

ANALYSIS OF CONSULTATION RESPONSES

An additional GCSE, AS and A level exam series in autumn 2020

Proposals for an additional exam series in autumn 2020 in response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic

ofqual

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Introduction

Following the government's decision to cancel exams in summer 2020 to help fight the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) and the published decisions about the exceptional arrangements for awarding a range of general qualifications including GCSEs, AS and A levels¹, we sought views on our proposals for an autumn exam series. The aim is to provide an opportunity for students to seek to improve their grades if they believe the calculated grades they receive this summer do not properly reflect their abilities. The autumn exam series will also provide an opportunity for any students who were planning to take their exams in summer 2020 but were not able to receive a calculated grade.

While we recognise that the arrangements for the autumn exam series might need to be adjusted in response to public health requirements, we wish to provide as much early certainty as possible about how the exam series will run.

This is the summary of responses to our [consultation](#) that ran between 22 May and 8 June 2020 and which received 3,481 completed responses.

In this consultation, we sought views on our proposals to:

- require exam boards to make examinations available in all GCSE, AS and A level subjects in the additional autumn series and therefore vary our normal rules that allow exams only to be held in May and June
- require exam boards to base results on students' performance in exams alone and not on any non-exam assessment, with the exception of art and design qualifications
- allow the exam boards to depart from the normal requirements for the issue of certificates
- adopt the normal arrangements for reviews and appeals

Background

The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has led to the closure of schools and colleges to all except the children of critical workers and vulnerable children, and to the cancellation of GCSE, AS and A level exams². In line with government policy we are working to enable students to have the opportunity to sit exams in the autumn.

Before issuing the consultation, we had already consulted with groups representing teachers, exams officers, school and college leaders, students and with the exam boards. We had also sought views from subject association groups.

In summary, as set out by government, students who feel that the grade they are awarded in the summer does not reflect their ability, or for whom it was not possible

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/exceptional-arrangements-for-exam-grading-and-assessment-in-2020>

²

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/877611/Letter_from_Secretary_of_State_for_Education_to_Sally_Collier.pdf

to issue a calculated grade, will be able to take exams in the additional exams series which will be scheduled for this autumn or, if they prefer, next summer.

We consulted on a number of areas and summarise the responses below. We will publish separately our decisions.

The scope and form of the autumn series

We proposed that we should require each exam board to make available exams for each of their GCSEs, AS and A level qualifications. To limit exam boards' extra costs and avoid them carrying out unnecessary work we proposed that, once the entry deadline for the autumn exams has passed, an exam board that has received no entries can withdraw its exams from the timetable. We also proposed that the exam papers taken in the autumn should be consistent with those normally taken in a summer exam series.

Non-exam assessment in the autumn series

We proposed to require the exam boards to award grades based on students' performance in their exams alone. However, due to art and design GCSE, AS and A level being solely assessed using non-exam assessment, we proposed that students entering for these qualifications should complete a new exam board set task under supervised conditions representing a reduced assessment requirement. The grade awarded would be based solely on the student's performance in this new set task.

Separately reported results and grades

We proposed that separately reported results in the A level sciences for practical skills and grades in GCSE English language for the spoken language endorsement will be carried forward and appear on students' certificates alongside any grades awarded for completing the examinations in the autumn.

Additionally, we proposed that where a student does not have a separately reported result or grade to carry forward, because they have not had the opportunity to be assessed on these elements previously, they can choose to sit exams in the autumn and receive a separately reported result of Not Classified for the practical skills or spoken language element, or wait and to take the full assessment in next summer's exam series.

The timing of the autumn exam series

We proposed that our exceptional regulatory framework should allow us to set a period during which the autumn series will take place – including the exams for GCSE English language and maths that are routinely available to students in the autumn - and to change that period should we consider that is necessary in light of the public health situation. Unless public health restrictions required this, we would not expect the published dates for GCSE English language and maths exams to change.

Reviews of marking and appeals

We proposed that the normal requirements for reviews of marking and appeals should apply to the autumn series, as set out in our qualification level conditions. If moderation of non-exam assessment is needed (contrary to the proposals on which

we consulted), we proposed that the normal provisions for reviews of moderation should also apply.

Certificates

We proposed that we would allow exam boards to respond to requests to issue replacement certificates that just show the higher of the calculated or the autumn series grade if the students requests it but not require the exam boards to do so.

Project Qualifications and the Advanced Extension Award

We proposed that it was not necessary to require exam boards to schedule opportunities for moderation for Project Qualifications at Level 3 - the Extended Project Qualification in the autumn series although they might decide to do so.

In addition, we proposed to allow the exam board which offers the Advanced Extension Award in maths to decide whether to offer exams in the autumn in light of the very small entry for this qualification.

Approach to analysis

The consultation was published on our website and available for response, using the online form, between 22 May and 8 June April 2020. The consultation included 31 questions related to our proposals.³

We present the responses to the consultation questions in the order in which they were asked. Respondents could choose to answer all or just some of the questions. This means that the total number responding to each question varies; the details are provided for each question.

For most of the questions, respondents could indicate the extent to which they agreed with the proposals, using a 5-point scale (Strongly agree, Agree, Neither agree nor disagree, Disagree and Strongly disagree). At the end of each section of proposals, and in the equalities and regulatory impact assessments, respondents were invited to provide any comments in an open comments box. Questions where respondents were asked to indicate the extent of their agreement are referred to as “closed”, whereas those which asked respondents to provide comments are referred to as “open”.

Not all respondents expressed a preference using the 5-point scale, with some only providing a comment in the open question that followed. Likewise, not all respondents who did express a preference on the scale responded to the open question and, of those who did, not all comments were relevant to the question. For example, in some cases, the comment was simply ‘no’. Many of the completed responses did not answer all the questions asked.

We have provided tables of the data from each of the closed questions and presented them as pie charts which show the proportions of responses (percentages

³ Some responses were submitted by email through a variety of routes. These were taken in to account when considering the analysis of our proposals but are not included in the total number of submissions or the data presented in this document.

are rounded to the nearest whole number⁴). In an appendix to this document, we have provided additional information about the responses from different respondent groups to each closed question. We have commented where there were distinct differences of view between the respondent groups and have summarised the main themes that were reflected in the responses.

Some themes emerged in response to more than one question. Wherever possible we have included them in the analysis of one question only and cross-referenced to the theme from other questions.

Respondents were invited to self-identify the group to which they belong. The number of responses reported in the tables in Appendix A are based on these unverified self-descriptions.

We read all responses in full, including those that did not follow the format of the consultation. Some respondents chose to express their views without specifically answering the questions asked. These responses were considered but were not included in the total number of responses to each question.

The numbering of the questions in this analysis goes from 1 to 31 which represents all the questions in the survey. By selecting particular subjects at the start of the survey, respondents may have taken a route through the survey that resulted in only relevant, not all, questions being asked.

Where we have included comments, to illustrate the main themes identified, we have edited some for clarity, brevity and to preserve anonymity but have been careful not to change their meaning.

Who responded

As noted in the introduction we had 3,481 responses to the online consultation that used the standard response form. In addition, we received 4 responses which were submitted by email. These are not included in the quantitative data we provide below, although we have quoted from them where relevant.

We have given a detailed breakdown of respondent groups in Appendix A against each of the closed questions asked, to support a more detailed understanding of the level of support or disagreement with our proposals.

In light of the large number of responses, we have not listed the details of all of the organisations that responded. The following table is a summary of respondents by types who completed our consultation.

Respondent description	Number of respondents
Organisation	252
Academy chain	10

⁴ This has resulted in some of the figures in the pie charts adding up to percentages out of other than 100. For example, questions 21 and 23 total 101%, and question 16 totals 99%.

Awarding body or exam board	7
Employer	0
Local authority	7
Other representative or interest group	40
Private training provider	11
School or college	169
University or higher education institution	8
Personal	3,229
Awarding organisation employee	6
Consultant	10
Examiner	71
Exams officer or manager	350
Governor	10
Other	47
Parent or carer	501
SLT (Senior leadership team)	284
Student	919
Student - private, home-educated of any age	176
Teacher (responding in a personal capacity)	855
Total	3,481

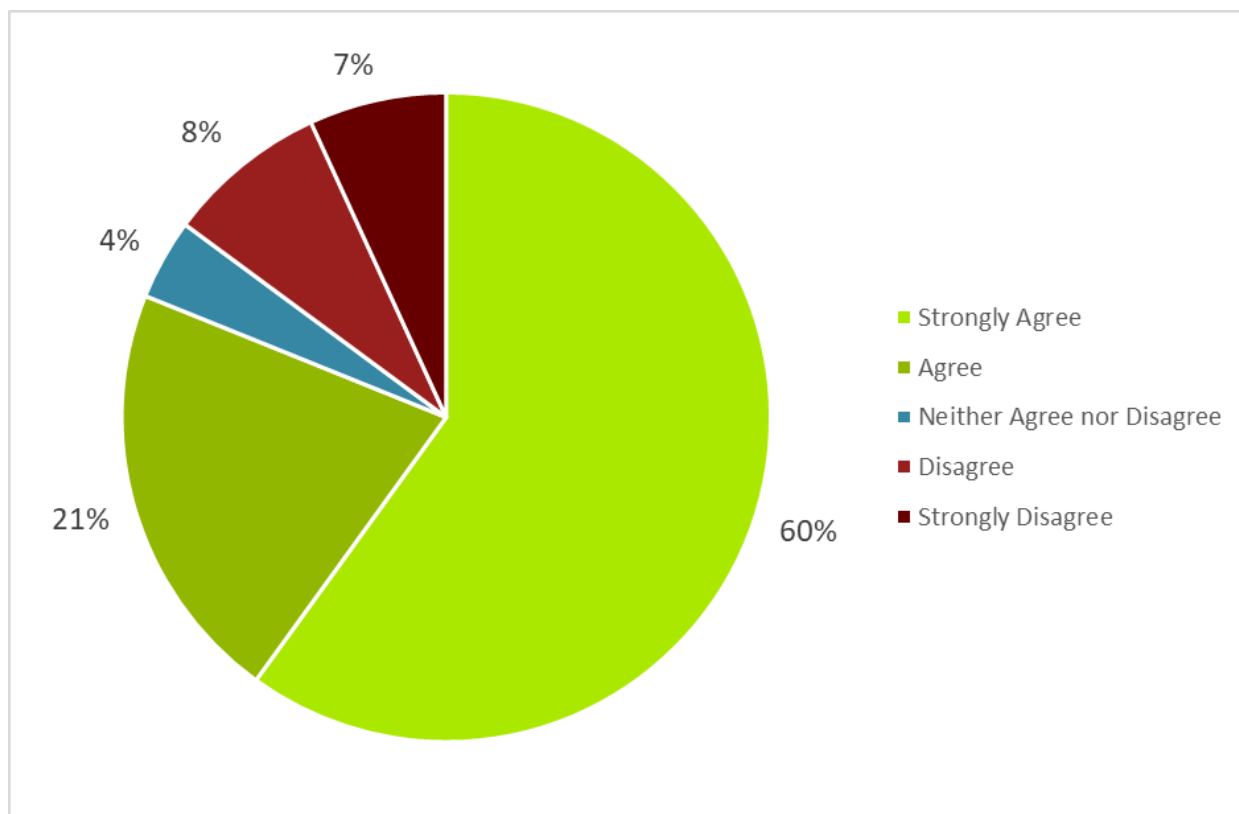
This was a public consultation on the views of those who wished to participate. We were pleased to receive a large number of responses, including many from students, and thank everyone for responding. We recognise that the responses are not necessarily representative of the general public or any specific group.

Views expressed - consultation response outcomes

In this section we report the views, in broad terms, of those who responded to the consultation document. Responses to the individual consultation questions were as follows.

The scope of the autumn series

Q1. To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should require exam boards to offer exams for all of the GCSE, AS and A level qualifications this autumn they had intended to offer in the summer?



Q1 responses	Count	Percentage
Strongly Agree	2,075	60%
Agree	731	21%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	139	4%
Disagree	278	8%
Strongly Disagree	237	7%
Q1 total responses		3,460
No response		21
Survey total responses		3,481

The majority of respondents, 81%, supported the proposal that Ofqual should require exam boards to offer exams for all of the GCSE, AS and A level qualifications this autumn they had intended to offer in the summer.

Fifteen per cent of respondents were not supportive of this proposal. Their comments focused on the logistical challenges for centres; how offering an option for an autumn exam series undermines the award of calculated grades; there were a number of respondents who suggested that a narrower range of qualifications should

be offered in the autumn examination series, this would allow students to progress and ease some of the burden on centres.

“There is a risk that the autumn series undermines the integrity of the centre-assessed grades (CAG) process.” (Other)

The response patterns were similar across all respondent groups with the majority either agreeing or strongly agreeing.

For students, who were the biggest respondent group, 89% either agreed or strongly agreed with the proposal. Similarly, 91% of those respondents who identified themselves as a student - private, home educated of any age, supported the proposal.

“I believe it is totally fair to provide an opportunity for every student taking any subject, and nobody should be disadvantaged in any form, because of the subject one is studying. Hence, I strongly agree that offering exams in every GCSE, AS and A LEVEL subject, is the best thing to do.” (Student)

Teachers were the second biggest respondent group and 79% of this group agreed or strongly agreed with the proposal. However, there was concern about the lack of teaching time available to prepare students for the autumn examination series.

“Completely agree. This will offer student a choice, given the unprecedented circumstances of the last few months.” (Teacher - responding in a personal capacity)

“Concerned that there will be an expectation that teachers will provide support with preparing for these exams and the additional workload involved for both staff and students.” (Teacher - responding in a personal capacity)

Eighty-one percent of respondents identifying as a school or college either agreed or strongly agreed with the proposal.

“We strongly support the proposal. Furthermore, we would like the series to be open for candidates who were entered for the original summer series but for whom Centre Assessment Grades could not be provided, owing to a lack of evidence. Chiefly this is about private candidates, e.g. returning 2019 leavers or 'home language' candidates.” (School or college)

Respondents felt that the proposal to offer exams for all of the GCSE, AS and A level qualifications was the fairest option for all students, particularly private candidates who had not been awarded a grade. Respondents also commented that it provides an opportunity for students who were unhappy with the grades that they had been awarded to prove themselves in an examination, rather than disputing the result with the school or college.

“Having had a few private candidates due to take exams this summer and not having any evidence to grade/rank them I feel that private candidates should definitely have an option to get the grades they deserve for exams they were studying for this year.” (Exams officer or manager)

“I do believe it is important to offer students the chance to prove themselves in an exam - should they want it. It will also relieve some of the pressure on teachers/schools -should they dispute their grade, this is a way to settle that.” (Teacher - responding in a personal capacity)

“Students have had their choices taken from them when summer examinations were cancelled. I believe that by just giving students the choice to retake exams, we are giving back some of their ownership over their grades and their future. Whether or not they want to sit these exams, it should be their choice to do so.” (Teacher - responding in a personal capacity)

Academic progression and the importance of being able to attain the required grades through an examination was seen in a few comments, but the prospect of managing extra study in order to prepare for an examination in the autumn was a concern.

“I strongly agree that exam boards should be required to offer all A-Level qualifications because for students such as myself who will not be receiving a grade this summer, the university which has offered me a place has stated they can only defer my offer IF I take the exams in autumn (not next summer), so if my subject was not offered, I'd lose my offer. The offer is for Medicine and it will be extremely difficult to go through the whole UCAT and interviews process if I had to re-apply.” (Student – private, home educated of any age)

“This is essential to anyone, including myself that needs a certain result to progress now or in the future and which waiting a year to resit would not work/negatively impact their future.” (Student)

“Students would have no choice but to take a gap year or study at home for a year because they cannot take the exam to progress to university if the exam board no longer authorises their exam for a specific subject.” (Student)

For those respondents who identified themselves as an exams officer or manager, 62% supported the proposal and 33% did not. The main concerns were about managing the logistics of a full exam series in the autumn and the impact on the rest of the school and teaching. Several respondents suggested it would be more manageable to only offer certain subjects in autumn and all exams in summer 2021.

“As an Exams Officer I can safely say that it is going to be a complete nightmare to implement and is going to cause further chaos to schools who have already experienced severe disruption to their teaching. However, I also recognise that the Government made a promise to give students the opportunity to re sit exams in the Autumn and it is the right thing to do.” (Exams officer or manager)

“I believe we should offer the facilitating subjects that may stop a student moving forward to next steps, e.g.; GCSE English Language and Maths, and all others should be offered in summer 2021.” (Exams officer or manager)

“I feel that this is too much pressure to fit in a full autumn series. There simply is not the time to do it in a live secondary school. The impact of taking over rooms, sports hall, theatre etc to use as exam rooming is too great. In addition, we have to take into account the additional cost to the school in running another series (invigilators, entries etc).” (Exams officer or manager)

For those respondent groups who identified themselves as a member of a senior leadership team, 73% supported the proposal and suggested that it was the fairest option for their students. Twenty-four per cent of the same respondent group did not support the proposal and they commented particularly on the impact of the autumn examination series on the rest of school life.

“There are considerable concerns around where these exams will be held. If secondary schools are required to seat exams for pupils who have left in the autumn term then this will have a significant detrimental effect on the year 11/13 2020-21 cohort. We will not be able to hold practice exams in this window, sports facilities we will be unusable for other year groups, and considerable leadership capacity will be used arranging these including safeguarding arrangements for having ex-pupils on site.” (SLT - Senior leadership team)

A small proportion of respondents seem to have misunderstood the proposal and thought that the autumn examinations would be mandatory and that all students will be required to take exams in all the subjects that they had originally been entered for in the summer.

“Exams should be available for those who wish to take them. They should NOT be mandatory but an option and equally students should be able to opt to take just one exam should that be a subject they feel they need to retake.” (Parent or carer)

Of those respondents who identified themselves as an awarding organisation or exam board, only one of the boards that currently offer GCSEs, AS and A levels agreed with the proposal, one neither agreed nor disagreed, one disagreed and one strongly disagreed. However, all of their comments agreed that those qualifications required for progression should be available. There were reservations about offering a full suite of AS qualifications in the autumn examination series. AS qualifications have low entries and are normally taken in year 12, which provides an opportunity for the students to take the exam when they are in year 13 if they are unhappy with the calculated grade awarded.

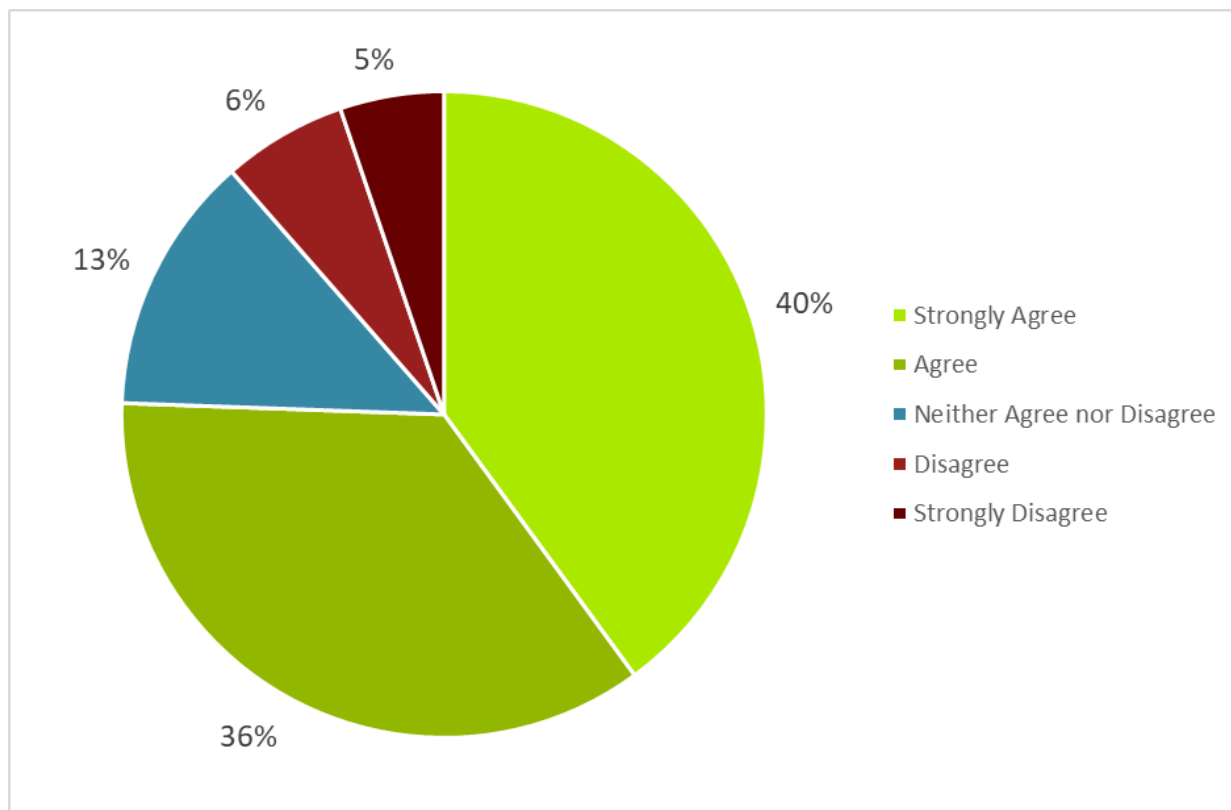
“We agree that all A level qualifications and GCSE qualifications should be offered. If the purpose of the Autumn series is to offer an opportunity for students who were not able to receive a grade for the summer series (such as private candidates) and for whom, without an opportunity to take assessments this autumn may not be able to progress to their next stage of learning, or for students who may be disappointed with their calculated grade and similarly cannot progress to their next phase of learning, they should have the opportunity to take these assessments prior to summer 2021.” (Awarding body or exam board)

“In the context of resource and operational pressures on centres and exam boards, we [Exam Board] believe the exceptional autumn 2020 resit series should prioritise those qualifications which deliver the most educational benefit and are important for progression. For example, we note that AS-level Maths and Further Maths are often used for progression, and therefore we believe should be included. However, all other AS qualifications have low entries and over 80% are taken in year 12. These can be resat in summer 2021 if candidates are unhappy with their result in summer 2020.” (Awarding body or exam board)

Awarding bodies or exam boards also expressed concerns about costs and burden of the proposal - these are reported in the regulatory impact assessment section of the report.

“An autumn series, particularly where large centres are concerned, will cause disruption to teaching and learning for those in the current year 10 and 12 who will be taking their exams in 2021. In addition, exam accommodation and management may be costly if they cannot be situated on a school or college site.” (Other)

Q2. To what extent do you agree or disagree that an exam board that receives no entries for a qualification by its entry deadline can withdraw the exams for that qualification from the exam timetable?



Q2 responses	Count	Percentage
Strongly Agree	1,378	40%
Agree	1,229	36%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	448	13%
Disagree	215	6%
Strongly Disagree	180	5%
Q2 total responses		3,450
No response		31
Survey total responses		3,481

Seventy-six per cent of all respondents were in support of the proposal that an exam board that receives no entries for a qualification by its entry deadline can withdraw the exams for that qualification from the exam timetable. Eleven per cent of respondents did not support this proposal, the comments focused mainly on the need in the current circumstances to have the flexibility to make a late entry.

“If there is no uptake it seems unnecessary to run an exam however if even 1 student is entered it should run. Students should not have to change exam boards for their qualifications.” (Exams officer or manager)

“Even if the numbers are small for any subject, the chance to improve on the grade awarded in that subject might make a lot of difference to an individual candidate” (Examiner)

“Withdrawing qualifications with 0 entries will avoid excess costs.” (Student)

“The possibility of late entries needs to be kept open given all the uncertainties of the present situation” (SLT – Senior leadership team)

Awarding bodies or exam boards supported the proposal that an exam board that receives no entries for a qualification by its entry deadline can withdraw the exams for that qualification from the exam timetable. Within their comments they suggested that the threshold of 0 entries was too low and gave a number of reasons which included the technical challenges of awarding small entry cohorts; disproportionate costs involved and the wish to save costs to be passed back to centres.

“Ofqual’s consultation document proposes that only qualifications with zero entries should be withdrawn. [Exam Board] believes this threshold is far too low, and would instead propose that a national entry of 100 should be set as the minimum threshold, in the context of costs to exam boards, considerable awarding challenges related to our ability to set standards in line with previous awards and the obligation to preserve savings from the summer 2020 exam series for returning to centres.” (Awarding body or exam board)

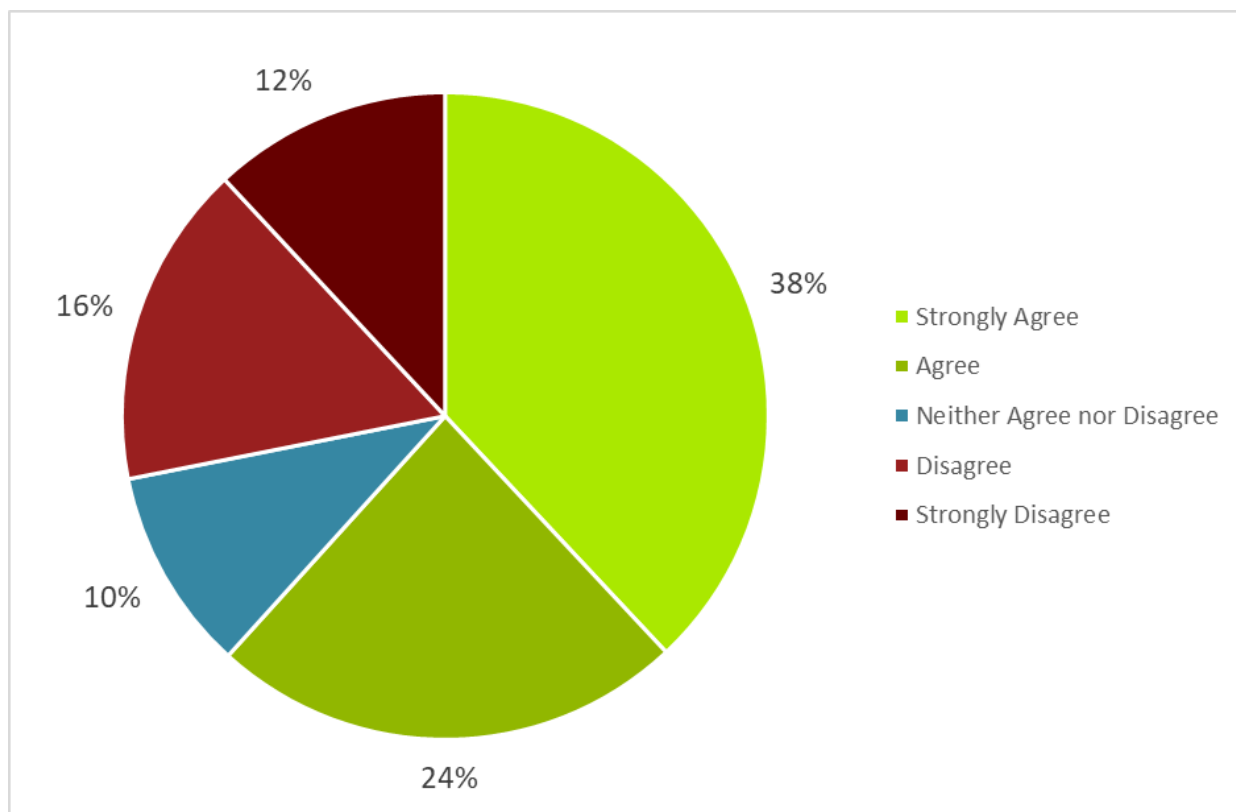
Q3. Do you have any comments on our proposal to require the exam boards to offer exams in every GCSE, AS and A level subject in autumn 2020?

In total, 1,614 respondents answered this question.

The themes that arose from the comments have been included within the analysis of the previous two questions.

The form and number of exams in the autumn series

Q4. To what extent do you agree or disagree that for the autumn series the same number of exams should be taken by students as they would have taken if the summer exams had not been cancelled?



Q4 responses	Count	Percentage
Strongly Agree	1,314	38%
Agree	819	24%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	351	10%
Disagree	559	16%
Strongly Disagree	413	12%
Q4 total responses	3,456	
No response	25	
Survey total responses	3,481	

The majority of respondents (62%) either strongly agreed or agreed that for the autumn series, the same number of exams should be taken by students as they would have taken if the summer exams had not been cancelled.

Most respondent groups showed a similar level of agreement. However, 75% of schools or colleges strongly agreed or agreed that students should take the same number of exams for each qualification.

Some respondents made comments that supported their agreement with students taking the same number of exams for each qualification.

“The same number of exams should be taken as students will use past papers to revise and having a different form will confuse them in the exam and may lead to a lower grade being achieved. Also, to allow the opportunity for students who missed an exam for reasons out of their control to take an exam and receive a grade.” (Student)

“If a student takes exams it should be exactly the same as it would’ve been in every way.” (Parent or carer)

“We [other representative or interest group] agree that the number and format of exam papers must be the same as students would have expected had they sat their exams in the summer term. Teachers will have ensured students knew the format and expectations for each paper and students will have completed assessments and mock exams using past questions and past papers.” (Other representative or interest group)

Respondents added to their agreement of students taking the same number of exams with comments about this being the only fair approach.

“To give a fair outcome the same number of exams should be taken.” (Exams officer or manager)

“The same number of exams should be taken to ensure fairness and match preparations the students will have done.” (Student)

“Reducing the number of exams would limit a candidate’s ability to demonstrate understanding and would have implications on the ability to compare outcomes with previous examinations.” (Awarding body or exam board)

Some respondents agreed with the proposal but added that replicating a full exam series, with all the required exams, would be a challenge in centres.

“My only concern about this is how to fit all of these exams into the time-frame available, especially since exams may need to be more spaced out across the day to allow greater time to organise cleaning and distancing should restrictions still be in place.” (SLT – Senior leadership team)

“I think this is fairest on the students but running this many exams with students in, whilst possibly social distancing will be very challenging logistically. It might need a re-think if the 2m rule is going to be enforced.” (School or college)

“If students are required to take the same number of exams as in the Summer series, and if the number of students wishing to take the exams is high, then schools are going to find this very difficult to administer. We will be in the very difficult situation of setting up partial or full return to school for (in our case) years 7 to 13, alongside running a full exam series. It may seem trivial but it will put our sports hall and gym out of action for a considerable period of time. This will compromise our ability to run the school in a safe, socially distant and effective manner.” (SLT – Senior leadership team)

Twenty-eight per cent of respondents strongly disagreed or disagreed with our proposal. This level of disagreement was seen across all respondent types, although it was lower (21%) in the respondents identified as parents or carers.

Some respondents followed up their disagreement with comments outlining why students should not take the same number of exams for each qualification.

“Given the crisis, this would be unfair.” (Teacher – responding in a personal capacity)

“Given the current situation this would cause unnecessary stress and anxiety for students trying to transition to college and deal with the demands of their new courses.” (SLT – Senior leadership team)

Other reasons that respondents provided for disagreeing or strongly disagreeing with our proposal included that students have missed too much teaching since schools have been closed and that they will not have sufficient time to prepare.

“Too many papers, too much learning lost from March to Summer.” (SLT – Senior leadership team)

“I think you need to take into consideration that not every student will have finished the content they need for the exam. Many students are having to teach themselves the last few topics of their course. Students are also very stressed about the whole situation and a shorter exam series would benefit exam boards and centres too.” (Student)

“Students have been out of a learning environment for a long time - this means that they have missed valuable teaching time and will not have the time to catch this up in the autumn term.” (Teacher – responding in a personal capacity)

“It would be unfair on students to have to do the same exams they would have done in the summer, as they missed two months of learning extra content due to quarantine.” (Student)

“You have to bear in mind that KS4 will have started new KS5 courses and KS5 students may have gone to university or an apprenticeship. To expect them to prepare and sit the same number of exams and start their new courses is unfair and will create further pressure and anxiety on the students.” (Teacher – responding in a personal capacity)

“Students would not have the time to prepare as they would have done for the summer exams and so there should be fewer exams per subject or a different form.” (Student)

Some exams officers and managers commented that having the same number of exams would present insurmountable logistical issues in centres.

“Capacity - holding multiple exams per subject for hundreds of candidates at a time when the school is at top capacity (with all year groups in, not just those who are returning to retake).” (Exams officer and manager)

“The concern is how long the examination series will be. Currently exams in the summer run over 6 weeks and educational establishments may not be able to support 6 weeks of examinations in the Autumn term due to rooming

and impacting on the new terms teaching and the revision that resit pupils will require.” (Exams officer and manager)

“If GCSEs are offered, the same number of exams would impact learning in year 12. To organise an Autumn exams series for every exam, with two or three papers, at relatively short notice, not knowing how Covid-19 will affect it, is challenging.” (Exams officer and manager)

Some respondents suggested a better solution would be to have fewer exams or exams of a different length per qualification in the autumn series.

