews were achieved with a broadly comparable split of teachers working in the maintained and independent sectors.

**Table I.2 Profile of completed interviews (unweighted)**

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Number of interviews achieved</b>
Business studies	105
Design & Technology	108
English	70 (includes 33 teachers of English and English Language)
English Language	62 (includes 33 teachers of English and English Language)
English Literature	75
French	107
Geography	107
History	106
ICT	102
<b>AO</b>	
AQA	217
CCEA	75
Edexcel	208
OCR	190
WJEC	119
<b>Management type</b>	
Maintained	587
Independent	125
<b>Country</b>	
England	639
Wales	89
Northern Ireland	81

The fieldwork timings meant that the interviewing period for teachers using the CCEA specifications was shorter, as CCEA is mainly used by teachers in Northern Irish schools which break earlier for summer. In particular, the number of French CCEA teachers contacted was lower than the target (in total 3 CCEA French teachers were interviewed

compared with a target of 15). This was not because of a higher propensity to refuse among French CCEA teachers, but because fewer French CCEA teachers were contacted with the relatively limited fieldwork window than teachers in other subgroups. However an analysis of views from survey respondents, those submitting letters and stakeholders from Northern Ireland shows that the views collected across England and Wales relating to MFL do reflect those in Northern Ireland.

### *The sampling process*

The regulators provided samples of schools delivering each subject for each AO. The sample file covered 4,728 centres; many centres were listed multiple times because they were running CA in several subjects (either with the same AO or with a selection of AOs). The sample was structured at the school level initially, stratified by awarding organisation, centre type (whether maintained or independent, where available), and number of candidates entered per specification, and a sample of schools selected at random. This method aimed to deliver a random sample of teachers for each subject, whilst at the same time avoiding sampling any single school more than once. In practice, the number of selections in some AO-subject quota groups where sample was very limited was too small to hit the interview targets, and so more sample was drawn for these subjects. In these instances this meant sampling two or three subjects from the same school. (In many cases, it was not possible to draw additional sample in a particular AO-subject group without making multiple selections per school, because the same schools were needed to fulfil several quota targets.)

Overall, 3,057 schools were sampled, of which 214 were sampled twice (i.e. for two subjects), and 46 were sampled three times (for three subjects). Where schools were sampled more than once, it was always for separate subjects (e.g. French and Business studies); we did not sample more than one English teacher per school. In total teachers were interviewed across 787 schools; in 22 schools, 2 teachers were interviewed.

The interview was designed to be completed by the teacher with responsibility for CA for a particular subject. Interviewers initially asked to speak to the teacher in charge of exams and assessments for the subject sampled, or to the head of the subject sampled. Screener questions then confirmed whether the individual had had responsibility for CA in that subject for at least one year in their current school. Where English teachers had been sampled, the screener questions clarified which of the three English specifications they had taught, and then asked teachers to answer questions in relation to a maximum of two of these specifications via random selection. The screener questions also confirmed for all teachers which AO specification they worked to in delivering their subject.

### *Fieldwork*

All interviews were conducted from 21 June – 12 July 2011; some schools closed for summer before 12 July and had shorter fieldwork periods, including schools in Northern Ireland and independent schools. Schools where term was due to finish earlier in the fieldwork period were prioritised at the interviewing stage to ensure we achieved a minimum number of interviews.

Interviews were conducted by telephone, and lasted an average of 21.5 minutes.

### *Data processing*

After fieldwork, a specialist team of coders processed the verbatim answers recorded by interviewers in response to the open-ended questions.

Data were weighted by management type (maintained or independent) to the sample of schools selected.

## **This report**

This report integrates findings from the quantitative survey of subject teachers, qualitative in-depth interviews with stakeholders and AO representatives, and information contained in the complaints letters to the awarding organisations and to the three regulators.

In the report we often present the average finding across all nine subjects rather than reporting the findings for each subject separately. The sampling approach was designed to deliver minimum numbers of interviews with teachers using each AO specification within each subject. The aim was to achieve a similar AO profile within each subject covered. However, due to limited available sample, for example from WJEC and CCEA, this was not always possible. As far as was possible therefore we have achieved a comparable profile of interviews by AO and subject.

We should note that the number of interviews covering each subject reflects the targets we have set in order to achieve a balance of opinions across subjects and AOs, rather than a fully representative view of teachers of each specification within a subject. The aggregate interviews are therefore not statistically representative of teachers of the nine subjects covered, in that the research aimed deliberately to interview broadly equal numbers of teachers using each AO for each subject. The data were not weighted to reflect the population profile of teachers by AO-within-subject, partly because reliable population data was not available, and because the aggregate totals would largely reflect opinions towards

AQA (the largest AO) and English teachers. Readers should be aware that the findings reflect the views of those teachers interviewed rather than the broader teaching population.

Strictly speaking, tests of statistical significance only apply to probability samples; we have applied statistical significance tests to the quantitative findings to give an indication of where differences between teachers of different subjects, and following specifications from different AOs, are meaningful, however.

Where possible, we have drawn on the qualitative in-depth interviews to explain and shed light on the survey findings. We highlight where information has been drawn from the qualitative interviews by referring to 'stakeholders' and 'AO participants'. The qualitative interviews often reflect a more critical opinion of CA than the quantitative survey findings, which might reflect that those with particularly strong negative feelings were more likely to want to take part in the in-depth interviews, and that they may be representing others in their views, while the survey focussed on the experiences of the individuals responding.

# 1. Views of Controlled Assessment

*This chapter looks at teachers' and stakeholders' general views of Controlled Assessment, before examining differences between teachers of different subjects and teachers working with specifications issued by different AOs. It then looks at the perceived benefits of Controlled Assessment, both in general and for teachers of each subject surveyed. Finally, we look at the perceived drawbacks of Controlled Assessment, looking again at teachers' overall views as well as subject-specific findings.*

*A majority of teachers in each of the nine subjects covered by the research feel that CA meets its key aims well, including preventing plagiarism, giving a fair assessment of skills, and assessing an appropriate breadth of skills. In fact, when asked to say what they consider the main benefits of CA to be, teachers spontaneously mention factors that relate to CA's principle aims: confidence that assessments reflect students' own work, ensuring students complete all aspects of the assessment, and a more level playing field because all students spend the same amount of time on their assessments.*

*The views of French teachers, while positive overall, are notably less positive than other subject teachers: they are less convinced that CA reduces plagiarism or that it is effective in assessing subject skills and abilities. Stakeholders participating in the depth interviews also raised concerns about CA in Modern Foreign Languages, and particularly concerns that students can gain high marks in assessments simply by regurgitating information learnt at home, and that it neither assesses subject skills adequately nor prevents plagiarism.*

*For most subject teachers the drawbacks of CA most commonly mentioned are logistical: a reduction in the amount of class time available for teaching and learning (mentioned by an average of 19% teachers surveyed), accommodating pupils who miss assessment periods (18%) or are entitled to extra time (6%), scheduling difficulties (12%), strains on schools' ICT resources (8%) and stress for students (11%) who are continuously assessed during their GCSE years were commonly mentioned by teachers in the quantitative work, and consistent themes in the qualitative stakeholder interviews. However, there are some subject-specific criticisms: French teachers in particular feel that CA leads to less proficient learning.*

*Teachers working with OCR specifications are less positive than teachers running specifications for other AOs, which suggests perhaps the requirements and/or guidance and support provided by OCR could be improved.*

## Does Controlled Assessment achieve its aims?

### General views about Controlled Assessment

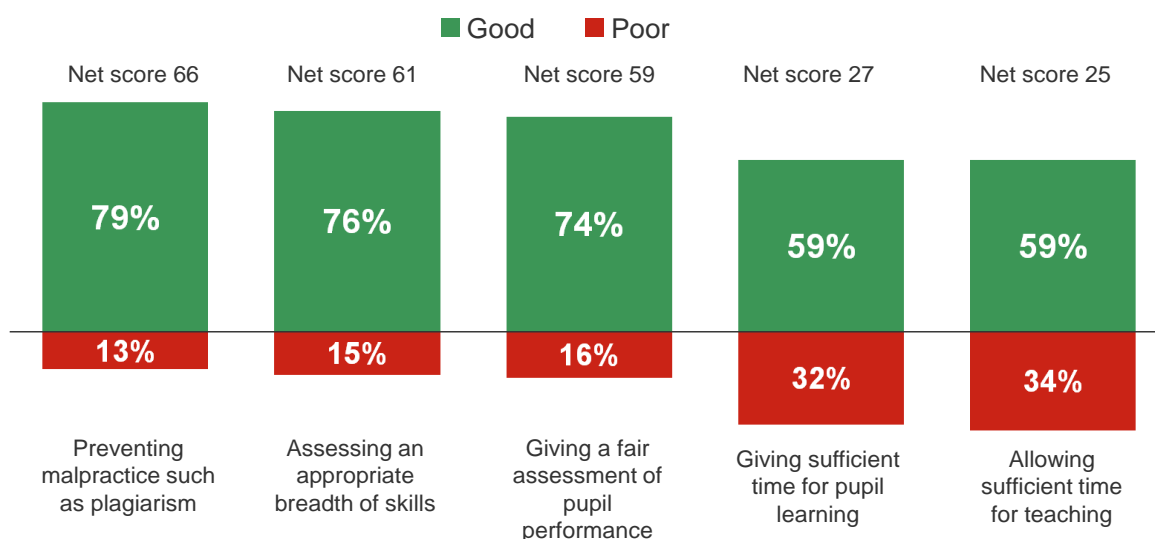
Controlled Assessment (CA) was introduced in 2009 to address a number of problems that were believed to be compromising coursework. Principally, CA was intended to make sure that all students spend the same amount of time on work and to prevent teachers providing inappropriate levels of guidance and input, whilst still allowing learners to produce an original piece of work. It was also intended to allow centres greater freedom and control, both over when tasks are taken and the contextualisation of the tasks themselves. Finally, it was

intended to counter concerns about plagiarism and improve the reliability and validity of students' results.

In the telephone survey, teachers were asked a series of questions to determine whether or not CA is perceived to be achieving these aims in general (teachers were also asked about how well they felt CA worked in their own subjects; this information is presented in Chapter 3). As set out below, the majority of teachers across the nine subjects surveyed feel that CA is performing well against its aims.

## How well CA meets its aims

Q1. Can you tell me how well you think controlled assessment meets this aim?



Ipsos MORI Base: 809 teachers, interviewed between 21<sup>st</sup> June and 12<sup>th</sup> July 2011

Source: Ipsos MORI



Teachers in each of the nine subjects surveyed are most positive about the success of CA in preventing plagiarism; an average eight in ten (79%) across the subjects covered say that they feel that CA is 'good' in this respect.

Both stakeholder and AO participants in the qualitative depth interviews recognised that concerns about the opportunities for plagiarism in the coursework system played an important role in the introduction of CA. In line with the quantitative research findings, stakeholders generally feel that CA has reduced the scope for plagiarism.<sup>7</sup> However, views among AO representatives are more ambiguous; whilst some think that CA has increased the confidence that one is able to have in the authenticity of learners' work, others are less

<sup>7</sup> An important exception to this is the case of Modern Foreign Languages. For comments on this see section 'Views of Controlled Assessment by subject' on p.22.

sure and question both how prevalent plagiarism (and other forms of malpractice) had been under coursework, whether they justify the complexity of the guidelines that CA has given rise to, and how effective CA is in combating malpractice:

*You are reducing plagiarism; it is going to be the students' own work. You can guarantee that it has not been done by their parents... So that side of it is a positive.*

Stakeholder, Depth Interview

*One of the major motivations behind the introduction of Controlled Assessment was a concern that candidates were cheating on a large scale... so with Controlled Assessment we now have quite an elaborate system of regulations which of course vary across subjects... I'm not actually convinced at the end of it all that we do get anything that's that much better in terms of authenticity... I mean there's nothing to stop candidates memorising vast chunks for a Controlled Assessment write up and I believe in some subjects that is very much what happens.*

AO Representative, Depth Interview

An average of around three quarters of teachers in each of the nine subjects say that CA is 'good' at both assessing an appropriate breadth of pupil skills and in giving a fair assessment of pupil performance (76% and 74% respectively). On balance, teachers' views were positive about CA allowing sufficient time for teaching and pupil learning, with an average of six in ten (59%) teachers across the nine subjects covered saying that CA is good in these respects. However, teachers of the surveyed subjects were less likely to feel CA worked well in allowing time for teaching and learning than they were to agree it meets its other key aims.

The issue of the amount of teaching time taken up by CA emerged as a major issue in both the stakeholder and AO representative depth interviews. Most stakeholders expressed a high degree of concern that the time demands of CA significantly reduce teaching time, making it more difficult to teach the full syllabus and encouraging teaching to the course. Several participants said that the time pressures imposed by CA mean that extra-curricular activities are being cut back, to the detriment of learners' wider education.

*The net impact for those schools that are doing significant numbers of home-based GCSEs... is something like a... 15% to 20% reduction in teaching time.<sup>8</sup>*

Stakeholder, Depth Participant

*For many lessons, students are now too involved in the 'controlled' aspect of the work [and] we are beginning to find it difficult for other activities to run.*

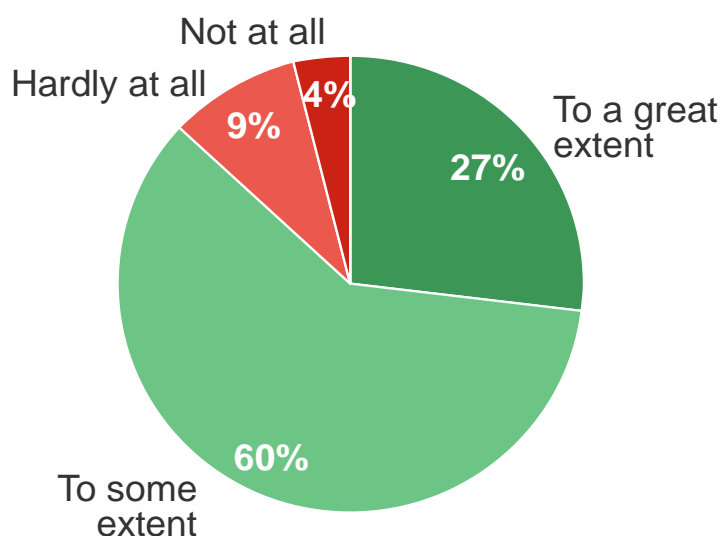
Centre, Letter

<sup>8</sup> In referring to 'home-based' GCSEs the participant was deliberately distinguishing between UK and International GCSEs.

Participants in the depth interviews stressed that an important rationale for coursework and CA is their ability to test different skills than those tested in exams. An average of almost nine in ten (87%) of teachers across the nine subjects covered by the research say that CA does this to some extent or a great extent. Conversely, 13% say that it hardly does this or does not do it at all.

## Ability of CA to assess different skills to final exams

Q2. To what extent, if at all, do you think that controlled assessment assesses different skills than final exams are able to test?



Ipsos MORI

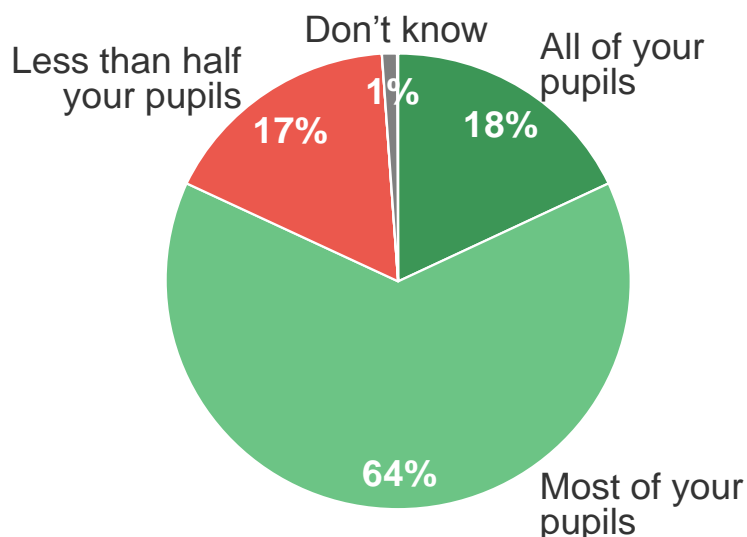
Base: All teachers (809), 21 June – 12 July 2011

Source: Ipsos MORI 

To function successfully as an assessment tool, CA also needs to be manageable for learners. An average of nearly a fifth (18%) across the teachers of the nine subjects covered by the research say that it is manageable for all of their pupils. Nearly two thirds (64%) say that it is manageable for most of their pupils, whilst 17% say that it is manageable for less than half of their pupils.

## Manageability of CA

Q3. And would you say that the process of Controlled Assessment is manageable for [all/ most/ less than half] your pupils?



Ipsos MORI

Base: All teachers (809), 21 June – 12 July 2011

Source: Ipsos MORI 

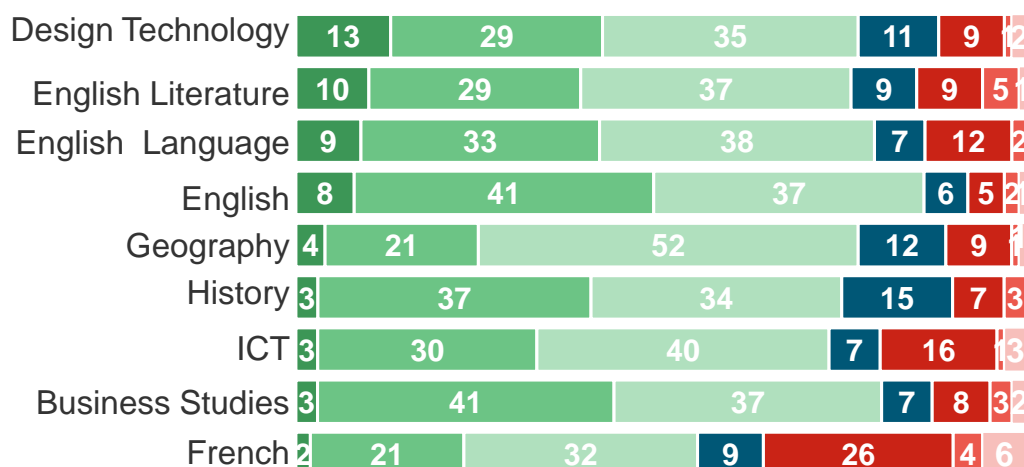
### Views of Controlled Assessment by subject

As stated above, the majority of teachers feel that CA is fulfilling its goals. However, there are wide variations between different subject teachers in their perceptions of CA's effectiveness. Most notably, although a majority of French teachers are positive about how well CA is accomplishing its goals, they are less likely to be positive about the suitability of CA for their subject than other subject teachers. As shown in the charts below, just over half (55%) of French teachers say that CA is good at giving a fair assessment of pupil performance, which compares with an average of three quarters (74%) across teachers of all subjects covered. The percentage of French teachers saying that CA is 'good' at giving a fair assessment of pupil performance is lower than it is for every other subject. Similarly, almost six in ten (57%) French teachers say that CA is good at assessing an appropriate breadth of skills, compared with an average of three quarters (76%) across teachers of all subjects. The percentage of French teachers saying that CA is 'good' at assessing an appropriate breadth of skills is lower than it is for every other subject.

## How well CA gives a fair assessment of pupil performance – by subject

Q1 How well do you think controlled assessment [gives] a fair assessment of pupil performance?

■ Extremely good   ■ Very good   ■ Fairly good   ■ Neither / nor  
 ■ Fairly poor   ■ Very poor   ■ Extremely poor



Base: All teachers (809), 21 June – 12 July 2011

Source: Ipsos MORI

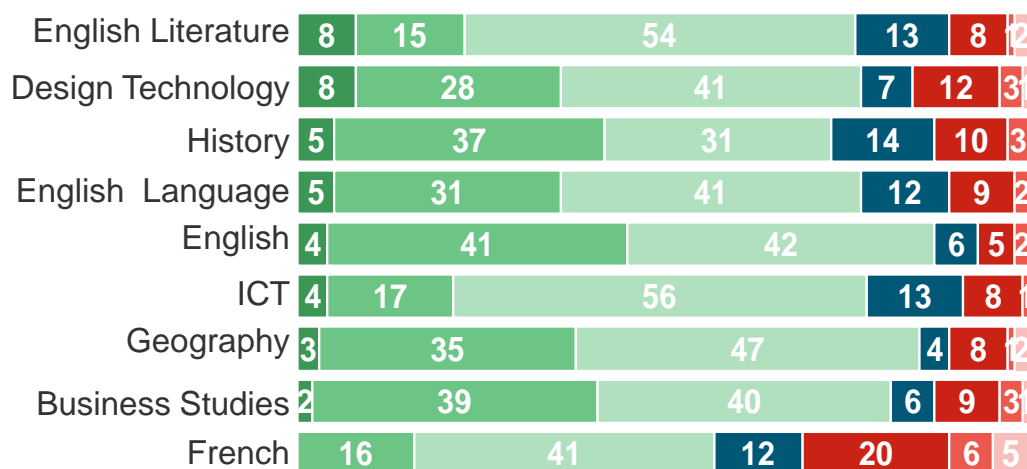
Ipsos MORI



## How well CA assesses an appropriate breadth of skills – by subject

Q1 How well do you think controlled assessment [assesses] an appropriate breadth of skills?

■ Extremely good   ■ Very good   ■ Fairly good   ■ Neither / nor  
 ■ Fairly poor   ■ Very poor   ■ Extremely poor



Base: All teachers (809), 21 June – 12 July 2011

Source: Ipsos MORI

Ipsos MORI



When considering whether CA assesses different skills to those assessed in exams (see Table 2.1), French teachers are again more negative than most other subject teachers, although English Literature teachers are also more negative than most in this respect. A fifth (21%) of English Literature teachers and nearly three in ten (28%) of French teachers say that CA hardly assesses different skills to those assessed in exams, or that it does not do this at all (compared with an average of 13% across teachers of all nine subjects surveyed).

**Table 2.1: Extent to which CA assesses different skills to exams – by subject**

Q2. To what extent, if at all, do you think that controlled assessment assesses different skills than final exams are able to test?

