

Pearson response to the Ofqual Consultation GCSE and A level Reform 2016 September 2014

Organisation details

To evaluate responses properly, we need to know who is responding to the consultation and in what capacity. We will therefore only consider your response if you complete the following information section.

We will publish our evaluation of responses. Please note that we may publish all or part of your response unless you tell us (in your answer to the confidentiality question) that you want us to treat your response as confidential. If you tell us you wish your response to be treated as confidential, we will not include your details in any published list of respondents, although we may quote from your response anonymously.

Please answer all questions marked with a star*

Name*

Lesley Davies

Position*

Vice President, Quality, Standards and Research

Organisation name (if applicable)*

Pearson

Address

190 High Holborn
London
WC1V 7BH

Email

lesley.davies@pearson.com

Telephone

020 7190 1735

Would you like us to treat your response as confidential?*

If you answer yes, we will not include your details in any list of people or organisations that responded to the consultation.

No

Is this a personal response or an official response on behalf of your organisation?*

Official response

Type of responding organisation*

Awarding organisation

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Nation*

England

How did you find out about this consultation?

Our website

May we contact you for further information?

Yes

Consultation questions

Note on A level and AS qualifications in ancient languages (questions 1-6)

Pearson does not offer qualifications in ancient languages. Therefore we do not feel best placed to offer comment on those assessment arrangements.

Note on GCSE, A level and AS qualifications in dance (questions 17-26)

Pearson does not offer qualifications in dance. Therefore we do not feel best placed to offer comment on those assessment arrangements.

Note on GCSEs in art and design, computer science, music and PE; A level and AS qualifications in music and PE (questions 7-16, 52-71)

Awarding organisations were heavily involved in the drafting of the proposed assessment arrangements, the assessment objectives and their weightings for these subjects. Pearson teams worked collaboratively alongside colleagues at AQA, OCR and WJEC, as well as DfE and Ofqual colleagues, to listen to the views of stakeholder groups and a range of HEI representatives to establish new content expectations and assessment arrangements. As well as working with stakeholder groups convened by the Department, we also have a detailed base of evidence of our own to draw on, including analysis of international high-performing jurisdictions, additional stakeholder engagement, and data and qualitative analysis of our existing qualifications.

As such, we believe that the proposed NEA / exam proportions and positions on tiering are appropriate across this group of qualifications and offer no further detailed comment on these for each subject.

We wish to add one note to this: the drafting process has inevitably required a degree of compromise, particularly with regard to the proportion of non-examined assessment. It has involved finding an appropriate balance between ensuring that the content provides the best possible progression, ensuring that the skills, knowledge and understanding represented are the right ones for the subject in the eyes of stakeholders, and ensuring that we can assess these validly and reliably over the life of the qualification. We believe these arrangements address these different drivers as best they can. We do however look forward to receiving feedback and refinement from the broadest range of stakeholders through this consultation process.

With regard to the **assessment objectives** and their weightings: we are broadly in support of these for the reasons outlined above. However, our participation in recent Technical Interpretations meetings with Ofqual and other awarding organisations has afforded the opportunity to work through the individual elements of each of the proposed AOs in more detail, and in some instances, this has brought certain required amendments to light. As such, where we have proposed changes to the assessment objectives for this tranche of subjects (see Art, Music) the recommendations are a reflection of discussions at those meetings.

GCSEs in art and design

Consultation Question 7: To what extent do you agree or disagree that GCSEs in art and design should be assessed entirely by non-exam assessment?

Strongly agree

Consultation Question 8: To what extent do you agree or disagree that GCSEs in art and design should not be tiered?

Agree

Consultation Question 9: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate for GCSEs in art and design?

We recommend the following amendments to AO3 and AO4:

AO3 – change from: Make and record ideas, observations and judgements relevant to intentions as work progresses.

to: Record own ideas, observations and insights relevant to intentions as work progresses.

The word 'make' is ambiguous in this context, as students do not 'make' ideas.

The addition of 'own' further instils the premise that recording must be a documentation of students' personal ideas, observations and insights, as opposed to documenting the ideas, observations and insights of practitioners or other external sources.

The replacement of 'judgements' with 'insights' has been recommended to better represent the kinds of evidence expected of students. Where 'judgements' implies taking a definitive position, 'insights' allows for any expression of personal thought processes without need to necessarily arrive at a definitive conclusion.

AO4 – change from: Present a personal and meaningful response that realises intentions and demonstrates critical understanding of visual language.

to: Present a personal and meaningful response that realises intentions and applies understanding of visual language.