“Could one paper touching on all topics be used?” (Exams officer or manager)

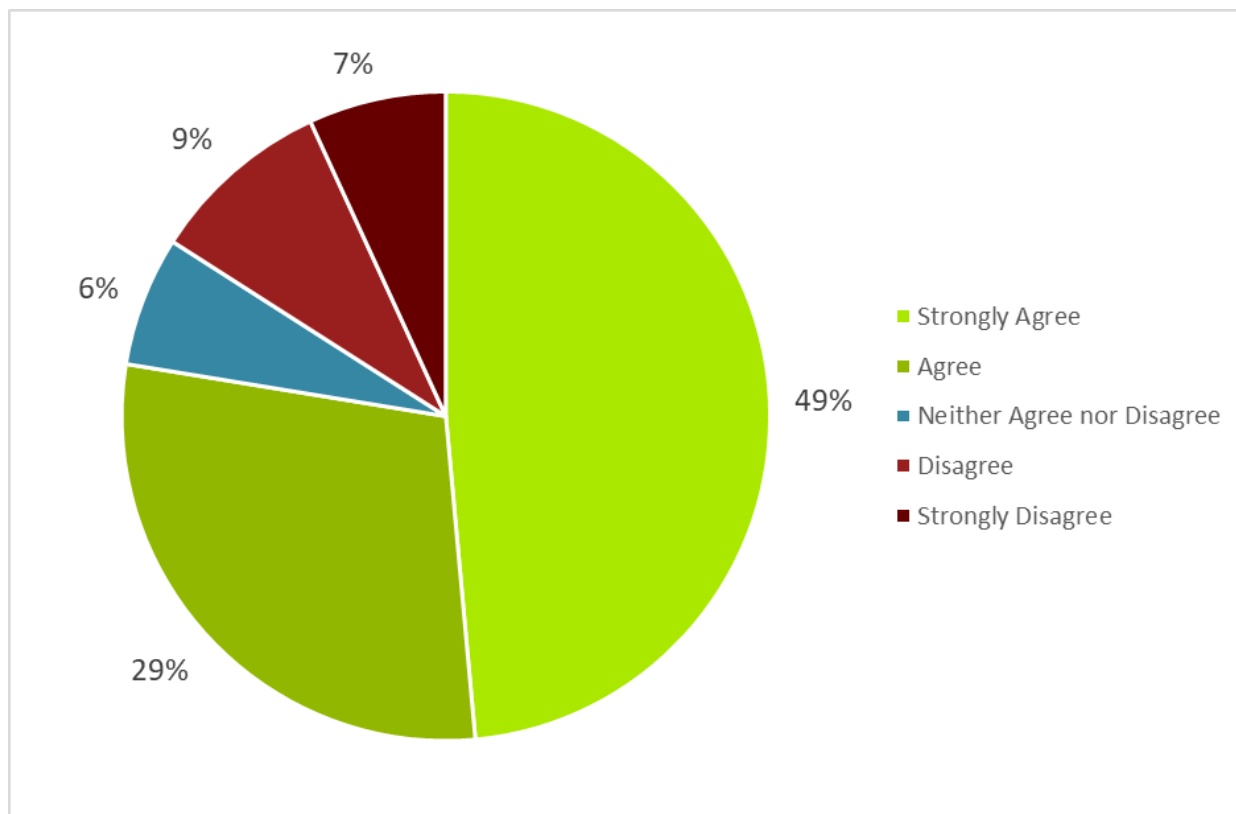
“Do maximum 2 exams for each subject. Ensure a wide range of topics are covered.” (Student)

“It might be better to have fewer but longer exams so that students have the opportunity to demonstrate their skills, knowledge and understanding but without impinging too much on their continuing studies.” (Parent or carer)

“I believe there should be a smaller number of exams per subject e.g. instead of taking 3 maths exams, take 1 which covered all areas of maths.” (Student – private, home-educated of any age)

“I think it would be better for students to have a more condensed exam where possible and sit only one paper per subject where they can do so and still demonstrate knowledge of the syllabus.” (Parent or carer)

Q5. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the exams taken in the autumn series should be in the same form for each qualification as those normally taken in the summer series?



Q5 responses	Count	Percentage
Strongly Agree	1,676	49%
Agree	1,002	29%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	223	6%
Disagree	314	9%
Strongly Disagree	237	7%
Q5 total responses		3,452
No response		29
Survey total responses		3,481

The majority of respondents (78%) either strongly agreed or agreed that the exams taken in the autumn series should be in the same form for each qualification as those normally taken in the summer series.

Most respondent groups showed a similar level of agreement. However, 88% of schools or colleges strongly agreed or agreed that the exams should be in the same form.

Some respondents commented in support of the proposal:

“In a time of considerable stress and uncertainty for students, sticking to the format for which they have prepared is sensible.” (Teacher – responding in a personal capacity)

“I think this is the only fair solution. They will have practised past papers and been thoroughly prepared by their teachers and mock exams in what form to expect.” (Exams officer or manager)

“Students work to prepare for a particular form of examination and to change this would put additional pressure upon those students.” (Teacher – responding in a personal capacity)

“I agree that the same framework of examination is required for the proposed re-sits where amount of papers, their length and scope should be the same as in the planned summer series.” (SLT – Senior leadership team)

“Particularly for students who couldn’t receive a Centre Assessed Grade for the summer exams, those students should have the opportunity to sit the exams in the same form as normal.” (Exams officer or manager)

Some respondents suggested this would be the only fair and / or valid approach.

“We agree with Ofqual’s proposal that exams taken in the autumn series should be in the same form for each qualification as those normally taken in the summer series. As Ofqual’s proposal makes clear, setting a new style of paper, with which candidates are unfamiliar, would put them at a disadvantage so that the autumn series is not a fair opportunity in which for candidates to demonstrate their performance.” (Awarding body or exam board)

“A large part of taking exams and getting the marks is exam practice and different question types have different formats. Therefore changing the format would put students at a disadvantage because it would be something that teachers have not seen before, and students have not seen before.” (Student)

“There needs to be parity with the summer exam season in order to guarantee how those exams are viewed by universities and employers.” (SLT – Senior leadership team)

“If you make any changes it will undermine the validity of these results when compared with previous years.” (Examiner)

“We agree that the number of exams and their format should be the same as for those exams candidates would have sat in the summer. Any attempt to adapt papers to allow for, say, gaps in learning would almost certainly introduce unfairness as there will be huge variation in which parts of the specification content different students will have covered. Any changes in format would also create unnecessary uncertainty for students who will be familiar with past papers and will have prepared for and expected exams that would look like the ones they would have taken in the summer.” (Awarding body or exam board)

Some respondents agreed with the proposal but added caveats. These included that students are coping with exceptional circumstances and that replicating a full exam series, with all the required exams, would be a challenge in centres. Also, that

students would need the same input from teachers and preparation time if exams are to be in the same form.

“Although I agree we need to keep exams the same for fairness to previous years, I am also acutely aware that students will not be in the same mind-set to sit these exams in Autumn - they have not had a full education, they would be expected to get used to school life again and sit exams even though they have been through a traumatic experience; many having lost close family members and been away from friends to help cope with the experience. They will also have gaps in their education and are out of exam preparation.”
(Exams officer or manager)

“In an ideal world, at an ideal time the answer to the above is of course it should mirror the examinations they would have taken. The reality is we are living in neither, currently. As such a full series of examinations and full series of papers per qualification seems a disproportionate / excessive response, which will create further disruption and potential difficulties to an already non-ideal return to the academic year.” (School or college)

“We feel this is the right solution but want it noted that this will be a logistical challenge for schools and students who will be also studying for their new courses.” (School or college)

“A full exam series will potentially be a mammoth undertaking and depending on numbers of candidates we will have to allow for a variety of halls/rooms to close whilst continuing to spread the school around site for social distancing in normal teaching subjects. We would have problems under current circumstances holding candidates in a waiting area prior to exams starting and they may demand pre-exam booster sessions which would impact teaching and resources at our school as we do not have post-16 provision. We're unlikely to be able to get our normal invigilators to come into school in the Autumn term as many are shielding meaning we would pretty much be obliged to routinely use teaching staff to invigilate. This would require me to train staff to be invigilators and take them away from teaching duties. Invigilators normally speak softly standing close to one candidate if they ask a question during the exam and this wouldn't be able to happen under current conditions.” (Exams officer or manager)

“As long as they are given full support and taught the lesson/curriculum that they would have got in March April June and July!!!!” (Parent or carer)

Others noted the need for modified papers for some students, suggesting this would be easier if the exam papers intended for summer 2020 were used in the autumn series. There was also concern that particular groups of students might be disadvantaged if the exams in the autumn series were not in the usual form.

“The Autumn series should mirror the examinations offered in Summer 2020. In fact, it is preferable that the current cancelled Summer 2020 series SHOULD be offered as the new Autumn 2020 series. As a teacher/modifier/producer of modified large print and braille examinations, it is extremely sensible that the existing Summer 2020 examinations are “re-used” for the Autumn series. There is NOT sufficient time to modify and prepare all the subjects offered in Summer 2020 as new examinations for Autumn 2020. The cost to the examination boards per series for modified papers is very high

indeed. This cost would be saved IF the Summer 2020 examinations were used for the new Autumn 2020 series.” (Other representative or interest group)

“Totally agree the exams should look the same and follow the same format. It would seriously disadvantage some learners, particularly those with SEND, if you were to change the format. Students would be unprepared for the new style.” (SLT – Senior leadership team)

“For most students, a new exam format would be detrimental, but for those with learning difficulties, getting the right support to do these in time, would be nigh impossible.” (Parent or carer)

“One of the most likely sources of unfairness will be the diverse levels of support that different students will have been able to access in order to prepare for exams in the autumn. This is not something that can be adjusted for in the exams themselves. Rather, it underlines the need to ensure that the format and number of exams for each subject are exactly as students were led to expect when they began studying towards their GCSEs or A Levels.” (Awarding body or exam board)

“For those with learning difficulties, a change to exam paper format would be very detrimental. Having to continue with schooling in a new term and the possibility of university, is not going to be to the benefit of anyone sitting an exam in the autumn. Changing the format is so wrong when 2 years has been spent learning the current format. All things will change on the paper, such as timing what covered in the paper. Students not at school will not have help from teachers etc.” (Student)

Sixteen per cent of respondents strongly disagreed or disagreed that the exams taken in the autumn series should be in the same form for each qualification as those normally taken in the summer series.

This level of disagreement was seen across all respondent types, although it was lower (10%) in the respondents identified as representing schools or colleges.

Some respondents explained why they disagreed with the proposal:

“I realise that you may have to adapt this, just as all other areas of life are being adapted. In an ideal world, it would be the same as the 'normal exams' but this situation is different.” (SLT – Senior leadership team)

“There is an argument for changing the format if it means that the 2020 students won't be further disadvantaged by the cancellation of the summer exams.” (Student – private, home-educated of any age)

Other reasons why some respondents favoured a different form for the exams included that students have missed teaching since schools have been closed and that they will not have sufficient time to prepare.

“Students will have gone at least 6 months with no teaching by the time these exams take place. It seems hugely unfair to expect them to sit the same exams they would have in the summer, after months of focused teaching and revision.” (Teacher – responding in a personal capacity)

“I am a sixth form student and I find myself and my fellow classmates at a huge disadvantage if the autumn exams were to be exactly the same as the

summer exams if they went as planned. I know that several classes have not finished teaching content that we would be examined on when lockdown was put in place.” (Student)

“They cannot be in the same form. This is unprecedented and students will have missed a significant time of learning.” (SLT – Senior leadership team)

“Students cannot be expected to sit the full exam when some courses might not have finished being taught before school closures.” (Teacher – responding in a personal capacity)

Some respondents suggested possible alternative options:

“To compensate for lost learning time more choice should be given on the exam papers. No content should be excluded as different schools will have covered different topics but CHOICE is essential.” (Teacher – responding in a personal capacity)

“Students will have prepared for a particular format and there would be little time to adapt, setting them at a disadvantage. It should be possible to gain an overview of ability/knowledge with one well-constructed paper per subject.” (Exams officer or manager)

“I think that there should be one or two papers, depending on the subject, with a list of topics provided, so the students are aware what to revise.” (Student)

“If a combined paper were on offer, with elements of all three papers, this would be good. There would be huge savings on time, costs and stress on students.” (Teacher – responding in a personal capacity)

“I think it would be better for students to have a more condensed exam where possible and sit only one paper per subject where they can do so and still demonstrate knowledge of the syllabus. Many students taking exams in the autumn will be doing so purely because they can’t get a predicted grade and they should be allowed to get their qualifications and move on to their other projects as soon as possible and with minimal disruption.” (Parent or carer)

“There should be a smaller number of papers and smaller amount of content that should be learnt for autumn exam.” (Student)

Q6. Do you have any comments on our proposal that students taking the autumn exams should take the same number of exams in each subject as they would have taken if the summer exams had not been cancelled and that the exams should be in the same form as the ones they would have taken in the summer?

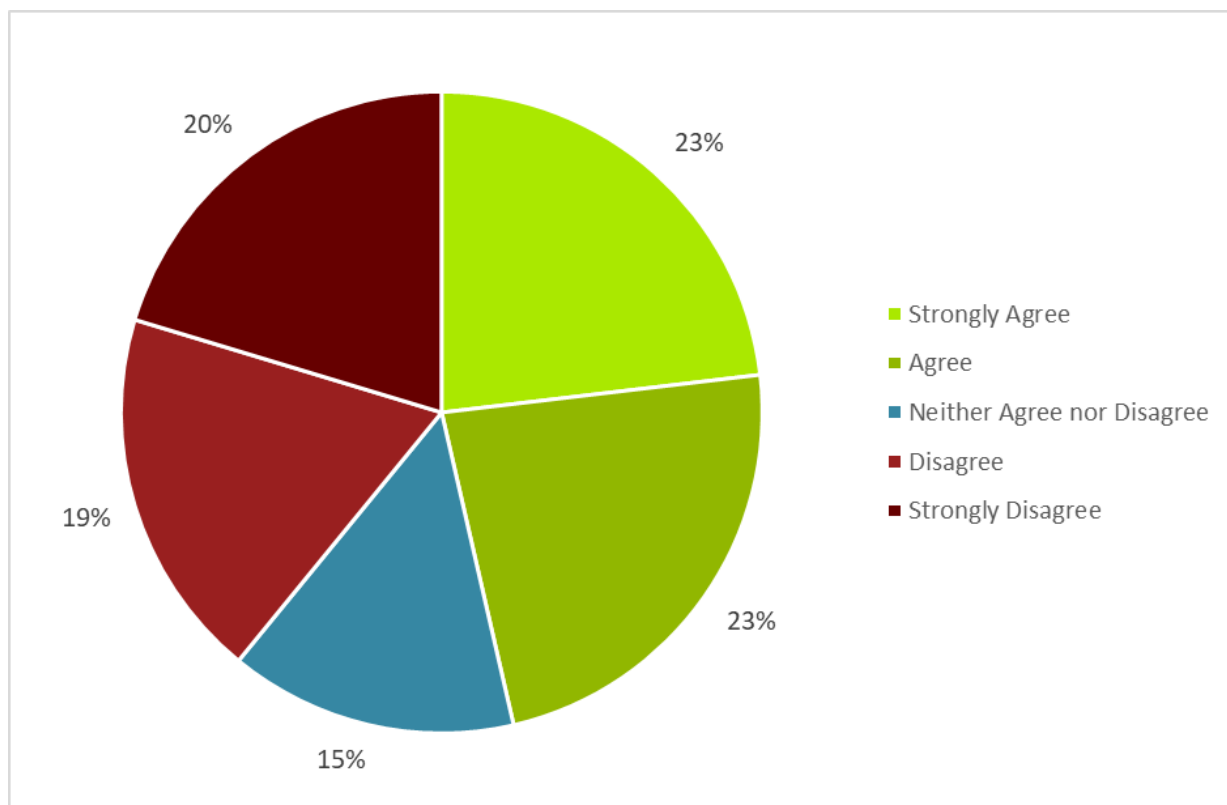
In total, 1,548 respondents answered this question.

The themes that arose from the detailed comments have been included within the analysis of questions 4 and 5.

Some respondents raised points that indicated that question 4 had been misunderstood with respondents thinking that the number of exams referred to overall rather than just per qualification. The analysis of this issue has been covered in question 1.

Approach to non-exam assessment

Q7. To what extent do you agree or disagree that, with the exception of art and design, grades for GCSE, AS and A level awarded in the autumn should be based only on students' performance in their exams, with no non-exam assessment?



Q7 responses	Count	Percentage
Strongly Agree	629	23%
Agree	633	23%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	395	15%
Disagree	510	19%
Strongly Disagree	553	20%
Q7 total responses		2,720
No response		761
Survey total responses		3,481

Responses to this question were fairly evenly split between those in favour (46%) and those who opposed (39%) our proposal that, with the exception of art and design, grades for GCSE, AS and A level awarded in the autumn should be based on students' performance in their exams, with no non-exam assessment (NEA). This response profile was closely mirrored by teachers, parents and carers, and students. There were higher agreement rates from senior leadership teams (54%), exams officers and managers (60%), schools or colleges (60%), and academy chains (90%).

This question attracted many comments from respondents covering a range of views and themes.

“This is a very complex situation and there is no easy answer to this.” (SLT – Senior leadership team)

A key factor for those who supported our proposal was the need to identify a solution that was as fair as possible for all students in the circumstances. Respondents commented on the differing states of completeness of students’ non-exam assessment work at the point schools and colleges were closed in March 2020, as well as uncertainty about the extent to which students were able to access and progress work during the lockdown.

“As the Head of Humanities, overseeing the process of the NEA for History, I know that we are not in a position to offer the expected level of marking or moderation. The school closures came long before the deadline, and students were at various stages of completion. It would be very difficult for those who had got less far to catch up, and I think it will be fairer if this is discounted for all, rather than counted for all to the disadvantage of many.” (Teacher – responding in a personal capacity)

“It seems to be the fairest way to provide a level playing field. Trying to provide equal access to NEA will be logistically difficult and not all students will have access to the support/resources they will need if they are working away from their school. This will inevitably introduce unfairness.” (Teacher – responding in a personal capacity)

“I believe this will be the fairest way for the majority of candidates; using current NEA is fraught with problems due to the partial completion/full completion issue but also due to the fact that it will be much harder to verify that work has been produced by candidates in line with the exam boards’ regulations.” (SLT – Senior leadership team)

Some respondents commented on the logistical challenges that centres would face if offering non-exam assessments in the autumn.

“The arguments for not having NEA include simplified administration and recognition that candidates may not have had a chance to complete all NEA work before schools were closed. There would potentially be safety issues around pupils coming into school and completing NEA work, and this would represent extra workload for teachers and individuals accessing facilities when no longer pupils of the school. We consider that keeping everything exam only is better and gives consistency across the board. All candidates taking exams in the autumn will effectively be private candidates (and therefore not current pupils) so it is very difficult to see how they can come into schools and access support from staff.” (School or college)

“Whilst there will be students who are significantly impacted by these decisions, notably in my Centre in music and drama, the shortened timescale, likely social distancing and fairness for all dictates that these qualifications should be exam based. Where NEA data was available at the time of CAG submission then this will already have been used by Centres in their consideration of the CAG.” (SLT – Senior leadership team)

“There will be no time, and teaching resources, to complete NEA with the Autumn term before an October exam series. It is likely that this will be a very challenging period for centres to deliver their normal education. Also any completed NEA has already fed into the CAGs issued.” (School or college)

A few respondents who supported our proposal expressed regret in doing so, and warned that the autumn arrangements should not set a precedent for future years.

“It is regrettable that non-exam assessment will not be able to form part of a student’s grade in the autumn series, as it is an important and significant part of many subjects. There does not, however, seem to be a viable option for its inclusion in a way that is fair to all, given the disruption that lockdown has caused to the non-exam assessment process in schools and colleges.” (Other representative or interest group)

“I agree that you must exclude non-exam assessment with reluctance and really only because I cannot see a way in which schools can organise anything which needs group participation such as drama or PE. And I can see the calculated grades included non-exam assessment. But for all the subjects with non-exam assessment, this must not set a precedent.” (Other)

“We recognise that Ofqual is taking a pragmatic approach given the circumstances. However, many teachers and their students will be disappointed. Candidates’ mastery of the crucial knowledge that underpins programming will not be assessed. We see this as the ‘least worst’ option in response to extreme circumstances, rather than an ideal one and recommend that Ofqual makes assurances that this does not signal any future policy direction.” (Other representative or interest group)

Many respondents were concerned, however, that the lack of non-exam assessment would compromise the validity of some qualifications. This was particularly the case for subjects with a high proportion of practical work. This view was shared across the respondent groups as well as by those who agreed and disagreed with our proposal.

“Agree in relation to the majority of ‘academic’ areas where non-examined work provides an alternative to exam-based assessment. However, there are also a number of other courses, particularly those in the performing arts (music, dance, drama) where there is a significant amount of performance and to ignore this when providing a mark will unfairly disadvantage these students. The grade should reflect their practical ability as well as the theory ability. We would request that in areas like this, provision is made for practical elements to be considered, either by staff assessment or resubmission / submission of a reduced practical element.” (School or college)

“It is hard to see that for practical and performance-based subjects such as music, dance, performing arts, D&T etc. that the examination alone is a fair and valid assessment of the subject. For these qualifications, NEA is included as it is an essential element of the qualification and assessing students on just the written exam will distort the outcomes and lead to HE, FE and employers questioning the usefulness of the grades as an indicator of future potential. For example, in music, student performance will be judged purely on theory with no assessment of performance and composing skills which are at the heart of the subject. This will give very different results to those which would

have been achieved assessing all the components of the qualification and will lead to inherently invalid assessments and outcomes.” (School or college)

“In PE it would make a mockery of the qualification. The autumn examination would examine a different skill set from that required by the standard rubric and would favour students who are academically gifted but low-level performers. The autumn cohort would also be absolved from the EAPI [evaluation and analysis of performance for improvement] - arguably the most rigorous differentiator where candidates are required to apply knowledge from all areas of the specification to practical performance. This is unfair and would produce "skewed" results.” (Teacher – responding in a personal capacity)

Additionally, respondents commented that the lack of non-exam assessment meant that the autumn qualifications would not be comparable with those awarded in the summer, or in other years. As a consequence, some were concerned that this would undermine the credibility of the qualifications and that the autumn results would not be taken seriously because they would not be a fair reflection of students’ achievements.

“I understand the logistical difficulties but have deep reservations about the changed nature of the overall assessment and the consequences for fairness of the grades awarded in the autumn in comparison with students who took the qualifications at other times. NEAs have been limited to subjects where they were considered vital to give a fair reflection of ability in that subject.” (Exams officer or manager)

“This is a pragmatic approach with little alternative, however, for subjects where there is a significant performance measure e.g. PE, Music, drama etc the balance will not be fair for all candidates and not all assessment objectives will have been fully assessed. It is also a shame that those candidates who had already invested a lot of time into their NEA will not get recognition for their efforts.” (Local authority)

“NEAs only exist to reflect qualities that students need to demonstrate to meet the learning objectives and which cannot be demonstrated in exams. Hence, a grade for a subject achieved absent NEA will look the same as a normal grade on a certificate but it will not be certifying the same qualities.” (Teacher – responding in a personal capacity)

“This is absurd and unfair - the coursework element is just as important a component as the exam but testing different skills in different circumstances. The coursework is there to provide evidence of knowledge and skills deemed intrinsic to the nature of the academic discipline - to discount this is to add another unfair element to the disadvantage these year groups are already under.” (Teacher – responding in a personal capacity)

Some respondents commented that the removal of non-exam assessment would potentially disadvantage some groups of students and widen the attainment gap.

“Whilst we recognise that there are strong reasons for this decision we are concerned that it will have a negative impact on deaf candidates many of whom show what they know and can do much better in non-exam assessments as equality impact assessment submissions from [our] and other organisations have often stated.” (Other representative or interest group)

"We are concerned that the exclusion of non-exam assessments may have an adverse impact on the outcomes for disabled learners. Disabled learners are likely to perform better in non-exam assessment. We therefore welcome Ofqual's proposal to consider grade distribution at cohort level and to adjust grade boundaries accordingly however this will need to be carefully monitored in terms of the potential impact on rank ordering and the outcomes of others. We would recommend the same standardisation process that is being used to calculate grades is replicated in some way here." (Other representative or interest group)

"For many subjects the NEA is the real indicator of ability in that subject and it would seriously disadvantage pupils who find written exams difficult but would have shone in their practical exams and thus achieved a higher grade." (Teacher – responding in a personal capacity)

"This would place many students at a huge disadvantage. Most students who opt for GCSE FPN [food preparation and nutrition] do not have strengths associated with exam performances." (Teacher – responding in a personal capacity)

"I perform significantly better when given a prolonged period of time to produce an NEA than when given 2 hours to complete a paper, and I'd like to think that my hard work on my NEA will contribute to my grade. Surely there will be a way of standardizing this to accommodate for students who have only partially completed their NEA." (Student)

Many respondents who disagreed with our proposal felt it was unfair to disregard the non-exam assessment work that students had carried out, and suggested that it could still be taken into account.

"This is really difficult. Students choose these subjects sometimes because their practical skills are much better than their exam skills. Examining in a subject and not including an NEA would be very unfair to those subjects when the prime skills are not being tested. Could their current NEA be completed and used/marked as normal and counted towards their grade?" (Exams officer or manager)

"My daughter does Music, Drama and Dance. For the whole of her time at college she has been working on the non-exam assessed work in the form of performances, which make up most of her A levels (60% I think?). How can you have exams in autumn without reference to the performance work? That is what these subjects are about. The exam papers are the lesser part - theory and performance analysis. Nearly all her work was completed in Drama and Music and Dance just had one element left before her college closed, so it is all being taken into account for the summer grades, but we are worried she won't get the grades she deserves (predicted 3 As) because the college has not had great results for the last 3 years, before the new principal came in. She had worked so hard on all her subjects - how can it not be included? She would be gutted." (Parent or carer)

"Resit applicants who were supposed to redo their exams this summer were promised that their previous non-exam assessment would be carried forward and included. Students have worked incredibly on their non-exam assessments as they were told it would impact their final grade- it would be

unfair if this was no longer true.” (Student – private, home-educated of any age)

Others suggested that students should be given the opportunity to finish off their uncompleted non-exam assessment work in the autumn and submit this for grading alongside their written examinations.

“The NEA is a vital part of A level geog. It was required in the new spec by the universities. Some excel at the NEA and it boosts their grade. They will have time to finish it in Sept if necessary.” (Teacher – responding in a personal capacity)

“NEA has been reduced in most subjects in recent years. For example, at GCSE, to quote from Ofqual's new principles for reformed GCSEs, it is only used when "it is the only way to assess essential elements of the subject". Therefore, the proposal to reduce NEA assessment like this is tantamount to proposing an exam series which omits elements that are essential. It obviously lacks validity and fairness to the candidates. Some - perhaps many - centres will have substantially or fully completed NEA, and with a window of opportunity prior to the exams more could be done, and those candidates who still lack complete portfolios can be dealt with under the usual special consideration rules. At the moment the proposal to restrict NEA on the grounds that using it is unfair to those who have not completed is in effect proposing a system that is equally unfair to all those who will participate in the autumn series.” (SLT – Senior leadership team)

A large number of respondents proposed that the written examinations should be accompanied by a separate centre assessment grade that reflected the students' expected performance in their non-exam components.

“I don't believe it is possible to remove non-exam assessment from courses and for results attained to be fair or acceptable to students, many of whom would have opted for those subjects because of relevant practical skill. I feel schools should be asked (before the results' days) to submit Centre Assessed Grades for all non-exam assessments, using completed NEAs wherever possible. An Autumn series result should then come from a combination of Autumn exams and CAGs that have already been submitted for NEAs. I feel it is a serious disadvantage to students who chose subjects with NEA components to ignore this element of the final grade, however tempting that might be for logistical reasons.” (SLT – Senior leadership team)

“In the same way that teachers and schools are producing centre assessment grades for overall subjects for Summer 2020, I think schools should be asked for a centre assessment grades for the NEA element only of a qualification, on the basis of the expected grade if the student had had an opportunity to finish the NEA or if it was already completed. Then no student would be disadvantaged by the stage they were at with their NEA. The number of students requiring this task could be quite small and teachers now know how to assess like this anyway.” (Exams officer or manager)

“This disproportionately disadvantages students taking courses with high levels of NEA and changes the outcome of assessments within the specification. Different skills are assessed in different components and it is widely regarded amongst Drama teachers that NEA better assesses a

student's ability in Drama than a written examination. Therefore, by choosing to discount NEA and turn the course into 100% written examination, the assessment does not fit the course content and therefore cannot be considered valid. The only viable solution here, considering the problems faced, is to trust teachers' initial grade judgements in the initial awarding of grades and/or carry NEA consideration forward in the November series.”
(Other representative or interest group)

“If you are ruling out practical performance you are in essence not providing a valid or reliable qualification of that subject - a range of students would get a very different grade in the new style exam only qualification than they would have done if the original practical was taken into account - the format will strongly discriminate in favour of a student's theoretical knowledge - an estimated CAG for practical should be used in both the summer and autumn assessment” (School or college)

Overall, the comments indicated that there was virtually no interest for students to embark upon a brand new non-exam assessment in the autumn series.

“My answer depends on - if the NEAs can be carried over from Summer season - then count them. If they need to be redone Exam only.” (SLT – Senior leadership team)

“I would prefer this for admin/workload reasons. It would be impossible to produce a new NEA in this time frame so if the NEA was going to count it would need to be the existing one.” (Teacher – responding in a personal capacity)

“Logistically, it will be very difficult for pupils who have left the school to complete new NEA, especially with all the other difficulties that will be facing schools in September.” (School or college)

Q8. Do you have any comments on our proposed approach to basing grades for the autumn on students' exam performance only?

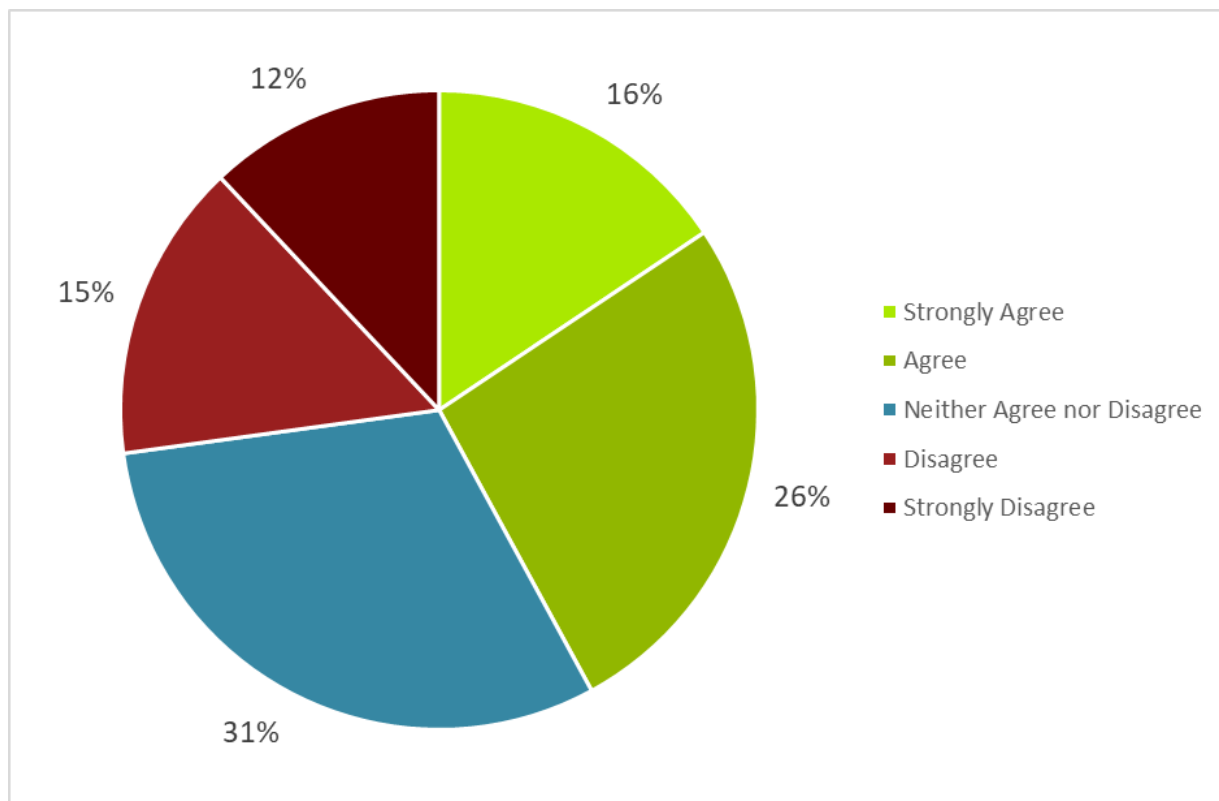
In total, 1,217 respondents answered this question.