(Light shading indicates subject is significantly lower than the average across all teachers; darker shading indicates a higher than average proportion gave this response)

	Aver -age	Eng.	Eng. Lang	Eng. Lit.	D&T	French	Geography	History	ICT	Bus. Stud.
<i>Base: All respondents</i>	809	70	62	75	108	107	107	106	102	105
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
To a great extent	27	25	16	21	47	13	31	25	34	19
To some extent	60	64	71	58	45	57	62	64	58	71
Hardly at all	9	6	7	18	4	18	6	7	7	8
Not at all	4	5	6	2	4	10	2	4	-	2
Don't know	*	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	1	-
<b>Great/some extent</b>	87	89	87	79	92	70	93	89	92	90
<b>Hardly/not at all</b>	13	11	13	21	8	28	7	11	7	10
<b>Net great/some extent</b>	74	78	74	59	83	43	85	78	85	80

Source: Ipsos MORI

Finally, French teachers are also less positive about how well their pupils are able to manage CA, with three in ten (31%) saying that it is manageable for less than half of them (see Table 2.2). This compares with 8% of English teachers, 13% of History teachers and 15% of Geography teachers who say the same thing.

**Table 2.2: Manageability of CA for pupils**

Q3. And would you say that the process of controlled assessment is manageable for...?

(Light shading indicates subject is significantly lower than the average across all teachers; darker shading indicates a higher than average proportion gave this response)

	Aver -age	Eng.	Eng. Lang	Eng. Lit.	D&T	French	Geography	History	ICT	Bus. Stud.
<i>Base: All respondents</i>	809 %	70 %	62 %	75 %	108 %	107 %	107 %	106 %	102 %	105 %
All of your pupils	18	31	21	15	22	10	16	23	17	13
Most of your pupils	64	60	64	64	61	58	69	65	66	66
Less than half of your pupils	17	8	15	18	17	31	15	13	17	19
None of your pupils	*	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
Don't know	1	-	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	2

Source: Ipsos MORI

These findings were echoed in the qualitative interviews, in which repeated concerns were raised about CA in relation to MFL. AO representatives said that they are aware that MFL is causing particular difficulties for centres and teachers whilst stakeholders were repeatedly critical of CA in relation to MFL. Whilst stakeholders feel that CA helps generate more authentic work in most subjects, MFL is an important exception. Many depth participants feel that as students are able to prepare their work for CA in MFL subjects at home, they can access whatever help they choose and simply learn it by rote and replicate it in the assessment. Participants also feel that some aspects of the implementation of CA are hampering learning whilst also preventing learners from enjoying their subject (and also, therefore, putting them off from studying it at AS and A-level).

*It seems utterly preposterous to me...that our candidates are expected to prepare for a speaking assessment entirely without speaking.*

Centre, Letter

*It's killing the enjoyment of learning a language.*

Centre, Letter

Teachers of English are positive about how well CA meets its aims; it is notable that they are more positive about most aspects of CA than teachers of English Literature and English Language. English teachers are more likely than the average across teachers of all nine subjects to think that CA helps to prevent malpractice, assesses an appropriate breadth of skills, give a fair assessment of pupil performance, and give sufficient time for teaching and for pupil learning. English teachers are also more likely than the average across all subjects to say that CA is manageable for all their pupils (31% compared with 18%).

Business studies teachers are more likely than the average across all nine subjects to feel that CA allows sufficient time for both teaching and learning (71% and 75% compared with 59% and 59% respectively).

### **Views of Controlled Assessment by AO used**

The AO whose specification teachers follow also seems to affect the perceived effectiveness of CA in meeting its aims. It indicates, therefore, that differing AO approaches, or differing levels of support and guidance provided by AOs, are affecting the experience of CA in centres. As Table 2.3 shows, the findings suggest that those centres who use OCR are, on the whole, less likely to think that CA is good at meeting its aims, whilst those who use AQA are more likely to be positive about this. For example, two thirds (67%) of teachers whose centres use AQA say that CA is 'good' at allowing sufficient time for teaching and 85% of these teachers say that CA is 'good' at preventing malpractice; this compares with half (50%) and three quarters (74%) of those whose centres use OCR who say the same thing.

**Table 2.3: Extent to which CA assesses different skills to exams – by subject****Q1. Can you tell me how well you think controlled assessment meets this aim?**

(Left hand column shows the average across all teachers. Light shading indicates where AO responses are significantly lower than the average across all teachers; darker shading indicates a higher than average proportion gave this response.)

	Average	AQA	Edexcel	OCR	WJEC	CCEA
<i>Base: All respondents</i>	809	217	208	190	119	75
	%	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Giving a fair assessment of pupil performance</i>						
GOOD	74	78	75	67	78	75
POOR	16	14	17	17	16	14
<i>Assessing an appropriate breadth of skills</i>						
GOOD	76	81	74	66	79	86
POOR	15	11	18	19	12	8
<i>Allowing sufficient time for teaching</i>						
GOOD	59	67	59	50	60	50
POOR	34	27	30	43	34	41
<i>Giving sufficient time for pupil learning</i>						
GOOD	59	69	56	52	63	51
POOR	32	24	34	39	29	40
<i>Preventing malpractice such as plagiarism</i>						
GOOD	79	85	74	74	85	72
POOR	13	10	14	14	13	14

**Source: Ipsos MORI**

Teachers following an OCR specification for their subject are also more likely to say that CA hardly assesses different skills to final exams, or that it does not do this at all; a fifth (20%) of these teachers say this compared with an average of 13% of teachers across the nine subjects covered by the research.

Teachers whose centres use AQA are more likely to say that CA is manageable for all their pupils; a quarter (24%) of these teachers say this, compared with 13% of those whose centres use OCR and 12% of those whose centres use WJEC.

### Views of Controlled Assessment by type of centre

The type of centre that teachers work at also impacts on views of CA. When asked about how well CA meets its aims, teachers who work at maintained schools are more likely to be

positive than those who teach at an independent school. For example, six in ten (61%) of maintained school teachers say that CA is good at giving sufficient time for pupil learning, compared with half (51%) of those who work at independent schools.

However, although they are less positive about CA achieving its aims, teachers who work in independent schools are more likely to say that CA is manageable for all their pupils than those who work in a maintained school (38% compared with 15%). It is highly likely that the greater amount of personal attention that many independent schools are able to provide to their pupils may play a part in this.

## Benefits of Controlled Assessment

Teachers were asked, unprompted, what they consider to be the greatest benefits of CA<sup>9</sup>. The most commonly mentioned benefit is an assurance that *work carried out is student's own*, cited by an average of 37% across the teachers of the nine subjects covered by the research. Other perceived benefits of CA include that it *ensures that all students complete the work required* (an average of 18% of teachers surveyed say this) and that it ensures a *more level playing field* as all students spend the same amount of time on the tasks (15%).

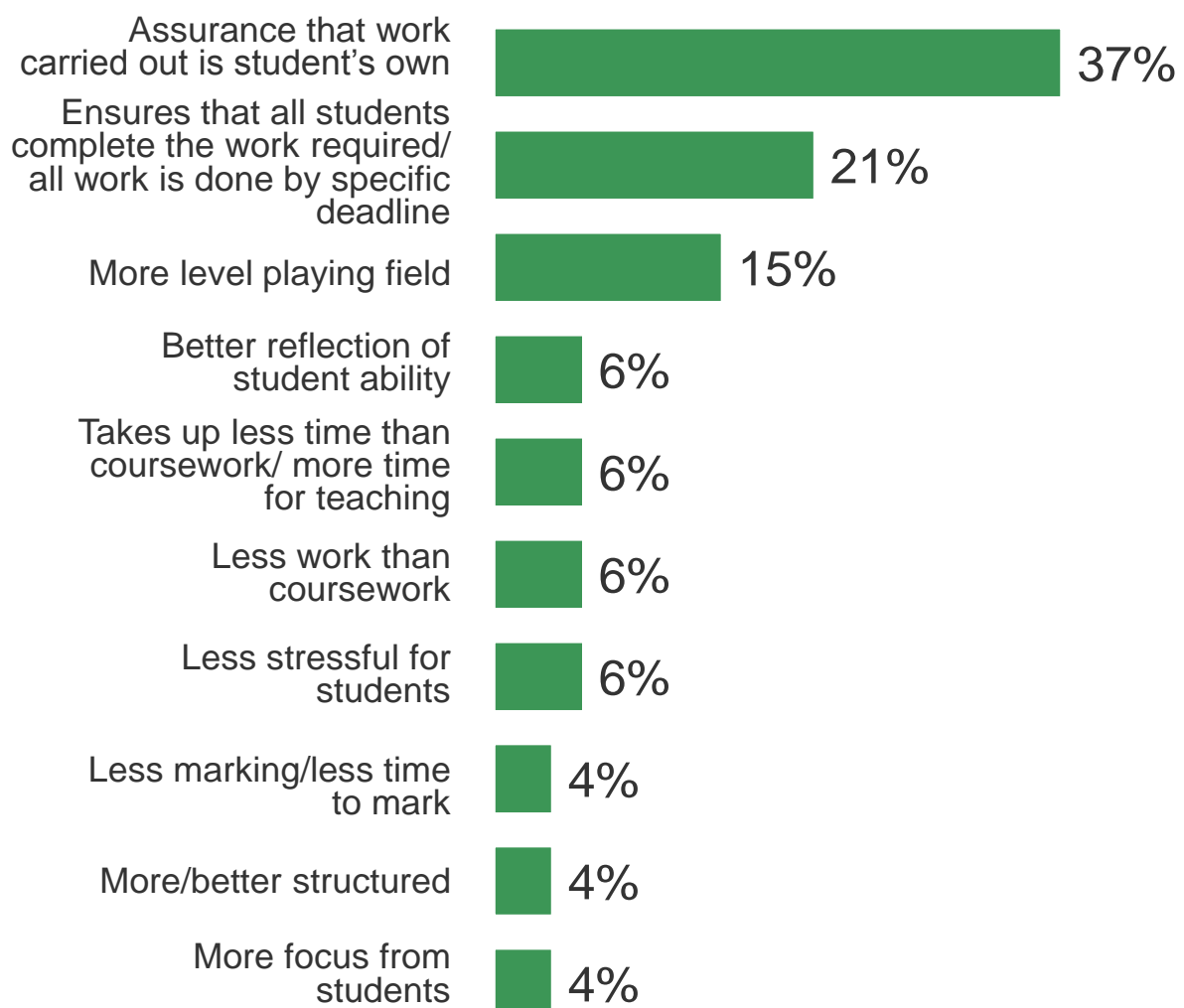
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<sup>9</sup> Although note that this question appeared towards the end of the interview, after teachers had been asked about some of the key aims of CA.

## Benefits of CA over coursework

Q17. Thinking now about your own experiences of implementing controlled assessment in [SUBJECT], what do you feel are the benefits, if any, of controlled assessment over coursework?

### Top 10 answers



Base: All teachers (809), 21 June – 12 July 2011

Ipsos MORI

Source: Ipsos MORI 

Many of these benefits were also identified by participants in the depth interviews. As discussed above, a degree of support was expressed for the effectiveness of CA in eliminating plagiarism, whilst the fact that CA makes sure that all learners complete the work required is also seen to be a benefit of CA by qualitative interview participants. Participants said that, under coursework, some learners would struggle to hand any work in at all by the deadline. A variety of reasons were offered for this, including some learners' home environments being inimical to study and a lack of motivation amongst others. However, as CA is completed in class time, learners are not left to rely on their own resources and this problem is therefore avoided.

*Candidates from comfortable homes have got all the facilities to do their coursework at home. Candidates from disadvantaged backgrounds often don't. So maybe for them and for candidates with difficult home circumstances it does make things a bit easier.*

AO Representative, Depth Interview

However, although many quantitative respondents identify a range of benefits of CA, a fifth (22%) say it brings no benefits: it is notable that French, D&T and ICT teachers are most likely to say it has no benefits over coursework (38%, 31% and 28% respectively). The qualitative work suggested that for more technical subjects like D&T and ICT the shift from coursework has not brought a very great change and these teachers have not therefore seen the benefits (or disadvantages) seen elsewhere.

In the stakeholder research a number of participants either had difficulty identifying any benefits of CA, or were strongly negative about it and advocated that it be abolished. Whilst AO representatives are more positive, and could see a number of advantages to CA, they too described hearing some strong opposition from certain groups of teachers,.

*[We had a meeting and I asked]... 'Is there anything good to say about [CA]?' And there was a deafening silence and then somebody said, 'Well they're better than coursework.' But that's like saying that a five year stint in prison is better than a 10 year stint in prison.*

Stakeholder Representative, Depth Interview

### **Subject-specific benefits**

Once again, French teachers are more negative than teachers of other subjects; nearly four in ten (38%) say that there are no benefits to CA compared with coursework (compared with an average of 22% across teachers of the nine subjects surveyed). In keeping with the existence of concerns about the possibility that students may simply rote-learn pieces of work to reproduce in Modern Foreign Language CA, described above, French teachers are also less likely than most subject teachers to say that the assurance that the completed work

is a student's own is a benefit of CA (22% say this). In contrast, English, English Language, and English Literature teachers are more likely than average to say that CA provides assurances of the authenticity of learners' work (59%, 56%, and 52% respectively).

**Table 2.4: Benefits of Controlled Assessment**

Q17. Thinking now about your experiences of implementing controlled assessment in [SUBJECT], what do you feel are the benefits, if any, of controlled assessment over coursework?

	Average	Teachers significantly more likely than average to identify as a benefit	Teachers significantly less likely than average to identify as a benefit
<i>Assurance that work carried out is student's own</i>	<b>37%</b>	English (59%) English Language (56%) English Literature (52%)	French (22%) Design & Technology (21%)
<i>Ensures that all students complete the work required</i>	<b>18%</b>	English Literature (28%) History (27%)	French (6%)
<i>More level playing field as students all dedicate the same amount of time to tasks</i>	<b>15%</b>		French (7%) ICT (7%)
<i>Takes up less time than coursework/more time for teaching</i>	<b>6%</b>	Business Studies (14%) Geography (12%)	ICT (1%) French (1%) Design & Technology (-)
<i>Less marking/less time to mark</i>	5%	English (14%) English Language (12%) English Literature (12%)	Design & Technology (1%) French (-)
<i>More/better structured</i>	4%	Design & Technology (9%)	
<i>Clarity/understanding of requirements/expectations from students and teachers</i>	3%	Business Studies (7%)	
<i>Students take it more seriously</i>	2%	English (8%) English Language (7%) English Literature (6%)	
<i>Prepares students for other exams/A-levels</i>	2%	English (6%)	
<i>Work is done in a controlled environment/students can't take work home</i>	2%	Geography (5%)	
<i>Not allowed to draft/re-draft/one off assessment</i>	1%	English (6%) English Language (5%)	
<i>Less stressful for teachers</i>	1%	History (4%)	
<i>Good use/access to resources</i>	1%	French (3%)	
<i>Can keep track of students' progress</i>	1%	English (5%)	
<i>Opportunities for research/collaborative research</i>	1%	Business Studies (4%)	

Source: Ipsos MORI

## Drawbacks of Controlled Assessment

Teachers were also asked to state the main drawbacks of CA, again without prompting. Whilst an average of one in ten (10%) teachers across the nine subjects covered by the research say that there are no drawbacks to CA, most teachers identify a broad range of problems. Generally speaking the specific concerns mentioned can be categorised as follows:

- Timing issues;
- Resourcing and timetabling;
- Issues relating to subject teaching;
- Assessment and marking;
- Stress; and,
- Inconsistencies.

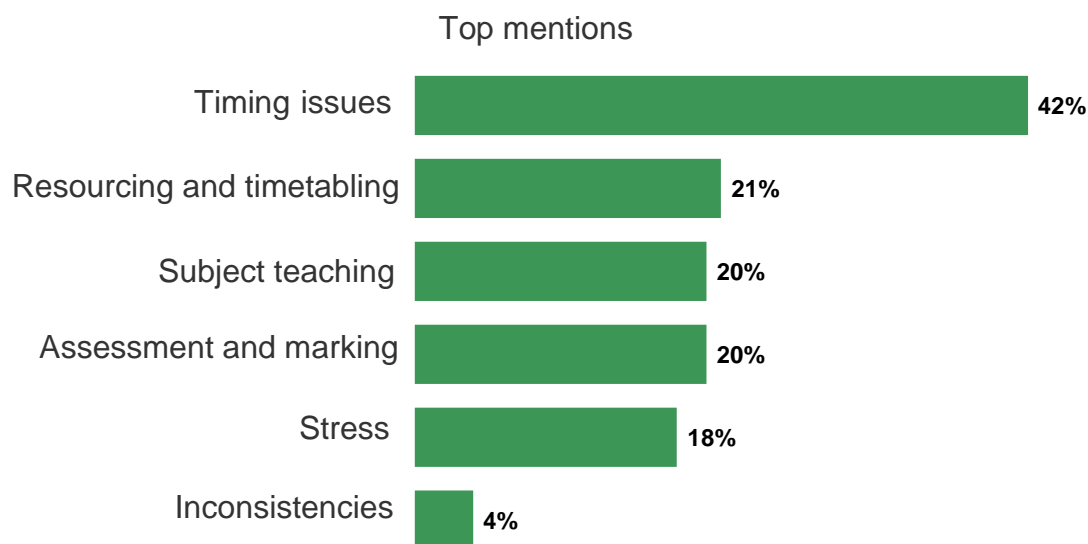
When looking at the results at a top line level, **timing issues** are the most commonly identified type of concern, with an average of 42% of teachers across the nine subjects covered by the research identifying this as a drawback.<sup>10</sup> Within this category, the most commonly mentioned concerns related to the reduction in teaching and learning time (19% say this is a drawback) and about accommodating pupils who are absent (18%).

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<sup>10</sup> For subject level differences please see section on 'Subject-specific drawbacks' later in this chapter.

## Main drawbacks of CA by category

Q19. And what would you say are the drawbacks of controlled assessment, if any, compared with coursework?



Ipsos MORI

Base: All teachers (809), 21 June–12 July 2011

Source: Ipsos MORI 

As previously discussed, timing issues also emerged for many teachers in the qualitative depth interviews, and are seen to have a number of implications for teachers, some of whom feel that, because it takes place in school hours, CA diminishes the amount of teaching time into which they can fit the syllabus.

*They have just created a great pressure on schools and pupils in terms of time management.*

Stakeholder, Depth participant

Accommodating students who are absent or miss assessments (mentioned by an average of 18% across the nine subjects covered), and accommodating pupils who are entitled to extra time (mentioned by an average 6%) were issues that were raised repeatedly in the depth interviews<sup>11</sup>. Participants felt that it is logistically very difficult for teachers to find time for pupils who miss assessments to catch up with other students, even outside lesson times, particularly if they are catching up with assessments across several subjects. The issue of accommodating pupils who are entitled to extra time to complete assessments was seen in the depth interviews to be connected to this, and to pose similar logistical challenges.

<sup>11</sup> In a separate regression analysis carried out on the results, looking at factors associated with reporting difficulty in implementing CA, a lack of clarity around the guidelines for managing pupil absence was one of the factors most strongly associated with finding it difficult to implement CA.

However, whilst AOs recognise that CA has caused timing difficulties, and that there are logistical problems that arise in relation to these, a couple of representatives from the awarding bodies feel that these problems are intrinsic to CA; it has brought work that used to be done in learners' own time into school time and this will inevitably have time implications.

*It will always impact on teaching time and create more logistical administrative difficulties for them than coursework did. That's just a fact of life because what we're saying is that what was previously undertaken on the kitchen table at home in the evening, must be undertaken...in the classroom under supervision... during the school day. So indisputably, that will always have an impact on teaching time and on the administrative demands that coursework didn't.*

AO Representative, Depth Participant

Another commonly mentioned problem is **resourcing and timetabling**, with an average of a fifth (21%) of teachers across the nine subjects covered by the research identifying these areas as a drawback.

The issue of timetabling CA emerged in the stakeholder interviews, and was mentioned by 12% of teachers surveyed; participants say that centres have tried to coordinate departmental timetables to ensure that learners are not doing CA for all their subjects simultaneously. However, such an approach requires centres to plan up to a year in advance, which is felt by some participants to be extremely difficult. Furthermore, it does not accommodate the additional problems caused by absent pupils or disruptions caused by unpredictable events.

*We've tried to create a strategic approach to it whereby the kids aren't doing it all at once. And that's just impossible to do.*

Maintained School, Depth Participant

Related to the problems of timetabling and resourcing CA, is the question of allocating ICT resources for CA. A minority (an average of 8% of teachers across the nine subjects covered by the research) say that CA places a strain on centres' ICT facilities.

According to the depth participants, there are two key reasons why CA causes these strains. First, many non-ICT subject teachers prefer their candidates to use ICT to complete assessments (for example, for History, English or Geography). With limited ICT facilities available in many schools, this creates timetabling pressures and can sometimes eat into the periods when ICT class groups would be using the facilities. A second type of issue was the guidance from AOs around ICT, which require that learners have different login names and passwords for each CA, which can be difficult to organise and add to the pressure on ICT teachers in those centres without a dedicated technician. In addition, there are also complications arising from the need to ensure that learners cannot access WiFi and the need

to ensure sufficient power points when laptops are being used. Several participants also pointed out that, even once all other issues have been addressed, there is still no guarantee that the technology will function, and breakdowns cause further issues in relation to time and the administration of CA.

*You know [the ICT guidance] looks fine on paper, for example, 'Must make sure there is no access to email and internet'. But it is not that simple when you are in a school with wireless networking and everything else. Because how do you actually go round and disable all that on machines? It isn't necessarily that simple to do.*

Stakeholder, Depth Participant

A third area in which CA is seen by some respondents to have drawbacks in relation to coursework relates to how well CA helps with **subject teaching** and the impact that CA has on this; on average a fifth (20%) of teachers across all nine subjects raised these issues. The issues vary greatly from subject to subject; teachers of the three English specifications are particularly likely to feel that CA does not teach editing and proofing skills as well as coursework did; D&T teachers that CA does not stretch the most able pupils well enough, and teachers of French that it reflects students' memory skills rather than being a knowledge test.

A fourth area of criticism related to **assessment and marking**, mentioned by a fifth (20%) of teachers across the nine subjects covered by the research. The most commonly mentioned problems in relation to this are an inability to give feedback to students and a feeling that CA is too much like an exam (cited by 7% and 4% of teachers across all nine subjects respectively).

