



**Minutes**

Emergency Board Meeting

**Time and venue**

08.00am by Microsoft Teams

**Date**

Tuesday, 30 June 2020

**Attendees**

Board

Susan Barratt

Ian Bauckham (until item 61/20)

Delroy Beverley (item 60/20 only)

Sally Collier Chief Regulator

Mike Cresswell (from item 60/20)

Lesley Davies

Hywel Jones

Catherine McClellan

Dame Christine Ryan

Roger Taylor Chair

Matt Tee (until item 61/20)

Mike Thompson

Frances Wadsworth

Ofqual

Phil Beach Executive Director, Vocational and Technical Qualifications

Niamh Field Board Secretary

Daniel Gutteridge Director of Legal

Michael Hanton Director of Strategy and Markets

Janet Holloway Associate Director, Standards for Design, Development and Evaluation

Matthew Humphrey Director of Legal Moderation and Enforcement

Kate Keating Director of Communications

Michelle Meadows Executive Director, Strategy, Risk and Research

Sean Pearce Chief Operating Officer

Julie Swan Executive Director, General Qualifications

Anona White Private Secretary to the Chief Regulator

**58/20 Welcome and apologies for absence**

There were no apologies.

**59/20 Declarations of interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**60/20 Consultation on proposals to modify the assessment requirements for some GCSEs, AS and A levels in 2021 in response to disruption to teaching and learning caused by the COVID-19 pandemic**

At the Emergency Board Meeting on 24 June 2020, the Board approved a draft consultation document.

Following further discussions with the Department for Education (DfE), who are responsible for subject content, revised proposals were outlined to the Board including changes to non-exam assessments to save teaching time and to address potential public health safeguards, and the option for teachers to not cover all of the subject content for GCSE History and Geography.

With regard to GCSE History and Geography, it was proposed to make c15% of content optional for both subjects. Ofqual had met with the exam boards and subject experts on 26 June 2020 to discuss the proposal. A number of options had been provided to subject experts and the DfE and would be discussed with Ministers.

The Board considered and discussed the proposals for GCSE History, including the likely impact on teaching and learning, the impact on student progression, the different impact for those schools teaching KS4 over different time periods, the extent to which disciplinary knowledge could still be developed through the remaining content and the potential to set expectation for future amendments to the content.

It was anticipated that teachers would welcome the option to not teach all of the content and the choices available to them, but noted that exam boards would need to ensure that the approach would not impact on interwoven topics.

Consideration was given to the proposals for GCSE Geography. Fieldwork was noted as the main issue including whether it could be conducted safely if social distancing continued, and when it was normally completed in the KS4 timetable. The importance of the support of the geographical associations was noted. The completion of virtual fieldwork had been proposed and geographical associations had indicated that they could provide resources for schools. It was noted that the removal of the physical or human geography elements had not, and would not, be proposed.

The Board noted that the removal of the fieldwork element would be less harmful for A level progression, in particular, if there would be no requirement for fieldwork to be assessed or checked.

There was no proposal to change how GCSE maths would be assessed. It was noted that exam boards would need to provide rubrics for students and invigilators in the summer 2021 exams.

*This section has been redacted, as its publication would be prejudicial to the effective conduct of public affairs.*

It was noted, having reviewed the top 14 combinations of GCSE subjects, that most students would receive some benefit in most of their subjects.

The Board received an update on the development of the 2021 VTQ proposals which would differ to general qualifications given the practical elements.

**RESOLVED:**

Subject to the comments made above, the Board resolved to approve the draft consultation document for publication. The final sign-off of the consultation document was delegated to the Chief Regulator in consultation with the Chair.

**61/20 Any Other Business**

The Director of Communications reported that the Summer Symposium would take place on 2 July 2020. The event would communicate the exceptional arrangements in place this summer to stakeholders. It was anticipated that there would be increased media interest in the coming weeks following the publication of the decision document for the Autumn 2020 consultation, the appeals guidance and the 2021 draft consultation

There was no other business.

The meeting ended at 09.10am.