The themes that arose from the detailed comments have been included within the analysis for question 7.

Some comments addressed other areas of our consultation and these have been considered with the appropriate analyses of the relevant questions. For example, concerns that the autumn assessments would be mandatory for all students (question 1) and concerns about the arrangements for GCSE, AS and A level art and design (questions 9 to 11).

In addition, a few respondents appeared to have misunderstood our proposals and were concerned that by “non-exam assessment” we intended to introduce different expectations for assessment evidence in the autumn. For example, for qualifications that are 100% assessment by examination, that we intended to use classwork, mini-tests and mock exam results.

Q9. To what extent do you agree or disagree that grades for GCSE, AS and A level art and design awarded in the autumn should be based on a new task completed under supervised conditions?



Q9 responses	Count	Percentage
Strongly Agree	322	16%
Agree	545	26%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	634	31%
Disagree	312	15%
Strongly Disagree	248	12%
Q9 total responses	2,061	
No response	1,420	
Survey total responses	3,481	

Forty-two per cent of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that grades for GCSE, AS and A level art and design awarded in the autumn should be based on a new task completed under supervised conditions. Twenty-seven per cent of respondents strongly disagreed or disagreed with the proposal, while 31% of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed.

The breakdown of responses by respondent group shows a degree of variation in how different groups answered this question. There was a high level of support for our proposals from universities and higher education institutions (83%) and local authorities (100%), as well as from academy chains (70%) and governors (70%). The majority of schools or colleges (59%), senior leadership teams (56%), exams

officers and managers (62%) and representative or interest groups (60%) were also in favour.

In contrast, the responses from teachers, parents and carers, and students were mixed with approximately 30% of each group in support and 30% not in support. All four exam boards who offer these qualifications did not support our proposal.

Those who supported our proposals commented on the need to ensure consistency and fairness for all students.

“To make it fair across centres there probably should be a new task. Some schools would have already started and even completed their exam [externally set assignment], whereas some schools won't have, so it's unfair that something outside of their control could affect grades. If all students used a new task then it would at least be fair.” (Exams officer or manager)

Some respondents regretted that students' previous work would not be taken into account in the autumn series, but noted that not all students would have finished this work prior to schools and colleges closing in March 2020.

“It is a shame that portfolios can't be included in the final grades awarded, but they would have benefited from the time spent on it and this would have been used to submit centre grades for the summer awards. Moderation of portfolios for this series will not be practical.” (Local authority)

“I feel for the students who have worked hard on portfolios for two years and who take this subject because they struggle with the stress of exams, but I can't see another fair way to do the assessment.” (Teacher – responding in a personal capacity)

Many of those who were not in favour of the new task were concerned that the work students had done during their course would go to waste.

“I think this proposal is completely unfair, disadvantaging any student who has been conscientious enough to complete all their coursework and examination preparation. My daughter is utterly dismayed by these proposals. We ask that there be an opportunity for all private candidates to submit their preparatory work, portfolio etc., to be moderated following an exam in November 2020 and that a “new” task is not set. The former is fair and the latter seems completely unnecessary, placing an additional burden on students. Any additional time and expense incurred by exam boards etc to provide these things is more than justified by the protection of the mental health and wellbeing of students. No price can be put on that.” (Parent or carer)

“Art and design students put a lot of time and effort into their work and so asking for a new task to be set would be unfair due to the amount of time and energy they would've previously wasted. Their talent will not change so I do not see why a new task is needed when there is lots of work to look at to make a graded decision on.” (Student)

Of those who supported our proposal, many commented on the logistics of delivering a new task in centres in the autumn.

“This seems fair and sensible. There will be an impact on centres in terms of rooming and facilities. This will be inconvenient, but I am hoping that staff will

see that it is for the wider benefit of the students.” (SLT – Senior leadership team)

“Although [we] agree that in these exceptional circumstances this is the most reasonable approach to take, there are logistical issues which need to be resolved. Students’ original centres may not have the capacity to facilitate 10-15 hours of non-exam assessment; this will take staff, rooms and learning resources away from their current cohorts, impacting on their teaching, learning and progress. As these hours need to be offered in substantive blocks of time, the only possibility might be to do this after the normal school day. Staggered start and finish times for students likely to be in operation to reduce social contact might create further problems. In all cases this will create additional workload for staff involved and potentially create a more stressful environment for students completing the assessment.” (Other representative or interest group)

“Our only concern about the proposals for Art and Design is that schools and colleges will need to find the time and space for their former students to return in order complete the task under supervised conditions; this could be difficult for some, particularly if social distancing measures are still in place.” (University or higher education institution)

Those who did not support our proposal also expressed concerns about manageability for centres. Respondents referred to the challenges they would face of having to accommodate students taking their art and design task, while also teaching the rest of their students, and amidst uncertainty about their ability to operate effectively in the autumn.

“We do not believe that it is practical for schools to offer a supervised 10 hour assessment for art and design students in the Autumn term under the current uncertainties. It will be practically difficult to achieve access to the right facilities for such an extended period of time whilst dealing with the potential Coronavirus restrictions which may exist and ensuring teaching and learning for current students. We cannot see how a task can be released and a window of opportunity created for students to sit the task, even under optimal conditions of a normal autumn term let alone with trying to catch up the education of 5 year groups who will have been disadvantaged by remote teaching. Even if the task is board set and marked it does not reduce the burden on schools to manage the delivery.” (School or college)

“Again, decisions are being made without knowledge of the extent to which schools can open in September. We cannot prioritise the previous cohort whilst jeopardising the Key Stage 3 students (who are most likely to be asked to stay away from school if schools do not fully open). The decisions about examining need to be made after the decisions about schools opening.” (SLT – Senior leadership team)

Many respondents were concerned about the lack of time and space for students and teachers to prepare for and carry out the new task.

“How will the students get the support and help they will need to be able to sit an Art exam. When will they have the opportunity to discuss their ideas face to face with their teachers to see if it is possible? How will they practice their ideas if they have no space or equipment at home? It puts students from

deprived backgrounds at a disadvantage. There is also a cost implication for the department.” (Teacher – responding in a personal capacity)

“The amount of work required to put an art installation together is phenomenal. It would be unrealistic to expect a new submission to be created especially if the time between announcing the new topic and submission will be short.” (Parent or carer)

“If a new task is to be set then it is important that the students have access to a centre and its facilities to be able to fully reach their potential and not be disadvantaged through having to work from home where resources may be limited. If the new task is going to be set it is important that students are given some period of preparation to consider what they will create in the timed assessment. It must also be a task that is very open ended so that students feel able to respond with any media 2D or 3D as all students will want to work with their specialist skills rather than it just being a set drawing task which would disadvantage some students.” (Teacher – responding in a personal capacity)

“I am worried about whether there would be sufficient space/time for the 'former' students to access to the college's facilities and this may disadvantage the students - in graphic communication and photography - access to Photoshop/Illustrator - expensive programs - the students have been taught using these industry-standard programs, free alternate programs don't always work as well, and in any case, students using these alternates would have to learn an entirely new program. In Fine Art and other subjects even issues like having the space to work bigger/access printing presses/even just printing ink, might affect the student's work.” (Teacher – responding in a personal capacity)

In addition to general concerns about insufficient time, many respondents commented on the importance of the preparatory work, both in terms of students being able to produce a final piece during the supervised session and for its role as assessment evidence against all aspects of the marking criteria.

“Both the existing question paper or new task must have a preparatory period as previously. Students must be suitably prepared for resolving the thought process and presentation of the concluding outcome. The research and design process are integral elements to the artistic process.” (Teacher – responding in a personal capacity)

“Regarding the new task for the art students to complete, I completely disagree. The students need time to build a feel for the topic they are studying so they learn to interpret and combine the ideas correctly in relation to their chosen theme. By giving them an entirely new topic they are thrown back into the deep end and wouldn't be able to display their topic in depth and in their work by simply one supervised final piece. Additionally, to point out, the purpose of coursework is what allows the students to develop and create their final piece to a high level so by changing the topic completely it does not allow students to do so, giving a much less detailed, developed and thought through final piece.” (Student)

“We think that particular consideration should be given to students who are studying areas such as photography, 3DD or fine art sculpture for example,

where a preparatory portfolio doesn't only evidence a range of skills but is also vital in order for a 'sustained piece' to be created. Given the special nature of art we also believe that consideration should be given to including assessment of the portfolio of [preparatory] work, even if it is not the full weighting as normal." (School or college)

"Re-doing unit two (exam) takes time and focus, and re-takes will interfere with the start of A Level courses/university/art college. A one off test piece would give no reflection of the art student's true creativity or skill with reference to the exam board mark scheme." (Teacher – responding in a personal capacity)

Some respondents suggested that students should complete the externally set task on which they had already started work, rather than undertake a new task.

"The exam component at GCSE and A level has a long period of preparation before the supervised exam takes place usually in late March or in April. The exam papers for GCSE are made available in January and the A level paper is made available in February. Will a new task allow for a similar period of preparation? If so, it will potentially be the end of November before the supervised exam period can take place. If the preparation period for the autumn series is shorter the new task may therefore be rushed, under prepared and not a true reflection of the students ability. Allowing students to complete the task they started is more useful, will allow the preparation to be completed and enable students to feel more prepared." (Teacher – responding in a personal capacity)

"The prep work will have already been completed by the students and materials may have been obtained by the school." (Exams officer or manager)

"Students will have no time with their current Art teachers to complete anything new. We would just want to give the time to complete the task set for last year in the exam conditions as the students had prepared for." (SLT – Senior leadership team)

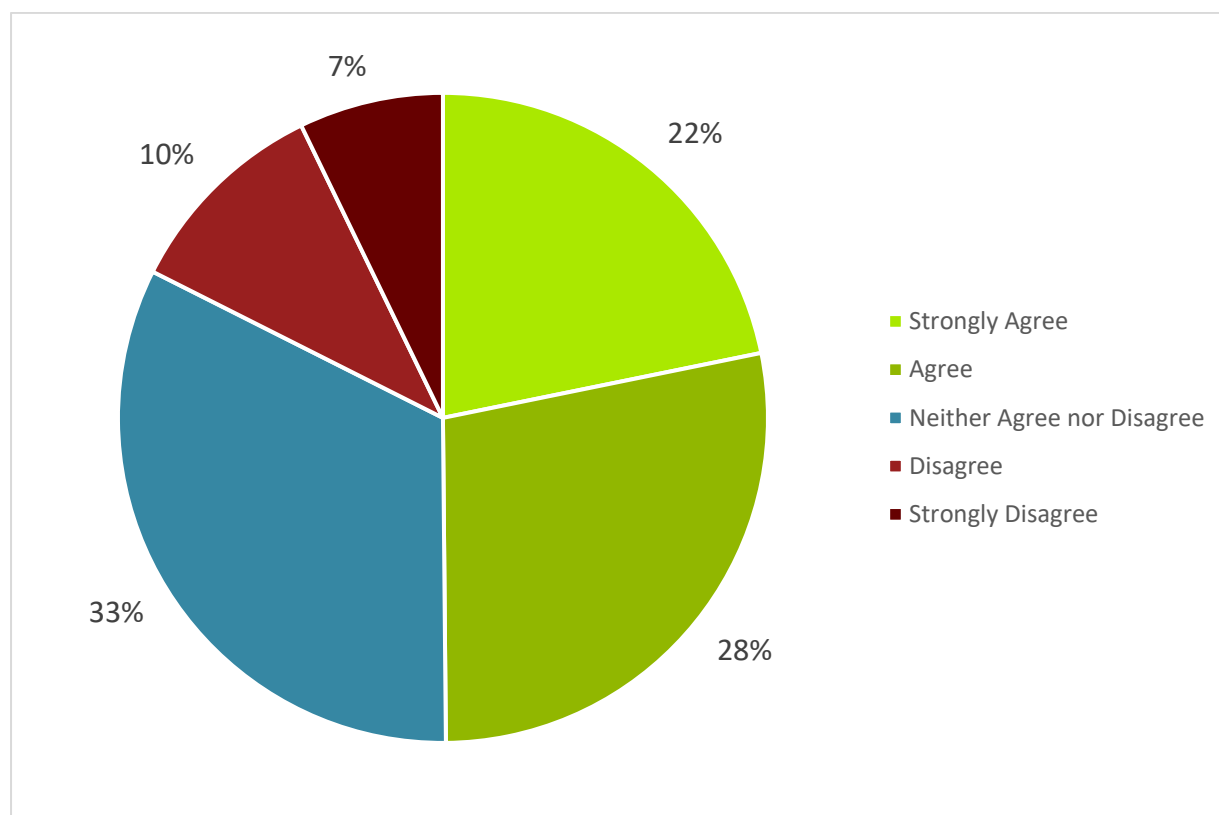
"We believe the summer 2020 task should be carried forward and that it is not necessary to create a brand new task for the autumn series for Art and Design. There will be no authentication issues or inequalities caused by re-using tasks from this summer because under the existing arrangements there is no limit on the amount of preparatory work students can do – some always do more than others and all preparation is unsupervised. It is only when students move from 'preparatory work' to completing their 'outcome' that work is produced under controlled conditions. Exposure to the existing task is not of any concern – the important control rests with the exam conditions under which the outcome is produced. Centres normally have 4-5 months between paper release and mark submission - for GCSE and A Level – candidates would be severely disadvantaged compared to a normal series and the proposed new task would put huge pressure on teachers to prepare new resources. Even if a centre had already started some of the timetabled hours, work is locked away after each session. So, if a candidate had done 3 of those 10 hours, for example, all work would be secure and they could carry on with the other 7 hours when centres re-opened. If a candidate was required to take the non-exam assessment at a new centre it would be possible for them

to start again and re-produce that work under the same number of set hours and conditions.

Also, it would be extremely challenging to produce a new task at speed and alongside the preparation of new tasks for 2022. The tasks are not simple to produce – for example, in GCSE, the paper is made up of 5 Themes and within each Theme there are 8 stimulus items – so 40 starting points/stimulus items in one paper. About 25 of these will be images, other items will include quotes; historical extracts; applied briefs; bodies of work from practitioners etc. Securing copyright and sourcing high-resolution images can also be very time consuming and would pose a risk to timely delivery. We would expect to moderate the work following teacher assessment which would be consistent with a usual assessment series.” (Awarding body or exam board)

“Our preferred option would be to use existing Component 1 (the internally assessed NEA). All students will have completed or nearly completed this, so it is less likely to advantage some students over others. If there must new work, we would strongly favour using the existing Component 2 task, rather than anything entirely new. Students will have done considerable preparation work for this, and the supervised assessment work itself could be started ‘from scratch’ for all students to optimise fairness. The externally set task is usually released in February with a deadline of early May to conduct the supervised 10/15 hours. This allows essential preparation time for candidates and flexibility for centres in scheduling resources.” (Awarding body or exam board)

Q10. To what extent do you agree or disagree that any new task for GCSE, AS and A level art and design should be set and marked by the exam board?



Q10 responses	Count	Percentage
Strongly Agree	449	22%
Agree	578	28%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	671	33%
Disagree	214	10%
Strongly Disagree	148	7%
Q10 total responses		2,060
No response		1,421
Survey total responses		3,481

Half (50%) of respondents strongly agreed or agreed with our proposal that the new task for GCSE, AS and A level art and design should be set and marked by the exam board. A relatively high proportion of respondents (31%) neither agreed nor disagreed, while only 17% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

The majority of schools or colleges (64%), exams officers and managers (64%), senior leadership teams (65%) and academy chains (70%) supported our proposal. There were lower rates of agreement from teachers (41%), students (43%) and parents and carers (35%). All four exam boards who offer these qualifications did not support our proposal.

Those respondents who agreed that the new task should be set by the exam board commented that this approach would support fairness for students and manageability for teachers.

“It has to be externally set if you are going to do it in order for it to be fair.”
(Consultant)

“I think the timescale dictates this must be the case.” (SLT – Senior leadership team)

Most of the comments from respondents who did not agree that the exam board should set the new task were based on the view that there should not be a new task at all, as covered in the previous question. A few respondents expressed concern that a new task set by the exam board in the autumn might not be sufficiently related to the teaching and learning that had taken place during the course.

“Whatever the new task is we believe it must be broad enough to be able to relate to the preparation work that has gone on for the original task across the 4, nearly 5 terms of the course so that it reflects the depth of work that has been undertaken during the course.” (School or college)

“I think that the assessment should be teacher led as they know the pupils and their abilities.” (Parent or carer)

Respondents who supported our proposal for the exam board to mark the new task commented that this would be essential in order to relieve the burden on teachers. However, some respondents observed that exam board marking would likely involve teachers in any event.

“Teachers will not be able to assess and moderate the autumn 2020 series, this MUST be completed by exam boards.” (Teacher – responding in a personal capacity)

“Teaching staff would not have time to do all the marking associated with Art and Design so this would have to be marked by the board. Even just to run these assessments in supervised conditions will be a big task for centres to manage so close to the start of term and with full teaching timetables.”
(School or college)

“I’m also not sure where the examiners will come from given that most are employed in schools or colleges in a very busy time of the year.” (SLT – Senior leadership team)

Some respondents suggested that the assessments should be marked by teachers and moderated by the exam board.

“I think that the task should be set by the exam board, then the standard internal marking and external moderation should take place.” (Exams officer or manager)

“External marking would support teacher workload in autumn. However, I also know how valuable teacher marking is for art exam.” (Teacher – responding in a personal capacity)

Many respondents sought clarification on how exam board marking would work in practice, and whether this would involve visiting examiners. Some were concerned about the limitations of marking remotely from photographs. Others referred to the

additional logistical challenges of needing to post physical artwork to the exam board, and questioned whether this would restrict the type of art that students would be able to produce.

“On the second question members had mixed opinions. Whilst they could see the benefits of removing the burden of marking from centre staff, some had concerns about this approach. They questioned whether the pieces would need to be sent to awarding organisations or whether photographs of the pieces might be sent instead. Members felt there could be significant cost and logistical implications of sending the pieces and that marking from photographs would not be appropriate. Whilst the marking is moderated in any normal series, with the aim that standards are applied equally across the country, members felt that knowledge of the student – the artist - was important in understanding the art they produce.” (Other representative or interest group)

“How will work be sent to the exam board, especially if a candidate produces a sculpture? More clarity is required so that an informed decision can be made.” (School or college)

“I don't see how it could be possible for the exam board to mark work, unless someone comes to school and marks it. The work couldn't be posted - it would cost too much, and then the administration of it all and the logistics. Providing artwork electronically isn't always the same as handling it or viewing it in real life - so the judgement and marking could be off if it was marked over a computer screen.” (Teacher – responding in a personal capacity)

“My concern would be that Artwork often loses its impact when consigned to electronic format. In person moderation of a displayed piece of artwork has such impact and the viewer is able to fully immerse themselves into the work rather than just seeing a digital image.” (Exams officer or manager)

Q11. Do you have any comments on our proposed approach to the assessment of GCSE, AS and A level art and design in the autumn 2020 series?

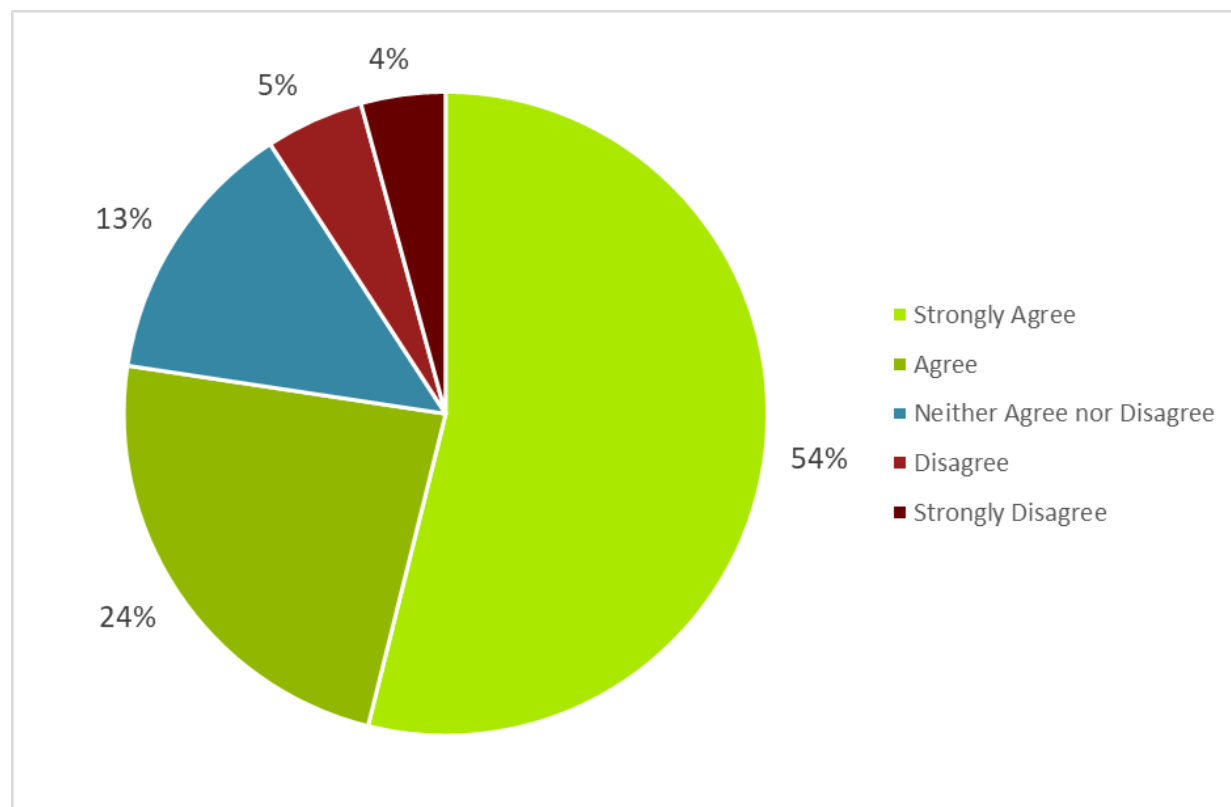
In total, 527 respondents answered this question.

The themes that arose from the detailed comments have been included within the analyses for questions 9 and 10.

In addition, a few respondents made comments that addressed other areas of our consultation and, therefore, these have been considered with the appropriate analyses of the relevant questions. For example, concerns that the autumn assessments would be mandatory for all students (question 1) and comments about arrangements for other qualifications with significant practical elements (question 7).

Separately reported results and grades

Q12. To what extent do you agree or disagree that exam boards should carry forward the outcome of the practical skills assessments for students who take exams in A level biology, chemistry, physics and/or geology in the autumn?



Q12 responses	Count	Percentage
Strongly Agree	1,027	54%
Agree	448	24%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	256	13%
Disagree	94	5%
Strongly Disagree	81	4%
Q12 total responses		1,906
No response		1,575
Survey total responses		3,481

The majority of respondents (78%) either strongly agreed or agreed that exam boards should carry forward the outcome of the practical skills assessments for students who take exams in A level biology, chemistry, physics and/or geology in the autumn.

All respondent groups showed a similar level of agreement with 93% of schools or colleges strongly agreeing or agreeing with the carry forward option.

Some respondents made comments that supported their agreement with the proposal to carry forward the endorsement result.

“Practical work will have been completed by the vast majority of candidates prior to the Covid 19 outbreak and should be carried forward.” (Exams officer or manager)

“Students who have already demonstrated that they have achieved the Certificate of Practical Competence should be able to carry it forward as they have demonstrated the necessary skills throughout the course. These are monitored by the exam boards who would be able to query the results of any centres that didn't meet the standards during the monitoring process.” (Teacher – responding in a personal capacity)

“When students re-sit these subjects in usual circumstances, they are permitted to carry this element forwards, so, as long as evidence exists to show that the students had met the required competencies, then I see no reason why this should be different this year.” (Exams officer or manager)

“I believe that these practical skills assessments can normally be carried forward from one exam session to another (if the candidate fails the written papers but passes the practical assessment), so the decision for this autumn should fall in line with that. Also, for candidates to pass the assessment, they will have had to demonstrate the required skills, so there is no need for them to have to re-take this assessment (it will just put further pressure on candidates and schools).” (Parent or carer)

Some supported the carry forward option on the basis that there would not be capacity in centres for this to be redone as part of the autumn series of exams.

“Simply can't do any new set of practicals while supporting rest of school, don't have enough equipment to carry them out socially distanced...” (Teacher – responding in a personal capacity)

“It would not be feasible for students to complete the practical endorsement in school as schools will be focusing on the new year groups.” (Teacher – responding in a personal capacity)

“We won't be able to run additional sessions for pupils who have left - no time or space in curriculum” (SLT – Senior leadership team)

“There wouldn't be enough resources and time to repeat these practicals. Therefore, practical skills assessment grades should be carried forward and not repeated.” (Other)

Some respondents were of the opinion that students should have the opportunity to submit a new result for the science Practical Endorsement as part of the autumn series if they had been given the opportunity to carry out additional practical work. This additional practical work would be necessary in order to ensure that students would be prepared for the exam questions that are based on practical skills.

“The practicals assessment should be based on previous skills gained but due to lockdown disruption, students did not get a chance to fully complete their practicals, so, they should be given time to allow them to gain the skills which they could not get instead of taking previous assessments results as they are.” (Student)

“Students who had not yet had the opportunity to carry out practical skills assessments should be given the option to do so, rather than carrying forwards a Non Classified or having to wait and repeat the year. This is important as passing the practical skills element of the course is sometimes a requirement for progression” (Student)

“Students who missed practical skills assessments in class but would have done them during exam season will be unfairly impacted.” (Student)

A small number of respondents did not agree that exam boards should carry forward the science Practical Endorsement result as, in some cases, the practicals may not have been completed.

“Did not complete the practicals at the school due to COVID-19 closure”
(Parent or carer)

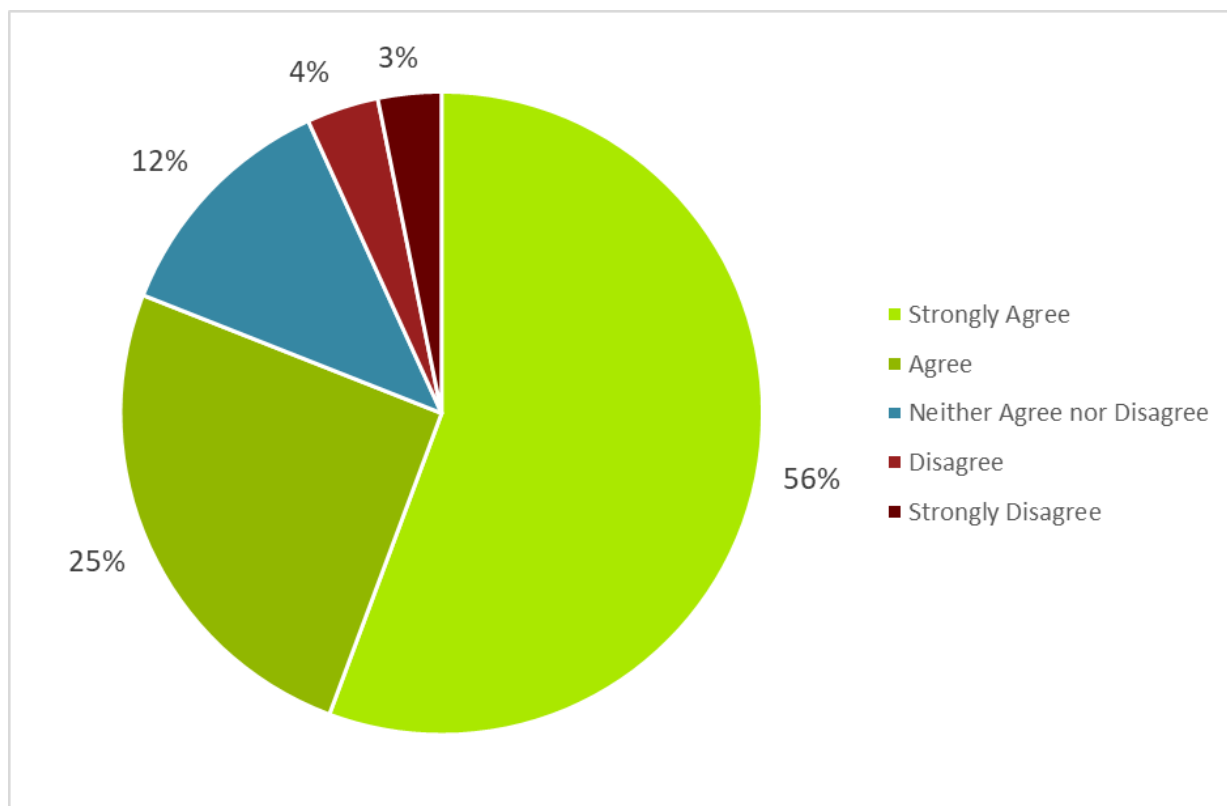
“Since we were not able to complete all practicals, I believe it is unfair to generalise and hand out a pass or fail. Especially when we were told we could do the practicals we had not passed at the end of the year before the exams.”
(Student)

Q13. Do you have any comments on our proposed approach to A level biology, chemistry, physics and geology practical skills assessment outcomes for the autumn?

In total, 457 respondents answered this question.

The themes that arose from the detailed comments have been included within the analysis of question 12.

Q14. To what extent do you agree or disagree that exam boards should carry forward the outcome of the GCSE English language spoken language assessment for students who take exams in the qualification in the autumn, as in any other year?



Q14 responses	Count	Percentage
Strongly Agree	1,028	56%
Agree	467	25%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	225	12%
Disagree	67	4%
Strongly Disagree	59	3%
Q14 total responses	1,846	
No response	1,635	
Survey total responses	3,481	

The majority of respondents (81%) either strongly agreed or agreed that exam boards should carry forward the outcome of the GCSE English language spoken language assessment for students who take exams in the qualification in the autumn, as in any other year.

All respondent groups showed a similar level of agreement with 95% of exams officers or managers strongly agreeing or agreeing with the carry forward option.

Some respondents explained their support for the proposal:

“The Spoken Language endorsement grades have been collected separately so could be easily carried forward.” (Exams officer or manager)

“Students should not have to re-do any component of their course if they have already completed it. With the assumption that the majority of centres will have completed the Spoken Language element previous to school closure, these results should be carried forward to alleviate any further pressure on students and teachers.” (Teacher – responding in a personal capacity)

“The Speaking and Listening component is an endorsement rather than an integral part of the assessment. It is time consuming, and as it is already recorded it should be readily available for evidence in any case.” (Exams officer or manager)

There were comments that supported the carry forward option as there would not be capacity in centres for this to be redone as part of the autumn series of exams.

“It is unrealistic to get students to complete this again in September when the school will be full and staff will not have sufficient time to work with students who may have left the school.” (SLT – Senior leadership team)

“They would have to carry forward as schools and colleges wouldn't have time for students to do the assessments again. A lot of schools would have already done the speaking test already anyway.” (Exams officer or manager)

Some respondents were of the opinion that students should have the opportunity to submit a new grade for the Spoken Language endorsement as part of the autumn series if they were unhappy with their calculated grade from summer 2020.

“Students who have not undertaken the spoken language assessment should be given the option to do so, rather than carrying forwards a Not Classified or having to wait and repeat the year. This is important as passing this element of the course is sometimes a requirement for progression. This could even be done remotely over a recorded video conference.” (Student)

“If the assessed grade is not good, students should have an opportunity to improve it.” (Parent or carer)

“If the point of the autumn series is to replicate summer exams (but in the autumn) then surely pupils should have the chance to redo this endorsement as well?” (SLT – Senior leadership team)

A small number of respondents did not agree that exam boards should carry forward the Spoken Language endorsement grade.