A fifth drawback mentioned concerns the **stress** teachers perceive CA places on both learners and teachers, mentioned by an average of 18% of teachers across the nine subjects covered by the research. In addition, some respondents report that CA is stressful for learners, with an average of one in ten (11%) teachers across all nine subjects surveyed saying that this is a drawback.

The issue of whether CA is indeed more stressful for students is not clear cut however; when teachers were asked what the benefits of CA are, an average of 6% say that it is *less* stressful for learners. This ambiguity was also found in the qualitative research. Several participants are concerned that learners are being continuously assessed throughout years 10 and 11, which is contributing to higher levels of stress and anxiety: several participants referred to incidents that they had heard of where learners did not turn up to school on the day of their CA because they did not feel adequately prepared.

*Pupils...have become locked into a never-ending stream of exam-style assessment.*

Stakeholder, Letter

*Almost every week there's...a controlled assessment in something. [Students] seem to be far more stressed than when it was just worrying about exams or your coursework deadlines.*

Stakeholder, Depth Participant

However, in keeping with the quantitative findings, a small number of depth participants feel that CA means that learners no longer face having to complete several pieces of coursework for different subjects simultaneously and in their own time, potentially meaning that they are less stressed.

### **Subject-specific drawbacks**

Each subject has different CA requirements, and within a subject, the different specifications from AOs also vary to a greater or lesser extent, which pose different sets of challenges and issues. Consequently, teachers of each subject identify different drawbacks for each subject (see Table 2.5).

- When looking at the identified drawbacks by subject, the most significant issue for many subject teachers is accommodating pupils who are absent or miss assessments: this was the most commonly-mentioned drawback for teachers of all three English specifications,<sup>12</sup> ICT (23%) and Business studies (16%). A significant minority of Geography teachers also cited this problem (23%).
- The most commonly mentioned drawback by French teachers (28%) is a reduction in teaching and learning time. French teachers are also more likely than the average across all nine subjects to say that CA is stressful for their students (18% compared with an average of 11% across teachers of all nine subjects).
- The most commonly cited drawback for both Geography History teachers is a reduction in teaching time with a quarter (24%) of teachers in both subjects saying this. Geography (17%) and History (13%) teachers were also more likely than the average across all nine subjects (8%) to say that ICT resourcing is a problem for them. In addition to these issues, Geography teachers also pointed to general problems in scheduling assessments (18%, compared with an average of 12% across teachers of all nine subjects).
- Along with History and Geography teachers, Business studies teachers were more likely than the average across all nine subjects to say that ICT resourcing is a problem for them (16% compared with 8%)

<sup>12</sup> 37% of English, 27% of English Language, and 25% of English Literature teachers find accommodating absentees a problem, compared with an average of 18% of teachers across each of the nine subjects covered in the survey.

- D&T teachers are more likely than average to say that there are no drawbacks to CA (18% compared with an average of an average of one in ten (10%) across the teachers of the nine subjects covered by the research). This may, in part, be due to the relatively small adjustment required for more technical subjects, as discussed above. Where D&T teachers do identify problems, they are more likely than other subject teachers to be concerned that CA reduces learners' enjoyment of the subject and that it does not stretch the most able learners sufficiently (5% and 12% of D&T teachers say these, compared with averages of 2% and 5% respectively).
- Teachers of the English and English Language specifications are more likely than other subject teachers to raise issues relating to students' scope to spend time on their assessments, and to re-take assessments to improve the standard of their work and grades. For example, English teachers say it is harder for students to get good grades (8% compared with 3% on average), and that students cannot re-take assessments to improve (11% compared with an average of 2%).

**Table 2.5: Drawbacks of Controlled Assessment**

Q19. And what would you say are the drawbacks of controlled assessment, if any, compared with coursework?

	Average	Teachers significantly more likely than average to identify as a drawback	Teachers significantly less likely than average to identify as a drawback
<b>Time constraints</b>	<b>42%</b>		
<i>Less teaching and learning time</i>	19%	French (28%)	
<i>Accommodating pupils who are absent/miss assessments</i>	18%	English (37%)	Design & Technology (9%) French (5%)
<i>Accommodating pupils who need extra time for assessments</i>	6%	Geography (10%)	
<i>Burden on teachers from pupils who need extra time</i>	3%	Business studies (7%) Geography (7%)	
<b>Resourcing and timetabling</b>	<b>21%</b>		
<i>Timetabling/scheduling difficulties</i>	12%	Geography (18%) History (13%)	English (4%)
<i>Strain on ICT resources</i>	8%	Geography (17%) Business studies (16%)	Design & Technology (1%) French (1%) English (-) English Language (-) English Language (-)
<i>Amount of additional administration needed</i>	4%	French (10%)	
<b>Subject teaching</b>	<b>20%</b>		
<i>Doesn't stretch the most able pupils enough</i>	5%	Design & Technology (12%)	
<i>Harder for students/to get good grades/students don't perform as well</i>	3%	English (8%) French (7%)	
<i>Doesn't teach editing/proofing skills</i>	2%	English (11%) English Language (10%)	
<i>Reduces enjoyment of the subject</i>	2%	Design & Technology (5%)	
<i>Students are less well prepared for A-level</i>	1%	French (5%)	
<i>It's a memory test/not testing knowledge</i>	1%	French (10%)	
<i>Does not encourage learning</i>	1%	French (4%)	

**Table 2.5: Drawbacks of Controlled Assessment** (showing all mentions over 5%)

Q19. And what would you say are the drawbacks of controlled assessment, if any, compared with coursework?

	Average	Teachers significantly more likely than average to identify as a drawback	Teachers significantly less likely than average to identify as a drawback
<b>Assessment and marking</b>	<b>20%</b>		
<i>Too much like an exam</i>	4%	Design & Technology (-)	
<i>Does not assess important skills</i>	3%	French (11%)	
<b>Stress</b>	<b>18%</b>		
<i>More stressful for students</i>	11%	French (18%)	Geography (5%)
<i>More stressful for teachers</i>	7%	ICT (14%)	
<i>Not fair on students who want to spend more time on CA</i>	3%	English Language (10%)	
<i>Students are continuously assessed</i>	2%	French (5%)	
<b>Inconsistencies</b>	<b>4%</b>		
<i>Inconsistencies across subjects</i>	1%	English (6%)	
<b>Other</b>			
<i>Poor understanding/clarity regarding expectations/requirements of students/staff</i>	4%	Business studies (7%)	
<i>Can't re-take the same assessment/no room for improvement</i>	2%	English (11%) English Language (7%)	
<i>Tasks are always changing</i>	2%	History (6%)	
<i>Students are unable to work outside controlled environment/from home</i>	2%	Design & Technology (5%)	
<i>Hinders creativity of students</i>	2%	Design & Technology (5%)	
<i>Control management issues/keeping control/on top of things</i>	2%	Geography 4%	
<i>Limits use/development of skills/knowledge</i>	1%	English Literature (6%)	
<i>Lack of resources/facilities</i>	1%	History (5%)	
<i>Increasing cost e.g. resources, facilities, staff</i>	1%	English Language (3%)	
<i>Boring/less interesting</i>	1%	Geography (2%)	
<i>Students are not independent enough in their work</i>	1%	History (3%)	
<i>Work count hinders students</i>	1%	English Language (3%)	
<i>Lack of training for teachers</i>	1%	Geography (3%)	
<i>Causes difficulties with external businesses/industry</i>	*	Business Studies (3%)	
<i>Less structure than coursework</i>	*	History (2%)	

Source: Ipsos MORI

## 2. Guidance and information

*Teachers were asked about the sources of guidance and information they had used about Controlled Assessment, and how useful and clear the guidance had been. They were also asked for suggestions about how the guidance could be improved. In this section we present the findings for each subject, as well as broken down by AO.*

*Teachers of each subject covered by the research were asked to give their views on various aspects of the guidance and information they have received about controlled assessment.*

*Virtually all teachers have received guidance about CA (99%), and most have received information from multiple sources. INSET days and training are the most commonly used sources, but AO websites and leaflets are also used frequently. The sources of information used are similar for teachers of different subjects, and irrespective of AO.*

*Teachers are positive about the guidance provided by AOs: the great majority consider it to be clear, helpful and presented in a useful format. Teachers are slightly less positive about the level of detail in the guidance, although views are still broadly positive: 28% of teachers across the nine subjects surveyed feel there should be more detail.*

*Teachers are consistently less positive about the guidance produced by OCR than average, while AQA and WJEC ratings tend to be higher than average.*

*English teachers tend to be more positive than teachers of other subjects about various aspects of the guidance, while French and ICT teachers tend to rate their guidance less positively than other subject teachers.*

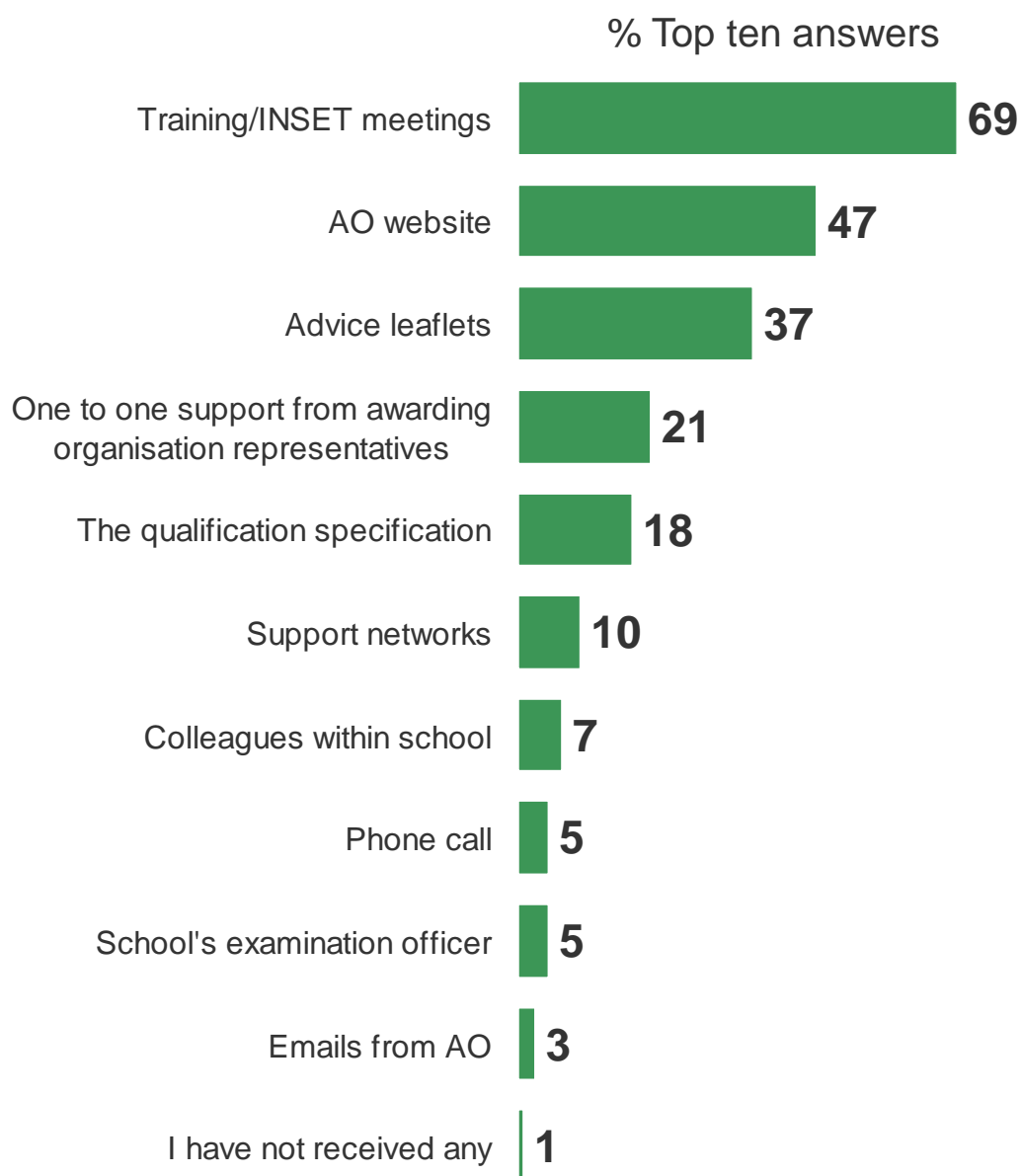
### Sources of guidance and support

Teachers receive guidance from a number of different sources. The most common source of guidance or support in relation to CA has been via training or INSET<sup>13</sup> meetings delivered by the AOs. An average seven in ten (69%) teachers across the nine subjects surveyed have received information through these means. Just under half (an average of 47%) have consulted their AO's website and two in five (an average of 37%) have received information from AO leaflets. Around one in five have been supported through one to one guidance from AO representatives (21%) and a similar proportion refer to the qualification specification (18%). Just one per cent of teachers surveyed have not received any information or support.

<sup>13</sup> INSET days are used in most English, Welsh and Northern Irish schools during term time when school sessions are not required to be run, and the pupils do not attend school. On the inset day staff are required to attend training or complete administration tasks.

## Receiving guidance and support

Q6. Firstly, from where have you received guidance and support from [AO] for [SUBJECT] controlled assessment?



Base: All teachers(2,117), 21 June – 12 July 2011

Source: Ipsos MORI

Ipsos MORI



These findings also reflect views given in the qualitative interviews; several of the stakeholders interviewed had used the AO website and frequently asked questions pages to find information, as well as the written guidance documents. Teachers in the qualitative interviews reported that, alongside their use of AOs' websites and the written guidance documents, the AOs are also generally very responsive in replying to their queries.

*Everybody is actually quite full of praise for the exam boards.*

Stakeholder, Depth participant

Similarly, in the AO interviews participants described support systems for teachers that encourage the use of the AO websites to resolve queries; AOs have CA 'micro sites', and online FAQs and knowledge banks, amongst other resources.

In general, the sources of information used are similar for all subjects, although there are some statistically significant differences. Teachers of Design & Technology are most likely to have turned to the qualification specification for guidance or support (32%, compared with 18% on average across teachers of the nine subjects surveyed). French teachers are more likely than the average across all other subjects to have attended training/INSET days (79% compared with an average of 69%), and teachers of English, English Literature and History have received relatively high levels of one-to-one support from AO representatives (32%, 31% and 30% respectively, compared with an average of 21%).

The types of support received by teachers following specifications from different AOs are similar, although there are some variations: teachers following OCR specifications are more likely to have received guidance from their AO website (54%, compared to 47% on average), teachers who use AQA are more likely than average to have received leaflets (43% compared to 37%) and teachers who use WJEC are relatively likely to have received training from the AO or from INSET meetings (81% compared to 69% overall).

**Table 2.1 Sources of guidance and support – by AO**

Q6. Firstly, from where have you received guidance and support from [AO] for [SUBJECT] controlled assessment?

Grey shading indicates where figures are statistically significantly higher than the average across all teachers

	<b>Average</b>	<b>AQA</b>	<b>Edexcel</b>	<b>OCR</b>	<b>WJEC</b>	<b>CCEA</b>
Base: all respondents	(809)	(217)	(208)	(190)	(119)	(75)
AO Training/ Inset meeting	69	71	62	70	81	55
AO website	47	48	41	54	52	37
AO advice leaflet/information	37	43	39	33	35	27
AO one-to-one support	21	27	24	10	20	21
Qualification spec	18	21	17	15	19	14

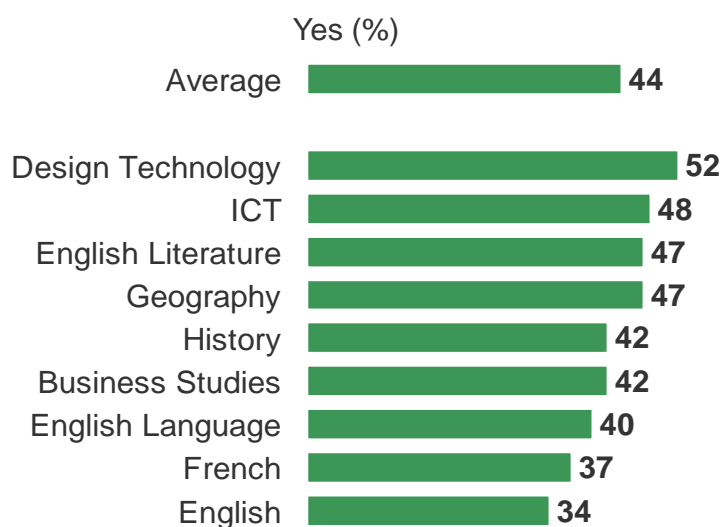
Source: Ipsos MORI

## In-school training

Just under half (44%) of teachers surveyed say they have received an internally-organised school training or a briefing about CA and this ranges from a third (34%) of English teachers to over half (52%) of Design & Technology teachers. It is important to note, however, that there are no statistical differences between these findings by subject. Teachers who have received in-school training are slightly more likely than those who have not to say that their centre's approach to CA is 'good enough' at the moment (79% compared with 71%).

## Training / briefings received on CA

Q15. Have you received any training or specific briefing about CA within your school, or not?



Ipsos MORI

Base: All teachers (809), 21 June – 12 July 2011

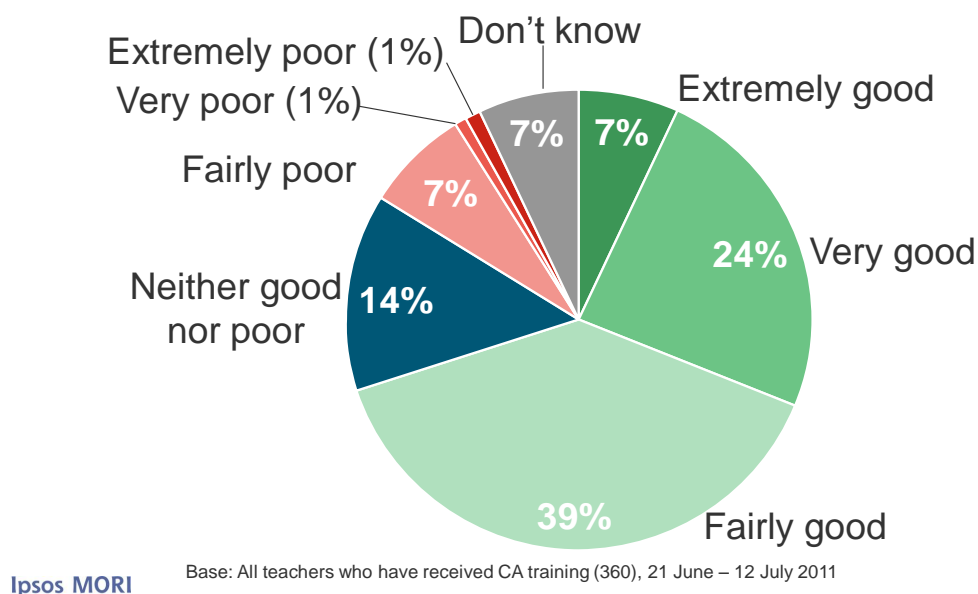
Source: Ipsos MORI 

Centres using CCEA are, however, more likely than those using other AOs, to have received training or a briefing on CA (62%, compared to 43% for AQA and Edexcel, and 41% for OCR and WJEC). Maintained selective schools are also more likely to have received this form of support than non-selective centres (57% and 43% respectively).

Where teachers have received internal training, they tend to rate it well. Seven in ten (70%) say it was fairly, very or extremely good, although the largest proportion of these thought it was fairly good (39%). Just one in eleven (9%) say it was poor.

## Rating of CA training

How would you rate the training about controlled assessment that you received? Would you say it was ...



Design technology teachers are particularly positive; they are more likely to say their training was good than teachers more generally (82% compared with 70% on average).

## Views of AO guidance in summary

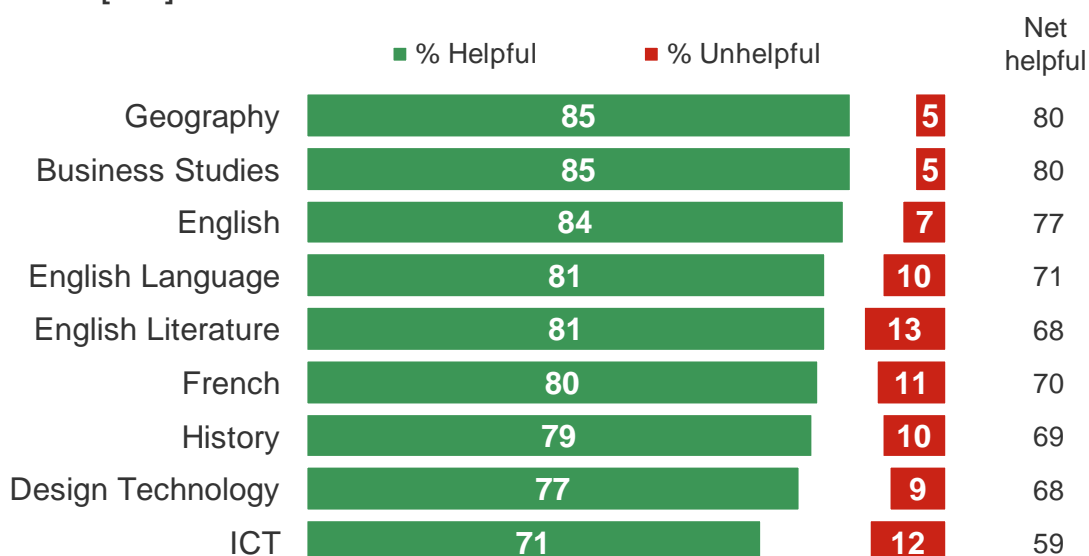
Most teachers said that they find the AO guidance helpful. At least three quarters of teachers in each of the nine subjects surveyed feel the guidance they have received has been very or fairly helpful (80% on average, including 31% who feel it is very helpful), in a good format (78% average, 30% feel it is in a very good format) and clear (76% average, 27% feel it is very clear). Views about the level of detail in the written guidance are also largely positive; an average of two in three (65%) across all nine subjects feel the level of detail is about right, although 28% say it is not detailed enough and 6% that it is too detailed.

