

Consultation Summary Paper

DfE Consultation on Core Maths Technical Guidance

14 May 2014

Opened 14/04/2014, closed 26/05/2014, Pearson lead: Jim Dobson

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A summary of the consultation

Core Maths is a new category of qualification designed to address the issue of poor progression in mathematics from age 16. Around 250,000 students who attain GCSE grade C in mathematics each year do not continue with study of the subject. This has long been recognised as a problem in relation to the mathematical demands of higher education and employment. The government's proposals would see new qualifications approved for the 'Core Maths' category in November 2014, and become fully available for first teaching from September 2015.

Qualifications recognised as Core Maths would need to meet the following characteristics:

- Include a declared purpose of preparing students for the varied contexts they are likely to encounter in vocational and academic study and in future employment and life.
- Be at least 180 glh in size.
- Be recognised by at least 6 employers / HEIs / professional or learned bodies.
- Cover the specified content areas of
 - deepening competence in the selection and use of mathematical methods and techniques
 - developing confidence in representing and analysing authentic situations mathematically and in applying mathematics to address related questions and issues
 - building skills in mathematical thinking, reasoning and communication.
- Be linear and at least 80% externally assessed with a proportion of synoptic assessment.
- Be graded.

A summary of the Pearson response

We are broadly in agreement with the proposals, but put forward some key recommendations to supplement them.

- First, we believe that the proposals must require greater consistency between core maths qualifications from different awarding organisations. The proposals allow for a degree of flexibility in the amount of external assessment and the grading scales that could be used, for example, and we believe that if this group of qualifications is to have credibility value they must have a consistency that allows end-users to make confident comparative judgments about those who hold them. To this end, there needs also to be more direction from Ofqual in setting a common standard.
- We also believe that there should be less influence from academic mathematicians on design and in the final review. There needs to be greater representation from the end-user groups, which are employers and HE academics in subjects that require mathematical skills in support of their disciplines.
- Finally, we urge that the timeline should be reviewed to ensure sufficient time for resolution of these issues and subsequent development; we propose that the list of approved qualifications could be published in spring 2015 rather than November 2014, with no detrimental effects.