“Excluding it from the re-takes because it is convenient to do so, at the expense of those learners who have never been assessed (or re-assessed in over a year) is not acceptable. It serves to further downgrade the importance of Spoken Language as an element of the English Language specification which is hard enough to justify to learners already - the knock on effect will be that learners will use this as further justification as to why they simply need not bother to achieve the Spoken Language element at all in future exams and it's a hard enough sell already in FE/Post 16 settings.” (Teacher – responding in a personal capacity)

“I think that all the students who choose to do the English language exam in autumn should have to do the spoken language part then whether or not they have done it in the past.” (Student)

“I would recommend a further spoken language assessment. If social distancing measures cannot be achieved at an examination centre, video conferencing software could be used.” (Governor)

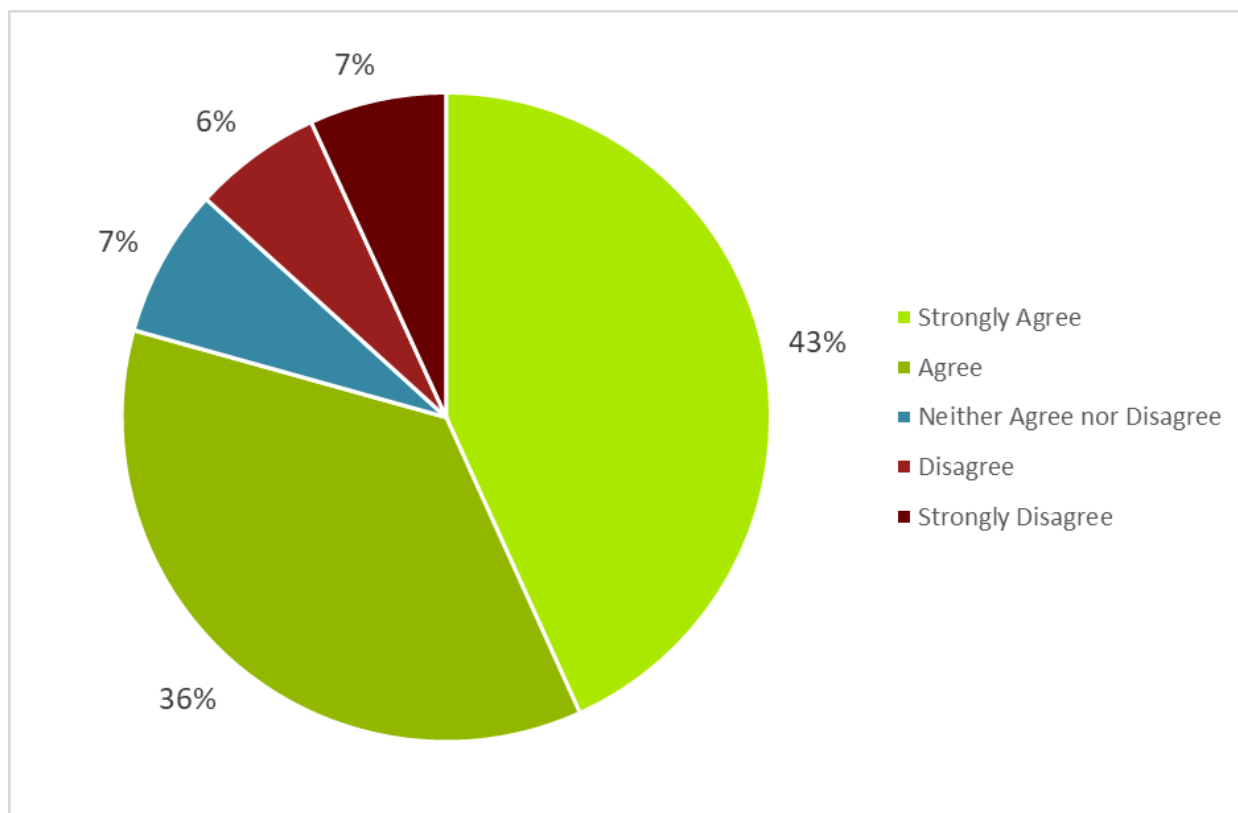
Q15. Do you have any comments on our proposed approach to the GCSE English language assessment outcomes for the autumn?

In total, 348 respondents answered this question.

The themes that arose from the detailed comments have been included within the analysis of question 14.

The timing of the autumn series

Q16. To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should put in place provisions that allow the exam boards to offer exams from October 2020, with the exact start and finish dates being confirmed by us when the position on the re-opening of schools and colleges is clearer?



Q16 responses	Count	Percentage
Strongly Agree	1,493	43%
Agree	1,246	36%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	256	7%
Disagree	222	6%
Strongly Disagree	236	7%
Q16 total responses	3,453	
No response	28	
Survey total responses	3,481	

The majority (79%) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the proposal that Ofqual should put in place provisions that allow the exam boards to offer exams from October 2020, with the exact start and finish dates being confirmed by us when the position on the re-opening of schools and colleges is clearer. Thirteen per cent of respondents did not support the proposal. Their comments focused on concerns

about preparation for the exam series (both for students and schools/colleges), resources, safety, and progression.

The response patterns were similar across all respondent groups, with the majority of all groups either agreeing or strongly agreeing with the proposal. Students were the largest respondent group and had the highest level of agreement with the timing proposed with 84% agreeing 8% disagreeing.

Some respondents explained why they agreed.

“October or November will be the most appropriate months as the current situation means the start of the academic year i.e. September will be quite busy.” (Student)

Those identifying themselves as exams officer or managers and those identifying themselves as examiners had a level of agreement that was still overall high, but somewhat lower than the other respondent groups, with 71% agreeing or strongly agreeing and 22% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing. Concerns included being able to plan and resource the autumn exam series effectively and safely.

“There will not be enough time to enter students, organise exam entries, seating plans etc. before October for potentially large cohorts. Summer series exams usually give a window of 3 months organisation time.” (Exams officer or manager)

Many respondents commented specifically on the timing of the exam series. Although the majority of respondents agreed with the time frame proposed, some commented that exams should be as early as possible.

“Exams should be set as soon as possible in autumn, keeping in mind the current situation. As soon as it is safe to host exams it should be done accordingly.” (Student - private, home-educated of any age)

“The sooner they are held the better (especially for higher in demand courses) to minimise overlap with a candidate's next steps.” (Teacher - responding in a personal capacity)

“It would seem to be most sensible to plan on a series as early in the new school year as possible to minimise disruption to students and schools. It will also mean that the content is as "fresh" as possible, and reduced disadvantage to candidates. This is of course if such can be facilitated given the ongoing public health crisis.” (University or higher education institution)

Some respondents were of the view that the exam series should be later, for example from November onwards as this would give students more time to make decisions and revise. It would also enable schools and colleges to plan more effectively. The potential impact of clashes with half term holidays was also raised.

“The timing needs to be long enough after results day for students to revise and not get utterly stressed out as the exams are really soon.” (Student)

“I feel that November would be easier logistically” (Teacher - responding in a personal capacity)

“The A level exams should be in November rather than October. Prior to the schools closing students had not yet finished all the course content at my daughter's school. This would give them time to decide if sitting the exam is

needed once they get their results rather than rushing to enter, to be taught the rest of the course (making use of the Oct half term for sessions in school) and to revise, all without the additional stress of time pressure. At the moment not knowing until mid-August their results means they are not in a position to make an informed choice and move forward.” (Parent or carer)

“PLEASE be mindful that exam series do not just run themselves. It is not just entry deadlines, but half term dates (must be avoided) and SUFFICIENT time to allow Exam Officers to make well planned preparations in order to ensure that the exam series can go ahead smoothly. JCQ regulations from 2019-2020 series MUST BE extended, with no changes to regulations being implemented. Be mindful also, that many invigilators are within higher risk age brackets, and therefore centres will need additional time to ensure training of additional members of staff to cover this role should that be needed.” (Exams officer or manager)

“Must be enough time for schools and other exam centres to make plans for the logistics of an extensive exam series at that point in the year. It brings a number of challenges alongside running a full school with other cohorts in it, and examining large numbers of students that would technically be private candidates.” (SLT – Senior leadership team)

“This is a busy term, with an existing exam season in November, university entrance tests, plus other school and UCAS deadlines. Half term dates differ across regions, so this will be very difficult, as most exams officers are on term-time only contracts.” (Exams officer or manager)

“October is very problematic because of half term across the country, which varies according to local area.” (SLT – Senior leadership team)

Several respondents commented on the issue of safety, wanting to ensure that exams only go ahead when it is safe to do so.

“I think they should only happen if it’s safe, but I trust you to make that judgment.” (Student)

“Only when it is safe to do so.” (Teacher – responding in a personal capacity)

A large number of respondents, including students, commented on the impact of the timing on progression for students. Clarification about the start date for universities and university applications, in particular Oxbridge and other early application courses such as medicine and veterinary courses, was questioned. There was also the concern of clashes with university entrance exams and other assessments that could impact on the ability to run the series, and also students’ ability to complete exams at this time.

“I think doing the autumn exam series later would mean students wouldn’t be accepted into unis for 2020 as the results of the resit would be too late. It would be ideal if Ofqual could work with universities to help students in such positions. I do however appreciate that these are unprecedented times and flexibility would help students organise their time with a rough indication of dates but also allow movement to ensure the safety of students and staff alike as well as the public, which is key.” (Student)

“The timing for the exam series being October seems good for school students and for most university courses. However I am applying to medicine

which has a current deadline of 15th October 2020, with the exams being the same time as the deadline it would be difficult to balance revision and the application at the same time. Also, the results would not be back until Christmas time when most medicine courses have sent for interviews or declined applications by this point. As an external student, I cannot have a predicted grade and would need my actual grade to apply and be considered for medicine. Without this grade, I would be delayed going to uni for another academic year postponing everything. I would need my grade before the application deadline or before offers are made.” (Student – private, home-educated of any age)

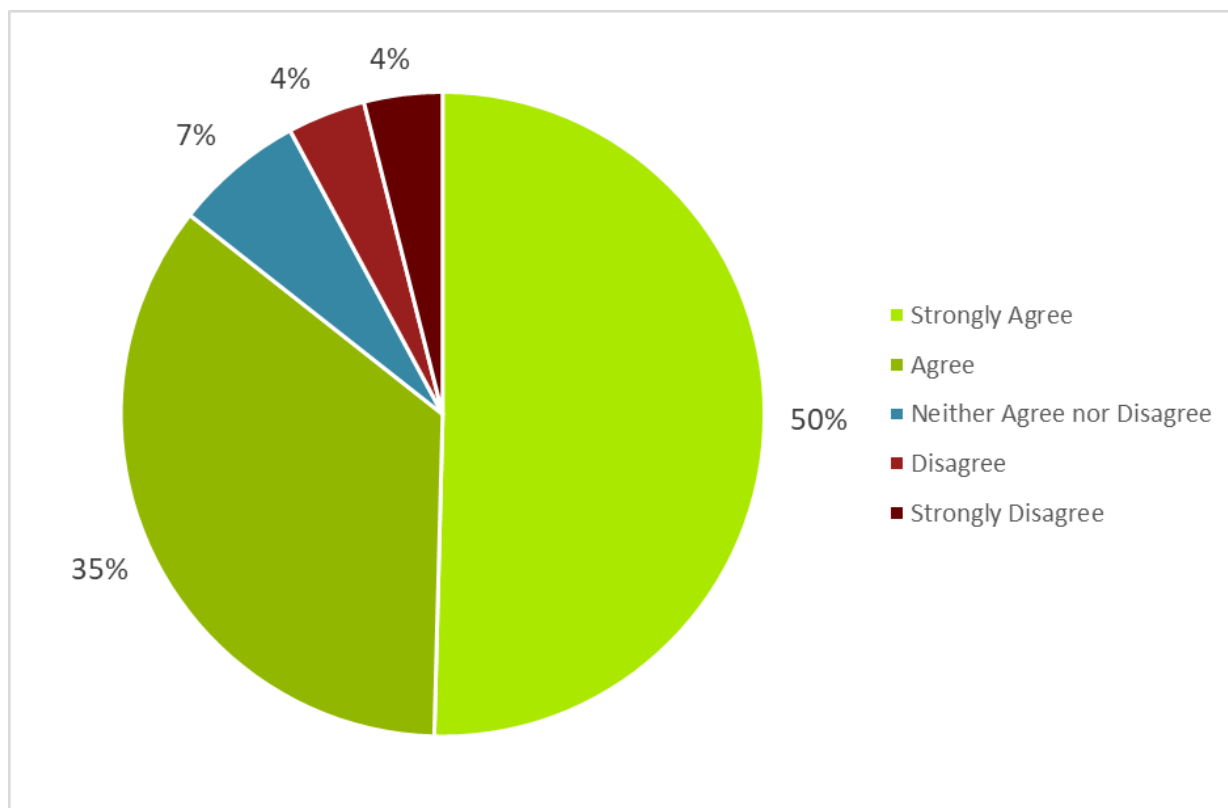
“It is essential that exams are held as soon as possible to allow students to apply to university this autumn.” (Parent or carer)

“The idea of these exams is to allow students to appeal the Centre assessed Grade process by sitting an exam. The whole process has been underpinned by the concept of not disadvantaging candidates and allowing progression. If results for GCSE are not to be given until February this will be too late for progression purposes and negate the need for autumn exams full stop.” (School or college)

“Subjects which are likely to have significant numbers of entries should be timed carefully to avoid holidays. Consultation should take place with the Admission Testing Service to avoid clashes with those university exams to reduce the burden on schools and students.” (Exams officer or manager)

“Please don't squash them all up. I know it is a huge undertaking but hopefully most students won't want to do it. Also, please try and avoid the Oxbridge/Vet/Medicine test date of 4th November altogether! Also, I don't think you are thinking of September but we are a grammar school and host the 11+ in the 2nd week of that month. It would be impossible, at current social distancing measures, to accommodate public exams at the same time.” (Exams officer or manager)

Q17: To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should build some flexibility into our regulatory framework to enable us to vary the start and finish dates of the series if that is necessary because of the public health situation?



Q17 responses	Count	Percentage
Strongly Agree	1,738	50%
Agree	1,213	35%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	225	7%
Disagree	135	4%
Strongly Disagree	136	4%
Q17 total responses	3,447	
No response	34	
Survey total responses	3,481	

The majority (85%) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the proposal that Ofqual should build some flexibility into our regulatory framework to enable us to vary the start and finish dates of the series if that is necessary because of the public health situation. Eight per cent of respondents did not support the proposal; their comments focused on concerns about ongoing uncertainty impacting on students' preparation, welfare and planning for schools and colleges.

The response patterns were broadly similar across all respondent groups, with the majority of all either agreeing or strongly agreeing with the proposal.

“We need to have the flexibility to be able to make changes according to the situation.” (Academy chain)

“I completely understand that things will need to be flexible in this one-of-a-kind exam series.” (Exams officer or manager)

“The timing varying is understandable due to the situation so any changes to be made in the process leading up to the exam is acceptable. (Student – private, home-educated of any age)

“It is absolutely necessary to have flexibility built into the regulations and decisions should be taken on the basis of sound public health science and advice. This includes, if necessary due to a second or further subsequent spike and the accompanying tightening of lockdown conditions that would follow, the potential cancellation of the series altogether. Students were supporting of the proposal overall, but those who disagreed were concerned about the impact any element of flexibility might have on them in terms of preparation, achievement and mental health. (Other representative or interest group)

Within the group who identified as a school or college, 94% agreed or strongly agreed with the proposal. This was higher than the other respondent groups for this question.

“There will need to be some flexibility as if the country were to enter another lockdown following a further spike we do not want to be faced with the same scenario as for the summer 2020 series resulting in youngsters who desperately need to sit an examination, not being able to.” (School or college)

Those respondents who disagreed or strongly disagreed with the proposal were concerned about being able to plan the exam series effectively and the impact that uncertainty may have on students.

“Schools do need precise times and dates as far as is possible because we need to book external invigilators, set up spaces and build our school calendars around them. If social distancing is still in situ, we can also look to see how we could sit exams socially distancing for example - remote learning for the rest of the school on the days when large exams take place e.g. English and maths, so that the full complement of classrooms could be used.” (SLT – Senior leadership team)

“To have variable dates would be a logistical nightmare for exam boards, schools, exams officers and invigilators. Please do not underestimate the difficulties of finding invigilators, who MUST be trained, at short notice at a time of year they do not normally work, and still with a risk from COVID-19 (many invigilators are fairly elderly). Likewise, finding capacity for exams in a school, particularly as social distancing is likely to still be necessary both in classrooms and in the examination rooms is likely to need a lot of planning, and possibly closing the school to other learners, depending on numbers of candidates resitting.” (Exams officer or manager)

“It will be difficult to manage but there also needs to be some continuity for those in lower years and having too much flexibility will make it difficult for schools to plan for other year groups.” (SLT - Senior leadership team)

A few respondents who disagreed, commented on the mental health and well-being of students.

“Changing any dates or even having these exams in the autumn is going to severely affect children’s mental health yet again. I am against it.” (Parent or carer)

“Not having an exact date puts mental and emotional stress on the students and causes them to not prepare properly and possibly unfairly fail or be underprepared compared to other years” (Student)

Some respondents commented that they agreed with some flexibility but stressed the importance of sufficient notice being given to enable both students and schools and colleges to plan.

“The students and schools need to be given as much notice as possible.” (Governor)

“Before half term and the date needs to be fixed as soon as possible.” (Other representative or interest group)

“There must be adequate notice to allow students and schools to prepare for an exam season.” (Exams officer or manager)

“I think that the dates should be stated as soon as possible as it gives time for students to revise.” (Student – private, home-educated of any age)

There were some respondents who appeared to have misunderstood the proposal and concluded that flexibility meant that exams may be taken at different times or at dates chosen by schools or colleges.

“I think it can be planned for. However, I would worry that students who sit examinations at different times may divulge the content of the examination to other student's on line.” (Examiner)

“How do we ensure exam content isn't shared on social media if too much flexibility is used?” (Teacher – responding in a personal capacity)

Q18 Do you have any comments on the preferred timing of the autumn exam series?

In total, 1,339 respondents answered this question.

Some respondents were concerned about the costs and funding of an additional exam series, these are also considered in the analysis of question 30.

“We have mentioned elsewhere [our] members’ concerns around the additional costs and burden associated with an autumn exam series and these are also the case in respect of the timing proposed. However, if there is to be an autumn series then to hold exams at the times suggested is not necessarily worse than any other option, and certainly better than attempting to hold them in September. It is absolutely necessary to have flexibility built into the regulations and decisions should be taken on the basis of sound public health science and advice. This includes, if necessary due to a second or further subsequent spike and the accompanying tightening of lockdown conditions that would follow, the potential cancellation of the series altogether.” (Other representative or interest group)

Some respondents were concerned about the impact running an autumn exam series might have on other students in the school or college.

“I think you will need to consider what impact this will have on schools with regards to social distancing. Thus, it could lead to a situation where schools cannot have in other year groups in order to accommodate social distancing rules and to have enough staff to invigilate this.” (Other representative or interest group)

“Please bear in mind the amount of school space taken up with exams and the knock on effect to other students. (Teacher – responding in a personal capacity)

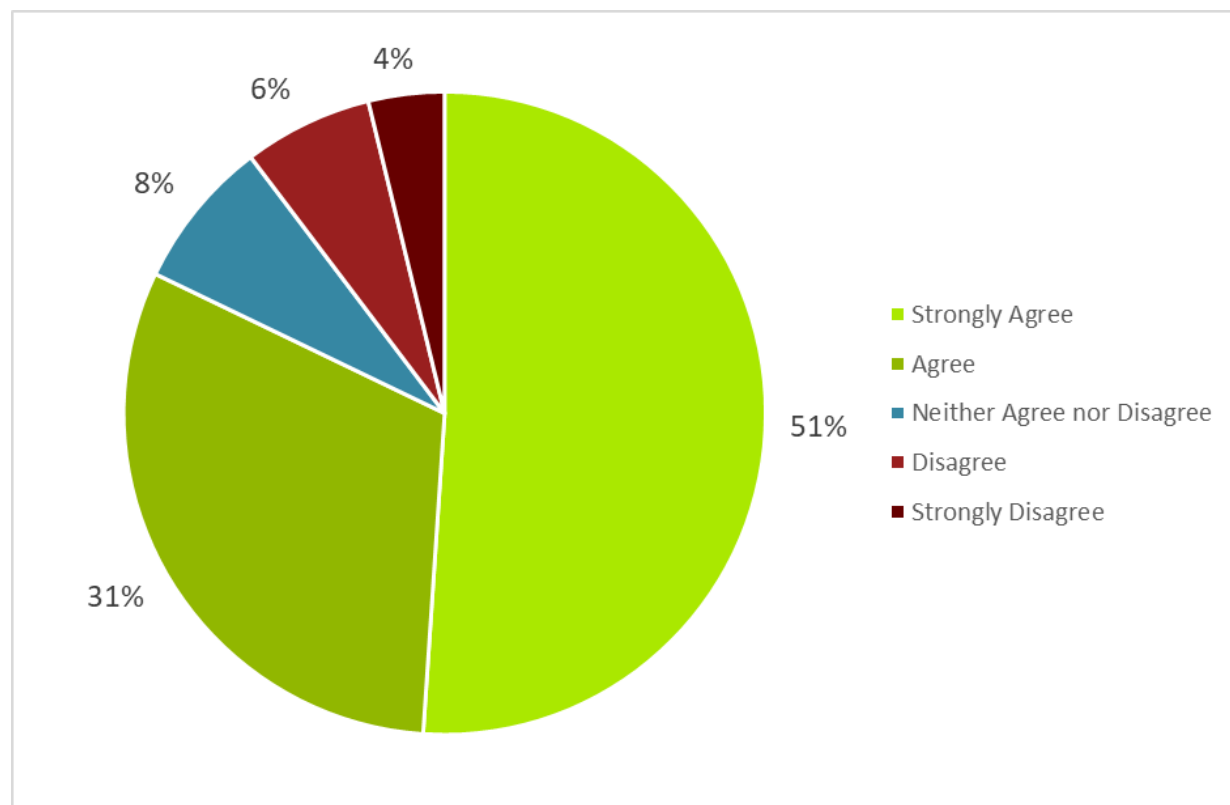
“If stretched over 4-5 weeks like the summer series this will have a significant impact on schools and colleges with disruption to Year 12 teaching and facilities (i.e. exam venues).” (School or college)

“Is it proposed that these exams are sat in schools? The disruption would be significant, not least for the current Year 10 and Year 12 cohorts who would usually be completing mock examinations at this time - having already had a significant volume of disruption to their learning in the Spring/Summer of Year 10/12.” (SLT – Senior leadership team)

Some respondents commented on a preference for no exams to take place in autumn, or for exams to be held in local hubs, these comments are considered in the analysis of question 28.

Reviews of marking and appeals

Q19. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the normal review of marking and appeal arrangements should apply to the autumn exam series?



Q19 responses	Count	Percentage
Strongly Agree	1,761	51%
Agree	1,071	31%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	260	8%
Disagree	224	6%
Strongly Disagree	132	4%
Q19 total responses	3,448	
No response	33	
Survey total responses	3,481	

A large majority (82%) of respondents to this question supported our proposal that the normal review of marking and appeal arrangements should apply to the autumn exam series. Ten per cent either disagreed or strongly disagreed.

There was no significant variation in responses between different respondent groups.

Those who supported our proposal did so for a number of reasons. Many respondents observed that in many respects the autumn series will be the same as a normal summer series, and that the same opportunities for reviews and appeals

should therefore apply. Many respondents referred to principles of fairness and consistency with other cohorts.

“If exams can be held in a way that is consistent with normal exam series, then I think that the review of marking should also be normal.” (Examiner)

“These students should be given the same arrangements as with previous exam series.” (Teacher – responding in a personal capacity)

“This season is a 'normal' exam season - therefore normal regulations and rules should apply.” (Exams officer or manager)

“If it is a 'real' series then appeals and review of marking etc must be in place.” (School or college)

“Usual arrangements for reviews of marking should apply. Reviews of moderation should not apply where external assessment has replaced internal assessment and moderation (e.g. as proposed for Art and Design). Anything externally assessed should be subject to a review of marking. Any work that was used as part of the centre's grade assessment of candidate performance (e.g. any carried forward endorsements or Art and Design Portfolio work) would not be eligible for review as to do so could undermine our statistical model used to issue results this summer.” (Awarding body or exam board)

Similarly, some other respondents referred to experiences of poor-quality marking in previous series as a reason that reviews and appeals should be available as normal.

“Every year when students are awarded surprising marks, we have appealed and marks have been changed. This process also ensures accountability in examiners and their teams.” (Teacher – responding in a personal capacity)

“Must always be the opportunity to review and appeal, particularly given the frequency that these result in a changed grade from a normal exam series - there is no reason to expect marking done for an autumn series to be more accurate than the summer.” (SLT – Senior leadership team)

Some respondents who agreed or strongly agreed with our proposal nonetheless suggested in their comments that an exceptional approach should be taken. Many commented on the time that reviews and appeals can take to complete.

“All reviews of marking should be dealt with on the priority review timescale, given that there will be lower numbers involved. The aim should be to have all enquiries completed and the window for enquiries closed before the Christmas break.” (Exams officer or manager)

“Needs to be sped up compared to the summer series.” (Teacher – responding in a personal capacity)

“I think the time available to lodge appeals should be very limited in order to try to reduce the instances of "oh, let's just give it a go as you are close to a grade boundary". The burden on the exams office staff who will by February be planning for what may well be their largest season ever with a high number of potential resits from June 2020 should also be taken into account.” (Exams officer or manager)

“A simplified system needs to be put in place to support this. There will be a much higher volume of appeals.” (Teacher – responding in a personal capacity)

It was not always clear whether respondents who disagreed or strongly disagreed with our proposal for normal review and appeal arrangements thought there should be exceptional review and appeal arrangements or no opportunities for review or appeal arrangements at all.

Respondents who opposed our proposal did so for three main reasons. Firstly, some respondents were concerned about the extent to which review and appeal arrangements might delay the issuing of final results.

“These are exceptional times and this would further delay the outcome and kill the rationale of these additional exams.” (Parent or carer)

“This is likely to make the whole process drag on to an unreasonable extent.” (Exams officer or manager)

“If exams occur there should be no right of school/ student appeal as this is too time consuming and further delays the future destinations into year 12 and uni.” (Teacher – responding in a personal capacity)

Others felt that the autumn series already represents an ‘appeal’ of sorts in relation to the calculated grades from summer 2020, and that candidates should not be given a further opportunity to dispute the grade they receive.

“The candidates have already had a chance to accept a grade based on performance, and not accepted it. To then not accept the grade given in an exam is taking it a bit far.” (Private training provider)

“I believe the Autumn exams are the ‘appeal’ stage of the summer teacher assessed grades - either accept the assessed grade or sit the exam and take that grade.” (Parent or carer)

“I believe if pupils appeal in summer then the offer of the exam paper in autumn is their appeal so cannot further appeal.” (Exams officer or manager)

“The exams taken will be somewhat of an appeal in themselves due to the nature of them being optional for students who are unhappy with awarded grades.” (Student)

The third main reason for opposing our proposal which respondents raised was issues of capacity.

“If the Autumn exam grade is lower than the calculated grade the calculated grade will stand thus the candidate should not need to pursue a review of results. Likewise the centre should not need this service as league tables and progress 8 are suspended for this cohort. As an exams officer I would not wish to be processing post results well into 2021 whilst making entries and planning for the summer 2021 exams.” (Exams officer or manager)

“When are staff supposed to find the time to deal with these?” (School or college)

“Reviews take up a lot of exam officer time, this would not be possible as preparation would need to begin for 2021 exams.” (Exams officer or manager)

Two of the exam boards (one of which supported our proposal, one of which opposed it) also raised the issue of capacity with a particular emphasis on the potential difficulty of running a review and appeals service over the Christmas period.

“We agree that if the proposal is implemented to provide students with the exam experience they would have had in the summer, had the exams not been cancelled, then the normal ROMM [review of marking and moderation] appeal arrangements should apply though the planned timing of the results dates will mean that the ROMM window falls over the Christmas period which will pose challenges for schools and colleges, and exam boards. Given that the purpose of the Autumn series is to enable candidates to have an opportunity to receive an outcome based on examination performance, the normal reviews of marking and appeals arrangements should apply. We do consider that there is the potential that some learners/centres may want to appeal the Autumn results on the basis that the learner lost teaching time and has therefore been disadvantaged and not achieved the result they deserved. In order to mitigate this, we will consider whether we need to provide further guidance to ensure our centres and learners are clear about the basis upon which they can appeal for autumn 2020.” (Awarding body or exam board)

“It is important that students have the opportunity to request a review of marking/moderation. However, consideration must be given to the possibility that normal services may not be possible in the normal timespans. For example, for A level, Priority reviews of marking must be completed within a week. The timing of the release of results for the A level will make the priority service 2 window very difficult to achieve Impact on operations – ability to make and process requests after schools/the office have closed for the Christmas period; hub centres etc. Should reviews of moderation be required for art and design, or any other internally assessed NEA component if this is offered, consideration would also need to be given to how this can be conducted safely, potentially in reduced timescales.” (Awarding body or exam board)

A number of respondents, mostly from among those who opposed our proposal, suggested that reviews and appeals should be more ‘lenient’ for the autumn series. The comments, however, were rarely clear about what this might mean in practice.

“There should be some leniency due to the circumstances. Some people have lost family members and other mental/physical health problems, should be put under consideration.” (Student)

“The appeals process should reflect the situation and the fact that students will have missed quite a bit of school by the time they take that exam.” (Teacher – responding in a personal capacity)

“If there were to be exams placed in the Autumn of 2020, I think the exam boards and their examiners need to take in account of what these students have been put through since March, most of them probably haven't revised and that their knowledge wouldn't be as strong as if had been if they had been in school.” (Teacher – responding in a personal capacity)

A variety of other issues were raised by small numbers of respondents, including suggestions that fees be waived, grade boundaries be lowered, and that results should be published sooner.

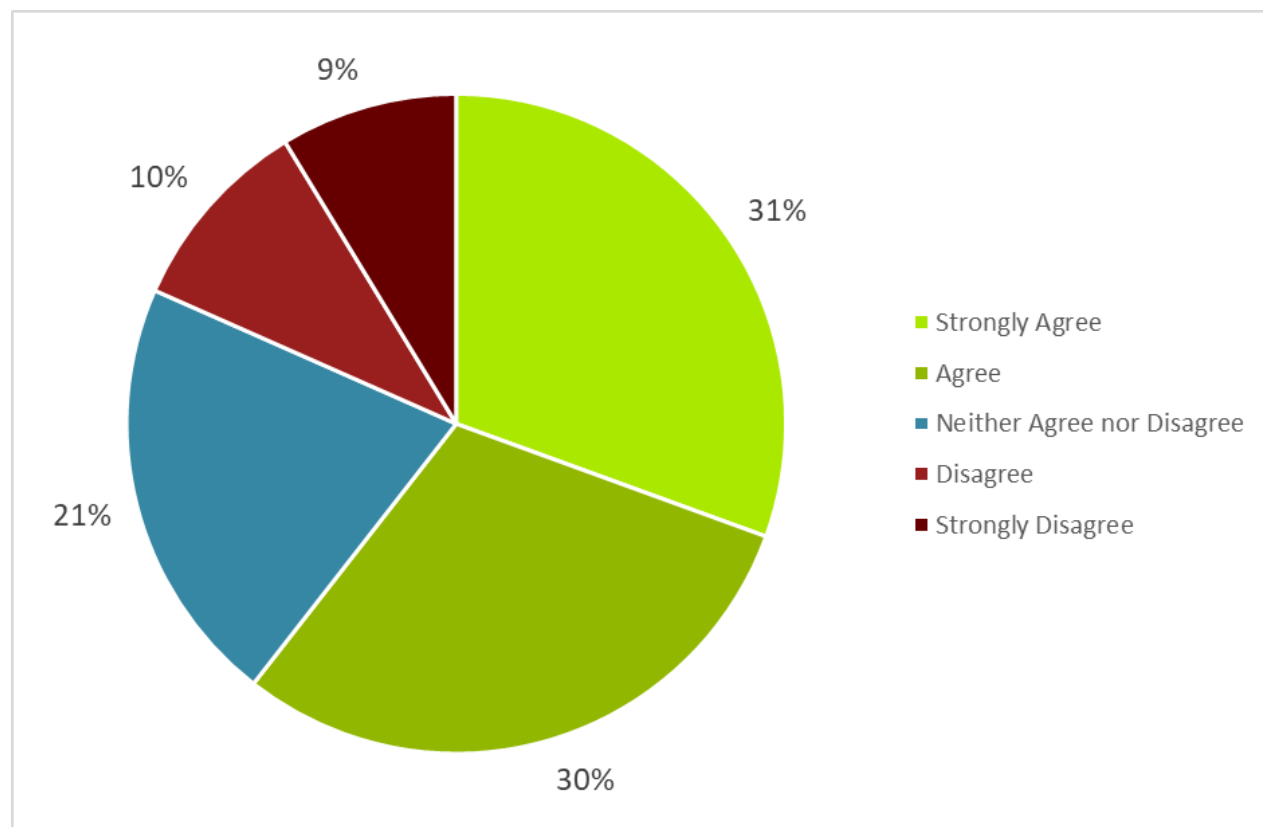
Q20. Do you have any comments on our proposal that the normal reviews of marking and appeals arrangements should apply and, if needed, the normal reviews of moderation arrangements?