## Ratings of AO guidance by subject<sup>14</sup>

Overall ratings of the helpfulness of AO guidance do not differ significantly by subject, as indicated by the following chart.

### Helpfulness of guidance – by subject

Q7a. Overall, how would you rate the guidance you've received from [AO]?

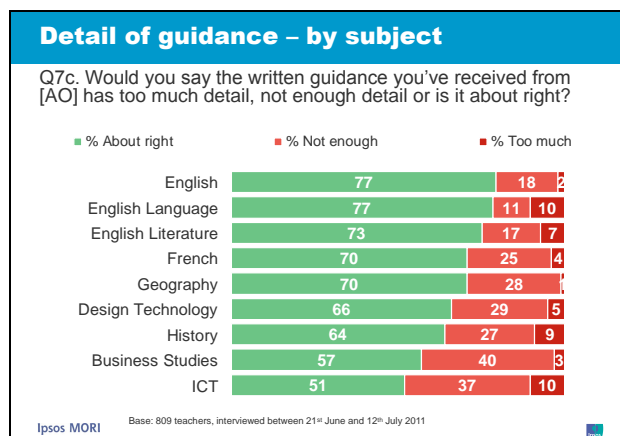
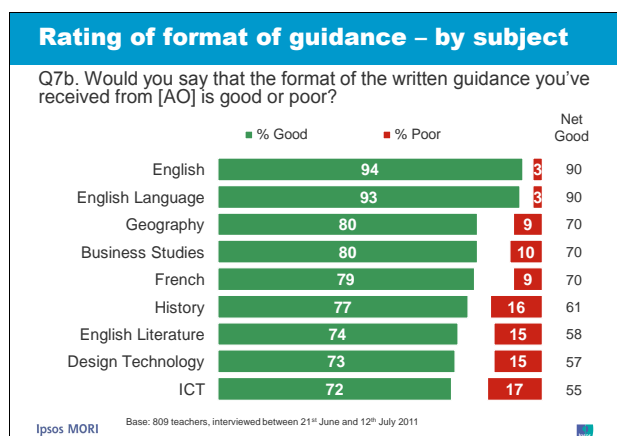


Ipsos MORI

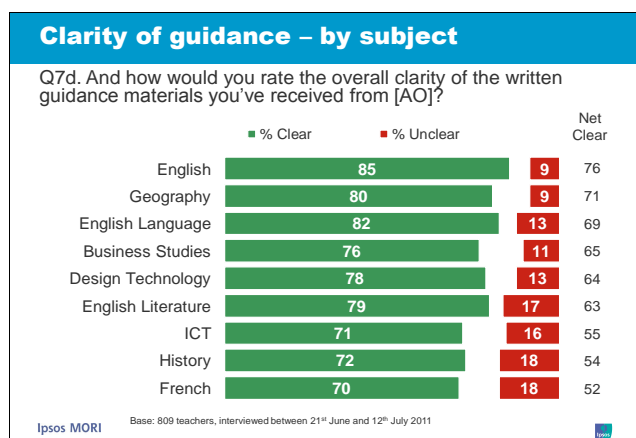
Base: 809 teachers, interviewed between 21<sup>st</sup> June and 12<sup>th</sup> July 2011



<sup>14</sup> Chart shows net figures: 'net helpful' is calculated as % helpful minus % unhelpful; 'net good' is calculated as % good minus % poor.



Views about the format and detail of the guidance, on the other hand are more variable. English teachers are relatively positive about most aspects of the guidance: over nine in ten English and English Language teachers (94% and 93% respectively) rate the format of the guidance as good and their net scores of +90% are 20 percentage points higher than scores for any other subject. English teachers are also more positive than average about the amount of detail in the guidance and the levels of control. It is notable, however, that teachers rate the clarity and format of the English Literature guidance less highly than the other English specifications, and there may be value in exploring why this difference might exist.

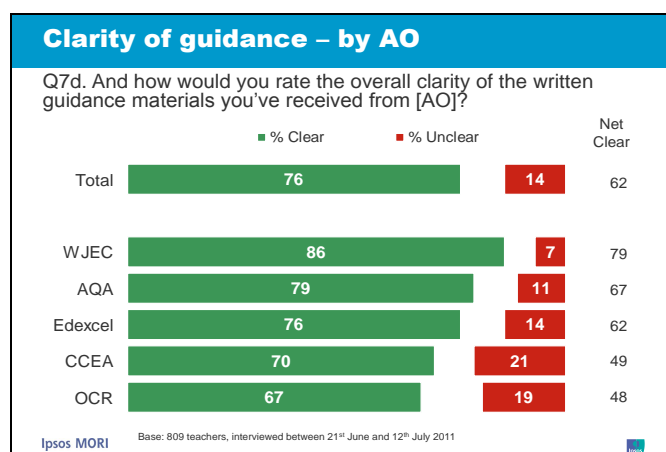
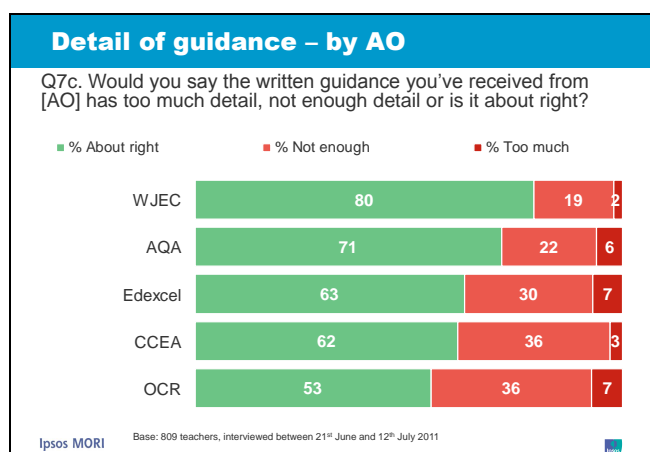
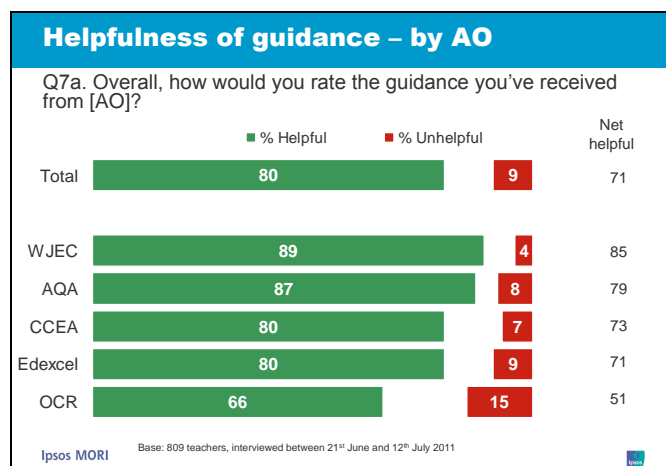
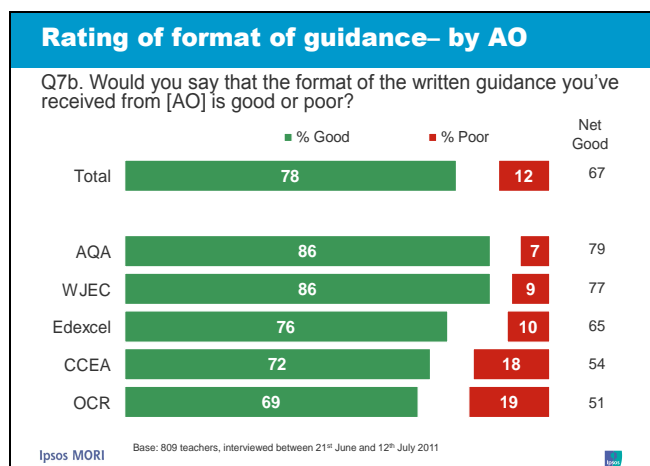


While still positive overall, views of French teachers are least favourable on the clarity of guidance when compared to the average across teachers of the nine subjects surveyed; one in six (18%) think it is not clear and the net score is +52%.

Of the nine subjects included in this research, Business studies and ICT teachers are most likely to feel the guidance is not detailed enough (40% and 37% respectively, compared to an average of 28%). Just over half (51%) of ICT teachers surveyed consider the level of detail in

the guidance to be about right, compared to around three quarters of teachers in English subjects.

## Ratings of AO guidance by AO<sup>15</sup>



Teachers' ratings of the AO guidance follows a clear pattern: the views of teachers following OCR specifications are consistently less positive than the average, while those following WJEC and AQA specifications tend to have more positive views about the guidance.

<sup>15</sup> Chart shows net figures: 'net helpful' is calculated as % helpful minus % unhelpful; 'net good' is calculated as % good minus % poor.

## Other issues raised about the AO guidance

Despite the high level of satisfaction with AO guidance reported by teachers, some issues with the guidance were reported throughout the qualitative interviews. One of these issues related to discrepancies between the stated rules in the AO guidance and the advice given to centres by examiners. In one instance, a participant described being told by an examiner to disregard the instructions in the guidance on the time limits for CA. Such discrepancies may be noted only by the minority but can severely undermine confidence in CA and contribute to a feeling, described by a small number of participants and correspondents, that the AOs do not, in fact, know what they are doing.

*Subject Leaders have found guidance from the Exam Boards to be vague – the blind leading the partially sighted?*

Centre, Letters

In line with this, a small minority of respondents in the quantitative research mentioned inconsistencies in the implementation of CA between centres and AOs as a drawback of CA (four per cent of teachers across the nine subjects covered mentioned inconsistencies). This issue was highlighted to a greater degree in the qualitative interviews, where participants were perhaps in a position to look across teachers or subjects, and the issue seemed to enhance teachers' stress in particular. Stakeholders said that teachers and their students believed that peers in other schools, or doing other subjects, were applying the CA regulations inconsistently. Teachers in particular often felt concerned that they were 'short-changing' their students by applying the written regulations too stringently.

A few qualitative participants from headteacher representative groups felt that the initial guidance for CA was 'fragmented', with too much guidance issued from too many sources. While the qualitative participants felt that the guidance may be pitched well for subject teachers in most respects, the guidance is less appropriate for school leaders: there is too much very detailed information, while headteachers require a summary document. One interviewee said that headteachers are required to verify that correct CA procedures have been followed in their school but that the volume of documentation and variation between differing AO's guidance mean that it is *impossible* for them to be fully familiar with the specific guidance for each AO and specification, and they cannot, therefore, give this assurance with confidence. Several interviewees highlighted the sheer amount of material that there is to digest about CA: as well as guidance from AOs, the regulators and JCQ, each school is required to have its own CA policy.

## Improving the guidance

Comments from the qualitative interviews about the need for greater clarity tended to fall into three main categories. First, participants wanted more guidance on how to deal with absent pupils and those in need of extra time.

Second, both participants in the qualitative interviews and correspondents who wrote to AOs expressed a need for standardised procedures and a greater clarity about how CA should be implemented. Those supervising CA felt that there is a lack of clarity around what exactly is constituted by 'high' control and this raises the concerns already mentioned that students may be advantaged or disadvantaged by the way in which their teacher interprets the regulations.

Third, stakeholders felt there are also subject-specific issues with the guidance, often centring around the marking guidance, which was variously described as vague, complex and overly subjective. For example, a few felt the Design & Technology guidance is unclear about task-setting and marking, and one participant said that the expectations about the standard that can be achieved in the timeframe allotted for CA are unrealistic. Other subject teachers who participated in the qualitative interviews voiced their concerns that they find it difficult to judge the appropriate standards for CA in their subject.

Most AO representatives feel that their guidance is as clear as they are able to make it (although the fact that there is always room for any text to be interpreted was also recognised in one interview, albeit in reference to malpractice).

*I think we hope it's as easy [to implement the guidance] as we could make it within the constraints of controlled assessment.*

In keeping with this feeling, the issue of task marking in relation to the guidance did not emerge as a specific issue in the AO interviews, with several participants saying that this aspect of CA is not very different from coursework. However, one AO representative did remark that teachers want exemplar materials but felt that these are not really available because CA is new. This representative did say they acknowledged, however, that, over time, more will become available and this will help resolve any issues with task marking.

### 3. Subject requirements

*This section examines teachers' views about the clarity of the Controlled Assessment requirements for their subjects, and whether they consider current levels of control to be appropriate. We then examine the findings for individual subjects and by AO separately, to understand how far issues relate to all subjects, or to particular specifications.*

*Broadly speaking, CA requirements are seen as clear for most issues, and the levels of control were considered 'about right' by the majority of teachers. How to manage candidate absence is a notable exception; the requirements are seen as both unclear, and having too low a level of control in this respect. As a consequence, the stakeholders interviewed for the qualitative research perceived there to be variation between schools in terms of how they manage absence which they feel undermines the reliability of CA. Clarifying the guidance around accommodating pupils who have been absent, and those entitled to extra time, will be important.*

*There is perhaps also a need for greater clarity on what is permitted between sessions (both in terms of extra teaching time and in developing new notes or resources), and the amount of feedback allowed. Again, the levels of control were considered too low on these issues by a significant minority. The qualitative work suggests that these may go beyond clarifying the guidance, to a broader consideration of pedagogical principles such as how far it is appropriate not to provide feedback on students' tasks or to miss out on what are perceived as valuable learning opportunities by asking students to refine and polish their work.*

*Perceptions are broadly consistent across the range of subjects surveyed. However, D&T and ICT teachers are generally more likely to say their specification's CA requirements are unclear on some basic issues around the number and nature of tasks that should be taken. In addition, French teachers identify a lack of clarity about what activities and teaching are permitted between CA sessions.*

*In general, teachers working on WJEC specifications are the most likely to think the requirements are clear, while Edexcel and OCR users are the least likely to say the requirements are clear.*

#### Clarity of Controlled Assessment requirements

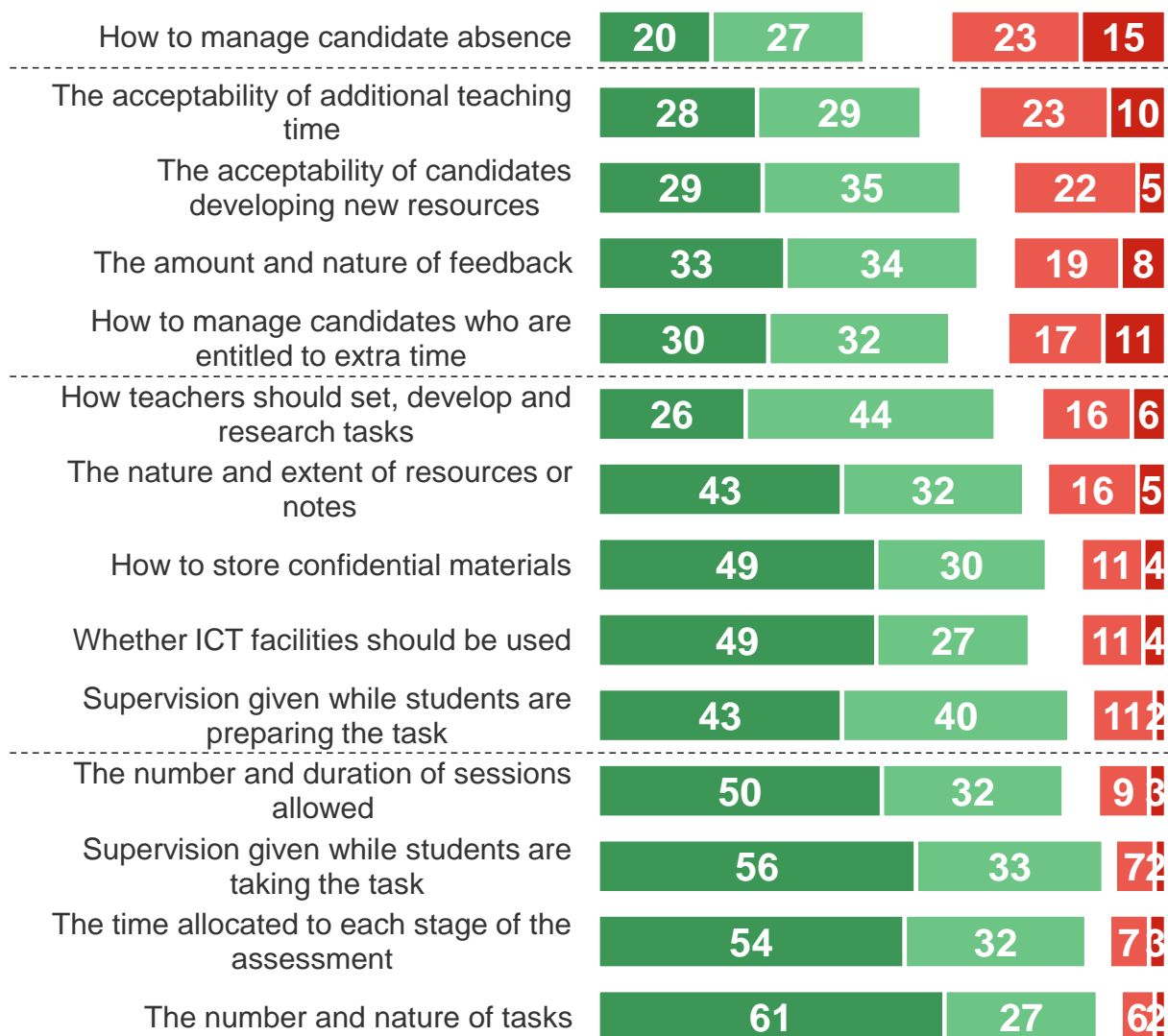
The CA requirements for individual subjects cover a range of different issues through the stages of setting, taking and marking. Subject teachers were asked to rate how clear or unclear the requirements are for a selection of issues covered by the guidance.

The following chart shows perceptions of how clear or unclear the guidance is for individual subject teachers' specifications. For each issue, the figures shown are an average across teachers of all nine subjects surveyed. Generally speaking, the guidance is perceived as clear for the majority of issues covered in the survey.

## Perceived clarity of CA requirements

Q8. Thinking now about the controlled assessment requirements outlined in the specification, I'd like you to rate their clarity about a number of issues.

■ % Very clear   ■ % Fairly clear   ■ % Fairly unclear   ■ % Very unclear  
*"Neither clear nor unclear" and "Not applicable" shown as white area in centre*



Base: All teachers (809), 21 June – 12 July 2011

Source: Ipsos MORI

Ipsos MORI



While the majority of teachers feel that the guidance is clear on the issues asked about, there are some areas where the guidance is perceived as less clear:

- Only around half say the guidance is clear when it comes to pupil absence<sup>16</sup>. This issue was consistently raised in the qualitative stakeholder work, and it seems clear that more guidance around how centres should manage absence would be of value. A related issue is the management of candidates who require extra time, the guidance for which is also considered less clear than many other areas. However, whilst the findings of the interviews with AOs suggest that they are aware of the difficulties around absent students, they are less aware of potential issues around the accommodation of those students who are entitled to extra time; making sure that this is recognised as an issue may enable AOs to improve the clarity of this aspect of their guidance.

*If it's appropriate that candidates can have extra time, it's the same principle as it would be for an external exam, i.e. they can have up to 25% of the time.*

AO Representative, Depth Interview

- Teachers seem less clear about issues around the feedback they can give to students, and what is permitted between sessions of CA, than they are about some of the more basic elements of CA design such as the length of tasks, time allocations and so on<sup>17</sup>. The stakeholder interviews revealed some uncertainty on the part of teachers about what feedback they were able to provide to students on their completed assessments; in several cases, teachers felt that the limited feedback they were able to give was detrimental to their relationship with students, and in some cases missed an important pedagogical point, because it reduced the scope for students to learn from reviewing their own work. Further consideration around the guidance for these areas may be of value.
- For most issues around the setting of tasks, use of ICT facilities, supervision of students, and the number and timing of tasks, the majority of teachers consider the guidance to be clear; in many cases the balance of opinion is that guidance is 'very' rather than 'fairly' clear.

<sup>16</sup> As noted earlier, regression analysis shows that finding the guidance about managing candidate absence to be unclear is associated with a four times greater probability of having difficulty in implementing CA (when compared with those who did not feel these particular guidelines applied to them).

<sup>17</sup> Regression analysis confirms the importance of these issues; finding the guidance unclear about the number and length of CA sessions allowed, and the acceptability of teaching in between sessions, was very strongly associated with finding it difficult to implement CA.

## Perceived clarity of the guidance by subject

CA tasks vary by subject, so it is natural to expect there may be some variations in perceptions between teachers of different subjects. The following table shows the proportion of teachers for each subject who say the CA requirements are unclear.

**Table 3.1: Perceived clarity of CA requirements, showing proportion considering guidance to be *unclear* on specific issues – by subject**

Q8. Thinking now about the controlled assessment requirements outlined in the specification, I'd like you to rate their clarity about a number of issues. For each issue I read out, please say whether you think the requirements are clear or unclear.

Dark shaded cells indicate that a particular subject's teachers are significantly more likely than the average across all teachers interviewed to consider the guidance to be unclear. Rows with no shaded cells indicate no statistically significant differences for that issue.

**% saying unclear (very unclear or fairly unclear)**

	Aver -age (809) %	Eng. (70) %	Eng. Lang (62) %	Eng. Lit. (75) %	D&T (108) %	French (107) %	Geog- raphy (107) %	Hist -ory (106) %	ICT (102) %	Bus. Stud. (105) %
<i>Base: All respondents</i>										
How to manage candidate <b>absence</b>	39	35	30	34	42	34	39	39	46	39
The acceptability of <b>additional teaching</b> time between sessions	33	37	32	24	33	43	32	28	33	33
How to manage candidates who are entitled to <b>extra time</b>	28	22	25	23	27	30	33	24	35	32
The acceptability of candidates developing <b>new resources or notes</b> between sessions	27	26	26	27	30	35	24	20	35	18
The amount and nature of <b>feedback</b> that teachers may give to candidates	27	28	28	30	30	20	28	24	28	30
How <b>teachers should set, develop and research tasks</b>	22	10	12	18	22	22	18	29	30	21
The nature and extent of <b>resources or notes</b> that candidates can take into and use during sessions	21	26	28	28	23	18	18	13	23	19
Whether <b>ICT facilities</b> should be used	15	14	24	11	20	20	9	18	9	18
How to <b>store confidential materials</b>	15	7	9	12	27	15	11	11	19	13
<b>Supervision</b> given while students are <b>preparing</b> the task *	13	10	11	15	20	9	16	13	13	9
The <b>number and duration of sessions</b> allowed	12	9	8	7	24	8	12	7	17	12
The <b>time allocated to each stage</b> of the assessment (including task preparation and task taking)	10	-	-	8	16	9	6	7	20	10
<b>Supervision</b> given <b>while</b> students are <b>taking</b> the task *	9	3	7	10	18	-	12	7	11	9
The <b>number and nature of tasks</b> that candidates must complete (including word counts, where applicable)	8	6	5	2	12	8	8	6	11	12
<i>* these two statements based on smaller number of respondents as shown</i>	(763)	(66)	(62)	(71)	(98)	(101)	(102)	(101)	(96)	(99)

Source: Ipsos MORI

On the whole, teachers' views are similar across subjects, but there are notable differences for three subjects:

**French:** there is a reported lack of clarity about what should happen between sessions, both in terms of additional teaching time and candidates developing new resources or notes.