In total, 685 respondents answered this question.

The themes that arose from the detailed comments have been included within the analysis of question 19.

Certificates

Q21. To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should amend our rules to allow an exam board to issue a replacement certificate to a student to show either their calculated grade or their grade from the autumn exam series, but not require them to do so?



Q21 responses	Count	Percentage
Strongly Agree	1,044	31%
Agree	1,025	30%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	720	21%
Disagree	331	10%
Strongly Disagree	297	9%
Q21 total responses	3,417	
No response	64	
Survey total responses	3,481	

Most respondents (61%) supported our proposal about the certificates students taking the autumn series should receive. Of the rest, 21% neither agreed nor disagreed with our proposal, and the remainder (19%) opposed our proposal.

While there was not a significant variation between different respondent groups, responses representing the official views of organisations had a higher rate of opposition, averaging 27% as opposed to 18% for responses from individuals.

Most respondents who supported our proposal and also commented on it did not give clear reasons for their support beyond repeating elements of the discussion from our consultation document, or making general comments supporting the principle of students having certificates showing their achievement. Most of these respondents did not explicitly comment on whether the approach should be allowed or required for exam boards.

“If the autumn exam results in a better grade, there should be the chance for this to replace the centre assessed grade on the certificate.” (Teacher – responding in a personal capacity)

“Certificates should reflect the students’ final grades.” (Parent or carer)

“I think that if for example in the autumn exam series a student gets a higher grade than their calculated grade, then a replacement certificate should be issued. But if they don't get a higher grade, if they get a lower grade in the exams the higher grade should stand and not be overridden.” (Student)

Some respondents gave more detailed comments which covered a range of views, mostly of a practical nature relating to the uses of certificates in the future.

“To ensure minimum additional costs, and to enable it to be practical, the assumption would need to be that the certificate print runs for the summer and autumn series would take place as normal and those certificates would be available to give to candidates in the usual way. We see no difficulty in principle with providing replacement certificates thereafter.” (Awarding body or exam board)

“If different certificates were given out for Autumn exam series, it would be clearly distinguishable from grades issued in any other years as A levels have never been in October. Therefore, the only way to avoid this problem is to issue replacement certificates to students - the higher grade received in Autumn exam series that indicate they were a part of the Summer 2020 series.” (Student – private, home-educated of any age)

“It will be confusing in the future when applying for jobs to show what grade you actually received if both grades still stand. If you get a better grade in the autumn series, these should be your final grade as that is the most accurate presentation of your ability.” (Student)

I understand that students may not want to show people certificates with lower (calculated) grades on if they go on to improve, but I am sure for the next few decades everyone (including employers) will be well aware of what happened in 2020 and why they may have been given grades that didn't reflect their true abilities, so I cannot imagine anyone being seriously badly affected by having a certificate with those calculated grades on if they also have the 'real' grades to show too. (Teacher – responding in a personal capacity)

Some responses conflated our proposals for certification with the concept of the higher grade being the one which stands and framed their agreement in this context.

“Students must given the best result.” (School or college)

“Students should have the option of retaining the strongest grade.” (Teacher – responding in a personal capacity)

“Given the circumstances the better grade should apply because the degree of disruption will vary from student to student depending upon family circumstances.” (Parent or carer)

Some comments, despite being from respondents who agreed with our proposal, suggested alternative approaches.

“It would be more manageable for certificates to be issued all together after the Autumn season to show the best results all on one certificate, this would save on having to reprint certificates and would also mean less admin work for centres.” (Exams officer or manager)

Respondents who were not in favour of our proposal opposed it for a number of reasons, but the most common reason by some margin was that we should **require** exam boards to issue replacement certificates, rather than simply permit this approach. Many of these comments did not give specific reasons for this point of view, but some highlighted the need for consistency between exam boards.

“Whatever decision is made you HAVE to require all exams boards to adhere to it. You can’t have some doing it and others not.” (Teacher – responding in a personal capacity)

“This needs to be consistent across all awarding bodies. Either they are required to or none of them are allowed to.” (SLT – Senior leadership team)

“This should be a requirement. If it is not required, some boards may decide not to issue replacements at all, meaning students with better grades in some autumn exams may be disadvantaged depending on the subject.” (Parent or carer)

“Students should be able to receive the same type of certification regardless of examination board. Examination boards should either be required to issue a replacement certificate, or the facility should not be available.” (Other representative or interest group)

Some respondents went further, and said that replacement certificates should be issued automatically.

“It seems appropriate that candidates should automatically receive a certificate with their highest grades (combined from autumn/summer). It should not be down to a candidate to have to ask for this as it is obviously the document they would wish to show to employers at a later date.” (School or college)

“If a student has chosen to sit the autumn examinations, then a replacement certificate should be automatically provided to the student - just as if they had sat the exams this summer.” (Teacher)

The second most likely reason given by respondents who did not support our proposal was that, in all cases, two certificates should be issued – one for the summer awards and one following the autumn series. Some comments which recommended this approach did so on the basis that our proposed approach devalued or undermined the summer awards.

“Exam boards should issue certificates for both exam series, and not replace them.” (Student)

“Our preference would be that both the calculated grade and autumn exam series grade stand and are issued with separate certificates.” (University or higher education institution)

“Students should receive a certificate for their result from any exam session that they sat a qualification in - Summer 2020 (estimated) session and Autumn 2020 (actual) session are separate and should therefore have separate certificates.” (Exams officer or manager)

“We believe that it should be clearly defined that expectations around certificates should be aligned to existing practice. There is a precedent to issue a new certificate in an autumn series for any students re-sitting GCSE English Language and Mathematics. Flexibility in allowing exam boards to show the better of two results would constitute another system change that would be burdensome to manage given the current context of changes and the limited window in which such system development can be tested. Allowing exam boards to only issue a certificate with the higher of two grades, in addition to delaying the issuing of certificates for all candidates, could be seen to undermine the validity of the summer grading process.” (Awarding body or exam board)

“Why do they need a replacement? Just issue a certificate for the series and people who are required to show evidence of qualifications can for something can show that one if they choose over the summer one. If you issue "replacements" it suggests that the Autumn one is somehow more acceptable.” (SLT – Senior leadership team)

Other reasons for opposing our proposal were given in significantly smaller numbers, and included suggestions that no certificates be awarded until after the autumn series, that sitting the autumn series should invalidate grades awarded from the summer, and that exam boards should issue separate certificates for each qualification.

Many respondents also referred to the issue of fees or charges for the issuing of replacement certificates, as we proposed to permit exam boards to charge for this service. Most respondents who commented about this issue suggested that the service should be provided free of charge, but a significant minority also accepted that some costs might be passed on to students.

“Replacement (updated) certificates should always be provided in request and free of charge.” (Governor)

“The provision of the best outcome certification should be mandatory but with the ability to pass this cost on to the students and parents if it is requested. If optional it is likely that some will not provide this service as it has a cost implication.” (SLT – Senior leadership team)

“I think boards should be required to do this, and there should be no charge to schools or students.” (Exams officer or manager)

“We understand that exam boards will likely incur additional costs in issuing certificates to students. However, we believe that whichever approach Ofqual takes in offering certificates, the cost burden should not be passed on to students. To ensure fairness and equality of access, it is important that there

are no cost barriers to students in accessing certificates which accurately reflect their best grades.” (Other representative or interest group)

“A cap on the charge for replacement certificates should be issued. Students from lower-income families should not suffer simply because of their financial background. Exam boards should not profit off this but rather cover the costs.” (Student)

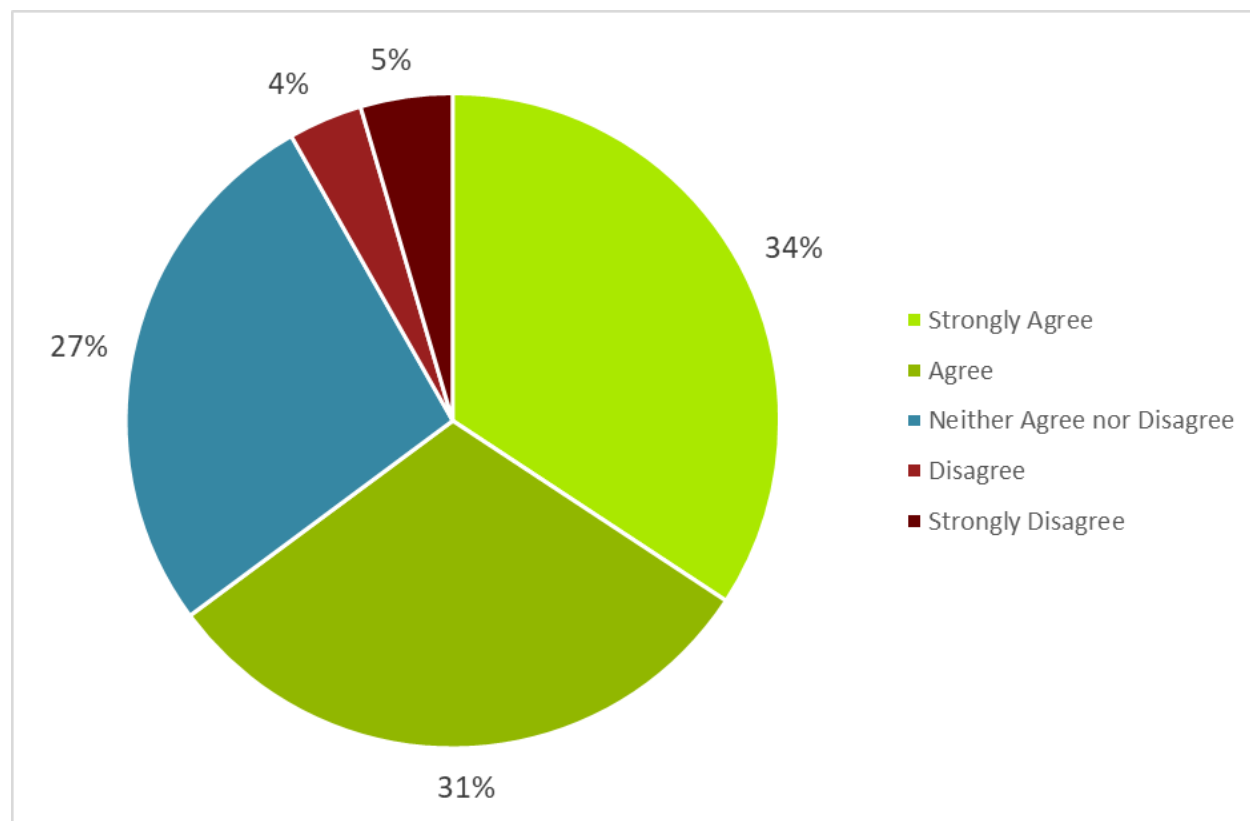
Q22. Do you have any comments on our proposal to allow exam boards to issue replacement certificates to students?

In total, 913 respondents answered this question.

The themes that arose from the detailed comments have been included within the analysis of question 21.

Project qualifications

Q23. To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should not impose any additional requirements on the exams boards that award the EPQs?



Q23 responses	Count	Percentage
Strongly Agree	271	34%
Agree	242	31%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	213	27%
Disagree	29	4%
Strongly Disagree	36	5%
Q23 total responses	791	
No response	2,690	
Survey total responses	3,481	

Relatively few respondents answered this question – just 23% of respondents to the consultation as a whole.

Of those who expressed a view, the majority (65%) supported our proposal. Nine per cent of respondents opposed it. These proportions are relatively consistent between the respondent groups, but both students and parents were more likely to oppose our proposal (17% and 20% respectively).

Relatively few respondents (129) commented on this proposal. Those who agreed that additional requirements should not be placed on exam boards did so for 2 main

reasons. A number of respondents made the point that EPQs in their centre had already been completed.

“EPQs at my centre were completed prior to lockdown and marked and moderated as per the usual process. Why are these in any way subject to this process?” (Teacher – responding in a personal capacity)

“The EPQ’s were completed and handed in even when schools were closed down - so we were working from home. From doing the EPQ all sections were completed excluding the presentation section as many students from my college were due to do their presentation the week after college had shut. I feel and though we have done enough work to reflect the grade we would have gotten - so no additional work should be required.” (Student – private, home-educated of any age)

“Since they had already been submitted, these students had not really been affected by the whole pandemic situation.” (Parent or carer)

Others made the point that as a matter of course the exam boards offer additional series during the year – for example in November and January – so it would not be necessary for any additional requirements to be in force.

“Given that the EPQ can normally be entered in January it may not be necessary to have an October entry given the additional moderation and administration needed.” (Local authority)

“There are awarding organisations (e.g. AQA) that offer November submission anyway. It may be appropriate to allow this one time for resubmission to occur in the EPQ (i.e. centre assessed grades in June, the resubmission in November). Resubmission is not currently allowed for the EPQ.” (Teacher – responding in a personal capacity)

“As there is a January series normally for EPQs there would be no need for any additional requirements for these.” (Exams officer or manager)

Respondents who supported our proposal and those who did not raised concerns about the feasibility of students embarking on and completing new projects between September and October or November.

“The requirement to submit a brand new project for the autumn 2020 resit series will be difficult to police, when projects completed for the summer 2020 series have not been seen. It is not realistic to expect a student to complete a new project between August and October. Projects which candidates have been working on already should, therefore, count as new.” (Awarding body or exam board)

“Not sure what is meant in the consultation about 'new' projects. There will not be time to undertake an entirely new EPQ project from September. What may be needed is a moderation process for those EPQs submitted for CAGs in the summer that are not awarded marks that their supervisors/coordinators think are appropriate.” (Exams officer or manager)

“Your document states: 'students who are unhappy with their calculated results to complete and submit new project materials for assessment in the autumn.' EPQs take around six months of planning, research and writing, with careful supervision from members of staff. I believe your statement does

not show an understanding of the EPQ process - it cannot be done this quickly. Students must be awarded a predicted EPQ grade.” (SLT – Senior leadership team)

Respondents who did not support our proposal did so chiefly on the basis that under our proposal exam boards could choose not to offer opportunities for moderation of EPQ in the autumn series.

“If exam boards are looking to cut costs they will first look to things that are requested not required. The EPQ would then not be moderated and should not therefore be awarded. If moderation is seen to be necessary usually how could it not be necessary in the autumn, and would the knowledge that no moderation was occurring mean that some centres would be less rigorous with the accuracy of the marking?” (School or college)

“If the EPQ is to run fully as normal in the Autumn series, it must be moderated in the usual way. Because this option has already been offered to students it is not enough simply to anticipate that exam boards will moderate.” (SLT – Senior leadership team)

“‘Anticipate Exam Boards will do so’ is not a sufficient guarantee to students that Exam Boards would undertake moderation. Why not just ‘REQUIRE’ them to do so, like all other subjects. Students worked hard for EPQ over more than a year - it is as important a subject to them as any others, there is no reason to treat EPQ differently. Cannot be seen as favouring or discriminating any subjects.” (Parent or carer)

Other respondents who did not support our proposal did so on the grounds of consistency with other subjects.

“Why should EPQ be exempt from the Autumn series? Exam boards should be compelled to allow submission of a project in Autumn in the same way as examinations are taken.” (School or college)

“This would downgrade the EPQ and so this qualification should be considered in the same way as any other.” (Exams officer or manager)

“The provisions should be made to exam boards for EPQ, just like other subjects. To not do so is seen as unfair for/against EPQ as a subject and should be avoided.” (Teacher – responding in a personal capacity)

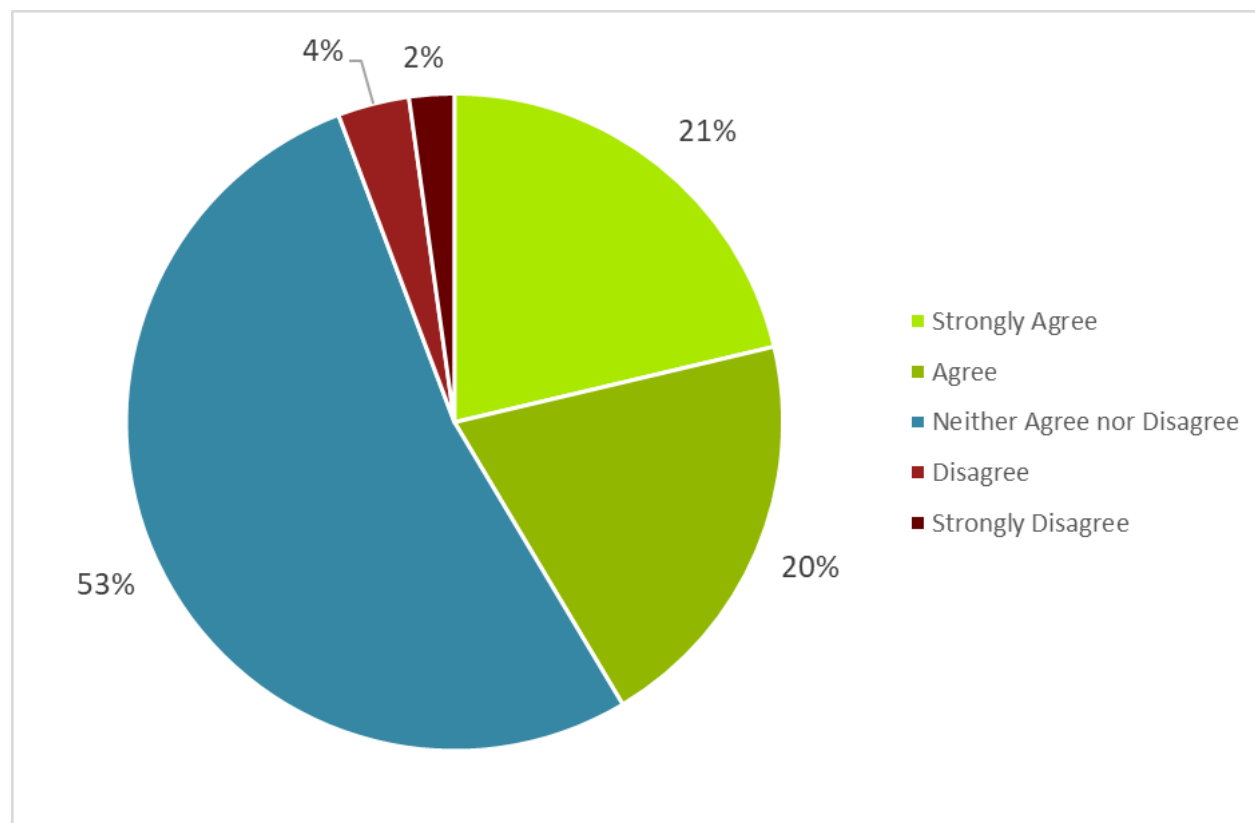
Q24. Do you have any comments on our proposal that we should not impose any additional requirements on the exams boards that award the EPQs?

In total, 129 respondents answered this question.

The themes that arose from the detailed comments have been included within the analysis of question 23.

The Advanced Extension Award

Q25. To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should not impose any additional requirements on the exam board that offers the Advanced Extension Award?



Q25 responses	Count	Percentage
Strongly Agree	163	21%
Agree	154	20%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	404	53%
Disagree	27	4%
Strongly Disagree	17	2%
Q25 total responses	765	
<i>No response</i>	2,716	
Survey total responses	3,481	

Relatively few respondents to the consultation answered this question (22%). Of those that did, over half (53%) indicated they neither agreed nor disagreed with our proposal. Forty-one per cent supported it, and 6% opposed it.

These proportions are relatively consistent between the respondent groups, but both students and parents were more likely to oppose our proposal (19% and 15% respectively).

Respondents who supported our proposal gave very little explanation for their response other than noting the very small entry for this qualification. One exam

board commented that students should be able to take the qualification in the autumn.

“We support offering the Advanced Extension Award qualification in the Autumn, to give candidates a comparable opportunity to resit, as with other qualifications. We do not believe any additional regulatory requirements are needed in this area.” (Awarding body or exam board)

Respondents who opposed our proposal did so on the basis of consistency.

“They should be required to make it available, like every other qualification. They should be no different. That is the only fair model.” (SLT – Senior leadership team)

“On principle I'd argue that all qualifications should be offered as this is (at least in spirit) what seemed to be promised when the announcement was made.” (School or college)

Two respondents noted that the nature of the qualification meant that there had been no opportunity to gain a calculated grade.

“In my child's school, the course was completed, but they haven't done a single test / assessment, therefore school has nothing to base a calculated grade on. The option to take exam in the Autumn is essential, it should be provided for those students - otherwise there is no opportunity to get the qualification.” (Parent or carer)

“There should be a requirement to provide Advanced qualification exam in Autumn. Otherwise, students who done the course but had no chance to do any tests at school and therefore not in a position to get a calculated grade, will have no opportunity to get this qualification.” (Student)

Q26. Do you have any comments on our proposal that we should not impose any additional requirements on the exam board that offers the Advanced Extension Award?

In total, 78 respondents answered this question.

The themes that arose from the detailed comments have been included within the analysis of question 25.

Equality Impact Assessment

Q27. Are there other potential equality impacts that we have not explored? What are they?

In total, 1,056 respondents answered this question.

Disadvantaged students

The most frequently identified impact identified by respondents was that of the closure of schools and colleges on disadvantaged students and their ability to prepare for the autumn exam series.

Views were expressed that some disadvantaged students may lack a suitable home environment in which to continue their studies, may lack the facilities to enable them to do so, or may have additional responsibilities that may have an impact on their ability to study.

“The issue of disadvantaged students who were in full-time education until schools and colleges closed. They may not have had access to online materials and resources or a quiet space or time to study due to their home circumstances. These students will be less able to study effectively for an autumn series because they will not have been or be able to be in an educational setting where they can receive support and guidance to offset the barriers their home circumstances have raised.” (Teacher - responding in a personal capacity)

“The ability for students who live in difficult or disadvantaged homes to revise at home without access to a library or other study space as they would had they been at school/college during this time.” (Student)

“Students with no access to online learning, those in rural communities will be affected and therefore at a disadvantage.” (Teacher - responding in a personal capacity)

“Disadvantaged students may not be able to purchase textbooks to complete courses for the autumn exams if they needed to.” (Student)

“Students from lower income backgrounds may be in full time work over the summer.” (Student)

The lack of access to facilities was identified as a particular issue for students taking art and design.

“I'm guessing from your questions that the possible suggestion is for exam boards to set Art and Design candidates an assignment for them to independently research and develop an idea which they could then go into a centre and produce a final outcome in a 10 hour sustained study. This would put disadvantaged students without access to materials normally sourced from school in an impossible situation.” (Teacher - responding in a personal capacity)

“It is not fair and equal for Art students to sit a replacement exam in autumn as pupils will have unfair access to specialist equipment and materials. Low income families will not be able to support pupils who would normally have

access to this equipment during lesson time of year 11.” (Teacher - responding in a personal capacity)

It was noted that wealthier centres may be more able to support their students’ preparation for the autumn series. A number of respondents expressed the view that independent schools and colleges may be better able to support their students than state schools and colleges. The view was also expressed that wealthier students and centres will be more able to source additional tuition.

“A number of students will be in schools who are stretched by the requirements that will need to be in place for face to face teaching from September. Such students may find their schools struggle to support them through such an exam session. Private school students may be able to pay for this extra tuition and therefore have greater success.” (Teacher - responding in a personal capacity)

“Some schools (particularly independent ones) will be in the position where they can teach students to prepare for the October exams, whilst state schools will not be funded to do so. Inequality alert!” (School or college)

“Over these few months, schools have not been focusing on teaching year 11 students and year 13 students. This is especially relevant in state/comprehensive schools. Compared to independent schools, online lessons have been taking place much less frequently in state/comprehensive schools. This will undoubtedly cause an even larger divide between students from different backgrounds.” (Student)

“Well-off families will pay for tutoring in the lead up to the exams in the absence of teaching, less well-off families will not be able to afford this - students will have therefore not had the support for 6 months prior to taking the exam.” (SLT - Senior leadership team)

“It is [...] possible that it would put wealthy students at a significant advantage as they may be better able to afford the extra tutoring and learning material cost incurred over the time before sitting exams. Students that do not have access to these resources may end up performing massively worse than they would have otherwise done.” (Student)

“Students from affluent backgrounds may have access to finance that would provide private tutoring. Whilst this is the case for any exam series, what students have missed out on this time is the intense exam preparation that schools do leading up to the June exams.” (Teacher - responding in a personal capacity)

Respondents also identified that less-affluent students and centres would be less able to pay for exam entries or to fund travel to exam centres.

“Financial constraints of schools and how exam boards charge for this Autumn season need to be clearly identified. We wouldn't want a poorer school with high SEN and disadvantaged student numbers not to be able to access this season if they want to.” (Exams officer or manager)

“Funding - not only for disadvantaged students but those from families from low incomes who do not qualify for PP [pupil premium]. If students are to pay for any entries they make then we could be stopping a large amount of students from sitting the autumn series. However the schools cannot afford to

fund entries for students who are no longer on roll in addition to the normal entry budgets for the upcoming Yr 11 and Yr 13s.” (Exams officer or manager)

“Due to the fact that sitting the exams will cost money, some families will not be able to fund their child's exam meaning that this person may not be able to get a qualification that they need for further education.” (Student)

Students affected by coronavirus (COVID-19)

Some respondents identified a particular impact for students whose lives have been impacted by coronavirus (COVID-19), including those who have been bereaved. A particular impact was identified in this regard for BAME students.

“Those who have been unwell with COVID-19 and could not prepare or were caring for sick relatives. This disproportionately affects BAME and disadvantaged groups.” (School or college)

“Ethnic minorities have been affected more by COVID than other communities so students from ethnic minorities could have been less able to study or keep up with school.” (Student)

“The cohorts as a whole will have been significantly disadvantaged, but as a school with a majority BAME student body, the added risks will mean that they are likely to miss more learning than other groups.” (Exams officer or manager)

“There will be students whose ability to revise for these exams will have been significantly impacted by the death of family members or friends, and this should be taken into account.” (Student)

“There may be students who require special consideration above and beyond that normally applied in circumstances where they have endured one or more bereavements in their close family.” (Teacher - responding in a personal capacity)

“Students from different parts of the country who will have been impacted more seriously - it is clear that some parts of the country - regional and cities - have been harder hit - could there be consideration made for those students?” (SLT - Senior leadership team)

Respondents also identified a particular impact for students with mental-health issues – which in some cases may have been exacerbated by the pandemic, either directly or indirectly

“Mental health of young people, in particular following a global pandemic where students may well have been ill themselves or their family or potentially lost a family member. GCSEs are incredibly stressful without the impact of a pandemic.” (Parent or carer)

“Please take into account the impact the pandemic and the situation with grades is having on students' mental health. For a lot of students it feels like their future has been taken out of their hands and it is horrible.” (Student)

“There is no mention of the massive impact this has had on young people's mental health and the additional support many will need to re-engage with study.” (Parent or carer)

“Pupils with medical, emotional and mental issues directly due to the pandemic. Anxiety can vastly reduce a pupil's performance.” (School or college)

“Students with mental health difficulties find changes challenging. If procedures are not as expected then they may become anxious and significantly under-perform.” (SLT - Senior leadership team)

“Students with existing mental health issues may be negatively impacted by increased stress levels caused by the short amount of time between results being released and a decision being required about resitting exams in Autumn, not to mention reduced time to revise for these exams whilst getting to grips with the step up to the next level of qualifications.” (Exams officer or manager)

Some respondents also identified that the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic may mean that some students will be less able – or unable – to attend a centre in order to sit the autumn series.

“Those with health conditions may not have returned to school by October, provisions should be made for how they will be able to take a resit if they are still unable to return to school.” (Parent or carer)

“How exams will be taken for the extremely medically vulnerable. Would it be possible for exams to be taken at home with the correct invigilation in place?” (Teacher - responding in a personal capacity)

“Students who are shielding may not even be able to go back to school at the start of the next school year and so will have less in classroom time with teachers.” (Student)

“Given the profile of COVID deaths BAME students may find it more challenging to come into school for an exam.” (Teacher - responding in a personal capacity)

“Obviously students of BAME communities might be disadvantaged by calculated grades - but might also have more grounds for continuing to shield in the Autumn.” (Teacher - responding in a personal capacity)

“Students who are more at risk to COVID-19, or live with people who are more at risk, may be reluctant to take these exams if the virus is still prevalent in the autumn.” (Student)

“Some vulnerable and disabled candidates will be very anxious about social distancing. They might NOT feel safe in some environments, until a COVID-19 vaccine is available. In addition, a visually impaired candidate is NOT able to see the different surfaces in a building. Their life revolves around touch - mobility and tactile discrimination. Further additional procedures need to be in place to allow safe accessibility to centres.” (Other representative or interest group)

Students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

A number of respondents identified a particular impact for SEND students.

“Students have not had the school exposure and support that they would normally have on the run up to exams. This is detrimental to all children but particularly children with SEN. Structure, planning etc. that is usually provided for by school is not in place for children with SEN. These children often find it difficult to organise and revise with no adequate support.” (Parent or carer)

“Difficulties for students with poor working memory who will find it very hard to retrieve information to apply in exams if they have not had any teaching on those subjects for many months.” (Teacher - responding in a personal capacity)

“The DfE has suspended the statutory duties of LAs [local authorities] and other agencies so they are no longer required to meet the needs of pupils with an EHCP [education, health and care plan] during this lockdown period. Until that duty is reinstated, we cannot expect that pupils with SEND will have received the required support in order to catch up. How are Ofqual and the DfE planning to address this?” (Other representative or interest group)

“SEND students who may have just moved to a new provision may feel less 'safe' and relaxed to sit exams that quickly in a new environment.” (Exams officer or manager)

Reasonable adjustments

Respondents identified a number of impacts relating to reasonable adjustments.

A number of respondents identified that it would be difficult to assess students' access requirements in time for the autumn series.

“Assuming new students joining the college, who need to take any additional exams, will be permitted to take such exams with us as their new centre (although it appears they may be expected to return to their old centre), then to hold an additional exam season in October does not allow sufficient time for them to settle into college, have entries agreed and be assessed by us for both modified paper requirements and access arrangements. Even for November exams, normal modified paper deadline is usually 21st September so how could we know a newly arriving student's modified paper requirements in August before they have joined us, particularly having had no chance to invite them in for transition visits before the summer break?” (School or college)

“How would applications for extra time / rest breaks / etc. work? Normally you need to log this through the school well in advance of the exams.” (Student)

“Those candidates who would apply for additional provision - JCQ needs to realise that it may not be possible in the confines of the post-COVID world for all such students to be tested by an educational psychologist prior to the completion of Form 8 documents.” (Exams officer or manager)

“Potential impact for students who have emerging health conditions that may need exam access arrangements in place in the autumn, but who were not eligible in the summer series. How will this work? Also, for students who were eligible for exam access arrangements in the summer, will there be any further testing needed or will the summer arrangements stand?” (SLT - Senior leadership team)

A number of respondents noted that particular reasonable adjustments may be challenging to implement while observing social distancing.

“If a candidate requires a reader/scribe and we still have to keep a 2m distance, how is that going to work?” (Exams officer or manager)

“Given the public health rules, this would make certain access arrangements impossible to facilitate, taking into account students' varying abilities and needs. The idea of NWOW [normal way of working] would be rendered obsolete.” (Exams officer or manager)

“Administration of a series any earlier than November would add additional pressure on EO [exams officers] and colleagues at what is already a particularly busy time in school at the start of the academic year and will be more complicated than usual due to social distancing. There will be a need to set up new exam practice protocols to ensure social distancing of students/scribes/invigilators in an exam situation, whilst complying with 2020-2021 JCQ regulations, which are not published until September. Also the possible need to source new equipment or create resources to comply with social distancing protocols, to book and train scribes and invigilators (in new protocols as well as the usual training for anyone new to the role) and, identify and set up sufficient accommodation whilst timetabled lessons are already likely to be taking up more space than usual as classes will be distanced, etc.” (School or college)

A number of respondents also noted that the reasonable adjustments that students receive for the autumn series may be less effective than they would have been in the summer.

“Students with access arrangements that would have had a single person assigned to them for the exam series may not have access to that person at all, or may have to have a mixture of people as a full timetable will be running in school rather than the standard in May/June when there are 1 or 2 less year groups to support.” (Exams officer or manager)

“Students with access arrangements will not have had their usual school support for a significant time.” (Teacher - responding in a personal capacity)

“Where disabled students are moving on to a new centre in the autumn there will not have been the opportunity to practice the access arrangements with the disabled student as normally would happen in Mocks. This means that difficulties will not have been addressed e.g. lighting in rooms or building up a relationship with a scribe.” (Parent or carer)

Grades based on exam performance only

A number of respondents suggested that our proposal to require the exam boards to award grades based on students' performance in their exams alone may have an impact on some groups of students – most notably on SEND students, disadvantaged students, and girls.