These two issues are likely to be seen as unclear in the requirements across all subjects, and in particular for French.

**D&T:** Design & Technology teachers are more likely than average to say the requirements are unclear for storage of materials, supervision while preparing the task, number and nature of sessions, supervision while taking the tasks, and the time allocated to each stage of the assessment. These are the issues where teachers in general consider the guidance to be clear, but there appears to be a particular issue for teachers of D&T. Some qualitative participants felt the Design & Technology guidance were unclear about task-setting and marking, and one participant said that the expectations about the standard that can be achieved in the timeframe allotted for CA are unrealistic.

**ICT:** ICT teachers are more likely than average to say the requirements are unclear when it comes to the time allocated for each stage of the assessment, and how teachers should set, develop and research tasks.

### **Perceived clarity of the guidance by AO**

Looking at the same data by AO reveals a few consistent patterns: teachers working with OCR specifications are more likely to consider the guidance unclear. Those working with WJEC specifications are most likely to think the requirements are clear. These findings, particularly the lower ratings for OCR, link with findings elsewhere in the research that suggest OCR's guidance is less highly rated than the guidance produced by other boards. This has possible implications for how easily centres have found it to implement CA in practice.

**Table 3.2: Perceived clarity of CA requirements, showing proportion considering guidance to be *unclear* on specific issues – by AO**

Q8. Thinking now about the controlled assessment requirements outlined in the specification, I'd like you to rate their clarity about a number of issues. For each issue I read out, please say whether you think the requirements are clear or unclear.

Darker shaded cells indicate AOs where guidance was significantly more likely to be rated unclear than AOs with lighter shaded cells on the same row. Rows with no shaded cells indicate there are no statistically significant differences between AOs.

**% saying unclear (fairly unclear or very unclear)**

	AQA	Edexcel	OCR	WJEC	CCEA
<i>Base: All respondents</i>	(217) %	(208) %	(190) %	(119) %	(75) %
How to manage candidate <b>absence</b>	40	37	38	35	47
The acceptability of <b>additional teaching</b> time between sessions	33	37	36	21	33
How to manage candidates who are entitled to <b>extra time</b>	28	30	31	22	28
The acceptability of candidates developing <b>new resources or notes</b> between sessions	27	25	37	16	26
The amount and nature of <b>feedback</b> that teachers may give to candidates	25	30	28	24	29
How <b>teachers should set, develop and research tasks</b>	19	19	28	21	23
The nature and extent of <b>resources or notes</b> that candidates can take into and use during sessions	20	21	27	12	23
Whether <b>ICT facilities</b> should be used	15	18	12	17	17
How to <b>store confidential materials</b>	14	16	16	10	20
<b>Supervision</b> given while students are <b>preparing</b> the task *	14	12	16	9	13
The <b>number and duration of sessions</b> allowed	10	13	13	13	9
The <b>time allocated to each stage</b> of the assessment (including task preparation and task taking)	10	7	15	6	9
<b>Supervision</b> given <b>while</b> students are <b>taking</b> the task *	8	9	10	6	12
The <b>number and nature of tasks</b> that candidates must complete (including word counts, where applicable)	7	7	12	5	13

Source: Ipsos MORI

## Levels of control

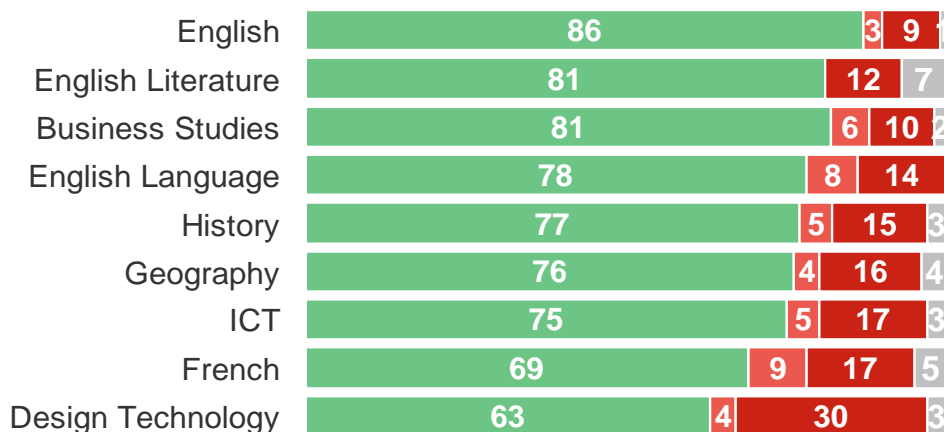
The CA regulations specify different levels of control for different stages of CA: task setting, task taking and task marking. AOs then develop qualification specifications in line with these regulations. A key aim for the quantitative stage was to examine whether on balance teachers of the nine subjects view the current levels of control as appropriate, based on their experiences with the specifications they follow. Teachers were asked generally to rate the

levels of control for their specifications (see chart below); they were then prompted about the suitability of the levels of control for specific aspects of assessments.

## Level of control – by subject

Q7e. And how would you rate the different levels of control in the controlled assessment for [SUBJECT] overall?

■ % About right    ■ % Too low    ■ % Too high    ■ % No opinion



Ipsos MORI

Base: 809 teachers, interviewed between 21<sup>st</sup> June and 12<sup>th</sup> July 2011



The quantitative findings reveal that views vary on the appropriateness of the level of control for different tasks. This is shown in broad terms in the following table, which is based on the average for teachers of all nine subjects surveyed. The aspects in the table are ranked, so that those where teachers generally feel the levels of control are not right at the moment appear at the top, and those where there is a broad consensus that the levels of control are appropriate appear towards the bottom of the table.

**Table 3.3: Current level of control**

Q9. Still thinking about the controlled assessment requirements outlined in the [AO] [SUBJECT] specification, how would you rate the level of control around ...?

<i>% Net right = % About right – (% Too high + % Too low)</i>	About right %	Too high %	Too low %	N/A %	Net about right %
<i>Base: All respondents (809)</i>					
<i>Statements marked *, Base: All asked (763)</i>					
The amount and nature of <b>feedback</b> that teachers can give to candidates	58	14	24	3	20
Candidate <b>absence</b>	57	6	17	20	34
Having <b>additional teaching</b> time between sessions	64	8	15	14	41
The time <b>allocated to each stage</b> of the assessment (including task preparation and task taking)	72	12	13	3	47
Candidates <b>developing new resources</b> or notes between sessions	70	8	13	9	49
The <b>nature and extent of resources</b> or notes that candidates can take into and use during sessions	73	11	11	4	51
The <b>number and duration of sessions</b> allowed	75	8	14	3	53
Using <b>ICT facilities</b>	71	8	7	13	56
Candidates who are entitled to <b>extra time</b>	72	4	11	13	57
The <b>number and nature of tasks</b> that candidates must complete (including word counts, where applicable)	79	12	6	3	61
<b>Setting, developing and researching</b> tasks	82	6	9	3	67
<b>Supervision</b> given <b>while</b> students are <b>preparing</b> the task*	84	8	8	1	68
<b>Storing confidential</b> materials	84	5	7	4	72
<b>Supervision</b> given <b>while</b> students are <b>taking</b> the task*	85	7	6	2	72

Source: Ipsos MORI

The majority of teachers surveyed say they think the level of control is 'about right' for each aspect they were asked about. However, in some areas this view is less widespread: 58% say the level of control is about right for the amount and nature of feedback teachers can give, 57% feel it is right for managing candidate absence and 64% around having additional teaching time between sessions.

It is striking that several of the aspects for which the majority of teachers consider the levels of control as being too low are also those that teachers perceived to be unclear in the guidance. Specifically, these include what is permitted between sessions, management of candidate absence and what feedback is permitted. This suggests that it may be worthwhile reviewing the requirements for these three aspects of CA.

It is also noticeable that teachers surveyed who think the guidance is clear on a particular aspect tend to think the level of control is about right for that aspect. Conversely, those who think the requirements are unclear generally do not think the current level of control is right.

The following table highlights this for the three aspects where there is the least consensus that levels of control are currently right.

**Table 3.4: Level of control and clarity of guidance**

Q9. Still thinking about the controlled assessment requirements outlined in the [AO] [SUBJECT] specification, how would you rate the level of control around ...?

	<p>Q8. Thinking now about the controlled assessment requirements outlined in the specification, I'd like you to rate their clarity about a number of issues.</p> <p>For each issue I read out, please say whether you think the requirements are clear or unclear.</p>				
	Very clear %	Fairly clear %	Neither clear nor unclear %	Fairly unclear %	Very unclear %
<i>Base: All respondents (809)</i>					
<b>The amount and nature of <b>feedback</b> that teachers can give to candidates</b>					
	(263)	(269)	(58)	(150)	(68)
About right	73	69	35	37	25
<b>Candidate <b>absence</b></b>					
	(164)	(219)	(78)	(184)	(124)
About right	90	79	54	35	21
<b>Having <b>additional teaching</b> time between sessions</b>					
	(223)	(236)	(60)	(186)	(81)
About right	86	73	58	44	33

*Source: Ipsos MORI*

In the qualitative work teachers mentioned that it was unclear how they should manage candidate absence; as such, they felt schools were taking different approaches, and that greater clarity and consistency was needed. Likewise, stakeholders raised problems around giving students feedback on their work; teachers felt that their inability to give feedback not only went against their pedagogical instincts, but also meant that their students were not getting the opportunity to develop their skills, such as editing their work and the ability to produce a final 'polished' document. Some participants felt that these skills are needed to succeed at A-level and degree level, as well as in the workplace, and this was therefore a significant loss.

There is only one issue where the average view is that the current level of control is too high rather than too low: the number and nature of tasks that candidates must complete. As

discussed in the recommendations section of this report, when asked how they could overcome the problems they had experienced with CA, teachers on balance tend to recommend that the number of tasks, and/or the amount of time dedicated to CA tasks, should be reduced.

### **Levels of control by subject**

Perceptions about the appropriateness of the current level of control do vary by subject, as the following table illustrates.

Table 3.5: Current level of control too high– by subject

Q9. Still thinking about the controlled assessment requirements outlined in the [AO] [SUBJECT] specification, how would you rate the level of control around ...?

Shaded cells indicate that the proportion saying the level of control is too high for that issue for that particular subject is significantly larger than the average across all nine subjects surveyed.

**% saying 'too high'**

	Aver- age (809) %	Eng. (70) %	Eng. Lang (62) %	Eng. Lit. (75) %	D&T (108) %	French (107) %	Geog- raphy (107) %	Hist- ory (106) %	ICT (102) %	Bus. Stud. (105) %
<i>Base: All respondents</i>										
The amount and nature of <b>feedback</b> that teachers can give to candidates	14	14	12	27	16	13	16	12	14	7
The time <b>allocated to each stage</b> of the assessment (including task preparation and task taking)	12	11	11	13	16	19	11	12	14	3
The <b>number and nature of tasks</b> that candidates must complete (including word counts, where applicable)	12	15	23	21	8	10	7	13	18	4
The <b>nature and extent of resources or notes</b> that candidates can take into and use during sessions	11	16	19	15	12	10	10	12	9	6
The <b>number and duration of sessions</b> allowed	8	2	5	9	8	14	13	7	9	2
Having <b>additional teaching time</b> between sessions	8	8	5	13	11	5	7	8	7	4
Candidates developing <b>new resources or notes</b> between sessions	8	5	6	11	10	8	12	10	8	4
<b>Supervision</b> given <b>while</b> students are <b>preparing</b> the task*	8	2	4	7	9	8	10	12	6	7
Using <b>ICT facilities</b>	8	5	4	11	9	6	18	8	4	4
<b>Supervision</b> given <b>while</b> students are <b>taking</b> the task*	7	5	5	10	9	2	14	6	9	2
<b>Setting, developing and researching</b> tasks	6	4	7	10	5	5	4	13	6	4
Candidate <b>absence</b>	6	5	3	6	6	7	9	5	4	6
<b>Storing confidential</b> materials	5	6	2	2	5	6	10	6	4	2
Candidates who are entitled to <b>extra time</b>	4	2	2	3	3	3	9	2	6	4
<i>* these two statements based on smaller number of respondents as shown</i>	(763)	(66)	(62)	(71)	(98)	(101)	(102)	(101)	(96)	(99)

Source: Ipsos MORI

With regard to the following subjects, teachers are more likely than average to say:

- **English Language:** control is too high for the number and nature of tasks, and for the nature and extent of resources or notes that can be used during sessions.
- **English Literature:** control is too high for the amount and nature of feedback teachers can give to candidates, and for the number and nature of tasks that candidates must complete.
- **French:** control is too high for time allocated to each stage, and for the number and duration of sessions allowed.
- **Geography:** control is too high for whether ICT facilities can be used, and for supervision given while candidates are taking the task.

Perceptions also vary by subject on whether the current levels of control are too low, as the following table illustrates.

**Table 3.6: Current level of control too low – by subject**

Q9. Still thinking about the controlled assessment requirements outlined in the [AO] [SUBJECT] specification, how would you rate the level of control around ...?

Shaded cells indicate that the proportion saying the level of control is too low for that issue for that particular AO is significantly larger than the average across all nine subjects surveyed.

**% saying 'too low'**

	Aver- age (809) %	Eng. (70) %	Eng. Lang (62) %	Eng. Lit. (75) %	D&T (108) %	Frenc h (107) %	Geog- raphy (107) %	Hist- ory (106) %	ICT (102) %	Bus. Stud. (105) %
<i>Base: All respondents</i>										
The amount and nature of <b>feedback</b> that teachers can give to candidates	24	23	19	14	25	34	26	16	27	23
Candidate <b>absence</b>	17	18	14	19	18	14	19	14	20	15
Having <b>additional teaching time</b> between sessions	15	20	24	8	17	16	15	7	16	18
The <b>number and duration of sessions</b> allowed	14	8	8	3	26	8	14	12	21	17
The time <b>allocated to each stage</b> of the assessment (including task preparation and task taking)	13	4	7	5	18	12	11	11	22	14
Candidates <b>developing new resources or notes</b> between sessions	13	18	17	10	13	15	14	5	16	13
The <b>nature and extent of resources or notes</b> that candidates can take into and use during sessions	11	26	24	8	7	13	10	6	10	12
Candidates who are entitled to <b>extra time</b>	11	12	12	8	14	10	12	8	15	9
<b>Setting, developing and researching</b> tasks	9	7	5	6	12	11	8	8	8	11
<b>Supervision</b> given <b>while</b> students are <b>preparing</b> for the task	8	5	3	8	8	10	7	5	8	10
<b>Using ICT facilities</b>	7	3	5	5	8	4	9	10	6	10
<b>Storing confidential</b> materials	7	5	4	6	15	7	7	8	3	6
The <b>number and nature of tasks</b> that candidates must complete (including word counts, where applicable)	6	5	3	2	5	6	9	4	7	9
<b>Supervision</b> given <b>while</b> students are <b>taking</b> the task	6	5	4	6	8	4	5	5	8	8
<i>* these two statements based on smaller number of respondents as shown</i>	(763)	(66)	(62)	(71)	(98)	(101)	(102)	(101)	(96)	(99)

Source: Ipsos MORI

With regard to the following subjects, teachers are more likely than average to say:

- In **English**: level of control is too low for additional teaching time between sessions
- In both **English and English Language**: control is too low for the nature and extent of resources candidates can take into and use during sessions.
- **Design & Technology**: control is too low for the number and nature of sessions allowed<sup>18</sup>, and for storing confidential materials<sup>19</sup>
- **French**: control around the amount and nature of feedback that teachers can give to candidates is too low<sup>20</sup>. French teachers may feel that the levels of control around giving feedback are too low in the sense that there is not enough clarity about what feedback and mentoring is allowed, and therefore there is insufficient consistency across centres in this respect.
- **ICT**: control is too low around the number and duration of sessions allowed<sup>21</sup>, and for the time allocated to each stage of the assessment<sup>22</sup>.

## Levels of control by AO

As discussed earlier, it appears that to a small extent the perceived clarity of the requirements varies between centres using different AOs. However, there is little variation in perceptions about the appropriateness of levels of control. When it comes to levels of control, perceptions vary more between different subjects than between different AOs.

<sup>18</sup> Perceptions within D&T varied depending on the AO used, though small base sizes mean some caution is needed when interpreting the results. Among D&T, 31% of AQA users and 36% of WJEC users thought the level of control too low, as against the average of 14% for all the subjects and AOs surveyed.

<sup>19</sup> Again this varies for different AOs, though small base sizes mean some caution is needed when interpreting the results. Among D&T, 30% of OCR users thought the level of control too low, as against the average of 7% for all the subjects and AOs surveyed.

<sup>20</sup> This varies for different AOs, though small base sizes mean some caution is needed when interpreting the results. Among French teachers surveyed, 46% of AQA users thought the level of control too low, as against the average of 24% for all the subjects and AOs surveyed.

<sup>21</sup> This varies for different AOs, though small base sizes mean some caution is needed when interpreting the results. Among ICT teachers surveyed, 30% of AQA users thought the level of control too low, as against the average of 14% for all the subjects and AOs surveyed.

<sup>22</sup> Among ICT teachers surveyed, 38% of AQA users and 27% of OCR users thought the level of control too low, as against the average of 13% for all the subjects and AOs surveyed.

## 4. Centres' implementation of controlled assessment

*This section looks at how easy teachers think their centres have found it to implement Controlled Assessment, and factors that have affected the ease or difficulty of implementation. It then looks at teachers' suggestions for how their centre could improve its approach to Controlled Assessment, and any changes that have already taken place within centres that teachers feel assist in its implementation.*

*In addition to the CA requirements, and the specific requirements of AOs for each subject, a range of factors relating to centres themselves – including their resources, student body, and management practices – will affect how easily CA has been implemented. This chapter explores the impact of centres themselves on the implementation of CA.*

*Teachers were split as to how easy it had been to implement CA in their centre: 45% said it was easy and 41% had found it difficult. French and Geography teachers were most likely to find it difficult, as were those following OCR specifications. Larger centres report more difficulty in implementing CA; stakeholders also highlighted that the logistical challenges of implementing CA were greater in larger schools and those with more limited resources.*

*Teachers report that factors relating to resources, particularly ICT, and timetabling make CA difficult to implement, while school management and policy tend to have helped in implementation. Two in five (39%) teachers on average across the nine subjects surveyed said their centre's approach to CA had changed over the past two years; in general, changes were prompted by a better understanding of CA requirements, but also a need for a better approach to timetabling.*

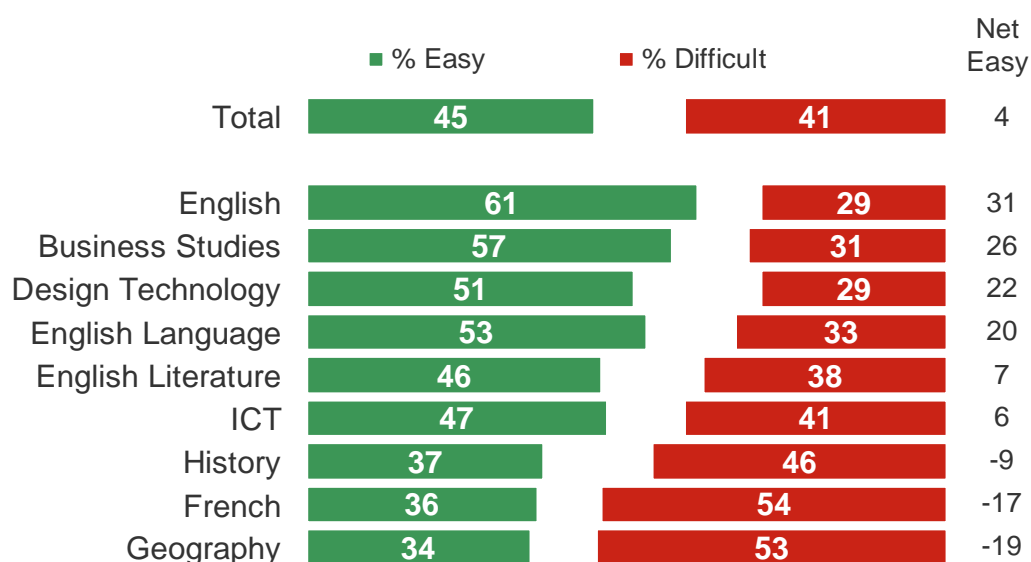
*Where teachers felt their centre's approach still needs to improve, they generally highlighted a need for better co-ordination of CA across subjects, better timetabling, and better management of resources across the school.*

## Centre approaches to CA

Just under half of teachers (45%) across the nine subjects included in this research have found it fairly or very easy to meet the requirements of CA, while two in five (41%) have found it difficult. Teachers of English and Business studies are most likely to feel that meeting the requirements of CA has been fairly or very easy (61% and 57% respectively). In contrast, over half of Geography and French teachers say implementing CA has been *difficult* (53% and 54% respectively), and 46% History teachers also report difficulties<sup>23</sup>.

### Ease of meeting CA requirements

Q10. In general, how easy or difficult has it been for your centre to meet the requirements for controlled assessment in [SUBJECT]?



Ipsos MORI

Base: All teachers(809), 21 June – 12 July 2011

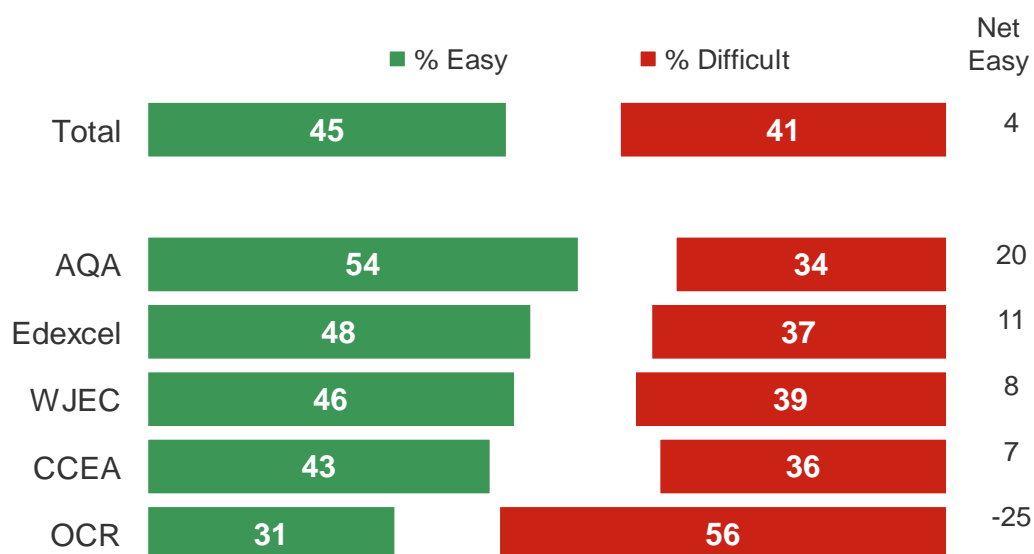


<sup>23</sup> Regression analysis shows that, when other factors are held constant, teaching French and History is associated with higher rates of reported difficulty in implementing CA than teaching other subjects.

Teachers using OCR are more likely than any other AO to consider CA to be difficult to implement (56%); this finding is in line with teachers typically rating the OCR guidance more poorly than the guidance produced by other AOs. Over half (54%) of teachers using AQA, on the other hand, believe it has been fairly or very easy.

## Ease of meeting CA requirements

Q10. In general, how each or difficult has it been for your centre to meet the requirements for controlled assessment in [SUBJECT]?



Ipsos MORI

Base: All teachers (809), 21 June – 12 July 2011

Source: Ipsos MORI

### Factors affecting implementation of CA

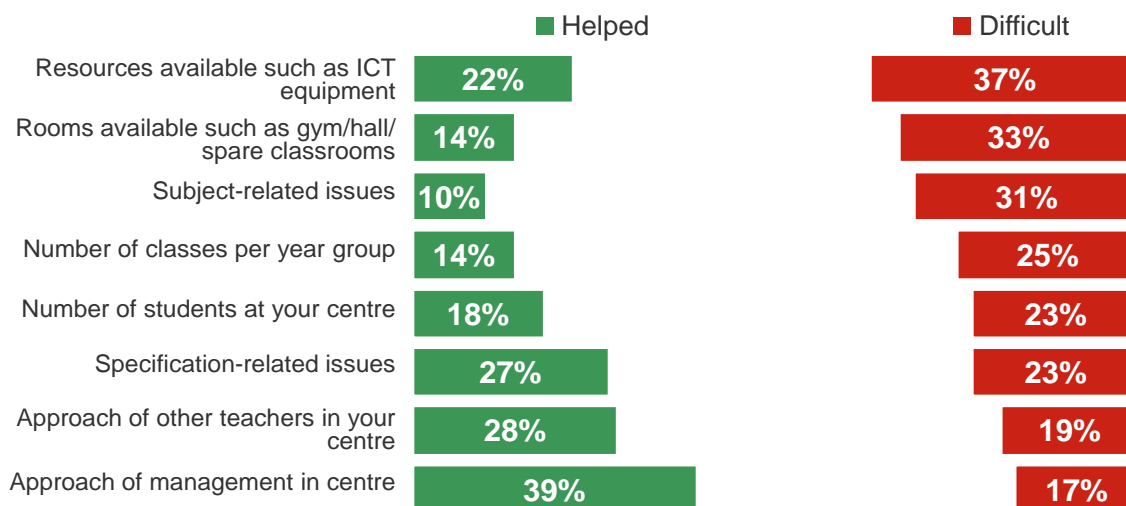
Teachers were asked about a number of practical/logistic, subject-related, and centre-related factors that might have affected the implementation of CA in their centre.

Almost two in five (37%) say the availability of resources such as ICT equipment has made things difficult, and around one in three cite the availability of rooms (33%) as a problem. Subject-related issues are a problem for about one in three teachers on average across the nine subjects surveyed (31%). An average of around one in four say the number of classes per year group or the number of students in the centre have been more of a hindrance than a help (25% and 23% respectively).

The approach taken by the centre towards CA is the factor most likely to be considered a help; 39% say the approach of the management and 28% feel the approach of other teachers has helped.

## Factors affecting implementation of CA

Q11. For each one, can you tell me whether this makes it difficult or whether it helps you to meet the controlled assessment requirements in [SUBJECT]?



Ipsos MORI

Base: All teachers (809), 21 June – 12 July 2011

Source: Ipsos MORI

### Factors affecting implementation of CA – variations by centre size and type

Independent schools are more likely than all other school types to say that implementing CA requirements has been easy (57%, a net easy score of +23<sup>24</sup>). Conversely, maintained selective centres are more likely to say it has been difficult (57%, a net easy score of -28). Looking at the specific factors that may affect the implementation of CA is revealing: 25% of centres in the maintained sector mentioned said the number of students had made CA more difficult, compared with only 15% of independent schools. However, differences by centre type do not appear to be exclusively related to the absolute size of centres. The group most likely to say number of students makes it difficult to meet requirements is maintained selective centres: 36% of teachers surveyed in maintained selectives say this, compared with 24% of maintained non-selective schools, which on average tend to be larger.

These findings mirror the findings from a separate regression analysis of the factors associated with teachers finding it difficult to implement CA. Reporting that the number of pupils in their school to be a problem, and reporting that the resources available in school –

<sup>24</sup> Net easy calculated as % easy minus % difficult.

such as rooms and technical equipment such as ICT facilities – were a problem were both associated with teachers finding it more difficult in general to implement CA.

As suggested by some participants in the qualitative research, teachers working in larger centres generally find it more challenging to implement CA; those in centres with more than 1,000 pupils are more likely to find it difficult to meet CA requirements than those working in centres with 1,000 pupils or fewer (47% compared with 38%). In line with this, when asked whether the number of pupils in their school makes it easier or more difficult to meet the CA requirements, teachers working in larger centres were more likely than average to say the number of pupils in their school makes it difficult to meet the requirements (37% teachers working in centres with 1,400+ students compared with 23% overall); teachers working in larger centres are also more likely to feel the number of classes per year group impedes them (34% compared with 25% overall).

Stakeholders pointed out that many of the challenges of implementing CA are logistical pan-school issues, such as timetabling and managing access to limited resources, such as ICT laboratories. These problems are magnified in larger schools.

Other differences were also highlighted in the qualitative interviews; participants stressed that there is a great deal of variety in the way that CA is approached, both between schools and between subjects within schools. This is largely seen as a result of the different subject requirements, in terms of the nature of the tasks, the time allocations, and the levels of control. It is also the result of different approaches taken by centres: stakeholders identified, broadly, two methods of managing CA.

Some described a centralised approach, led by either the examinations officer or director of studies (often the Assistant Head) who are responsible for managing CA across the whole centre. In this model, department heads are consulted, but play a less central role in determining how CA is implemented in the centre. The alternative model is less centralised, with department heads determining which approach would work best for their subject and implementing it accordingly. As discussed below (see section 'Changes in centres' approaches over time' later in this chapter), when asked how their centre could improve its management of CA (or how it already has improved management), some of the most commonly-cited answers relate to better timetabling and management. As such, the responses suggest that more centres may gravitate towards a centralised approach to timetabling and planning in the future.

### Factors affecting implementation of CA – variations by subject

Teachers were prompted with a list of factors and asked to state whether each helped or impeded their implementation of CA. There is significant variation between teachers of different subjects on the factors that have made it difficult for them to implement CA, as illustrated in Table 4.1.

**Table 4.1: Factors making it difficult for centres to meet CA requirements– by subject**

Q11. I'm now going to read out some things that might affect how easy it is to meet the requirements for [SUBJECT] in your centre. For each one, can you tell me whether this makes it difficult or whether it helps you to meet the controlled assessment requirements in [SUBJECT]?

Shaded cells indicate where teachers of a particular subject were more likely than the average across teachers of all nine subjects to say a particular factor made it difficult for them to meet the CA requirements.

#### % saying 'made difficult'

	Average (809) %	Eng. (70) %	Eng. Lang (62) %	Eng. Lit. (75) %	D&T (108) %	French (107) %	Geography (107) %	History (106) %	ICT (102) %	Bus. Stud. (105) %
<i>Base: All respondents</i>										
<b>Resources available</b> such as ICT equipment	37	26	39	37	42	19	71	38	14	39
<b>Rooms available</b> such as gym/hall/spare classrooms	33	24	37	31	23	38	51	35	19	35
<b>Subject-related issues</b> such as the need for oral exams in languages, need for research in history, geography fieldwork etc	31	18	24	26	23	56	38	31	26	26
<b>Number of classes</b> per year group	25	23	33	27	24	24	34	27	16	18
<b>Number of students</b> at your centre	23	22	30	25	15	24	34	22	21	22
<b>Specification-related issues</b> such as the structure of units, weighting of assessment etc	23	18	27	37	17	26	22	20	29	12
<b>Approach of other teachers</b> in your centre	19	11	20	20	15	20	22	28	13	18
<b>Approach of the management</b> in your centre	17	19	18	23	12	18	23	17	8	14

Source: Ipsos MORI

**Geography** teachers are particularly likely to feel that practical factors have impeded their ability to meet CA requirements; they are more likely than the average across the nine subject areas to have experienced problems with the number of students that have to be assessed (34%), the number of classes per year group (34%), the resources they have at their disposal (71%) and rooms available (51%).

**English Literature** teachers are more likely to cite specification-related problems (37% versus 23% on average).

**French** teachers are particularly likely to say that subject-related issues have increased the difficulties of implementing CA (56% versus 31% overall).

With regard to the latter, the qualitative interviews found that modern foreign language assessments can pose particular logistical challenges. One headteacher spoke about the need to hire supply teachers to provide cover whilst ordinary class teachers are conducting oral examinations. Some participants and correspondents said that, in the past, oral examinations would be conducted by an external moderator and that they feel that under the new approach AO work has been transferred to teaching staff who not only have to conduct the orals, but also provide a large amount of paperwork to justify their grading of the oral assessment. This not only adds to teachers' workload, but also adds to the cost of CA for centres in arranging supply cover.<sup>25</sup> Furthermore, one participant noted that during CA orals students are required to leave other lessons for periods of time, causing further disruption. In addition, a stakeholder letter referred to the additional burden of marking and cross-moderating.

AO representatives are aware of a broad spectrum of problems in relation to CA. However, in the AO interviews, as in the stakeholder interviews, MFL emerged as being especially problematic.

*For MFL it is specifically about the fact that the orals are assessed by controlled assessment.... although they have got a medium level of control over task taking and theoretically they could do it under informal supervision at any time... because it is an oral they have to submit a sample for moderation. In effect they have got no choice but to do it under controlled conditions so that they can record the candidate speaking without background noise and present that to us....*

Looking at whether particular issues have helped also reveals some notable variations between different subjects, as illustrated in Table 4.2

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<sup>25</sup> It should be noted that this is the participants' perception of CA; in practice, there were a number of ways in which oral examinations were previously run, often dependent on the AO used, and the extent to which CA will represent an additional burden will depend on the approach that was taken previously.

**Table 4.2: Factors helping centres meet CA requirements – by subject**

Q11. I'm now going to read out some things that might affect how easy it is to meet the requirements for [SUBJECT] in your centre. For each one, can you tell me whether this makes it difficult or whether it helps you to meet the controlled assessment requirements in [SUBJECT]?

Shaded cells indicate where a significantly larger than average proportion of teachers said that a particular factor helped them to meet the CA requirements in their subject.

**% saying 'helped'**

	Aver- age (809) %	Eng. (70) %	Eng. Lang (62) %	Eng. Lit. (75) %	D&T (108) %	Fren ch (107) %	Geog- raphy (107) %	Hist- -ory (106) %	ICT (102) %	Bus. Stud. (105) %
<i>Base: All respondents</i>										
<b>Approach of the management</b> in your centre	39	46	36	38	40	35	38	39	40	43
<b>Approach of other teachers</b> in your centre	28	34	40	31	32	31	32	18	25	24
<b>Specification-related issues</b> such as the structure of units, weighting of assessment etc	27	33	30	22	35	18	19	27	29	31
<b>Resources available</b> such as ICT equipment	22	14	11	17	30	14	16	13	36	36
<b>Number of students</b> at your centre	18	20	17	16	18	14	14	19	22	20
<b>Rooms available</b> such as gym/hall/spare classrooms	14	22	23	14	12	12	7	13	12	20
<b>Number of classes</b> per year group	14	10	12	18	15	8	6	11	21	20
<b>Subject-related issues</b> such as the need for oral exams in languages, need for research in history, geography fieldwork etc	10	9	11	7	4	9	21	10	6	10

Source: Ipsos MORI

**English Language** teachers are particularly likely to say that the approach of other teachers in their centre helps (40% versus 28% overall). They are also more likely than average to say room availability has helped (23% versus 14% overall).

**Design & Technology** teachers are particularly likely to say specification-related issues (35% as against 27% overall) and resources help (30% compared with 22% overall).

The number of classes per year group is particularly likely to be seen as helping by **ICT** teachers (21%) and **Business studies** teachers (20%), compared with 14% of the average of all nine subjects surveyed.

**Geography** teachers are more likely than other subject teachers to say that subject-related issues have helped them (21% versus 10% overall). However, this is still a smaller proportion

than the 38% of Geography teachers who feel it has hindered their ability to meet the requirements of CA.

### **Specification requirements – by AO**

Teachers following OCR specifications are more likely than those using other AOs to feel that specification-related issues make it difficult for them to meet the requirements of CA. As the following table shows, 28% of teachers using OCR for their subject said this, compared with 19% for AQA and 17% for WJEC.

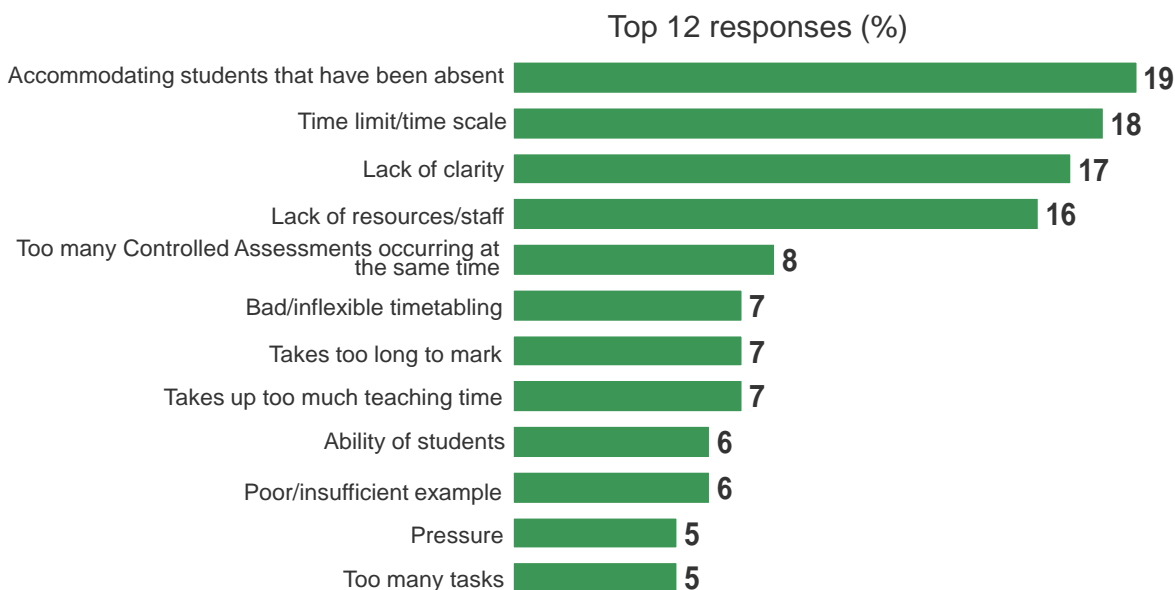
<b>Table 4.3: Meeting CA requirements – by subject</b>					
Q11. I'm now going to read out some things that might affect how easy it is to meet the requirements for [SUBJECT] in your centre. For each one, can you tell me whether this makes it difficult or whether it helps you to meet the controlled assessment requirements in [SUBJECT]?					
<b>Specification-related issues such as the structure of units, weighting of assessment etc</b>					
	AQA	Edexcel	OCR	WJEC	CCEA
<i>Base: All respondents</i>	(217) %	(208) %	(190) %	(119) %	(75) %
Made difficult	19	25	28	17	22
Helped	26	24	25	32	31
Does not affect me	56	50	47	52	47

*Source: Ipsos MORI*

When asked to consider what other issues have made it difficult to successfully implement CA, the most commonly cited problems clearly link to the drawbacks of CA discussed in Chapter 1: accommodating pupil absence (19%), the time limit or time scale for assessments (18%), a lack of clarity or teacher/student understanding of the requirements (17%) and a lack of resources (16%).

## Other factors impeding delivery of CA

Q11. What else other than what I have already mentioned made it difficult for your centre to meet the controlled assessment requirements?



Ipsos MORI

Base: All teachers (809), 21 June – 12 July 2011

Source: Ipsos MORI

Factors that are particular problems for individual subjects include:

- Dealing with absence of pupils for the English subjects (cited by 36% of English Literature teachers, 33% of English Language and 29% of English);
- A lack of resources or staff for teachers of Geography (30% compared to an average of 16% across the nine subjects); and
- The amount of teaching time it takes French teachers (20%, compared to 7% overall), and the pressure and burden it places upon them (18%, compared to 5% overall).

### Changes in centres' approaches over time

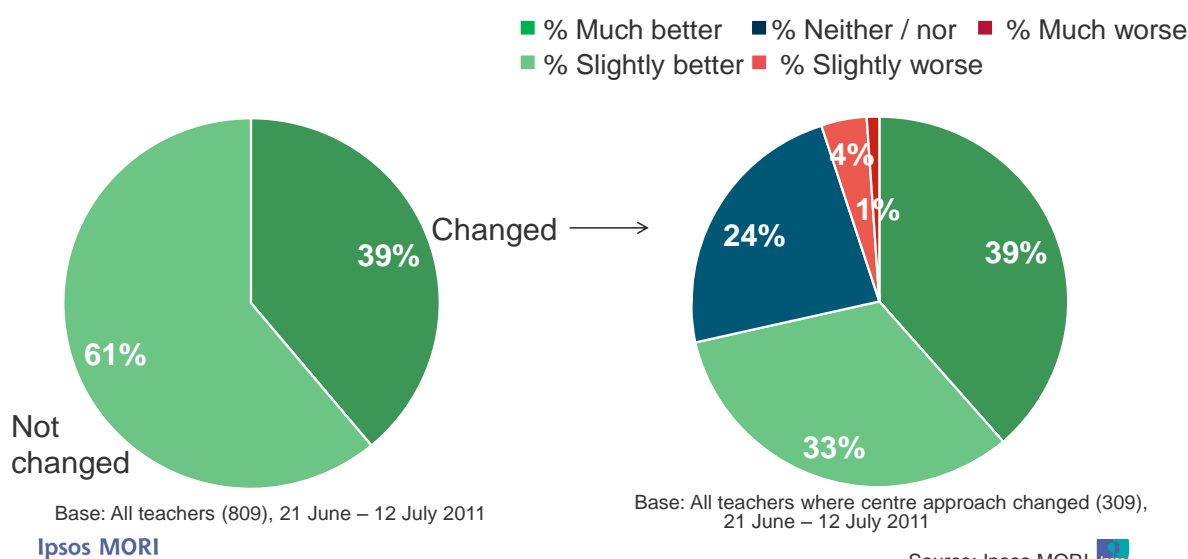
Two in five teachers of the nine subjects included in this research, (39%) say their approach to managing CA has changed over the last two years. The subjects in which practices have changed seem to be those where teachers report more difficulties in implementing CA, or greater problems with the guidance: D&T (48%), French (50%), and Geography (50%) teachers were more likely than the average across teachers of all nine subjects surveyed to have changed their approach, while English Literature teachers were less likely (22%). For Geography and French teachers this may be a reflection of the fact that, as already discussed earlier in this chapter, they are most likely to have found it difficult to meet the requirements of CA.

Where teachers report their or their centre's approach to CA has changed, teachers are positive about the impact of the changes: almost three quarters (72%) of teachers of the nine subjects say it has been for the better, while just 4% believe their approach has got worse. One in four (24%) say that, although their approach has changed, it is neither better nor worse than it was before.

## Approach to Controlled Assessment

Q22. Has your centre's approach to controlled assessment changed in the pass two years or not?

Q23. In your opinion, has your centre's approach to controlled assessment in [SUBJECT] got better or worse, or stayed the same over the past two years?