“There are potential impacts on a wholly exam driven approach which might present a disadvantage to some candidates with disabilities who may expect to perform better in non-examined assessment than exams owing to the mode of assessment and/or the content that is being assessed (considering the balance of cognitive, affective and psychomotor demands of the assessment).” (Awarding body or exam board)

“Your proposal to remove NEA scores from the Autumn Series exams will severely disadvantage students with specific learning disabilities (SpLD) such as dyslexia, ADHD, who often favour and excel at creative, practical subjects such as music, drama and graphic design.” (Parent or carer)

“Those with mental health and other developmental/neurological problems who struggle with e.g. anxiety, reading/writing etc. will be severely disadvantaged by the failure to support non-exam assessment in certain subjects. Children with these problems are more likely to select subjects that have NEA included and thus basing results only on exams is incredibly unhelpful and likely to lead to these young people doing badly whilst those who are more privileged (with all the benefits of higher socio-economic status) will benefit. It is of course important to bear in mind that there is a strong link between socio-economic status and mental health problems in young people.” (Parent or carer)

“Removal of NEA affects those pupils that are less academic or struggle in examinations. This can be linked to socio/economic factors.” (Teacher - responding in a personal capacity)

“With respect to GCSE and A level Music: a large number of candidates are drawn to this subject through the appeal of practical performance. In turn, a significant number of these may be from backgrounds that do not normally do well in a purely academic context. I am concerned that an Autumn 2020 series that includes no NEA may disadvantage students who have great creative flair, but are less confident with the written word; many of these may come from disadvantaged backgrounds.” (Teacher - responding in a personal capacity)

“Gender and NEA. Research shows that females outperform males in NEA.” (SLT - Senior leadership team)

“Not including NEA marks will have an impact on overall marks. This may affect different groups differently in ways that are incalculable. For example, female students may be more adversely affected.” (Examiner)

Finding a centre

A particular impact was noted for students who may have difficulty in finding a centre at which to sit the autumn series. Such students may include private candidates, and those whose centre may be impacted by coronavirus (COVID-19).

“It is already very difficult for private candidates to find centres to accommodate them, and this may be even more difficult if some centres are not entering any of their own candidates in the autumn. (Most do not cater solely for private candidates.) Therefore the opportunity to sit the exams at a neutral venue (LEA office/town hall etc.) should be considered, particularly for this series.” (Parent or carer)

“Schools are not obliged to accept private candidates. If schools who previously accepted private candidates decide not to in autumn 2020 (as resources may be stretched and space limited), then the private candidates who were not able to be given a calculated grade in summer 2020 may not have the opportunity to sit the autumn exams.” (Parent or carer)

“Access to exam centres for private candidates – EHE [Elective Home Education], EOTAS [Education Other Than At School] and adult learners. Especially those with disabilities and special learning needs. It is unacceptable to have boards run exams if there is no way for private candidates to sit them. Private candidates can struggle to access to exam centres at the best of times. Specialist exam centres [...] may not be able to cope with the far greater number of private candidates in the autumn, given that they need to accommodate those who have always planned to sit in the autumn, that there will be no English IGCSE in January, and that the majority of private candidates need to find an exam centre due to not being able to access GCSEs or IGCSEs this summer. They may often require additional travel and accommodation costs because of the long distances private candidates often need to travel to access exams. [...] Schools are highly unlikely to be able to provide access to exams for the autumn sittings. This is seldom done as the space and staff are not available to run exams for private candidates. This will be made worse by any social distancing measures in place. Finding an exam centre that is local enough to be practical, and has capacity (given the large number of candidates) will likely be a major barrier to accessing autumn sittings.” (Other)

“Given recent announcements that schools may be closed locally dependent on scientific advice, this throws the whole system into question.” (SLT - Senior leadership team)

Students moving on to a new course or employment

A number of respondents identified an impact on students who will have moved on to a new course or to employment in the autumn, as this may compromise their ability to focus on the autumn exam series. Some respondents suggested this would have a particular impact on disadvantaged students and SEND students.

“How could you ensure equality of access to support in the build-up to the proposed new round of examinations when students will either be undertaking new post-16 qualifications or in employment/apprenticeships? This will

disadvantage those who are currently most disadvantaged to an even greater extent.” (SLT - Senior leadership team)

“Students from lower income families may be less inclined to pursue an autumn exam date because of work responsibilities.” (Teacher - responding in a personal capacity)

“For slow processors / dyslexic students etc. the workload of starting A levels and resitting GCSEs is prohibitive and could impact in A levels.” (Parent or carer)

“My child has ASD [autism spectrum disorder] and struggles hugely with change. He is very academic and should be in line for a strong set of grades. If he isn’t awarded this and the appeals are unsuccessful he simply won’t be able to sit the exams in Autumn. His exam arrangements were to sit all exams at home due to his needs. How we would balance this alongside trying to integrate him into college and A levels is overwhelming.” (Parent or carer)

Religious holidays

A small number of respondents noted the potential for the timing of the autumn exam series to clash with religious holidays – in particular, the Jewish holiday Sukkot.

“There are religious festivals that occur in October, so for some religions this can put extra pressure on both students and schools.” (Student)

“Orthodox Jewish students will be unfairly disadvantaged unless you timetable the exams long after the religious holidays (when they are forbidden from work).” (Academy chain)

Autumn 2020 cohort

A number of respondents identified an impact on the autumn 2020 cohort as a whole – either due to the interruption to their teaching and learning time, or due to the lack of revision time between this summer’s results and the autumn series taking place.

“These students have not had any teaching or guidance, access to any resources or even in some cases finished the course for many months so to expect them to sit exams in the Autumn is putting some at a massive disadvantage. Teachers will not have the time to help as they have new classes.” (Exams officer or manager)

“Students who have not been in formal education since mid-March are going to struggle to get the same grades in any exams as would be expected had they been in full time education during this period.” (Parent or carer)

“Students would have missed out on several months of education in which they would have most likely been covering course content, but due to circumstances this has not been possible hence the ability of the student in the later parts of the course will be more lacking than those learnt before the 18th of March.” (Student)

“Definitely revision time, I’d already started revising in February for my A levels, giving me 4 months until my exams, if I receive my results on August 13th I will only have 1/1.5 months to revise for the Autumn series, this will not reflect the exam results I could have achieved.” (Student)

A number of respondents identified that the autumn series cohort may be atypical, which may introduce an equality impact – either against or in favour of the autumn cohort.

“How can we be sure results are a fair representation when cohorts are smaller than usually? I am concerned about statistical anomalies, particularly in minority subjects.” (Teacher - responding in a personal capacity)

Other comments

A number of respondents discussed equality impacts relating to the arrangements for summer 2020 awarding.

Q28. We would welcome your views on how any potential negative impacts on particular groups of students could be mitigated.

In total, 887 respondents answered this question.

Support for students

The most frequent theme in responses to this question was the suggestion that students should be supported in order to prepare for the autumn exam series.

“Schools as soon as possible putting in place study material to support students continue learning for these exams as at present yr 11s have no work set as younger children do. They are now out of sight, out of mind as it feels Schools have finished with them. [...] Some students have continued revising in case of appeal exams in autumn. Others have not. SENDCOs now need to be reviewing gaps in learning.” (Parent or carer)

“Students should be invited by the centres to talk to teachers and tutors about concerns or asking for help regarding the course and exam content. Heads of centre should also be available to talk to these students about the stress or mental health impacts this may be causing on them.” (Student)

“Schools could ask teachers to be available for online tutoring/put on revision sessions in the summer holidays.” (Teacher - responding in a personal capacity)

“Ensure that formal teaching is available in all subjects for students sitting the autumn exams to give them a chance to catch up on all they have missed.” (Parent or carer)

“Schools should offer revision and teaching from September to help these students that haven’t seen a teacher since March 2020.” (Parent or carer)

A number of respondents stressed the need for students to be provided with the appropriate materials to prepare for the autumn series – with disadvantaged students having a particular need.

“Lower income families when preparing for exams in the autumn may not have access to a private tutor. The government should ensure they have access to a plethora of education resources and that someone better off will not have an advantage due to finance.” (Student)

“Supply kit to pupils - not just ICT hardware, but kits of art, craft and design materials, or vouchers to purchase these from online retailers.” (Teacher - responding in a personal capacity)

“Laptops/tablets to be given to people from disadvantaged backgrounds and textbooks etc.” (Parent or carer)

“Give computers/tablets and make sure that if schools aren’t providing online lessons that they can get online lessons on websites such as MyTutor.” (Student)

There were also suggestions that third parties may be able to help students to prepare for the autumn series.

“One way round this would be to provide schools with extra money to employ dedicated tutors for these students until the exams. This will allow these students more time with tutors to revise most of the curriculum and put in more time over a week than they would have during normal lessons. Another thought would be to employ the tuition services who are used to running classes during holidays - they could even do this via Microsoft Teams or Google Classroom or another platform. An advantage of this is that schools could form a hub and their students could be taught together, especially if there are only a few students wanting to take an exam in a particular subject.” (Teacher - responding in a personal capacity)

“Ask exam boards to publish additional independent revision materials for pupils as teachers will not be able to teach and prepare them in the same way as usually.” (Teacher - responding in a personal capacity)

“Maybe some online seminars could be made available for students who no longer have face to face teaching. These could be provided by senior examiners or semi-retired teachers, etc.” (Teacher - responding in a personal capacity)

Finding a centre

A number of respondents gave views on where students might sit the autumn series.

Some stressed that students should be able to sit the autumn series at the centre where they would have sat the summer series.

“Provision should be made for SEND students to take exams in autumn at the centre where they would have taken their summer exams. The centre will understand the special requirements of the students and will also have the specialist staff and provision in place to cater for the needs of those students. Familiarity is a crucial aspect in the ability of such students to function successfully, so changing the environment and provision at such short notice could affect on their ability to sit the exams.” (Other)

“Students may have left education in July so need the choice to come back purely to sit the exams. Schools need to allow this access.” (Parent or carer)

Some suggested that students should be able to sit the autumn series at a new centre.

“Students should be able to choose a new centre for the exam. They may have moved 100s of miles from the school or colleges where they would have been examined in the summer.” (Parent or carer)

“There are many international pupils studying for A levels who have returned home and may need to sit their examinations in the Autumn overseas. This will be even more the case if there is a two week quarantine imposed on them. Therefore, it is important that such pupils have the opportunity to take assessments in centres near to them rather than require their attendance in the UK.” (SLT - Senior leadership team)

“My child has mental health issues caused by his current school and this has had a negative impact on him. He would be unable to return to his old school

to sit an exam if he wanted to, so provision of where to sit an exam is important and would factor in what he would do.” (Parent or carer)

Some stressed that students should be able to choose whether they sit the autumn series at the centre where they would have sat the summer series or at a new centre.

“Allow students to select their centre for the exam (so they can choose their current college or their school as attended in year 11).” (SLT - Senior leadership team)

A number of respondents suggested that “hub” centres could be used to facilitate students’ access to the autumn series.

“[We] believe that holding the autumn exam series in local hub centres would [...] reduce the chances of further exam cancellations or delays in light of future public health requirements and potential future school closures. The further cancellation of exams would be significant for private candidates, of whom a notable proportion are students with SEND, and those students with low school attendance. For these students, future exam cancellations may prevent any progression this year and cause further disruption to their education and well-being. Local hub centres would make the exam series more accessible for students who may have moved to new providers or new areas, such as students from the Gypsy, Roma Traveller research and some students with SEND for whom transport can be an issue. [We] also believe it would be easier to organise social distancing in local hub centres, which would increase the chances of medically vulnerable students being able to take their exams.” (Other representative or interest group)

“It is already very difficult for private candidates to find centres to accommodate them, and this may be even more difficult if some centres are not entering any of their own candidates in the autumn. (Most do not cater solely for private candidates.) Therefore the opportunity to sit the exams at a neutral venue (LEA office/town hall etc.) should be considered, particularly for this series.” (Parent or carer)

“Ofqual should require Boards to support the setting up specialist language examination centres in partnership with local or national language Consortia or communities like the Consortium of Gujarati Schools.” (Other representative or interest group)

However, some respondents felt that “hub” centres would not be desirable.

“Exam hubs would have the potential to further exclude students from less advantaged backgrounds. Disadvantaged students are less likely to countenance the idea of going to an unfamiliar place with unfamiliar people to take exams. They are also less likely to have the means to travel to somewhere not close to home.” (Awarding body or exam board)

“I am not convinced that a hub approach will work. Many LAs [local authorities] lack competent staff and many more any financial resource.” (School or college)

A number of respondents stated the importance of private candidates being able to find a centre for the autumn series.

“There must be a requirement for exam centres to accept private candidates to sit these exams. This issue must be addressed urgently. [...] It would not be acceptable to tell home educated children to defer taking GCSEs until exam centres have the confidence to return to normal service. Most of them are reluctant to have anything to do with private candidates now. This means that a generation of home educated children will be unable to apply to attend 6th form, because 6th forms have admission criteria of certain numbers and grades of GCSEs. As 6th form funding is limited by age, this could result in this group of children being permanently excluded from opportunity to attend 6th form.” (Parent or carer)

“Approximately 30,000 students take a qualification in their ‘community’ language every year. This situation has highlighted that this cohort may be systematically disadvantaged in gaining these qualifications. [We] recommend a review be undertaken to reduce systemic issues and to recognise the value of these examinations. Including: [...] Addressing the increasing difficulty of finding affordable and available examination centres to take an exam in ‘community’ languages.” (Other representative or interest group)

“Local authorities should be required to ensure sufficient exam centre access for the private candidates in their area. To maintain a database of school and exam centres available locally, and to make this freely available to private candidates. To work with exam centres/schools to make sufficient space and invigilators available where space is an issue due to the increased demand.” (Other)

“There could be government incentives for centres to take on private candidates for this series.” (Parent or carer)

Non-exam assessment

It was suggested that allowing non-exam assessment to be taken into account in the autumn series would mitigate negative impacts on particular groups of students.

“To help SEN students: Allowing non-assessment work to be taken into consideration.” (Exams officer or manager)

“You could mitigate the impact on girls by allowing NEA from Summer 2020 to be brought forward.” (School or college)

“Allow students to include their coursework for assessment if they wish to.” (Teacher - responding in a personal capacity)

It was suggested that Ofqual should ensure that groups who share a protected characteristic will not be disadvantaged if grades are determined on the basis of exam performance only.

“Whilst [we] accept Ofqual’s position on using exam-only performance for the results of the autumn exam series [we] are concerned that this may disadvantage particular student groups. Ofqual must consider the effect of this decision on groups with protected characteristics, particularly students with SEND, who may do disproportionately better in non-exam assessment. [We] call on Ofqual to set out greater detail on their proposals to adjust the results

to account for this and to ensure these groups are not further disadvantaged in relation to their peers.” (Other representative or interest group)

Taking the current situation into account

A number of respondents suggested that there should be particular mitigations in the autumn exam series to take the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and its knock-on effects into account – for instance, by reducing the amount of assessment or by adjusting grade boundaries.

“Reducing content and directing students to let them know which elements of the syllabus is “required” learning that will be included in the exams.” (Governor)

“It may be that disadvantaged groups could be more fairly treated by giving less papers than usual as their access to support is less at this time.” (Teacher - responding in a personal capacity)

“For maths: two papers instead of three, removal of some of the topics that are often left to teach at the end of the course (e.g. for GCSE vector geometry), questions which require application of lower level skills in familiar contexts rather than abstract concepts.” (Consultant)

“For Eng Lit - allow exam boards to name chapters/scenes that extracts are from, offer a reduced list of poems from which the named poem will be chosen.” (Teacher - responding in a personal capacity)

“The biggest issue for me will be the time between when these students last studied in a class the subjects for their exams and when they will sit the autumn GCSEs. Grade boundaries will need to take into account this exceptional circumstance.” (Teacher - responding in a personal capacity)

“Ensure marking scheme and grade boundaries are commensurate with the current situation and lack of access to regular support and teaching.” (Parent or carer)

“I think it's important to remember that there are going to be major differences in the students taking these 'resit' papers. The balance of levels of students will be different to normal so grade boundaries should be adjusted.” (Student)

A number of respondents suggested that there should be particular mitigations for particular groups of students.

“Ensure that all Exam Boards know who the DA [disadvantaged] students are, which students have had no technology in their home and make special arrangements as they would normally for a SEN student.” (SLT - Senior leadership team)

“I think those from state schools should have more lenience, as my state sixth form finished completely and we have not had any Zoom lessons etc., however people in private sixth forms have had lessons on Zoom etc.” (Student)

“Account for the disproportionate deaths due to COVID-19 on families who are of colour; lenient marking potentially on these students.” (Student)

“Please communicate directly with private candidates. Gather data from those who have been withdrawn to find out what proportion have mental health needs. These should be taken into account when looking at grade boundaries.” (Parent or carer)

“Give percentage leniency; perhaps a questionnaire for students to fill out about their emotional state.” (Teacher - responding in a personal capacity)

“Significant family illness or childcare being done by students will disadvantage them. A % boost to those students based on evidence from schools would help.” (Teacher - responding in a personal capacity)

“With track and trace potentially leading to regional rather than national lockdowns, pupils may be sitting the exam under very different public health circumstances in October. May need some form of weighting system, like with special considerations.” (Examiner)

Reasonable adjustments

It was suggested that reasonable adjustments that had been granted for the cancelled summer series should be rolled over to the autumn series.

“Students would need access to any assistance usually granted to them for exams. This could mean that Access Arrangement approvals had to be extended, as some may have expired since the Summer and there would not be sufficient time to re-test or update as necessary, leaving students at a disadvantage if they were not permitted access to a reader/scribe for example when this is their usual way of working.” (Exams officer or manager)

“If people have been granted exam conditions these should be carried forward for the new exam series and they shouldn’t have to be assessed again.” (Student - private, home-educated of any age)

“If private candidates decide to switch exam centres when taking them in Autumn and they have access arrangements, would it be possible to transfer the application for arrangements from the previous entering centre (summer 2020) to the new centre (Autumn 2020), saving time and money of all parties carrying out new access arrangement assessments?” (Other)

It was suggested that centres should be given guidance on the provision of reasonable adjustments for the autumn series.

“We believe there would be value in the provision of clear and consistent access arrangements guidance to centres which we believe the JCQ and Exam Boards will coordinate to ensure access arrangements are applied in a consistent and fair manner for learners with SEN and/or disabilities. This is because current requirements mean that approval of access arrangements expires after 26 months. Some candidates who would have been covered for the summer 2020 series may see their approval expire before the autumn series. Centres can reapply using the pre-existing evidence and previous approval reference number. This needs to be communicated swiftly and clearly to centres. The guidance could also include how access arrangements are conducted, taking into consideration public health guidelines for safeguarding concerns.” (Awarding body or exam board)

It was also suggested that funding should be available for reasonable adjustments for the autumn series.

“Where students already have an access arrangement in place, funding could be assigned to schools on a pro rata basis to help support extra staffing. (I have no idea who would provide such funding!)” (Exams officer or manager)

“Budget allowances for TAs [teaching assistants] in exams e.g. readers.” (Student)

Flexibility from receiving institutions

Respondents expressed the view that receiving institutions (such as universities and further education colleges) should take a flexible approach with this year’s cohort of students, in order to allow their onward progression.

“Students progressing to university should not be disadvantaged by sitting exams. There needs to be consensus amongst universities to allow students to progress onto their courses. They should not have to reapply & should be allowed to start late or in the following academic year. Otherwise 2020 students will be competing with 2021 students who completed different exam procedures.” (Student)

“We have pupils taking Native Language exams at our school. We do not have teachers for these languages, (Russian and Arabic), so we are not able to award CAGs [centre assessment grades]. These pupils are missing out on qualifications through no fault of their own. Please encourage universities to bear in mind these special circumstances and accept pupils affected in this way.” (School or college)

“Universities should be more flexible and have start dates to courses start January once results of Autumn series are received. If trying for first choice university by sitting autumn series, the second choice where required grades have already been received should remain as an option too.” (Parent or carer)

“UCAS deadlines for universities should be pushed forward until after everyone has sat the autumn exams and had their grades. This is because for some courses e.g. medicine the UCAS deadline is earlier and those sitting exams at this point will be disadvantaged as they’ll have their calculated grade which may not reflect their ability.” (Student)

“Delay the start of the new academic year (esp for Uni), and do not offer places through clearing until the exam results are out. GCSE students moving to 6th form can’t be disadvantaged either, so again, perhaps delay 6th form starting until January 2021.” (Parent or carer)

“Many university places are conditional on the grades achieved in what would have been the usual summer exams. If a student does not meet this conditional offer in the calculated grades, but does meet the offer whilst sitting the Autumn examinations, then I believe it is only fair that the university defers their place for 2021 entry.” (Student)

“Allowing sixth forms/colleges to accept students after autumn series of exams. Sixth forms should be able to get extra students who do well in the autumn.” (Student)

“Apprenticeship schemes, FE [further education] and HE [higher education] need to stagger intake for new students so they can take exams and proceed to next stage, especially BME groups who already are suffering inequality in education system.” (Teacher - responding in a personal capacity)

Clarity

A number of respondents stressed the importance for clear information about the autumn series to be disseminated as soon as possible.

“It is vital that Ofqual give considerable thought to communicating with all those learners, and their families, most at risk of disadvantage. Learners and their families will need clear and accessible information about the purpose and arrangements for the autumn series of exams. This information must set out clearly why it matters, what they need to know in order to participate and what support is available to them.” (Other representative or interest group)

“In my view it is important that students are instructed as soon as possible that there will be examinations in October 2020. It is important that students are told how to enter for these examinations.” (Examiner)

“Certainty is what is needed. The children need to know the exams will happen so they can prove their ability in the way that society expects.” (Student - private, home-educated of any age)

“Students will need as much notice as possible in order for them to make an informed decision as to whether to enter the exams or not.” (Teacher - responding in a personal capacity)

“Students who suffer from poor mental health will need significant pastoral support to return from lockdown and prepare for an unprecedented exam series. Clarity for these students should be an absolute priority.” (Teacher - responding in a personal capacity)

“For private candidates who, in many cases, do not have the option of receiving predicted grades it is essential that examination dates are published and then adhered to.” (Parent or carer)

“The commitments of the examination need to be made clear at the outset. The number and timings of examinations needs to be clear.” (School or college)

“It would help if JCQ specified at an early stage, and preferably before results days, which access arrangements instructions will be in place. Students will have expected the 2019-2020 version to apply in the summer and it would be very helpful if that was the case.” (Other)

“Students should be entitled to the teaching they should have had to complete their course - this should not be left to chance. Schools will need flexibility and funding to be able to achieve this and they need to know NOW so they can plan staffing.” (Teacher - responding in a personal capacity)

Costs

Some respondents expressed views that disadvantaged students should not have to pay fees, and that entry costs should not be a barrier to any student who wishes to take autumn exams. Respondents' comments in relation to fees are reported under questions 30 and 31.

Other comments

A number of respondents suggested that the autumn series should not happen at all.

"Don't have these exams. They are unfair on child mental health and you are only going to get those at top public schools sitting them or those who are potentially are at a real low mental health-wise because they did not get their required marks in August. It is wrong to have these exams." (Parent or carer)

"Not expecting children to sit exams with short notice following such a huge upheaval in society and education." (Teacher - responding in a personal capacity)

"Don't allow retakes to be set up for the Autumn. This all assumes that all will be back to normal by then but it won't be. Imagine setting all of this up and then finding we are in lockdown again. THAT is the worst thing that could happen to students, not the having a grade that they feel is unfair." (Teacher - responding in a personal capacity)

"I do not think exams should be offered in Autumn and that regardless Calculated grades should be given out or if students want to sit exams to do so next year. Especially for Private/External candidates we've had months out of education and time studying without private tutors due to the fact that we thought that we would receive a calculated grade, now if we were to be put into an autumn exam, it would severely disadvantage us and it would push us back another year from going to university which simply isn't fair." (Student)

"Don't do the resits. If students want to resit this can be done in a normal exam series. We need to protect the integrity of the CAG process." (SLT - Senior leadership team)

In addition, a number of respondents gave views on how negative impacts regarding the arrangements for summer 2020 could be mitigated or looked ahead to potential mitigations for potential negative impacts in summer 2021. Again, these issues are beyond the remit of this analysis.

Regulatory Impact Assessment

Q29. Are there additional activities associated with the delivery of an additional exam series in the autumn that we have not identified above? What are they?

In total, 793 respondents answered this question. Some respondents commented on the activities we had identified in our regulatory impact assessment, and others highlighted other activities associated with the delivery of the autumn exam series.

Preparing students for autumn exams

Many respondents raised queries about how students would prepare for autumn exams. Teachers and centres questioned the extent to which they might be expected to support students with teaching and revision, and highlighted the likely burden to them if this were to be required alongside a full autumn teaching timetable. Some expressed particular concerns about the potential for this to divert teachers from the preparation of students for exams in 2021, including for mock exams that would usually take place in the autumn term. Some respondents also queried whether centres would receive financial support for any support provided to students.

“Students will need to be given revision sessions by their teachers as so much time will have passed from when the course content was taught. This will have financial and timetable implications.” (SLT – Senior leadership team)

“A potential expectation for teaching/revision/support of any other kind when a student has moved on from the centre they’re entering at. Even those students who have remained at the same centre will have likely moved on to different courses/stages of their education in new class groups with different teachers. If there is an expectation from parents or students that education staff will continue to support students for whom they are no longer responsible, this will create additional workload burden for teachers and others, who will themselves have new students they have responsibility for from their new timetables.” (Other representative or interest group)

“I do not know how it would be possible for a school to offer any revision coaching to students who wished to enter for exams in any additional autumn series.” (Exams officer or manager)

“How will students prepare for these exams? Schools and colleges are unlikely to have the capacity to offer this support, and even if they did it would be unfunded. Will funding be provided to support 'returning' students? Considering teacher shortages, how will this be managed?” (Teacher – responding in a personal capacity)

“Teachers will be teaching a full timetable with new students. The autumn term is heavy workload wise with the lion’s share of the courses being taught. In reality December is halfway through the year for examination content.” (Teacher – responding in a personal capacity)

“For centres and exam boards, the autumn series will impose a range of costs, challenges and risks, and may disrupt to efforts to support current Year 10s and Year 12s who are set to miss 1.5 terms of teaching time in preparation for the summer 2021 series. Choices around the timing and scope of the autumn 2020 series will directly determine the educational benefit that is provided to other students.” (Awarding body or exam board)

Some respondents told us that in some cases, centres had not finished teaching GCSE and A level content to year 11 and year 13 students at the time schools closed, and that some further teaching is necessary. A few respondents also highlighted that students’ access to learning and resources since March would have varied significantly, impacting their preparedness. Some also commented that students would be required to return textbooks or other resources to centres.

“Not all students have finished all the topics at school for exams. So, there should be a way so that they can ask questions about any topics they do not understand from their teachers.” (Student)

“Will the students get any support from the school? My daughter in year 13 has been abandoned by the school. Is there any guidance re: what she can expect in terms of teaching? How do you motivate the school to care about these students?” (Parent or carer)

“Many Year 13 students will likely have to return their textbooks in the middle of revising for their autumn exams, because the Year 12s will need them. This will heavily disadvantage their ability to revise for the Autumn exams, and therefore heavily disadvantage their grade” (Student)

Some respondents highlighted the burden to students of revising for autumn exams while at the same time having started new study at A level or at university.

“How would a student find time to study both GCSE/A levels for their Autumn exams whilst also starting new A level/B Tec/ university courses? Can the students realistically ask for help from their course teachers when they have potentially left the school/college.” (Parent or carer)

If GCSEs are being re-sat the first term of A Levels is being disrupted. You need to help schools prepare for this. Course content is barely completed in the time frame already - let alone with students pre-occupied up until early November.” (Student)

Some respondents noted that students who can afford it will be able to access private tutors, but that this will not be an option for many. Comments were similar to those made in response to our questions on equality impacts. A few respondents suggested that government could arrange tuition for private candidates.

Entering students for exams

A few respondents raised questions about which centre should enter students for exams. Exams officers and managers, in particular, highlighted that centres must be afforded sufficient time to consider and process exam entries. A few highlighted the administrative burden of transferring candidates between centres, where this is required. Respondents also said that staff taking holidays over summer, term-time

only working arrangements and the burden of processing entries at the same time as managing results and appeals should all be taken into account.

Centre planning and delivery of exams

A number of respondents commented that the planning and delivery of autumn exams would place a significant additional burden on staff in centres, in particular exams staff. Some highlighted that exams officers often have other roles and responsibilities in the autumn term, including in relation to data and as cover supervisors. A few raised concerns about the limited time available to prepare for delivery of exams, saying that this would be much shorter than the time to plan for a usual exam series. It was suggested the reduced timeframe for planning could lead to breaches of regulations, for example paper security issues. Some said that holding exams at this time would be particularly challenging in the context of centres reopening to students and establishing new routines and physical distancing arrangements. Exams officers or managers also highlighted concerns about the impact on the delivery of mock examinations, usually scheduled in the autumn term.

“The timeframe it takes to make entries, create seat plans, book a team of invigilators (who may still be shielding or unwilling/unable to work in the autumn), plan all the reasonable adjustments and special needs arrangements and create timetables for a full season is approx 4 months in a school with 400 eligible students.” (Exams officer or manager)

“Impact of workload on staff to prepare and run an Autumn Exam series so close to proposed/planned mocks for summer 2021 exams.” (School or college)

“Not additional activities but this extra season will impact heavily on exam office staff who have other roles in school to deal with, also it may have an adverse effect on the new Y11 cohort as they may not be able to do a set of mock exam before Christmas. (Exams officer or manager)

“The delivery of the Autumn series will have considerable implications for schools and colleges who will need to consider carefully the logistical and administrative duties being placed on them in addition to taking on new students and re-engaging them while at the same time managing social distancing.” (Awarding body or exam board)

“The time and resource availability within schools of actually being able to manage and prepare for this when we don't even know if all students will be back in school from September.” (School or college)

“The impact of arranging such exam series whilst most exam officers are also school data officers/cover supervisors/members of SLT etc who have many other duties at the start of any new academic school year.” (Exams Officer or manager)

Reasonable adjustments

A number of respondents emphasised the work that would be involved in assessing and gathering evidence to support requests for access arrangements/ reasonable adjustments. They highlighted that sufficient time would be needed to ensure these were in place for students where required, with some raising concerns that there

would not be sufficient time to do this. Some suggested that access arrangements that had been approved for the summer exams could be carried over to autumn, without the need for reassessment.

“Might have to look at automatically extending access arrangement approval to automatically cover autumn exams even if it was due to expire after summer 2020. There would not be time or resources to re-assess.” (School or college)

Some also raised staffing challenges for implementation of reasonable adjustments, noting that staff, such as teaching assistants, who might usually be used, would be engaged with classes. Some also noted the logistical challenge of implementing certain adjustments, for example scribes, in the context of social distancing. Comments were similar to those reported in the equality impact section.

Invigilators

Many respondents highlighted potential challenges in recruiting invigilators. Some commented that many invigilators are retired and may be vulnerable and shielding in line with public health guidelines. Some also highlighted that university students and teachers sometimes work as invigilators but that they will not be available at that time of year.

“Many invigilators are in the older age group and will not be comfortable coming back into school.” (Exams officer or manager)

A few respondents noted the additional burden if the JCQ regulations were to change between summer and autumn and it were necessary to update policies and retrain invigilators. Respondents also highlighted that it would be necessary to renew DBS clearance for invigilators that had been recruited for the summer.

Managing candidates in centres

Some respondents commented on arrangements for managing returning students in centres at which they are no longer enrolled. They highlighted the potential logistical issues and administrative burden of managing or supervising such students on site as visitors. Some concerns were raised about safeguarding in relation to current students, and also about the authority of centres to deal with any behaviour issues. A few respondents questioned whether they should treat students returning for autumn exams as private candidates.

“Will 'returning' students be required to have a DBS (or remain supervised at all times on site) to come on site with younger students?” (Exams officer or manager)

“Students who have left our school may wish to return as a private candidate to sit exams that they would have taken in the summer. Our policy does not accept private candidates currently, so we will need to review this and plan accordingly.” (Exams officer or manager)

Exam accommodation

Many respondents highlighted concerns about the capacity within centres to host the autumn exams. Many said it would be very challenging to find sufficient space when

all year groups are expected to be in schools and likely being taught with social distancing arrangements in place and, at the same time, with greater than usual space required to deliver exams with social distancing in place. Some respondents raised particular concerns about the impact on PE lessons for the rest of school if sports halls were to be used for exams throughout October and November.