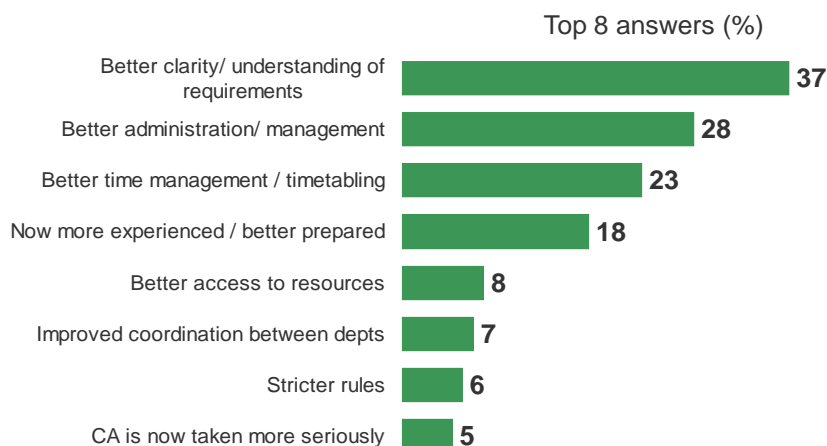
Of those centres where the approach to CA has changed, French teachers are most likely to say it has been for the worse (12%, or six respondents). An analysis of the reasons why these six French teachers feel that their centre's approach has got worse shows a variety of responses: three referred to increased difficulties around timetabling rooms and forward planning. The other three responses relate more to general problems with CA rather than centre approaches: one respondent said that it is taking time to get to grips with the new requirements, one that pupil stress has increased because CA is running in several of their subjects, and one that they feel the assessments require teachers to make children 'jump through hoops rather than teaching language skills'.

The most common explanations behind improvements in the management of CA are a better understanding of the requirements (37%), general improvements in administration or management of the assessments (28%) and better timetabling (23%). One in five (18%) teachers across the nine subjects put it down to their centre being more experienced and prepared. Participants in the qualitative research also highlighted that some of the negative

feeling about CA was down to the novelty of the assessments, and that teachers were becoming better able to cope with its requirements over time. In general, teachers' responses suggest that centres have adapted to the requirements of CA as it becomes more established.

## How management of CA has improved

Q24. In what way has your centre's approach got better?



Base: All teachers who say their centre's approach has got better in the last 2 years (219)

Ipsos MORI

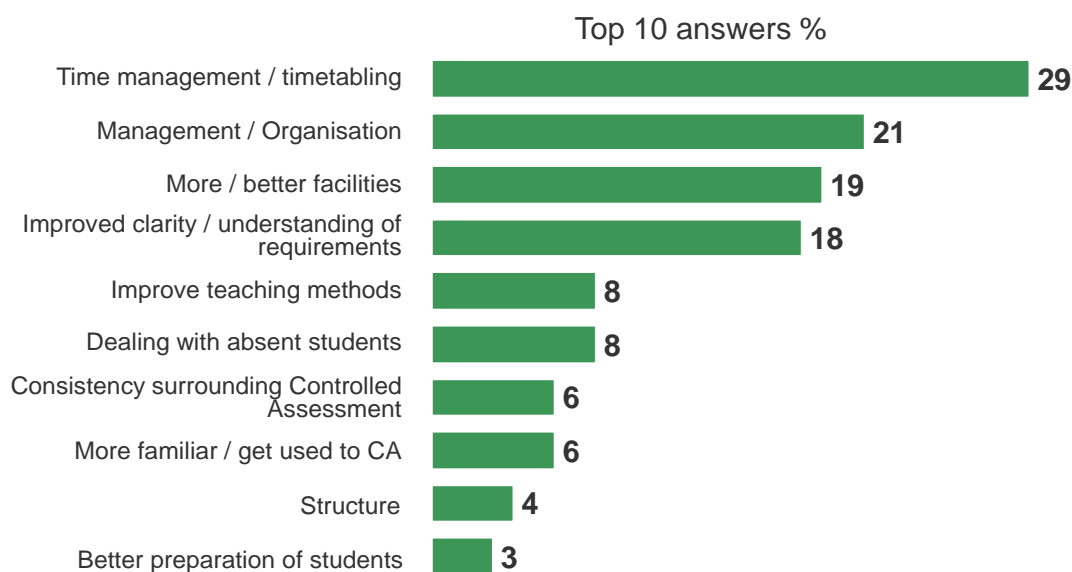


Three quarters (74%) of teachers of the nine subjects included in this research say that their centre's approach to CA is good enough at the moment. Despite French teachers being more likely to say their approach has worsened, there are no statistically significant differences between the results for the nine subjects, or between the AOs that centres use. Independent schools however, are more likely than other centre types to feel their approach is good enough (82%).

Those teachers who felt that improvements in their centre's approach are required were asked their views on how practices should change. The findings echo those seen in centres that have made changes over the past two years; the most commonly cited factors are related to improving timetabling (29%), general management, organisation or planning (21%), improving facilities (19%) and a better understanding of CA requirements (18%).

## Improving approaches to CA

Q26. What do you think your centre needs to improve?



Ipsos MORI

Base: All teachers who think their centre's approach needs to improve (208),  
21 June – 12 July 2011

Source: Ipsos MORI 

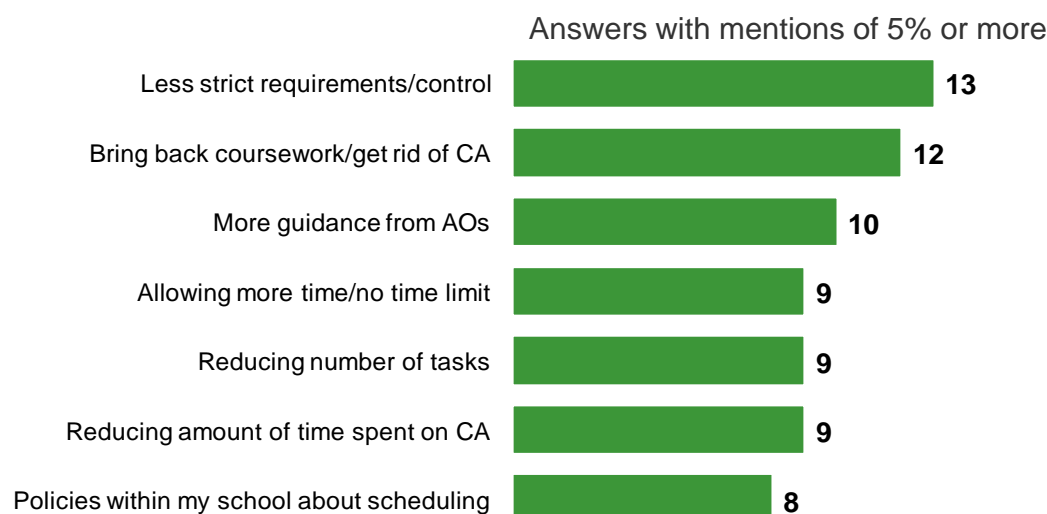
## 5. Overcoming problems with CA

*Teachers were asked how they felt the main drawbacks of CA could best be addressed. The findings from the quantitative survey and in-depth qualitative stakeholder interviews are consistent: teachers and stakeholders tend to feel that the nature of design of CA tasks needs to change, and that improving the AO guidance and/or centres' policies and management of CA will not suffice. While teachers and stakeholders acknowledge that centres could improve their approach to CA, particularly in timetabling and scheduling to manage limited resources better, and while there is room for improvement in the AO guidance, most feel that more fundamental change is required.*

Teachers were asked to suggest ways that the problems they have encountered in implementing CA could be improved. As illustrated in the chart below, the findings encompass a broad range of suggestions, but it is notable that the most frequently spontaneously mentioned recommendations relate to the nature and design of the CA tasks candidates are required to complete, rather than improvements in AO guidance or within-centre policies and management.

### How problems with CA can be addressed

Q21. How do you feel this issue could best be improved?



Source: Ipsos MORI

Ipsos MORI

Base: All teachers who identify any drawbacks to CA compared with coursework (724),  
21 June – 12 July 2011



Several suggestions involve relaxing the requirements or control involved in CA, such as less strict requirements, a longer time limit, fewer tasks within the time limits, or reducing the overall amount of time allocated to CA. Design and Technology teachers were particularly likely to suggest having less strict requirements for CA. This links to a comment made by one of the qualitative participants that the tasks are unrealistic for the time allocation for D&T.

In the qualitative work, while stakeholders were able to suggest minor changes that could improve CA, on balance most felt that more fundamental changes were needed, including substantially reducing the amount of time allocated to CA for each subject, or further limiting the subjects it applies to. A similar attitude was taken towards the issues of providing feedback to students and ensuring that CA is implemented fairly and consistently across all centres: depth interview participants do not feel that these matters could be dealt with by minor changes to the guidance.

A significant minority of teachers fundamentally oppose CA: 12% suggest bringing back coursework and abolishing CA, and 4% suggest having final exams only. It is striking that it is French teachers who are most likely to make both these suggestions (19% suggest abolishing CA, and 17% suggest having only final exams); this is consistent with findings throughout the research showing less positive views among French and MFL teachers..

*It is just very difficult to implement the way it is structured...Get rid of controlled assessments I'm afraid would be our consensus.*

Stakeholder, Depth participant

There is also some acknowledgement that centres could improve their policies in relation to CA: on average 8% of teachers across the nine subjects covered by the research said scheduling and timetabling of assessments could be improved in their centre. In the qualitative stakeholder interviews, some participants acknowledged that some of the problems identified relate to 'the shock of the new', and a few felt that centres will learn to manage the time and logistical pressures of CA more effectively as it beds in. Some participants also pointed out practical changes that centres could make to improve the implementation of CA, including limiting the number of assessments that students could do (especially in modern foreign languages) and improving access to ICT facilities.

*It will be better next year.*

Independent School, Depth Participant

A significant minority of teachers feel that changes to the guidance will help (10%). Likewise, some qualitative participants felt that relatively minor tweaks to the guidance would help, in order to condense it, clarify it, or ensure that it addresses key issues, such as how to deal with absent pupils. Other adjustments that were suggested include increasing the amount of external marking to reduce the burden for teachers and providing centres with examples of best practice in terms of approaches to CA.

## 6. Conclusions and recommendations

### Summary of conclusions and recommendations

In general, teachers and stakeholders support the principles underlying CA; furthermore, most feel that it delivers on its key aims. Most of the surveyed teachers feel that it guards against malpractice, provides a fair assessment of pupil performance, and assesses a broad range of skills. Stakeholders stressed that CA should complement final examinations, by testing a different set of skills, and most teachers of the nine subjects covered by this research felt that it does so.

Stakeholders revealed a sense that coursework was no longer seen as fit for purpose, and a widespread feeling that something needed to change. In general, though, the quantitative and qualitative research suggests that the principles of CA are well received and that, on the whole, teachers are broadly supportive of it.

The stakeholders interviewed in the qualitative interviews were notably less positive than teachers surveyed in the quantitative stage of the research, and it is clear that while the balance of opinion about CA among the teachers surveyed is positive, a significant minority have serious reservations or criticisms of the assessment system.

Some areas of concern emerged consistently throughout the research:

- CA is seen to take up a disproportionate amount of teaching and learning time by some stakeholders, and a significant minority of teachers say that it is ‘poor’ at allowing sufficient time for teaching and learning; teachers recommend reducing the amount of time, the number of tasks, and/or relaxing the levels of control required.** While there is a widespread feeling that CA meets its key aims of ensuring authenticity and reliability, a third of teachers feel that it takes up too much teaching and learning time. This is particularly the case for subjects with a larger CA workload, such as ICT and French. Stakeholders also felt that CA took up a ‘disproportionate’ amount of classroom time in some subjects which was to the detriment of students learning important subject skills. Some stakeholders also felt that these timing issues meant it inevitably narrows teaching, and leads to a reduction in extra-curricular activities that could broaden students’ knowledge and inspire an interest in their subject such as off-site trips.
- CA inevitably creates logistical challenges for schools, particularly those with more limited resources, and larger schools. Guidance to help schools with the**

**logistical arrangements for CA may help.** Stakeholders consistently cited the difficulty of arranging ICT access for pupils in particular. While there is no formal requirement to complete CA using ICT for subjects such as English or History, teachers often prefer to do so. Using ICT not only poses a number of logistical challenges in timetabling CA, but it also means that schools' computer labs are being used for CA rather than ICT teaching. In some cases, teachers felt this had a knock-on impact on teaching important ICT skills to more junior students. Other practical issues including arranging rooms for CA; in some schools assessments are conducted by several class groups simultaneously in a sports hall or gym, at which point teachers and stakeholders question how CA differs from final examinations.

- There is a perception that there are too many sources of information about CA, each of which are often very long – including schools' own policies, the regulations, and separate guidance for each subject provided by each AO. **Stakeholders felt there was a need for information that was more condensed and targeted** (e.g. information needed by school leaders, information needed by heads of subject, information needed by those implementing and designing the assessments). This would help all those involved in delivering CA to find the information they need to know.
- Teachers views were mixed about the impact of CA on pupils' stress levels: one in ten teachers surveyed (11%) spontaneously mentioned an increase in pupil stress as a drawback of CA, but when asked about the benefits of CA 6% teachers felt that it reduces pupil stress. Many stakeholders interviewed for the qualitative research, however, felt that assessments have an adverse impact on pupil well-being, particularly more conscientious students. **Advice and guidance about how schools can manage the burden on students might be helpful.** Some teachers and stakeholders feel that being continuously assessed throughout Years 10 and 11 hugely increases the pressure on students. As centres aim to spread the CA load throughout the GCSE years, so that students are not doing CA for several subjects simultaneously, a few stakeholders said that students are being assessed on an almost weekly basis in Years 10 and 11.
- **Action to address the design of CA in modern foreign languages will be important; French teachers' ratings of CA French were consistently lower than other subject teachers', and stakeholders consistently noted serious concerns about CA in modern languages.** While the survey shows that French teachers, on balance, are positive about CA, they are notably less positive than other subject

teachers across a range of measures asked about, and were more likely than other subject teachers to suggest that the best way to resolve issues with CA would be to abolish it. Stakeholders gave a number of reasons why CA in MFL is perceived as so problematic: some teachers feel that the assessments test students' memory rather than language skills, that it is open to the same type of abuses as coursework (in that students can receive outside help to prepare for tasks outside the classroom, and simply replicate the outside learning during assessments), and that some aspects of CA implementation are inappropriate (such as preparing for speaking tests in silence). While stakeholders raised issues about specific aspects of other subjects, views were particularly strong about the fundamental nature of the CA tasks for languages.

## Recommendations regarding specific subjects

- In addition to the wider concerns about CA in French discussed above, French teachers appear to be unclear about how much additional teaching time is permitted between sessions, and the extent to which candidates can develop new resources or notes between sessions. While teachers of all subjects were less clear on these aspects of CA than others, French teachers were particularly likely to feel unclear about this.
- Design and Technology teachers seem to be less clear than other teachers about some of the basic aspects of task design, including the number and nature of sessions, supervision of sessions, and storage of materials. Some qualitative participants felt the Design and Technology guidance was unclear about task-setting and marking.
- ICT teachers are more likely to feel the CA requirements are unclear about the time allocated for each stage of the assessment, and how teachers should set, develop and research tasks. Stakeholders interviewed in the qualitative research felt that the guidance had been unclear about ICT, and that teachers had found during the course of the CA implementation their original interpretations of the guidance had been incorrect.
- Along with French, Geography teachers were less likely than other subject teachers to say they had found CA easy to implement. Some of the stakeholders interviewed in the qualitative research said that Geography CA is seen as very time consuming

and it is felt that the requirement that the titles should change every year imposes an additional burden on teachers.

## Recommendations on AO guidance

- The AO guidance is generally rated as helpful, clear and well formatted by teachers, irrespective of the subject or AO. Ratings of the guidance are consistently lower than average for OCR, however, and **it may be worthwhile reviewing the OCR guidance.**
- **AO guidance needs to address some key issues with greater clarity, namely dealing with candidate absence and candidates entitled to extra time.** While teachers generally rated the guidance as clear, these issues were perceived as being both relatively unclear, and the levels of control were often seen as inappropriately low in these respects. Stakeholders feel that the current guidance does not adequately address these issues, and they are aware that schools are taking different approaches in addressing it. There is a perception too that the AO guidance is open to interpretation in many respects, and particularly around what constitutes a high level of control, and it may be worth reviewing these elements.
- There appears to be **uncertainty around the marking guidance for many subjects**; stakeholders interviewed in the qualitative work were aware that the standard achieved in CA will be lower than for coursework, where students had more time to spend on tasks, but they are unclear how to grade work at present. They acknowledge this will become clearer over time, and an AO representative also felt that this issue would be resolved over time, but several teachers called for more exemplar material to help make sound judgements.

## Recommendations for centres

- Qualitative participants felt that **centres that had adopted a centralised approach to planning and scheduling CA had found the process of implementing the new assessments more straightforward**: in these schools, at the start of the school year CA was planned for all subjects in advance, to ensure that resources such as ICT labs were booked in advance, and to ensure that students were not doing several pieces of CA in different subjects concurrently. The quantitative research corroborates this view: where teachers said their centre had changed its approach to managing CA over the past two years, changes had generally been made to improve

the management and timetabling of assessments and improve co-ordination between departments. Where teachers felt their centres needed to improve, it was the same issues that they felt needed addressing.

- **There may be some value in issuing guidance to help schools plan and organise the logistical aspects of managing CA across many subjects at the whole-school level.** While the approaches taken will depend on the specific centre to a large degree, prompting schools to consider key management issues may be helpful. Likewise, clarifying the requirements around ICT use could also be helpful in many centres. Many stakeholders felt that there were significant logistical challenges in organising CA at the school level, particularly where centres have more limited resources. This seems to be most acute when it comes to ICT resources; many feel that students can showcase their skills more effectively if using ICT than handwritten assignments, but there is a clear pressure for these limited resources in many schools.
- Another key issue that teachers raised in the quantitative surveys as needing to be improved in their centre is a better understanding of the CA guidance. To some extent, this is an issue that sits across AOs and centres; however, only 45% teachers on average across the nine subjects covered in the survey had received internal training about CA. **There may be value in encouraging centres to run internal seminars to instil greater confidence in teachers in a relatively new form of assessment,** to ensure they feel they are fully abreast of the requirements, as well as the logistics of running the tasks in their own school.

## Glossary

**AO** = Awarding organisation (i.e. recognised bodies that offer the qualification); may also be known as 'Exam Boards', 'Awarding Bodies'

**CA** = Controlled Assessment

**Controlled Assessment regulations** = The regulations were developed by QCA in 2008 for all GCSEs with Controlled Assessment, to support the development and implementation of CA in the revised specifications for first teaching from 2009. The regulations apply to GCSE single award qualifications.

**Centre** = examining centre - the term used to describe a school or college

**D&T** = Design and Technology

**ICT** = Information Communications Technology –used to refer to the subject, and to the IT resources in the school

**INSET** = In-school teacher training days

**MFL** = Modern foreign languages (the survey covered only French teachers, but stakeholders in the qualitative work often discussed modern foreign languages more generally)

**SLT** or **SMT** = School Leadership Team/ School Management Team

**Subject criteria** = The GCSE criteria sets out the required knowledge, understanding, skills and assessment objectives common to that subject. These criteria provide the framework within which awarding organisations create the detail of their specification/s for each qualification.

**Subject specification** = a particular syllabus that schools decide to teach (e.g. they would choose between History A or History B). Each Awarding organisation develops their own CSE specification for each subject they offer.

The five GCSE awarding organisations are

**AQA** = Assessment and Qualifications Alliance

**CCEA** = Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment

**Edexcel**

**OCR** = Oxford, Cambridge and RSA Examinations

**WJEC** = WJEC CBAC Limited

# Appendices

# Questionnaire

## Introduction and screening

Ipsos MORI is carrying out a survey on behalf of Ofqual (the qualifications regulator) about GCSE controlled assessment. The research aims to find out what teachers think about controlled assessment, and how it could be improved. Your school has been selected to take part in the research. The survey takes around 15 minutes to complete.

ASK ALL

S1 Can I speak to the teacher in charge of exams and assessment for [SUBJECT] please?

SINGLE CODE

Yes – continue

No – take details of teacher and direct contact information

WHEN SPEAKING TO CORRECT CONTACT:

As you may know, controlled assessment was first introduced for teaching in most GCSE subjects from September 2009, replacing coursework with independent work carried out at school or college under supervision. The purpose of this survey is to understand your views on controlled assessment, your experiences of controlled assessment at your school, and how you think controlled assessment could be improved. The survey will take around 15 minutes to complete.

ASK ALL

S2 Can I confirm that you have been teaching towards units that will involve controlled assessment in [SUBJECT] at your school for at least one year?

SINGLE CODE

Yes – continue

No – ASK FOR ANOTHER MEMBER OF STAFF IN THE SAME SUBJECT WHO HAS HAD RESPONSIBILITY FOR CONTROLLED ASSESSMENT FOR AT LEAST ONE YEAR

ASK ALL

S3 We understand your centre takes [SPECIFICATION] with [AO]. Is that correct?