“Accommodating these exams is going to be very difficult. Usually summer exams take place when we have less yr 11s and 13s on site. We also use sports facilities as exam halls so PE department move their students outside, a task more difficult in the autumn where weather may be worse. Even if we did not have to cater for social distancing, holding exams in Oct / Nov would be difficult to accommodate, but with distancing, it is going to be extremely difficult.” (Exams officer or manager)

“Where are our PE lessons going to go? Normally they are outside or in classrooms freed up by Y11’s on study leave but these exams will be in the winter. We don’t physically have anywhere to put them?” (SLT – Senior leadership team)

“Rooming issues for the exams themselves if social distancing is still in place. Potentially a logistical issue for large centres.” (Teacher – responding in a personal capacity)

“How are we going to manage this when our current exam halls only have to have 1.25 meters distance between desks? We cannot conjure up new exam halls to accommodate new social distancing especially when we are trying to run a school normally!” (School or college)

“It is one thing running exams when Y11/13 are on study leave - and another when there is a full cohort in school (under whatever conditions may apply at that time).” (School or college)

“Centres will be potentially at full capacity again so it may be difficult for some centres to find a location for the exams to take place. Are there going to be any alternative venues offered?” (Teacher – responding in a personal capacity)

“Schools will struggle to accommodate large numbers of students (particularly if a lot of separate venues are needed to support those with access arrangements), assuming schools are running at full capacity by the time of the exams.” (Exams officer or manager)

A few respondents told us there would be no capacity and that the exams would not be deliverable in centres during the autumn term or that they could only be delivered if teaching to other years groups was suspended or delivered remotely.

“We are an 11-16 school and we would not be able to accommodate the exams.” (School or college)

“There is quite simply no way the school I work in could be a centre for the Autumn Series due to the lack of space on site. Where are these exams going to happen is the single biggest issue that I feel could derail the whole process. We are able to deliver the usual GCSE and A level exams effectively because those year groups that take the exams are on study leave which frees up the space we need. In the Autumn this will not be the case and is a problem we simply cannot overcome - we will not have the space to host any exams in the Autumn.” (SLT - Senior leadership team)

“Space will be at a premium in the autumn term. A full exam series will have a negative impact on the quality of teaching and learning across the curriculum and would be quite impossible to accommodate in such a large centre as ours.”
(School or college)

A few respondents commented that guidance would be needed on social distancing if centres were to hold the exams. Some also suggested risk assessments would need to be carried out, and procedures and equipment in place to minimise risks related to coronavirus (COVID-19) – for example, taking the temperature of candidates before they enter the exam room, and provision of PPE. A few questioned whether invigilators would be permitted to walk down aisles between desks, how they might safely answer students’ queries and how risks to students and staff in relation to handling of exam papers and scripts would be mitigated.

A few respondents expressed a view that centres should be required to hold the exams. Many respondents proposed how the burden on centres of delivering exams might be reduced, including by collaborating across centres, and by delivering exams in alternative venues, away from centres. These proposals are set out in detail in the summary of responses to question 31.

Student travel to centres

Some respondents told us about the potential challenges for students to reach exam centres – including those who travel from rural communities, and in the context of students no longer having access to school transport. It was noted that allowing students access to school transport would pose a safeguarding issue. A few respondents also noted the burden on students who had started university courses elsewhere, in or outside of the UK, to travel back to their previous centre.

“Some students will have been provided with school transport to access their school in year 11 but will no longer have this support.” (SLT – Senior leadership team)

Examiners

Many respondents, including exam boards, highlighted potential issues in the recruitment of examiners for the autumn exams. Some said that teachers may not be available to mark at the same time as delivering a full teaching timetable in the autumn term. It was also highlighted that some examiners may already be contracted to work as examiners for different qualifications with other awarding organisations in this period.

“We also agree with the risk Ofqual have identified regarding a potential shortage of markers. When marking occurs in the summer term, a number of those teachers who have signed up to be markers will have reduced timetables due to the students from exam classes being on study leave. With that not being the case in autumn, and with the potential unreasonable, increased expectation for supporting students as highlighted above, many of those who might normally sign up may feel they do not have capacity to do so for this exceptional series.”
(Other representative or interest group)

“Assessor availability for marking may also be an issue as most markers are teachers who may not have the capacity to take on this role at this time of year, particularly given the impact of the pandemic on schools. This may inflate the costs relating to recruitment and also the payments being made to assessors to deliver this activity.” (Awarding body or exam board)

“We would further note that examiners, largely consisting of teachers, may be too busy teaching to help with marking exams – causing further recruitment issues for awarding organisations. This issue will also affect awarding, where we will be more than usually reliant on examiner judgement in a context in which those examiners are likely to be self-isolating.” (Awarding body or exam board)

“You've not asked any questions really regarding how full time members of staff who normally mark GCSE exams at the effective end of their teaching academic year in Jun/July could be accommodated to be released in order to allow for the numbers of markers/examiners/moderators who are likely to be needed to mark the unusually inflated number of November candidates' exam papers this November 20 exam series. As an examiner, it requires a number of weeks of intense marking to be undertaken over extended hours in order to manage the number of scripts allocated and to maintain quality within normal target times. This cannot be achieved if schools/colleges are expecting full time members of staff to conduct their normal timetabled teaching at the same time and needs to be considered as it is likely that much higher numbers than has become the norm will be re-taking exams in November.” (Teacher – responding in a personal capacity)

A few respondents suggested that examiner recruitment may not be an issue. It was suggested that if the entry numbers are small, there should be sufficient availability of senior examiners, also that retired examiners could be employed.

Some respondents said that exam boards' approach to payment of examiners in the summer could affect decisions on working as examiners in the autumn.

A small number of respondents commented on potential impacts to quality of marking in the autumn as a result of increased pressure on markers conducting marking alongside teaching responsibilities.

Non-exam assessment

Respondents highlighted that sufficient time would need to be allowed to plan and to complete any non-exam assessment that is required. A few respondents commented on impacts arising from our proposal that students should complete a new non-exam assessment task in GCSE and A level Art and Design. A few noted that the art room would need to be blocked out, impacting on the teaching of other year groups. Some raised queries about how the work would be assessed and moderated, and whether centres would be required to set up exhibitions for visiting moderators, or post work to the exam board.

“Art and Design - if exam board were to mark, would an examiner visit the centre or would the work be posted? Some could be large/fragile/awkward to post?” (Teacher – responding in a personal capacity)

“How much time will candidates be given to develop ideas prior to the exam as is usual with art and design, given that the exam entries are likely to be at the

beginning of September and the exam will be in October? Candidates usually have at least 12 weeks to prepare their ideas before the exam.” (Teacher – responding in a personal capacity)

Timing of exams

Many respondents commented on the proposed timing of autumn exams. Many highlighted the burden to centres of holding exams in what they consider to be their busiest teaching term.

Some supported the proposal to hold exams in October and November. Some considered that December or later would be more appropriate to allow more time for preparation, while others said that the exams should go ahead in August and September to minimise disruption to students and centres in the 2020/21 academic year, and to facilitate progression. These comments were similar to those made in response to question 18 and are therefore not repeated in detail here.

A few respondents asked that we consider potential clashes with higher education entrance exams that typically take place in the autumn, including for Oxford and Cambridge. Responses about the impact of the timing of the autumn exams on progression to higher education are reported under question 31.

Exam board activities

One exam board provided a list of additional activities it expected to undertake to deliver the autumn exams;

- system design, development and testing - to allow for additional qualifications to be added to the autumn series; potential changes to qualification structures; additional, new quality assurance processes
 - staff and appointee training in new ways of working adhering to social distancing measures and consequent development of new documentation
 - specific training for Art and Design moderators to be able to assess using different systems and processes
 - potential development for certification requirements
 - revising quality assurance process for traditionally marked scripts
 - operational activities relating to hub centres if this approach is progressed
- (Awarding body or exam board)

One exam board commented on activity that would be required if there were material changes to qualifications.

“If qualifications are materially changed for an atypical series there will be a need to exemplify and explain the changes to centres through a range of support methods, which will be additional activity we would not normally need to undertake. (Awarding body or exam board)

One exam board commented on the potential complexity of awarding in the autumn series, and the challenge of delivering this by remote means.

“The cohort entering for the autumn series will be an unpredictable cohort, with an unknown expected value-added rate. In addition, while we support the exclusion of NEA in the majority of assessments, this will make the awarding process more complex than usual. The statistical predictions for the outcomes of the exams will be less reliable than in a summer or a November resit series. The awarding process will therefore be more reliant on examiner judgement to ensure we are carrying forward a comparable standard. It is likely that, because of the risks of face-to-face meetings, all awarding will take place remotely. Whilst we are confident that we could deliver this, there is a risk that the standards being agreed will not be consistent with previous years.” (Awarding body or exam board)

Exam board comments in relation to costs of delivering autumn exams are reported under question 30.

Q30 What additional costs do you expect you will incur as a result of an autumn exam series?

In total, 1,323 respondents answered this question.

A number of respondents expressed views that costs should not be the main consideration when deciding on the approach to the autumn exams, and that rather, the priority must be fair outcomes for students.

Entry fees

Many respondents commented that their costs would not be known until fees for autumn exams, and any refunds or discounts for the cancelled summer exams are confirmed. Some respondents indicated they understood that exam boards would pass any savings back to centres. Some made clear that decisions on fees would have a significant financial impact overall on centre finances, and cited the sums centres had paid on entries for the exams that were cancelled. Some respondents expressed a view that entry to the autumn exams should be free.

Many respondents told us that centres do not have additional budget to meet any additional costs arising from the autumn series. Some said either government or students should meet any additional entry costs.

“None - this should be funded by Government as an expense related to Covid-19, asking schools to fund this is unacceptable.” (SLT – Senior leadership team)

“Our entries usually cost £150,000+ - I do hope students will be charged individually for a repeat entry as our school absolutely CANNOT afford this.”
(Exams officer or manager)

“If we are required to pay a £80,000 pounds for this additional exam series this would be unacceptable.” (SLT – Senior leadership team)

“Full entry fees when already paid for these during the summer season and will not have been budgeted for. If everyone decides to resit this could be £50k”
(Exams officer or manager)

A few respondents commented that it is usual for independent schools to pass on exam fees to parents and questioned whether it would be reasonable to do so for autumn entries.

“For independent schools, parents pay the costs of exam entries. This proposal will require them to pass on the increased cost of exam entries to parents. At a time when many such schools are struggling because of the squeeze on parents' wallets as a result of the pandemic - it seems unfair to pass on extra costs to their parent bodies.” (School or college)

Students, parent and carers and private candidate respondents expressed views that either centres or government should meet the costs of the autumn exams, or fees already paid for summer carried over. Some private candidates said they could not afford to pay again, particularly in view of high sums paid by some to receive a calculated grade in the summer. Some said that disadvantaged students in particular should incur no additional costs in order to enter the exams.

“The government decided to cancel these exams so no cost should be incurred by students/parents” (Parent or carer)

“There should be no extra cost for the student - it should be covered by the school through a government grant.” (Student)

“PP [pupil premium] students not having to pay to sit exams, and those who receive free school meals. This may need to extend to other families who have since lost their jobs due to Covid 19.” (SLT - Senior leadership team)

A few respondents noted that while charging fees for autumn exams could limit the number of entries, which in turn could reduce burden, this would not necessarily be a fair approach. Some respondents expressed views that cost should not be a barrier to any student wishing to enter autumn exams.

“In order to avoid costs being a barrier for schools, and potentially resulting in differential access for pupils, we recommend that the government should centrally fund any additional costs incurred by schools.” (Other representative or interest group)

Centre delivery costs

Staff

A few respondents indicated that centre costs would be offset by savings from the cancellation of the summer exams.

Some centres noted the burden and costs of delivering an exam series at this time, with teaching staff engaged in a full teaching timetable. Some said that there could be high costs for potentially small numbers of candidates.

Centres told us they expected to incur costs on invigilation - including recruitment, training and DBS clearance – and that in many cases these costs would be in addition to invigilator costs for the cancelled summer exams. Many respondents told us that centres had paid invigilators in the summer.

“The cost of paying for invigilators. We are paying them for the summer series, even though it is not taking place. The advice from HR was that we should pay them as they had an implied contract. Therefore any costs for an autumn series will be above and beyond what we would usually pay in a given year.” (SLT – Senior leadership team)

Some centres said they expected to incur additional costs for exams officers and administrative staff to work additional hours and, also, during half term. Some also commented that they may incur costs for additional staff required to manage candidates returning to the centre – including signing in, issuing passes and supervising them on site, and any necessary additional arrangements to ensure safeguarding.

Respondents also indicated there could be costs to centres of employing supply teachers to provide cover when teachers are involved in other activities, for example working on non-exam assessment or supporting reasonable adjustments for students in exams, or for those working as examiners, to attend standardisation meetings. A few commented that centres may also incur costs to deliver additional teaching and revision.

“All the additional activities listed have significant costs attached, including recruiting invigilators, organising access arrangements, booking exam

accommodation and the additional guidance and support which students will need ahead in advance of the series.” (Other representative or interest group)

“Additional staffing costs to cover revision sessions without timetabled time.” (Teacher – responding in a personal capacity)

Exam accommodation

Some respondents told us there would be additional costs to open centres over half term, for example on electricity and heating. Some respondents indicated that in view of centre capacity issues, and the expected need for social distancing meaning more space than usual would be needed, centres may incur costs in hiring external venues for exams.

Respondents also commented that there would be costs associated with minimising coronavirus (COVID-19) risks, such as the provision of PPE, setting up screens, providing sanitiser and arranging deep cleaning between exam sittings.

Respondents commented there would be costs of putting in place access arrangements/ reasonable adjustments, such as readers and scribes, for students who required these. A number of respondents also commented that centres would lose income from lettings and facility bookings during this period.

Information and communications to candidates

Some centres said that providing information to candidates who are no longer on the school roll would be an additional cost, as this could not be done through the usual internal systems. Some anticipated they may be diverted to dealing with many student and parent enquiries leading up to the exams, which would be burdensome and have a negative impact on the teaching of other year groups.

Non-exam assessment

A few respondents commented on potential costs to centres of having to conduct new non-exam assessment, including costs of resources and administration. Some comments related to subjects for which we did not propose there should be non-exam assessment in the autumn – such as GCSE food preparation and nutrition or MFL. Some comments related to additional costs for non-exam assessment in Art and Design, if this is required as we have proposed.

“Each exam season in Art, costs around £200 in additional equipment, sometimes specialist equipment. Although we didn't have one this year, our budget isn't carried over so we would have two exam seasons costs in one academic year.” (Teacher – responding in a personal capacity)

Appeals

A few respondents indicated that centres may incur costs through seeking reviews of marking, moderation and appeals following the autumn exams.

Costs to students

Some students, private candidates and parents and carers commented on costs they expected to incur as a result of taking the autumn exams. These included ongoing costs of tutoring, and costs of travel and in some cases, accommodation to stay near the exam centre. Some also cited costs to students of having to take a gap year where they are not able to progress to their next stage of study, and potential costs in terms of both time and money in repeating the university application process, including university admissions examinations. Some respondents said those in employment could incur loss of earnings if they have to take time off work to attend autumn exams.

“My parents will need to keep me at home for another full year if I need to use this. I will not be able to start university. With the financial economy looking as bad as it does right now a part time job may not even be possible. There will be no Child Benefit payable as I would have left school in October statistically, therefore I would be completely reliant on my parents.” (Student)

“The 2020-2021 academic year may be spent having to redo the entire UCAS process for current year 13 students. This means having to resit entrance examinations, university interviews etc. Unless the university gives the option to defer by one year, having to redo the entire process is unfair and a waste of time.” (Student)

“Tuition fees for private tutors and extra subscription on subject material.” (Student)

Exam board costs

Exam boards all made similar comments about the likely overall costs of delivering an autumn series. They indicated that while the activities we had identified in our impact assessment were correct and were the same as would have taken place in a usual summer series, the costs of delivering a full suite of exams for a smaller number of candidates in autumn could be disproportionately high compared to income received, meaning they would potentially make a loss.

“At a general level, we would note that the costs to exam boards of offering a full suite of GQ exams in the exceptional autumn resit series will be high, and may be considered disproportionate and a drain on resources that could be put to use for all students in other ways, i.e. by returning entry fees to schools or not needing to spread costs for low-entry high-cost-per-entry subjects across subjects. This is particularly the case given the main educational benefit of the autumn 2020 series is limited relative to the school population as a whole: to give private candidates the opportunity to obtain a qualification in 2020 (but after the HE 2020/21 academic year has started); and, to give students applying to competitive FE and HE courses an additional resit opportunity to the following summer 2021 series.” (Awarding body or exam board)

Exam boards provided details of the areas of activity on which they expected to incur costs. The combined responses are summarised below, however it should be noted that not all exam boards commented on all of these areas;

- developing and implementing an approach to the assessment of non-exam assessment in Art and Design

- system design, development and testing to accommodate an exceptional autumn series
- developing and implementing new systems and processes for delivery of exams in accordance with public health guidance
- development of new processes and working arrangements, and potential invigilator costs if exam hubs or other alternative locations are used
- creation of new exam content / papers / modified papers, though using content already developed for summer where possible – and noting that production costs may be incurred even where exams are later withdrawn due to no entries
- new processes for the security of unused papers from summer 2020 that will be used in autumn or later
- where question papers are used in an autumn series, additional costs as these will no longer be available for use in a later series
- training to staff on all aspects of autumn delivery
- increased seasonal staffing and courier costs in pre Christmas period
- awarding process delivered in remote working conditions – including likely increased reliance on examiner judgement for standardisation

One exam board commented that it expected it would need to resource some work externally, in order to deliver an autumn series at the same time as developing arrangements for 2021.

“An autumn series to include all GCSE, AS and A Level qualifications even with the low estimated entries will put pressure on awarding bodies at a time when other activities including preparation for the summer 2021 series would be taking place. This may result in the need to resource certain activities externally that would have been carried out by existing staff, increasing the cost of delivery.”
(Awarding body or exam board)

Exam boards commented on how they might meet the costs of the autumn exam series.

“The provision of a full examination series with low numbers of students per qualification is costly. It is likely that Exam Boards will need to use some of the funding from the costs not incurred from the summer series, to fund a full Autumn examination series.” (Awarding body or exam board)

“Additional costs to awarding organisations are likely to be passed on as additional costs to centres – either as a smaller amount which can be returned to them for this series, or as an increased exam entry fee for future series.”
(Awarding body or exam board)

A number of respondents other than exam boards commented that if new exam papers were to be produced, in new formats, this would cause costs and burden to exam boards in production and to centres in additional support for students. Some expressed a view that papers that had been produced for summer should be used in autumn, noting that if this were not the case, the continued retention of papers could incur storage costs and also pose a security risk. A few respondents said that there would be limited time to produce modified papers, in large print or braille for example, if new papers were produced, and also that this would be costly.

“If the Autumn 2020 series is a new series (and does not use the Summer 2020 series) there will be the production costs of a new set of modified papers in large print and braille. This would be a huge additional expense.” (Other representative or interest group)

Potential costs to higher education

Two responses from university or higher education institutions commented on potential costs to higher education. One noted the potential for lost income for universities.

“Universities will lose income from places if students decline offers in order to re-take their exams. It will also make managing admissions for 2021 entry more difficult if it is unclear how many places could need to be reserved for students who make use of the re-take opportunity and achieve the grades needed to meet their original standard offer for 2020 entry.” (University or higher education institution)

Another commented on the potential costs to universities if they teach different cohorts in one academic year.

“A potential concern is that if the autumn series is taken up by significant numbers, i.e. the majority rather than the few, this has the potential for substantial additional costs for a university. It has the potential to cause universities to have to teach to sequential cohorts in the same academic year.” (University or higher education institution)

Q31 We would welcome your views on any suggestions for alternative approaches that could reduce burden and costs.

In total, 818 respondents answered this question. Respondents suggested ways in which costs and burdens could be reduced.

Fees

Many respondents expressed views that there should be no additional fees to centres or students for the autumn exams, with some commenting that government should meet these costs. Some said that savings from the cancelled summer exams should be used to fund the autumn exams, and also that any savings overall should be passed back to centres. A few commented on the possibility of capping fees charged by exam boards, and also on capping fees that centres charge to private candidates.

“You could make provisions for any 'deferred' exam entries to 2021, to also apply to the Autumn series, therefore any payments made to the exam boards may also be used for the Autumn series.” (Student - private, home-educated of any age)

“We think that the costs of the additional autumn series should be funded by government or by those who make the most use of it.” (Other representative or interest group)

“Ofqual have highlighted many items in their impact assessment which [our] members agree will be costs. One such cost which is causing significant concern is the potential additional entry fees. As we have highlighted earlier in the response, this issue must be addressed.” (Other representative or interest group)

“Inevitably, the impact of being unable to obtain a calculated grade or being awarded an unsatisfactory grade this summer will have an adverse impact on the future plans of everyone in that situation. The consequences for those from lower socio-economic groups and who share particular protected characteristics may be far reaching. [...] It is therefore crucial in our view that all learners who find themselves unable to obtain a calculated or receive an unsatisfactory grade should not be asked to bear any financial penalty through fees for entering the autumn exams, this should include private learners. Exam centres should continue to bear any exam entry fees as they would had the summer exams not been cancelled for all entrants. We would also welcome Ofqual exercising its powers to cap fees charged by exam boards in these exceptional circumstances.” (Other representative or interest group)

Deadline for exam entries

Exam officers or managers expressed views that centres must be afforded sufficient time to make decisions and process entries, without risk of incurring late entry penalties. A few respondents provided a view that the exam entry deadline should be soon after the release of results so that exam boards can then publish timetables, enabling centres to start planning.

Early clarification of autumn arrangements

A number of respondents commented that burden could be reduced by providing clarity on the autumn exams, including timetables and guidance on delivery, as soon as possible. Some said this information should be made available before the end of the summer term, to enable centre staff who work during term time only to start planning. It was suggested that the JCQ 'Instructions for Conducting Examinations' book should be available in August for invigilator training purposes. Some respondents also commented that the JCQ requirements should not change as there would be insufficient time to train staff on these.

"It would be helpful to schools if the JCQ General Regulations, ICE, Access Arrangements & Reasonable Adjustments and all associated documents from the academic year 2019/2020 rolled over and are relevant for the Autumn Series of 2020. Schools are going to have a lot to do in the first half of the autumn term without having to get to grips with new regulations and rewrite lots of exam policies, as well as training invigilators again." (School or college)

"In order to support EOs in their role invigilators should not have to be updated on 2020/21 JCQ changes prior to administering Autumn exams, timetable for/guidance about the Autumn season should be published as soon as possible and prior to the summer holidays in order to ensure that EOs who are term-time only are able to prepare in advance if possible. AB deadlines should take into account the 6 week summer holiday and the workload of managing exam results and possible appeals during this period" (Exams officer or manager)

Scale and scope

Many respondents commented that burden on centres, and disruption to teaching of other year groups, could be reduced by limiting the scope of the autumn exams.

Many of the views expressed were similar to those provided in response to question 3. Suggestions included:

- excluding year 10 and year 12 early entrants who have received calculated grades in summer from the autumn exams
- holding a full suite of exams for A levels only so that students can progress, and for GCSEs, holding exams only in maths and English language for GCSEs (or maths, English language and science), with the remainder to be sat in 2021
- limiting entry to private candidates, or to those who have not been able to progress to next stage of study or employment in autumn 2020
- limiting entry to 5 subjects per student, or to subjects where students received a calculated grade lower than 6 at GCSE

Some suggested that a proportionate approach should be considered, and that where students know they will not be able to progress until autumn 2021, there is little benefit in taking exams in autumn rather than in 2021.

"We would suggest a more proportionate approach to the autumn series. Ofqual should work with the exam boards to find the smallest set of exams which accommodates the candidates who are most disadvantaged but without assuming a full series offered by all boards." (Other representative or interest group)

“Some members have raised questions over the benefit to be gained by students from receiving grades in December or February respectively, as opposed to summer 2021. For many students it seems that receiving grades a few months earlier than they would if they sat exams in summer 2021 makes no difference to their progression, as this would have been delayed until the next academic year already. As such, if the benefit does not indeed outweigh the potential costs and burdens, it seems that a way to reduce them would be to not hold a full autumn series as proposed. The Secretary of State said he hoped to offer students the opportunity to sit exams “as soon as reasonably possible”. If the benefits to students are relatively small or possibly even do not exist, it is reasonable to suggest that those students who entered for summer 2020 and who want to sit exams, could do so in summer 2021. It is particularly reasonable if such a circumstance might remove significant burden and costs.” (Other representative or interest group)

“The costs and burden of the exceptional autumn series to exam boards will be determined by the number and range of qualifications that are offered. As such, the principal approach that would reduce the burden and cost to exam boards would be to trim the number and range of qualifications offered, for example, by setting a minimum entry number for autumn resits that must be met if resits are to be offered in that qualification.” (Awarding body or exam board)

A few respondents commented, however, that while it may reduce burden and costs, to limit the scope the exams would limit equality of opportunity.

Papers and marking

A number of respondents commented that costs could be minimised by using papers that had already been written for the summer, with an amendment added to the front page to update the date and time of the exam. It was noted that this approach would avoid significant additional costs of producing new modified papers.

Some respondents said that burden on centres and students could be reduced by holding fewer exams, in a shorter period, with a reduced number of papers, or by combining papers. A few said this would be preferable for public health reasons and would also mean adjustments to papers could be made to account for the differential access of students to learning and resources since 20 March.

An exam board suggested that costs could be reduced if exam papers could be sent electronically and printed by centres.

“The use of electronic on-the day delivery of QPs [question papers] to centres which require centres to print off sufficient, good quality, copies of those QPs – particularly relevant if have a high number of small entry centres making physical despatch less economical.” (Awarding body or exam board)

Another exam board highlighted that if they are permitted to withdraw qualifications from the autumn timetable where there are no entries, costs will be saved by allowing materials to be used in future.

“In order to reduce the burden and costs, where there are no entries for a qualification, we would like to be able to withdraw the qualification from the examination timetable. This will allow us to use the examination materials for a future series.” (Awarding body or exam board)

Some respondents made comments about reducing costs and burden related to marking. A suggestion was made that exam boards could collaborate in subjects where specifications are similar in order to reduce administrative costs, and at the same time providing a larger sample for standardisation. A few respondents said that teachers must be given sufficient time for marking – supported by their centre to take time away from teaching responsibilities and given longer than usual by the exam boards to complete marking.

Exam accommodation and timing

Many respondents provided views about where exams should be held in order to minimise burden and disruption to centres.

A few suggested that all exams should take place in colleges rather than schools. Some respondents suggested that centres in a local area should be permitted to collaborate, sharing facilities and staff resource, for efficiency purposes.

“Would it be a good idea, given the numbers of students wishing to sit exams, to use one school in the area as the main venue for exams with individual schools making entries?” (Exams officer or manager)

“Allow schools to work with colleges to share burden of running exams by sharing buildings/facilities available to host exam sittings.” (Teacher – responding in a personal capacity)

“For this to work, there will need to be a centralised system in localities to reduce the burden on schools and staff, who will already be facing some serious challenges, including working to support the exam cohorts for 2021.” (Teacher - responding in a personal capacity)

A few respondents noted that there would be a benefit in students attending the centre at which they were previously on roll as the staff at that centre will know them. Some respondents expressed views that government should meet the costs of invigilation. It was also suggested that invigilator ratio requirements could be reduced.

Many respondents proposed that local or regional exam hubs be set up. Many expressed views that the exams should be delivered in a location away from centres, for example in conference centres, town halls, leisure centres, university buildings, libraries or church halls. Respondents highlighted that having the exams in one large, public place would make it easier to set up and manage arrangements relating to public health, for example sufficient distancing, screens between candidates and PPE equipment. Respondents suggested that local authorities could set these up, and also that invigilators and other required staff might be sourced from outside centres. Some respondents considered there was no option but to hold exams away from centres, as centres would have no spare capacity in the autumn term.

“[We] believe that the best approach to mitigate burdens and costs would be for local hub centres to be set up for students to take exams in the autumn term with any additional costs borne centrally by government. Local hubs could provide exam accommodation meeting current public health requirements as well as reducing overall costs and staffing needs. Such an approach would also reduce the risks of delay or cancellation and the further costs which would be incurred should that happen.” (Other representative or interest group)

“Use of centres outside of schools - exam boards/LAs/Academy Trust setting up their own assessment centres in available public spaces to allow for groups of students to sit exams outside of a school environment and to make better use of funds etc. Would allow schools to pool invigilation resources for example.” (SLT – Senior leadership team)

“Regional exam halls/hubs, similar to Nightingale hospitals. These would work for many students and allow a broad exam series. Students with EHCP, access arrangements or other vulnerabilities could apply to sit exams in a more familiar setting such as their old school - presuming these will be few in number.” (SLT – Senior leadership team)

“Separate venues for vulnerable students and scribes/support staff that could be deployed to schools to help out. [...] The possibility of centralised hubs for exams across a region/locality so students from different schools can attend these hubs to sit exams rather than taking out classrooms and venues in every school. Maybe University halls that are not being used could help to provide these services for some regions, although I know this wouldn't work for all.” (SLT – Senior leadership team)

“Could a large venue be used, eg a conference centre, to accommodate candidates from many schools to minimise the disruption it would cause in operating exams in schools where there could be clashes for use of space?” (SLT – Senior leadership team)

“Centralise the system rather than having a few students in lots of schools doing the same thing. Use large local venues e.g. sports halls, conference venues etc that students can travel to in order to take the exams. This will avoid disrupting learning in schools and reduce costs in the system from economies of scale.” (School or college)

A few parents, carer and student respondents indicated that they would prefer exams to take place locally rather than to have to travel to a regional centre. Some said that local, familiar settings would be preferable for vulnerable or anxious students.

“If my child has to sit the exams at her new exam centre then I would have to take time off work to ensure she gets to the exam on time as wouldn't wish her to rely on public transport on exam days. Would be better to sit the exams at her original centre as that's in walking distance. That maybe the plans I have not read your consultation/plans on where the Autumn exam series will be sat.” (Parent or carer)

“Exams need to be taken in a convenient place for students - you cannot have regional hubs, but need to be local, with all facilities for small rooms etc for anxious students.” (Parent or carer)

A few respondents suggested that disruption could be kept to a minimum if exams could be held in the evenings or at weekends. Some respondents suggested that it would be helpful to hold exams over the October half term, while others said that half term should be avoided. Reasons for this included a consideration that centre staff have been working through Easter and Whitsun holidays and expected only to be able to have a limited break over summer.

Non-exam assessment – Art and Design

A few respondents suggested that costs and burden could be reduced for assessment of Art and Design by moderating work students have already completed rather than requiring completion of a new task. These comments were similar to those reported under question 11.

Preparing students for exams

Some respondents commented that centres should receive additional resources support or funding if they are expected to provide teaching support to students ahead of the autumn exams. Other suggestions included the provision of IT resource and revision packs to students.

“Although such support is not explicitly expected, it may become expected by parents and students and to not acknowledge this prospect or prepare for it would be to expect schools and colleges to soak up the additional burden. Schools and colleges should not be put in a position where they are unfairly expected to offer provision for something they are not given the appropriate funding nor time for. Additional funding and resources should be made available to cover this.” (Other representative or interest group)

“We would welcome additional funding for IT equipment to facilitate remote and distance learning/ revision for resit students while we manage the teaching and learning of the new and continuing students.” (School or college)

Certificates

A few respondents suggested that costs and burden could be minimised if exam boards were required only to provide one certificate, after the autumn exams, which showed the student's highest grade in each subject. They suggested that a digital copy of results could be provided in the interim, for progression purposes.

Appeals

Respondents made a number of comments relating to appeals. Some said that burdens of the planned autumn exams could be reduced by broadening the scope of appeals against calculated grades, allowing centres to provide evidence of students' work on which centre assessment grades were based.

A few respondents suggested that the process for reviews of marking, moderation and appeals for the autumn exams could be streamlined, with shorter than usual timeframes.

Proposals for remote / online assessment

A small number of respondents suggested that remote assessment should be considered in the autumn. It was suggested that this could be appropriate in

circumstances where public health continues to require distancing, and also that this could be helpful for students who are no longer in the location at which they were due to sit their summer exams. It was also highlighted by a few, however, that online approaches would not work for all students, including those who require modified exam papers.

Supporting progression to further and higher education

A number of respondents commented on action they considered should be taken in relation to progression. A few urged that it is made clear to higher education institutions that these exams should be treated as first attempts and not resits, as this distinction has implications for some HE admissions requirements.

A number asked that clarity be provided on how results from autumn exams will link into entry to higher education. Some said that universities should be lenient in making decisions, some that they should allow students to join courses in January. A few respondents said that private candidates should be allowed to share other evidence with university admissions to be permitted entry in the autumn. A few respondents commented that they would need results to be available for university entrance interviews in the autumn; some said that October deadlines for applications to medicine, veterinary and dentistry courses should be extended. Many said it would be important for results to be available by the UCAS deadline of 15 January 2021.