SINGLE CODE

Yes - continue

No – CONFIRM SPECIFICATION IN NEXT QUESTION

IF CODE 2 AT S3

**S4 In that case, can I ask what [SUBJECT] specification you have responsibility for?**

SINGLE CODE: WHERE MORE THAN ONE MENTIONED, CODE THE MAIN SUBJECT TAUGHT

ONLY PRESENT ON SCREEN THE SUBJECT SPECIFICATIONS FOR THE SUBJECT WE HAVE RECORDED IN THE SAMPLE (E.G. FOR ANY HISTORY LEAD, IT WILL SHOW: AQA GCSE History B, Edexcel GCSE History A, OCR GCSE History B, WJEC GCSE History, CCEA GCSE History)

AQA GCSE English

AQA GCSE English Literature

AQA GCSE English Language

Edexcel GCSE English

Edexcel GCSE English Literature

Edexcel GCSE English Language

OCR GCSE English

OCR GCSE English Literature

OCR GCSE English Language

WJEC GCSE English

WJEC GCSE English Literature

WJEC GCSE English Language

CCEA GCSE English

CCEA GCSE English Literature

CCEA GCSE English Language

AQA GCSE Design and Technology: Resistant Materials Technology

Edexcel GCSE Design and Technology: Resistant Materials Technology

OCR GCSE Design and Technology: Resistant Materials

WJEC GCSE Design and Technology: Resistant Materials Technology

CCEA GCSE Technology and Design

AQA GCSE French

Edexcel GCSE French

OCR GCSE French

WJEC GCSE French

CCEA GCSE French

AQA GCSE Geography B

Edexcel GCSE Geography B

OCR GCSE Geography B

WJEC GCSE Geography B

CCEA GCSE Geography

AQA GCSE History B

Edexcel GCSE History A

OCR GCSE History B

WJEC GCSE History

CCEA GCSE History

AQA GCSE ICT

Edexcel GCSE ICT

OCR GCSE ICT

WJEC GCSE ICT

CCEA GCSE ICT

AQA GCSE Business Studies  
 Edexcel GCSE Business  
 OCR GCSE Business Studies  
 WJEC GCSE Business Studies  
 CCEA GCSE Business Studies

None of these – ASK TO SPEAK TO TEACHER WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR  
 [SUBJECT]. IF NOT AVAILABLE, CLOSE

IF CODE 2 AT S3, USE SUBJECT SPECIFICATION CODED AT S4 FOR SUBJECT  
 / AO ROUTING. IF CODE 1 AT S3 USE SUBJECT / AO INFO FROM SAMPLE

ASK IF 'English and English Language' IN SAMPLE:

**S5 We understand this unit can be taught as part of either the English GCSE or as part of the English Language GCSE. Which subject are you teaching this unit as part of?**

DO NOT READ OUT, SINGLE CODE

1. English
2. English Language
3. Some students will take English, some will take English Language
4. Haven't decided yet
5. Other

ASK IF 'ENGLISH', 'ENGLISH LANGUAGE' 'English English Language' OR  
 'ENGLISH LITERATURE' IN SAMPLE, OR IF 'ENGLISH', 'ENGLISH LANGUAGE'  
 OR 'ENGLISH LITERATURE' AT S4 (ie. teach ANY English):

**S6 Which of the other new specifications within the English suite do you have responsibility for?** [pre-code spec confirmed above]

MULTICODE, READ OUT

1. English
2. English Literature
3. English Language

ASK IF CODE ALL OF 1, 2 AND 3 AT S6

**S7 How do you and your candidates decide whether to take English, or whether to take English Literature and English Language? Is it...**

MULTICODE. READ OUT

1. Based on individual choice
2. Candidate ability
3. Other\_\_\_\_\_

ASK IF CODE 1, 2 AND 3 AT S6

**S8 At which point do you and/or your candidates make the decision on which English specifications to follow? Is it SINGLE CODE. READ OUT**

1. Before they start the course
2. Part way through the course, having taken some modules
3. Other\_\_\_\_\_

READ OUT IF CODE 3-5 AT S5 OR IF CODE MORE THAN ONE OPTION AT S6

**In this survey we would like you to concentrate on [English / English Language / English Literature as per quotas prioritising the subject with fewest contacts]**

**S6b Can I confirm which awarding organisation you use for [INSERT SUBJECT FROM S6]?**

AQA GCSE English  
 AQA GCSE English Literature  
 AQA GCSE English Language  
 Edexcel GCSE English  
 Edexcel GCSE English Literature  
 Edexcel GCSE English Language  
 OCR GCSE English  
 OCR GCSE English Literature  
 OCR GCSE English Language  
 WJEC GCSE English  
 WJEC GCSE English Literature  
 WJEC GCSE English Language  
 CCEA GCSE English  
 CCEA GCSE English Literature  
 CCEA GCSE English Language

ASK ALL

**S9 And can I just confirm your job title?**

Classroom teacher  
 Head of [SUBJECT]  
 Head of Modern Foreign languages  
 Head of Year  
 Assistant/deputy headteacher  
 Headteacher  
 Exam Officer – ASK FOR SUBJECT SPECIFIC TEACHER  
 Other (SPECIFY)

**CONTROLLED ASSESSMENT aims (do respondents agree/disagree that it achieves overall aims)**

READ OUT

**Controlled assessment was introduced to address a number of issues that were raised with coursework.**

ASK ALL

**Q1 I am going to read out some of the aims of controlled assessment. For each one, can you tell me how well you think controlled assessment meets this aim. Please think about what you know about controlled assessment in general, and we will cover controlled assessment in [SUBJECT] in later questions.**

**Would you say controlled assessment is good or poor at...**

ROTATE ORDER OF STATEMENTS

- a) Giving a fair assessment of pupil performance**
- b) Assessing an appropriate breadth of skills**
- c) Allowing sufficient time for teaching**
- d) Giving sufficient time for pupil learning**
- e) Preventing malpractice such as plagiarism**

SINGLE CODE

Extremely good

Very good

Fairly good

Neither good nor poor

Fairly poor

Very poor

Extremely poor

ASK ALL

**Q2 To what extent, if at all, do you think that controlled assessment assesses different skills than final exams are able to test?**

READ OUT, SINGLE CODE, REVERSE ORDER OF OPTIONS

To a great extent

To some extent

Hardly at all

Not at all

Don't know

ASK ALL

**Q3 And would you say that the process of controlled assessment is manageable for ...**

READ OUT, SINGLE CODE, REVERSE ORDER OF OPTIONS

All of your pupils

Most of your pupils

Less than half your pupils

None of your pupils

Don't know

**CONTROLLED ASSESSMENT subject guidance (effect of the awarding organisation guidance)**

ASK ALL

**Thinking specifically about controlled assessment in [SUBJECT].**

**Q5 In your opinion, how well or badly does [AO] manage controlled assessment in [SUBJECT/SPECIFICATION]? ... Is that extremely/very/fairly?**  
SINGLE CODE

Extremely well

Very well

Fairly well

Neither well nor badly

Fairly badly

Very badly

Extremely badly

ASK ALL

**I would now like to ask you about some specific elements of controlled assessment, to understand your views on the requirements in the [AO] [SUBJECT] GCSE that you are following.**

**Q6 Firstly, from where have you received guidance and support from [AO] for [SUBJECT] controlled assessment?**

DO NOT PROMPT. DO NOT READ OUT.

*Written materials*

1. The qualification specification
2. Advice leaflets/information from awarding organisations
3. Advice leaflets/information from other organisations (specify which organisation this guidance was from)

*Personal meetings/networks*

4. Training/ INSET meetings led by awarding organisations
5. Support networks (such as CASS Controlled Assessment Support Service from Edexcel)
6. One to one support from awarding organisation representatives
7. One to one support from other organisations (specify which organisation)

*Internal*

8. School headteacher/ senior leadership team
9. School's examination officer
10. Colleagues within school
11. I have not received any
12. Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

ASK ALL

**Q7 I'd now like you to think about the written guidance provided as standard by [AO], as opposed to any additional information you get from [AO] or anywhere else. By written guidance I mean any materials they have sent to you or resources on their website.**

**a) Overall, how would you rate the guidance you've received from [AO]?**

**Would you say it is...**

READ OUT, REVERSE ORDER

Very helpful

Fairly helpful

Neither helpful nor unhelpful

Fairly unhelpful

Very unhelpful

[DO NOT READ OUT] No opinion

**b) Would you say that the format of the written guidance you've received from [AO] is good or poor? ... Is that very/fairly?**

Very good  
Fairly good  
Neither good nor poor  
Fairly poor  
Very poor  
[DO NOT READ OUT] No opinion

**c) Would you say the written guidance you've received from [AO] has too much detail, not enough detail or is it about right?**

SINGLE CODE

Too much detail  
Not enough detail  
About right  
[DO NOT READ OUT] No opinion

**d) And how would you rate the overall clarity of the written guidance materials you've received from [AO]? Are they...**

SINGLE CODE, REVERSE ORDER, READ OUT

Very clear  
Fairly clear  
Neither clear nor unclear  
Fairly unclear  
Very unclear  
[DO NOT READ OUT] No opinion

**e) And how would you rate the different levels of control in the controlled assessment for [SUBJECT] overall? Would you say it's too high, too low, or about right?**

SINGLE CODE

Too high  
Too low  
About right  
[DO NOT READ OUT] No opinion

ASK ALL

**Q8 Thinking now about the controlled assessment requirements outlined in the specification, I'd like you to rate their clarity about a number of issues.**

**For each issue I read out, please say whether you think the requirements are very clear, fairly clear, neither clear nor unclear, fairly unclear or very unclear.**

**SINGLE CODE FOR EACH STATEMENT, ROTATE STATEMENTS. Are the requirements clear or unclear about...:**

1. How teachers should set, develop and research tasks
2. The time allocated to each stage of the assessment (including task preparation and task taking)
3. The number and nature of tasks that candidates must complete (including word counts, where applicable)
4. The number and duration of sessions allowed
5. The nature and extent of resources or notes that candidates can take into and use during sessions
6. The acceptability of candidates developing new resources or notes between sessions
7. The acceptability of additional teaching time between sessions
8. The amount and nature of feedback that teachers may give to candidates
9. Supervision given while students are preparing for the task
10. Supervision given while students are taking the task
11. Whether ICT facilities should be used
12. How to manage candidate absence
13. How to manage candidates who are entitled to extra time
14. How to store confidential materials

Very clear

Fairly clear

Neither clear nor unclear

Fairly unclear

Very unclear

Not applicable

ASK ALL

**Q9** **Still thinking about the controlled assessment requirements outlined in the [AO] [SUBJECT] specification, how would you rate the level of control for each of the following?**

**How would you rate the level of control around...**

**SINGLE CODE FOR EACH STATEMENT, ROTATE STATEMENTS.**

1. Setting, developing and researching tasks
2. The time allocated to each stage of the assessment (including task preparation and task taking)
3. The number and nature of tasks that candidates must complete (including word counts, where applicable)
4. The number and duration of sessions allowed
5. The nature and extent of resources or notes that candidates can take into and use during sessions
6. Candidates developing new resources or notes between sessions
7. Having additional teaching time between sessions
8. The amount and nature of feedback that teachers can give to candidates
9. Supervision given while students are preparing for the task
10. Supervision given while students are taking the task
11. Using ICT facilities
12. Candidate absence
13. Candidates who are entitled to extra time
14. Storing confidential materials

**READ OUT SCALE**

Too high

Too low

About right

Not applicable

<b>CONTROLLED ASSESSMENT in your centre (effect of the centre itself on implementation overall)</b>
---

ASK ALL

**The next few questions are about how controlled assessment is implemented in your centre, and the factors that influence how you are able to manage it in your centre.**

**Q10 In general, how easy or difficult has it been for your centre to meet the requirements for controlled assessment in [SUBJECT]?**

**SINGLE CODE, REVERSE OPTIONS**

Very easy

Fairly easy

Neither easy nor difficult

Fairly difficult

Very difficult

ASK ALL

**Q11 I'm now going to read out some things that might affect how easy it is to meet the requirements for [SUBJECT] in your centre. For each one, can you tell me whether this makes it DIFFICULT or whether it HELPS you to meet the controlled assessment requirements in [SUBJECT], or whether it makes no difference to you?**

**Has the .... helped or made it difficult for you to meet the requirements in [SUBJECT], or does it not affect you?**

**RANDOMISE ORDER OF STATEMENTS 1-8. STATEMENT 10 TO BE LAST FOR ALL RESPONDENTS.**

1. Approach of the management in your centre
2. Approach of other teachers in your centre
3. Number of students at your centre
4. Number of classes per year group
5. Resources available such as ICT equipment
6. Rooms available such as gym/hall/spare classrooms
7. Subject-related issues such as the need for oral exams in languages, need for research in history, geography fieldwork etc
8. Specification-related issues such as the structure of units, weighting of assessment etc
9. What else other than what I have already mentioned made it difficult for your centre to meet the controlled assessment requirements? (Please specify).....
10. What else other than what I have already mentioned has helped you to meet the controlled assessment requirements in your centre? (Please specify).....

**SINGLE CODE FOR STATEMENTS 1-8:**

Makes difficult

Helps

Does not affect me

**WHERE TWO OR MORE MENTIONED AS DIFFICULT AT Q11:**

**Q12 And which of these is having the greatest impact on controlled assessment in your centre?**

**IF NECESSARY: You said that [LIST STATEMENTS MENTIONED AT Q11] were difficult.**

**The next few questions are about how controlled assessment is managed in your centre.**

ASK ALL

**Q15 Have you received any training or specific briefing about controlled assessment within your school, or not?**

Yes

No

IF YES AT Q15

**Q16 How would you rate the training about controlled assessment that you received? Would you say it was ...**

SINGLE CODE, REVERSE ORDER, READ OUT

Extremely good

Very good

Fairly good

Neither good nor poor

Fairly poor

Very poor

Extremely poor

**Your experiences of CONTROLLED ASSESSMENT (extent and type of any negatives and positives)**

ASK ALL

**Q17 Thinking now about your own experiences of implementing controlled assessment in [SUBJECT], what do you feel are the benefits, if, any, of controlled assessment over coursework?**

DO NOT PROMPT. DO NOT READ OUT. PROBE FULLY.

CONFIRM LIST AFTER FIRST FEW STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

Assurance that work carried out is student's own

More level playing field as students all dedicate the same amount of time to tasks

Ensures that all students complete the work required

Less stressful for students

Spreads out assessments across the year

There are none

Other (please specify).....

ASK ALL

**Q19 And what would you say are the drawbacks of controlled assessment, if any, compared with coursework?**

DO NOT PROMPT. DO NOT READ OUT. PROBE FULLY.  
CONFIRM LIST AFTER FIRST FEW STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

*Timing issues*

- Less teaching and learning time
- Accommodating pupils who need extra time for assessments
- Accommodating pupils who are absent/miss assessments
- Burden on teachers from pupils needing extra time

*Assessment and marking*

- Too much like an exam
- Does not assess important skills (specify)
- Does not assess topics in enough depth
- Too many topics are assessed
- Difficult to mark assessments
- Cannot give detailed feedback to students about assessment work

*Resourcing and timetabling*

- Strain on ICT resources
- Timetabling/scheduling difficulties
- Difficulties finding suitable rooms
- Amount of administration needed

*Subject teaching*

- Reduces enjoyment of the subject
- Students are less well prepared for A level
- Doesn't stretch the most able pupils enough
- Doesn't teach editing/proofing skills that coursework used to

*Stress*

- More stressful for teachers
- More stressful for students
- Not fair on students who want to spend more time on CA
- Students are continuously assessed

*Inconsistencies*

- Inconsistencies across awarding organisations
- Inconsistencies across subjects

*There are none*

*Other*

Other (please specify).....

WHERE MORE THAN ONE MENTIONED AT Q19:

**Q20 Which of these drawbacks you've mentioned do you think is the biggest problem?**

READ OUT IF NECESSARY.

[CATI SCREEN TO SHOW LIST OF CODES SELECTED AT PREVIOUS QUESTION)

IF ANY DRAWBACKS MENTIONED (IF MORE THAN ONE, CHOOSE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE FROM Q20)

**Q21 How do you feel this issue could best be improved?**

More guidance from AOs

Reducing amount of time spent on controlled assessment/ shorter controlled assessment tasks

Reducing number of tasks covered in controlled assessment

Less strict requirements/control of controlled assessment

Guidance from AOs about ICT requirements

Policies within my school about scheduling/timetabling controlled assessment

Other (specify)

Don't know

### **Ways CONTROLLED ASSESSMENT could be improved**

ASK ALL

**I would now like to ask you about your centre's approach to controlled assessment.**

**Q22 Has your centre's approach to controlled assessment changed in the past two years or not?**

SINGLE CODE

Changed

Not changed

IF CODE CHANGED AT Q22

**Q23 In your opinion, has your centre's approach to controlled assessment in [SUBJECT] got better or worse, or stayed the same over the past two years? Is that much or slightly?**

SINGLE CODE

Much better

Slightly better

Neither better nor worse

Slightly worse

Much worse

IF CODE 1, 2, 4 OR 5 AT Q23

**Q24 In what way has your centre's approach got [better/worse]?**

ASK ALL

**Q25 Do you think your centre's approach to controlled assessment in [subject] is good enough, or do you think it needs to improve?**

SINGLE CODE

Good enough

Needs to improve

ASK IF CODE 2 AT Q25

**Q26 What do you think your centre needs to improve?**

CODE FULL RESPONSE

ASK ALL

**Q29 Before we finish, can I ask does your centre ever take private candidates for controlled assessment?**

SINGLE CODE

Yes

No

If CODE 2 AT Q29:

**Q30 Why is this?**

Precode list

---

**Q31 Finally, can I just check which of the following best describes how your school or college is managed?**

**Secondary comprehensive**

**Secondary modern**

**Selective secondary**

**Grammar school**

**Independent secondary**

**City academy**

**Sixth form college**

**FE college**

**Tertiary college**

**Other**

Don't know

QRECON

**Thanks very much for giving up your time today to take part in the interview. Ofqual may be conducting further research about controlled assessment in the next 18 months. Would you be happy for Ofqual to recontact you about further research in the next 18 months? We would not pass on any of your answers from today, just your name and telephone number, and which subject you have responsibility for controlled assessment for.**

**Yes – TAKE NAME AND CONTACT DETAILS**

**No – ASK FOR DETAILS FOR STANDARD QA.**

Thank and Close

# Qualitative discussion guide

Discussion thread	Approximate timings (mins)
<b>1. Introduction and explanation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interviewer introduces self, explains purpose of research, confidentiality and gets permission to audio-record</li> <li>• Participant introduction: briefly explain job description, current role in organisation</li> <li>• Organisation's relationship with Controlled Assessment (e.g. delivering it (as a school or AO representative (JCQ)), representing those who deliver it (as a teaching union) etc.)</li> <li>• Which AOs do you work with?</li> </ul>	Up to 5
<b>2. Implementation of CA in centres/ your centre</b> INTERVIEWER NOTE IF NECESSARY: We'll talk about this in more detail later <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ First of all, could you talk me through (your centre's) centre approach/es to CA?</li> <li>○ In general, how are subject teachers managing the new and differing requirements of CA?</li> <li>○ At the point of <i>task setting</i> how are teachers finding the new CA requirements, in terms of designing and/or preparing tasks?</li> <li>○ How helpful is/isn't AO guidance</li> <li>○ Now thinking about <i>taking the tasks</i>, how do you feel this works in centres/your centre?</li> <li>○ Now thinking about <i>task marking</i> - how do you feel this works in centres/your centre?</li> <li>○ How do centres/does your centre manage planning and timetabling for CA?</li> </ul>	5
<u>Views of pupils and parents</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Now thinking about some key stakeholders...</li> <li>• How well does the CA approach work for learners? Why do you say that?</li> <li>• How does CA work for specific groups of learners, such as those with particular learning needs?</li> <li>• In your view, what do learners/pupils think of CA?</li> <li>• Thinking about parents, what has their feedback been on CA?</li> </ul>	5

<p><b>3. AO guidance</b></p> <p>Now thinking about the guidance produced by AOs ...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How much, if at all, does controlled assessment guidance from AOs help centres to implement CA? IF HELPS: What helps/in what ways? What else?</li> <li>• How could AO guidance could be made more useful for centres?</li> </ul>	5
<p><b>4. Ofqual regulations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are you familiar with the Ofqual Controlled Assessment Regulations?</li> <li>• How clear, if at all, have you found the Ofqual regulations regarding CA? What is clear/unclear? What could be improved?</li> <li>• What do you think of AO guidance in relation to the Ofqual CA regulations? PROBE: Do AOs tend to follow the letter of the regulations too closely, not closely enough, do they take a slightly different approach etc?</li> </ul>	5
<p><b>5. Centre approaches</b></p> <p>Thinking now about the management of controlled assessment in centres.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In an average centre, who do you think has the most responsibility for making CA work? Who else is responsible? How well does that work?</li> <li>• In a centre, who do you think <i>should</i> have most responsibility for making CA work? Who else <i>should be</i> responsible? Why do you say that?</li> <li>• How should the responsibility best be managed?</li> </ul> <p><b>Overall management</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overall how well do you think most centres manage CA? Why do you say that? What could be done better? What, if anything, is always likely to be challenging?</li> <li>• Overall how well do you think most teachers manage CA? Why do you say that? What could be done better? What, if anything, is always likely to be challenging?</li> </ul>	5
<p><b>6. Change in approach over time/ improvements</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Have centres/your centre changed their approach to controlled assessment changed in any way over the two years since it was introduced?</li> <li>○ What have you/has your centre changed or modified since you first introduced controlled assessment?</li> <li>○ Are there any ways in which centres/your centre could implement controlled assessment differently next year?</li> </ul>	5

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What, if anything, do you think could be done to improve the implementation of CA in centres? What would help? Who would need to do this?</li> <li>• Which of these would make the biggest difference? Why?</li> <li>○ What, if any, difficulties involved in CA do you think could not be resolved? Why? What are the implications of this?</li> <li>○ And which if any, of the difficulties you have mentioned do you think will improve over time as teachers, learners and centres get used to the new arrangements?</li> </ul>	
<p><b>7. Practical effects/impacts of CA</b></p> <p>What do you think have been the biggest effects of CA within centres?</p> <p>FOR EACH: What difference has this made? Why has it made a difference?</p> <p>IF NOT MENTIONED SPONTANEOUSLY:</p> <p>What impact, if any, do you think CA has had on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Teaching and learning time</li> <li>○ Amount of administration needed</li> <li>○ Logistical pressures (timetabling, space etc.)</li> <li>○ Role of exam officers</li> <li>○ Stress levels among teachers/ relationships between teaching staff</li> <li>○ Relationships between teaching staff and pupils/students</li> </ul> <p>FOR EACH: Why has this made a difference?/What difference has this made?</p> <p>IF NOT MENTIONED SPONTANEOUSLY:</p> <p>What impact, if any, do you think CA has had on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Confidence in qualification standards</li> <li>○ Confidence in the fairness of grades</li> </ul>	10
<p><b>8. Overall</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To summarise then, what's your overall view of CA?</li> </ul> <p>PROBES: An improvement on coursework or not? A suitable alternative to assessment entirely by terminal exam or not? What would be your organisation's preferred approach to assessment at GCSE?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ What do you personally think are the greatest benefits to controlled assessment?</li> <li>○ And what are its drawbacks?</li> </ul>	5

<p><b>9. Wrap Up</b></p> <p>The next stage of the research is a survey of centres.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What two or three aspects of CA do you think it's most important we ask about in that survey?</li> <li>• Of all the things we've talked about, what's the key thing you'd want me to take away from today's discussion?</li> </ul> <p>Thank you for your time today. The discussion has been very useful and there are lots of things that we've learned.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there anything else you'd like to add, or any points you'd like to return to?</li> </ul> <p>Explain how the research will work from here (anonymised reporting etc.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do you have any questions?</li> <li>• Thank and close.</li> </ul>	<p>5</p>
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