Some respondents said it would be important for year 12 students to be able to start college courses in September, ahead of results from autumn exams. The potential risk of losing places on apprenticeships was also highlighted.

Respondents representing higher education commented on progression to university courses.

“This autumn is a good time to go to university, and universities will be providing a high-quality, engaging and positive experience for all learners. However, UUK recognises the importance of giving students the opportunity to undertake exams following the outcome of this year’s teacher assessment process. Some students may wish to take autumn exams to improve on their calculated grades in light of their ambition to attend university. It is important that students, schools, colleges and universities are clear on the extent to which the autumn exam process will align with university admissions processes and academic timetables. For universities already planning for an autumn start to the 2020/21 academic year, the results of autumn exams appear likely to be obtained after the first term has started and course content has been taught. In such cases, it may be appropriate, or practical, for students to apply for 2021 university entry. It is important that students can engage with schools, universities and UCAS to understand their options when considering the autumn series, including on the practicalities of start dates.” (Other representative or interest group)

“We do not believe it would be possible for students who take exams in the autumn and achieve the grades they needed to start their academic course in the January term; courses at [institution] are intensive, and there would not be time for students in that position to catch up the work they had missed. It would also make student number planning extremely difficult, as colleges would have to hold open places that might not be filled. We are also not sure how desirable it

would be for the students themselves. For higher education providers that operate an early deadline of the 15 October, the grades awarded for the autumn series will need to be supplied to us at the earliest opportunity if these students are to be considered for a deferred entry in 2021. At [institution] we have considered and made offers to the vast majority of our candidates by mid-December.” (University or higher education institution)

A subject association or learned society reported similar comments from their members.

“In the section “Impact on the FE and HE sectors and employers” it is noted that higher education providers might be asked by students taking exams in the autumn to accept them onto a course once they have their results. Evidence from [our] members suggests that HEIs are unlikely to be able to make this accommodation for individual students. The existence of an autumn exam series would therefore further increase the chances of large numbers of deferrals to 2020/21, and increased competition for places in 2020/21 as the next cohort also looks to progress into higher education.” (Other representative or interest group)

Financial support for students

A few respondents said that financial support should be provided to students and their families, where students’ progression is delayed. Proposals included extensions of child benefit and tax credits, and also the granting of bursaries. Suggestions also included that government could pay or subsidise students’ costs of travelling to exam centres.

General views on the proposals

A few respondents commented that they could not identify any different ways that we might approach autumn exams, saying that they considered the proposed approach to be sensible.

“The approach outlined in the consultation paper seems to me to be sensible and pragmatic given the extraordinary circumstances in which we have to operate.” (Teacher – responding in a personal capacity)

“The extra exam season is in children's best interests so we need to run it and work out the logistical difficulties.” (School or college)

A few others expressed a view that they did not support the general approach and considered that autumn exams should not go ahead, and that instead students should receive only the calculated grades.

“A thorough system for calculated grades has been established by schools. It should be allowed to stand as the final grade and improved for next year.” (Teacher – responding in a personal capacity)

“We were not convinced of the educational case for this additional series and would have wished to have had the opportunity to consider the option of not having one. The greater the take up of autumn series entries, the greater the costs to colleges and the more disruptive it will be. Where students have progressed as they expected, colleges may want to advise them to be cautious

about committing themselves to an autumn series exam which could distract from their current studies. We have welcomed the commitment by awarding organisations to return any net savings from the cancellation of the summer exams and this could provide some mitigation for the additional costs incurred by colleges.” (Other representative or interest group)

Plans if autumn exams cannot take place for public health reasons

A few respondents raised questions about what will happen if the public health situation means that exams cannot take place in the autumn. Some said that an alternative, contingency plan should be developed and published.

It was suggested that the option of obtaining a calculated grade should be kept open for private candidates if exams are not able to go ahead. It was noted that time and resource would have been wasted if a second wave of the epidemic meant that the planned autumn exams could not go ahead.

2021 exam cohort and future assessment arrangements

Some respondents urged that we focus on the current students in years 10 and 12 rather than on autumn exams for students who were entered for exams in the summer.

An exam board urged that we consider the burden of delivering of the autumn series in the context of preparations for 2021.

“We realise that arrangements for the 2021 series also need to be considered, and we would appreciate if burden and manageability can be considered in that context. Finally, we would appreciate if any non-essential regulatory work can be de-prioritised.” (Awarding body or exam board)

A few respondents made comments about how changes might be made to assessment and delivery of the affected qualifications in the long term. Proposals included returning to modular rather than linear qualifications, and also using improvements in technology to speed up the marking process, enabling students to be offered university places on actual rather than predicted results. Again, these issues are beyond the remit of this analysis.

Appendix A – breakdown of the responses for each question by respondent group⁵

Q1. To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should require exam boards to offer exams for all of the GCSE, AS and A level qualifications this autumn they had intended to offer in the summer?

Q1	Strongly agree		Agree		Neither agree nor disagree		Disagree		Strongly disagree		Total
Organisation	145	59%	56	23%	9	4%	20	8%	14	6%	244
Academy chain	5	50%	3	30%	0	0%	2	20%	0	0%	10
Awarding body or exam board	2	33%	1	17%	1	17%	1	17%	1	17%	6
Employer	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Local authority	3	75%	1	25%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	4
Other representative or interest group	21	55%	12	32%	4	11%	1	3%	0	0%	38
Private training provider	10	100%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	10
School or college	100	60%	36	21%	3	2%	16	10%	13	8%	168
University or higher education institution	4	50%	3	38%	1	12%	0	0%	0	0%	8
Personal	1930	60%	675	21%	130	4%	258	8%	223	7%	3216
Awarding organisation employee	4	67%	2	33%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	6
Consultant	5	50%	2	20%	0	0%	1	10%	2	20%	10
Examiner	43	61%	16	23%	4	6%	4	6%	4	6%	71
Exams officer or manager	111	32%	111	32%	15	4%	71	20%	41	12%	349
Governor	8	80%	1	10%	1	10%	0	0%	0	0%	10
Other	33	70%	6	13%	2	4%	4	9%	2	4%	47
Parent or carer	354	71%	73	15%	18	4%	27	5%	29	6%	501
SLT (Senior leadership team)	138	49%	67	24%	11	4%	38	13%	30	11%	284
Student	624	69%	188	21%	29	3%	31	3%	37	4%	909
Student - private, home-educated of any age	143	81%	18	10%	3	2%	6	3%	6	3%	176
Teacher (responding in a personal capacity)	467	55%	191	22%	47	6%	76	9%	72	8%	853

No response 21

Q2. To what extent do you agree or disagree that an exam board that receives no entries for a qualification by its entry deadline can withdraw the exams for that qualification from the exam timetable?

Q2	Strongly agree		Agree		Neither agree nor disagree		Disagree		Strongly disagree		Total
Organisation	145	59%	56	23%	9	4%	20	8%	14	6%	244
Academy chain	5	50%	3	30%	0	0%	2	20%	0	0%	10
Awarding body or exam board	2	33%	1	17%	1	17%	1	17%	1	17%	6
Employer	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Local authority	3	75%	1	25%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	4
Other representative or interest group	21	55%	12	32%	4	11%	1	3%	0	0%	38
Private training provider	10	100%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	10
School or college	100	60%	36	21%	3	2%	16	10%	13	8%	168
University or higher education institution	4	50%	3	38%	1	12%	0	0%	0	0%	8
Personal	1930	60%	675	21%	130	4%	258	8%	223	7%	3216
Awarding organisation employee	4	67%	2	33%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	6
Consultant	5	50%	2	20%	0	0%	1	10%	2	20%	10
Examiner	43	61%	16	23%	4	6%	4	6%	4	6%	71
Exams officer or manager	111	32%	111	32%	15	4%	71	20%	41	12%	349
Governor	8	80%	1	10%	1	10%	0	0%	0	0%	10
Other	33	70%	6	13%	2	4%	4	9%	2	4%	47
Parent or carer	354	71%	73	15%	18	4%	27	5%	29	6%	501
SLT (Senior leadership team)	138	49%	67	24%	11	4%	38	13%	30	11%	284
Student	624	69%	188	21%	29	3%	31	3%	37	4%	909
Student - private, home-educated of any age	143	81%	18	10%	3	2%	6	3%	6	3%	176
Teacher (responding in a personal capacity)	467	55%	191	22%	47	6%	76	9%	72	8%	853

No response 31

⁵ Respondents to the consultation self-identified the group to which they belonged. The number of responses reported in the tables are based on these unverified self-descriptions.

Q4. To what extent do you agree or disagree that for the autumn series the same number of exams should be taken by students as they would have taken if the summer exams had not been cancelled?

Q4	Strongly agree		Agree		Neither agree nor disagree		Disagree		Strongly disagree		Total
Organisation	106	44%	78	32%	19	8%	27	11%	11	5%	241
Academy chain	3	30%	2	20%	0	0%	4	40%	1	10%	10
Awarding body or exam board	4	67%	2	33%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	6
Employer	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Local authority	2	50%	1	25%	1	25%	0	0%	0	0%	4
Other representative or interest group	14	40%	14	40%	3	9%	4	11%	0	0%	35
Private training provider	6	60%	1	10%	2	20%	1	10%	0	0%	10
School or college	73	43%	54	32%	13	8%	18	11%	10	6%	168
University or higher education institution	4	50%	4	50%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	8
Personal	1208	38%	741	23%	332	10%	532	17%	402	13%	3215
Awarding organisation employee	3	50%	3	50%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	6
Consultant	3	30%	0	0%	1	10%	3	30%	3	30%	10
Examiner	41	59%	16	23%	2	3%	9	13%	2	3%	70
Exams officer or manager	97	28%	115	33%	27	8%	69	20%	41	12%	349
Governor	6	60%	2	20%	0	0%	1	10%	1	10%	10
Other	20	43%	15	32%	4	9%	4	9%	4	9%	47
Parent or carer	226	45%	105	21%	64	13%	56	11%	49	10%	500
SLT (Senior leadership team)	118	42%	56	20%	25	9%	48	17%	37	13%	284
Student	298	33%	214	24%	91	10%	170	19%	137	15%	910
Student - private, home-educated of any age	71	40%	26	15%	28	16%	21	12%	30	17%	176
Teacher (responding in a personal capacity)	325	38%	189	22%	90	11%	151	18%	98	11%	853

No response 25

Q5. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the exams taken in the autumn series should be in the same form for each qualification as those normally taken in the summer series?

Q5	Strongly agree		Agree		Neither agree nor disagree		Disagree		Strongly disagree		Total
Organisation	126	52%	85	35%	9	4%	13	5%	8	3%	241
Academy chain	4	40%	5	50%	0	0%	1	10%	0	0%	10
Awarding body or exam board	5	83%	1	17%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	6
Employer	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Local authority	3	75%	1	25%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	4
Other representative or interest group	16	46%	13	37%	2	6%	4	11%	0	0%	35
Private training provider	6	60%	2	20%	1	10%	1	10%	0	0%	10
School or college	87	52%	60	36%	6	4%	7	4%	8	5%	168
University or higher education institution	5	62%	3	38%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	8
Personal	1550	48%	917	29%	214	7%	301	9%	229	7%	3211
Awarding organisation employee	4	67%	1	17%	0	0%	1	17%	0	0%	6
Consultant	3	30%	2	20%	0	0%	3	30%	2	20%	10
Examiner	48	68%	17	24%	2	3%	3	4%	1	1%	71
Exams officer or manager	119	34%	147	42%	22	6%	35	10%	26	7%	349
Governor	5	50%	4	40%	0	0%	0	0%	1	10%	10
Other	23	49%	16	34%	3	6%	2	4%	3	6%	47
Parent or carer	282	56%	125	25%	36	7%	31	6%	26	5%	500
SLT (Senior leadership team)	132	47%	76	27%	22	8%	31	11%	20	7%	281
Student	434	48%	267	29%	61	7%	79	9%	68	7%	909
Student - private, home-educated of any age	87	49%	43	24%	28	16%	8	5%	10	6%	176
Teacher (responding in a personal capacity)	413	48%	219	26%	40	5%	108	13%	72	8%	852

No response 29

Q7. To what extent do you agree or disagree that, with the exception of art and design, grades for GCSE, AS and A level awarded in the autumn should be based only on students' performance in their exams, with no non-exam assessment?

Q7	Strongly agree		Agree		Neither agree nor disagree		Disagree		Strongly disagree		Total
Organisation	60	26%	84	36%	32	14%	25	11%	30	13%	231
Academy chain	2	20%	7	70%	1	10%	0	0%	0	0%	10
Awarding body or exam board	1	17%	2	33%	2	33%	1	17%	0	0%	6
Employer	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Local authority	0	0%	5	100%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	5
Other representative or interest group	5	17%	9	31%	9	31%	3	10%	3	10%	29
Private training provider	6	55%	2	18%	2	18%	0	0%	1	9%	11
School or college	43	26%	55	34%	18	11%	21	13%	26	16%	163
University or higher education institution	3	43%	4	57%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	7
Personal	569	23%	549	22%	363	15%	485	19%	523	21%	2489
Awarding organisation employee	1	17%	1	17%	1	17%	1	17%	2	33%	6
Consultant	3	33%	2	22%	3	33%	0	0%	1	11%	9
Examiner	16	36%	12	27%	4	9%	8	18%	5	11%	45
Exams officer or manager	84	25%	117	35%	48	14%	58	17%	30	9%	337
Governor	3	30%	2	20%	1	10%	2	20%	2	20%	10
Other	7	18%	9	22%	5	12%	13	32%	6	15%	40
Parent or carer	74	19%	71	18%	66	17%	79	20%	109	27%	399
SLT (Senior leadership team)	69	25%	78	29%	18	7%	53	20%	53	20%	271
Student	145	21%	117	17%	111	16%	167	24%	164	23%	704
Student - private, home-educated of any age	24	26%	23	25%	22	24%	9	10%	15	16%	93
Teacher (responding in a personal capacity)	143	25%	117	20%	84	15%	95	17%	136	24%	575

No response 761

Q9. To what extent do you agree or disagree that grades for GCSE, AS and A level art and design awarded in the autumn should be based on a new task completed under supervised conditions?

Q9	Strongly agree		Agree		Neither agree nor disagree		Disagree		Strongly disagree		Total
Organisation	34	17%	85	42%	28	14%	32	16%	21	10%	200
Academy chain	3	30%	4	40%	2	20%	1	10%	0	0%	10
Awarding body or exam board	0	0%	1	20%	0	0%	1	20%	3	60%	5
Employer	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Local authority	1	33%	2	67%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	3
Other representative or interest group	3	14%	10	48%	7	33%	1	5%	0	0%	21
Private training provider	2	33%	0	0%	4	67%	0	0%	0	0%	6
School or college	23	15%	65	44%	14	9%	29	19%	18	12%	149
University or higher education institution	2	33%	3	50%	1	17%	0	0%	0	0%	6
Personal	288	15%	460	25%	606	33%	280	15%	227	12%	1861
Awarding organisation employee	1	25%	1	25%	1	25%	0	0%	1	25%	4
Consultant	1	20%	1	20%	3	60%	0	0%	0	0%	5
Examiner	8	24%	6	18%	16	47%	4	12%	0	0%	34
Exams officer or manager	69	21%	131	41%	45	14%	56	17%	22	7%	323
Governor	5	50%	2	20%	2	20%	1	10%	0	0%	10
Other	5	14%	4	11%	16	44%	10	28%	1	3%	36
Parent or carer	24	8%	61	21%	132	44%	38	13%	42	14%	297
SLT (Senior leadership team)	57	22%	89	34%	40	15%	41	16%	33	13%	260
Student	67	14%	83	17%	192	40%	79	17%	57	12%	478
Student - private, home-educated of any age	8	12%	8	12%	40	59%	7	10%	5	7%	68
Teacher (responding in a personal capacity)	43	12%	74	21%	119	34%	44	13%	66	19%	346

No response 1,420

Q10. To what extent do you agree that the new task for GCSE, AS and A level art and design should be set and marked by the exam board?

Q10	Strongly agree		Agree		Neither agree nor disagree		Disagree		Strongly disagree		Total
Organisation	57	28%	70	35%	36	18%	24	12%	13	6%	200
Academy chain	5	50%	2	20%	1	10%	2	20%	0	0%	10
Awarding body or exam board	0	0%	1	20%	0	0%	3	60%	1	20%	5
Employer	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Local authority	2	67%	1	33%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	3
Other representative or interest group	3	14%	11	52%	7	33%	0	0%	0	0%	21
Private training provider	1	17%	0	0%	5	83%	0	0%	0	0%	6
School or college	43	29%	52	35%	23	15%	19	13%	12	8%	149
University or higher education institution	3	50%	3	50%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	6
Personal	392	21%	508	27%	635	34%	190	10%	135	7%	1860
Awarding organisation employee	1	25%	2	50%	0	0%	0	0%	1	25%	4
Consultant	1	20%	2	40%	2	40%	0	0%	0	0%	5
Examiner	8	24%	7	21%	13	38%	5	15%	1	3%	34
Exams officer or manager	72	22%	137	42%	66	20%	32	10%	17	5%	324
Governor	4	40%	3	30%	0	0%	3	30%	0	0%	10
Other	11	30%	5	14%	16	43%	4	11%	1	3%	37
Parent or carer	43	14%	62	21%	142	47%	22	7%	30	10%	299
SLT (Senior leadership team)	85	33%	84	32%	46	18%	31	12%	15	6%	261
Student	83	11%	125	26%	192	40%	52	11%	24	5%	476
Student - private, home-educated of any age	11	16%	12	18%	37	54%	4	6%	4	6%	68
Teacher (responding in a personal capacity)	73	21%	69	20%	121	35%	37	11%	42	12%	342

No response 1,421

Q12. To what extent do you agree or disagree that exam boards should carry forward the outcome of the practical skills assessments for students who take exams in A level biology, chemistry, physics and/or geology in the autumn?

Q12	Strongly agree		Agree		Neither agree nor disagree		Disagree		Strongly disagree		Total
Organisation	108	61%	52	29%	12	7%	2	1%	3	2%	177
Academy chain	3	38%	4	50%	0	0%	1	12%	0	0%	8
Awarding body or exam board	4	100%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	4
Employer	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Local authority	1	25%	2	50%	1	25%	0	0%	0	0%	4
Other representative or interest group	5	23%	13	59%	4	18%	0	0%	0	0%	22
Private training provider	4	80%	0	0%	1	20%	0	0%	0	0%	5
School or college	88	69%	30	24%	6	5%	0	0%	3	2%	127
University or higher education institution	3	43%	3	43%	0	0%	1	14%	0	0%	7
Personal	919	53%	396	23%	244	14%	92	5%	78	5%	1729
Awarding organisation employee	3	75%	1	25%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	4
Consultant	2	40%	1	20%	1	20%	1	20%	0	0%	5
Examiner	20	57%	7	20%	6	17%	2	6%	0	0%	35
Exams officer or manager	198	72%	60	22%	10	4%	3	1%	4	1%	275
Governor	5	71%	0	0%	1	14%	1	14%	0	0%	7
Other	16	47%	8	24%	9	26%	0	0%	1	3%	34
Parent or carer	118	55%	47	22%	38	18%	6	3%	7	3%	216
SLT (Senior leadership team)	124	62%	50	25%	12	6%	7	4%	6	3%	199
Student	198	37%	147	28%	83	16%	58	11%	48	9%	534
Student - private, home-educated of any age	60	54%	20	18%	19	17%	8	7%	5	4%	112
Teacher (responding in a personal capacity)	175	57%	55	18%	65	21%	6	2%	7	2%	308

No response 1,575

Q14. To what extent do you agree or disagree that exam boards should carry forward the outcome of the GCSE English language spoken language assessment for students who take exams in the qualification in the autumn, as in any other year?

Q14	Strongly agree		Agree		Neither agree nor disagree		Disagree		Strongly disagree		Total
Organisation	118	59%	56	28%	18	9%	4	2%	3	2%	199
Academy chain	4	40%	5	50%	0	0%	1	10%	0	0%	10
Awarding body or exam board	4	80%	1	20%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	5
Employer	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Local authority	1	25%	2	50%	0	0%	1	25%	0	0%	4
Other representative or interest group	5	21%	12	50%	7	29%	0	0%	0	0%	24
Private training provider	4	80%	0	0%	1	20%	0	0%	0	0%	5
School or college	98	67%	34	23%	10	7%	2	1%	3	2%	147
University or higher education institution	2	50%	2	50%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	4
Personal	910	55%	411	25%	207	13%	63	4%	56	3%	1647
Awarding organisation employee	2	67%	1	33%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	3
Consultant	4	80%	0	0%	0	0%	1	20%	0	0%	5
Examiner	15	43%	12	34%	5	14%	2	6%	1	3%	35
Exams officer or manager	249	73%	75	22%	11	3%	1	0%	3	1%	339
Governor	6	60%	1	10%	1	10%	2	20%	0	0%	10
Other	14	41%	10	29%	7	21%	2	6%	1	3%	34
Parent or carer	119	43%	78	28%	56	20%	12	4%	12	4%	277
SLT (Senior leadership team)	162	63%	62	24%	16	6%	10	4%	9	3%	259
Student	144	45%	88	27%	46	14%	21	7%	23	7%	322
Student - private, home-educated of any age	10	32%	7	23%	10	32%	2	6%	2	6%	31
Teacher (responding in a personal capacity)	185	56%	77	23%	55	17%	10	3%	5	2%	332

No response 1,635

Q16. To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should put in place provisions that allow the exam boards to offer exams from October 2020, with the exact start and finish dates being confirmed by us when the position on the re-opening of schools and colleges is clearer?

Q16	Strongly agree		Agree		Neither agree nor disagree		Disagree		Strongly disagree		Total
Organisation	99	40%	100	41%	19	8%	11	4%	16	7%	245
Academy chain	2	20%	5	50%	0	0%	3	30%	0	0%	10
Awarding body or exam board	3	43%	3	43%	0	0%	1	14%	0	0%	7
Employer	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Local authority	1	17%	5	83%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	6
Other representative or interest group	12	33%	13	36%	8	22%	1	3%	2	6%	36
Private training provider	10	100%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	10
School or college	68	40%	69	41%	11	7%	6	4%	14	8%	168
University or higher education institution	3	38%	5	62%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	8
Personal	1394	43%	1146	36%	237	7%	211	7%	220	7%	3208
Awarding organisation employee	2	33%	2	33%	1	17%	0	0%	1	17%	6
Consultant	4	40%	5	50%	0	0%	0	0%	1	10%	10
Examiner	39	55%	23	32%	4	6%	3	4%	2	3%	71
Exams officer or manager	86	25%	150	43%	25	7%	45	13%	43	12%	349
Governor	5	50%	4	40%	1	10%	0	0%	0	0%	10
Other	24	51%	11	23%	2	4%	5	11%	5	11%	47
Parent or carer	243	49%	154	31%	31	6%	32	6%	37	7%	497
SLT (Senior leadership team)	115	40%	102	36%	24	8%	26	9%	17	6%	284
Student	447	49%	319	35%	69	8%	39	4%	33	4%	907
Student - private, home-educated of any age	97	55%	48	27%	14	8%	8	5%	8	5%	175
Teacher (responding in a personal capacity)	332	39%	328	38%	66	8%	53	6%	73	9%	852

No response 28

Q17. To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should build some flexibility into our regulatory framework to enable us to vary the start and finish dates of the series if that is necessary because of the public health situation?

Q17	Strongly agree		Agree		Neither agree nor disagree		Disagree		Strongly disagree		Total
Organisation	125	51%	98	40%	12	5%	4	2%	4	2%	243
Academy chain	5	50%	5	50%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	10
Awarding body or exam board	2	29%	5	71%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	7
Employer	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Local authority	1	17%	4	67%	1	17%	0	0%	0	0%	6
Other representative or interest group	15	43%	13	37%	4	11%	1	3%	2	6%	35
Private training provider	8	80%	1	10%	1	10%	0	0%	0	0%	10
School or college	91	54%	65	39%	6	4%	3	2%	2	1%	167
University or higher education institution	3	38%	5	62%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	8
Personal	1613	50%	1115	35%	213	7%	131	4%	132	4%	3204
Awarding organisation employee	3	50%	2	33%	1	17%	0	0%	0	0%	6
Consultant	8	80%	1	10%	0	0%	1	10%	0	0%	10
Examiner	44	62%	21	30%	3	4%	2	3%	1	1%	71
Exams officer or manager	166	48%	130	37%	15	4%	19	5%	19	5%	349
Governor	7	70%	3	30%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	10
Other	20	43%	18	38%	1	2%	5	11%	3	6%	47
Parent or carer	232	47%	178	36%	33	7%	28	6%	27	5%	498
SLT (Senior leadership team)	156	56%	91	32%	14	5%	11	4%	8	3%	280
Student	446	49%	326	36%	68	7%	39	4%	28	3%	907
Student - private, home-educated of any age	75	43%	49	28%	25	14%	10	6%	14	8%	173
Teacher (responding in a personal capacity)	456	53%	296	35%	53	6%	16	2%	32	4%	853

No response 34

Q19. To what extent do you agree or disagree than the normal review of marking and appeal arrangements should apply to the autumn exam series?

Q19	Strongly agree		Agree		Neither agree nor disagree		Disagree		Strongly disagree		Total
Organisation	120	50%	90	38%	9	4%	14	6%	6	3%	239
Academy chain	5	50%	3	30%	2	20%	0	0%	0	0%	10
Awarding body or exam board	4	57%	2	29%	0	0%	1	14%	0	0%	7
Employer	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Local authority	1	33%	2	67%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	3
Other representative or interest group	16	46%	15	43%	2	6%	2	6%	0	0%	35
Private training provider	7	70%	2	20%	0	0%	1	10%	0	0%	10
School or college	83	50%	63	38%	4	2%	10	6%	6	4%	166
University or higher education institution	4	50%	3	38%	1	12%	0	0%	0	0%	8
Personal	1641	51%	981	31%	251	8%	210	7%	126	4%	3209
Awarding organisation employee	2	33%	2	33%	1	17%	0	0%	1	17%	6
Consultant	5	50%	3	30%	1	10%	1	10%	0	0%	10
Examiner	47	66%	16	23%	4	6%	2	3%	2	3%	71
Exams officer or manager	112	32%	144	41%	32	9%	35	10%	25	7%	348
Governor	5	50%	4	40%	0	0%	0	0%	1	10%	10
Other	21	47%	13	29%	4	9%	5	11%	2	4%	45
Parent or carer	286	57%	139	28%	38	8%	18	4%	18	4%	499
SLT (Senior leadership team)	122	43%	117	41%	22	8%	14	5%	9	3%	284
Student	518	57%	236	26%	62	7%	63	7%	29	3%	908
Student - private, home-educated of any age	101	58%	37	21%	21	12%	14	8%	2	1%	175
Teacher (responding in a personal capacity)	422	49%	270	32%	66	8%	58	7%	37	4%	853

No response 33

Q21. To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should amend our rules to allow an exam board to issue a replacement certificate to a student to show either their calculated grade or their grade from the autumn exam series, but not require them to do so?

Q21	Strongly agree		Agree		Neither agree nor disagree		Disagree		Strongly disagree		Total
Organisation	52	22%	87	36%	36	15%	40	17%	25	10%	240
Academy chain	1	10%	3	30%	1	10%	3	30%	2	20%	10
Awarding body or exam board	2	29%	4	57%	0	0%	1	14%	0	0%	7
Employer	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0
Local authority	0	0%	3	75%	0	0%	1	25%	0	0%	4
Other representative or interest group	6	17%	11	31%	7	19%	8	22%	4	11%	36
Private training provider	5	50%	3	30%	2	20%	0	0%	0	0%	10
School or college	38	23%	60	36%	24	15%	25	15%	18	11%	165
University or higher education institution	0	0%	3	38%	2	25%	2	25%	1	12%	8
Personal	992	31%	938	30%	684	22%	291	9%	272	9%	3177
Awarding organisation employee	2	33%	2	33%	2	33%	0	0%	0	0%	6
Consultant	4	40%	2	20%	2	20%	1	10%	1	10%	10
Examiner	17	24%	25	36%	21	30%	6	9%	1	1%	70
Exams officer or manager	62	18%	115	33%	80	23%	50	14%	40	12%	347
Governor	3	30%	3	30%	1	10%	0	0%	3	30%	10
Other	11	24%	17	37%	10	22%	5	11%	3	7%	46
Parent or carer	166	34%	124	25%	97	20%	45	9%	56	11%	488
SLT (Senior leadership team)	87	31%	73	26%	61	22%	32	11%	29	10%	282
Student	352	39%	278	31%	152	17%	61	7%	57	6%	900
Student - private, home-educated of any age	53	31%	53	31%	54	31%	4	2%	8	5%	172
Teacher (responding in a personal capacity)	235	28%	246	29%	204	24%	87	10%	74	9%	846

No response 64

Q23. To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should not impose any additional requirements on the exams boards that award the EPQs?

Q23	Strongly agree		Agree		Neither agree nor disagree		Disagree		Strongly disagree		Total
Organisation	35	29%	52	43%	25	21%	7	6%	2	2%	121
Academy chain	2	33%	2	33%	1	17%	1	17%	0	0%	6
Awarding body or exam board	0	0%	3	75%	0	0%	1	25%	0	0%	4
Employer	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0
Local authority	0	0%	2	67%	1	33%	0	0%	0	0%	3
Other representative or interest group	0	0%	11	65%	6	35%	0	0%	0	0%	17
Private training provider	2	67%	0	0%	1	33%	0	0%	0	0%	3
School or college	31	37%	31	37%	15	18%	5	6%	2	2%	84
University or higher education institution	0	0%	3	75%	1	25%	0	0%	0	0%	4
Personal	236	35%	190	28%	188	28%	22	3%	34	5%	670
Awarding organisation employee	2	67%	0	0%	1	33%	0	0%	0	0%	3
Consultant	1	20%	1	20%	3	60%	0	0%	0	0%	5
Examiner	6	46%	4	31%	3	23%	0	0%	0	0%	13
Exams officer or manager	64	31%	84	41%	49	24%	3	1%	7	3%	207
Governor	2	67%	0	0%	1	33%	0	0%	0	0%	3
Other	3	14%	6	27%	12	55%	1	5%	0	0%	22
Parent or carer	12	20%	13	22%	23	38%	1	2%	11	18%	60
SLT (Senior leadership team)	74	48%	43	28%	27	18%	4	3%	5	3%	153
Student	15	23%	12	18%	27	42%	6	9%	5	8%	65
Student - private, home-educated of any age	3	33%	1	11%	5	56%	0	0%	0	0%	9
Teacher (responding in a personal capacity)	54	42%	26	20%	37	28%	7	5%	6	5%	130

No response 2,690

Q25. To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should not impose any additional requirements on the exam board that offers the Advanced Extension Award?

Q25	Strongly agree		Agree		Neither agree nor disagree		Disagree		Strongly disagree		Total
Organisation	22	19%	44	38%	46	39%	4	3%	1	1%	117
Academy chain	1	17%	2	33%	2	33%	1	17%	0	0%	6
Awarding body or exam board	0	0%	4	100%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	4
Employer	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Local authority	0	0%	1	33%	2	67%	0	0%	0	0%	3
Other representative or interest group	1	6%	10	59%	5	29%	1	6%	0	0%	17
Private training provider	1	33%	1	33%	1	33%	0	0%	0	0%	3
School or college	19	23%	24	30%	35	43%	2	2%	1	1%	81
University or higher education institution	0	0%	2	67%	1	33%	0	0%	0	0%	3
Personal	141	22%	110	17%	358	55%	23	4%	16	2%	648
Awarding organisation employee	2	67%	0	0%	1	33%	0	0%	0	0%	3
Consultant	1	20%	0	0%	4	80%	0	0%	0	0%	5
Examiner	4	31%	3	23%	5	38%	1	8%	0	0%	13
Exams officer or manager	25	13%	30	15%	137	70%	1	1%	3	2%	196
Governor	2	67%	0	0%	1	33%	0	0%	0	0%	3
Other	2	10%	7	33%	12	57%	0	0%	0	0%	21
Parent or carer	10	17%	12	20%	29	48%	6	10%	3	5%	60
SLT (Senior leadership team)	42	28%	26	17%	75	50%	6	4%	2	1%	151
Student	13	21%	9	15%	28	45%	5	8%	7	11%	62
Student - private, home-educated of any age	2	22%	1	11%	6	67%	0	0%	0	0%	9
Teacher (responding in a personal capacity)	38	30%	22	18%	60	48%	4	3%	1	1%	125

No response 2,716



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