The replacement of 'demonstrates critical' with 'applies' is suggested for two reasons:

1 - There is potential for conflation with AO1 which requires 'demonstrating critical understanding of sources'. This demonstration of critical understanding of sources could arguably evidence critical understanding of visual language through sources at the same time, and allows for potential double rewarding across the two objectives.

2 - The use of the word 'applies' better represents the requirement that a student's understanding of visual language must be practically applied in the presentation of responses.

Consultation Question 10: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for GCSEs in art and design?

Agree

Consultation Question 11: Do you have any further comments relating to the assessment of this subject?

No further comment.

GCSEs in computer science

Consultation Question 12: To what extent do you agree or disagree that for GCSEs in computer science 80% of the available marks should be allocated to exams, and 20% per cent to non-exam assessment?

Agree

Consultation Question 13: To what extent do you agree or disagree that GCSEs in computer science should not be tiered?

Agree

Consultation Question 14: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate for GCSEs in computer science?

Agree

Consultation Question 15: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for GCSEs in computer science?

Agree

Consultation Question 16: Do you have further comments relating to the assessment of this subject?

No further comment.

A level and AS qualifications in geography

Consultation Question 27: To what extent do you agree or disagree that AS qualifications in geography should be assessed entirely by exam?

Agree

Please give reasons for your answer.

Pearson agrees that AS qualifications in geography should be assessed entirely by external examinations. We look forward to working with Ofqual to finalise Industry Standards for the percentage of fieldwork which must be assessed in examination. We recommend that the minimum assessment weighting should be 15%, in line with GCSE. The maximum assessment weighting should be 20%, in line with A Level.

Consultation Question 28: To what extent do you agree or disagree that for A levels in geography 80 per cent of the available marks should be allocated to exams, and 20 per cent to non-exam assessment?

Agree

Please give reasons for your answer.

Pearson agrees with Ofqual's proposed assessment arrangements for A levels in geography and strongly supports the assessment of A level fieldwork by non-exam assessment, worth 20% of the total A level assessment. The proposal to assess A level fieldwork within external examinations appears to contradict the findings of the ALCAB report which stated that 'the only appropriate method of assessment for fieldwork at A level is through a non-examination based independent investigation'. Pearson would recommend that A level fieldwork is assessed through the non-examined independent investigation only and not also through an additional examined assessment. If fieldwork is to be assessed in both, this will give a greater weighting to fieldwork overall than the Ofqual consultation proposed last year. We think this will impact on the ability of awarding organisations to implement the core and non-core content and geographical skills within the guided learning hours for A level qualifications.

Consultation Question 29: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate for A level and AS qualifications in geography?

In general, Pearson agrees that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate for A level and AS qualifications. However, we would recommend that the assessment objectives are reviewed to ensure they align with the DfE's proposed subject content. We would also suggest the following amendments:

In AO1: The addition of a comma after 'change'. The AO currently reads as though each of 'places, environments, concepts, processes, interactions and change' need to

be assessed at a 'variety of scales'. The emphasis instead should only be on 'change'.

AO2: The removal of 'concepts'. The AO currently reads as though candidates will be expected to 'analyse, interpret and evaluate key concepts' whereas in fact they will be applying their knowledge and understanding of concepts as per AO1 in order to analyse, interpret and evaluate 'information and issues'.

AO2: Clarification of the use of the phrase "different contexts". We would suggest this phrase is open to different interpretations by stakeholders which may lead to differences in level of demand across specifications. In order to ensure comparable coverage of different contexts across specifications, we recommend that this phrase is clarified for awarding organisations.

AO3: The use of the term 'geographical skills' rather than 'methods and techniques'. The AO is currently rather narrowly focused on fieldwork skills rather than the broad geographical skills as outlined in the subject content (ref pages 11 to 14). In addition, we would recommend that 'interpret, analyse and evaluate' is replaced with 'Critically investigate' in order to distinguish the focus of this AO from AO2.

Consultation Question 30: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for AS qualifications in geography?

Pearson agrees with the proposed weighting of the assessment objectives for AS levels and we support a narrowing of the acceptable weighting ranges.

Consultation Question 31: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for A level geography?

Pearson agrees with the proposed weighting of the assessment objectives for AS levels and we support a narrowing of the acceptable weighting ranges.

Consultation Question 32: Do you have any further comments relating to the assessment of this subject?

No further comment.

A level and AS qualifications in mathematics

Consultation Question 33: To what extent do you agree or disagree that AS qualifications in mathematics should be assessed entirely by exam?

Agree. Please note however that this question cannot be separated from the DfE content document which includes in paragraph 11

"AS and A level mathematics specifications must require students to:

- become familiar with one or more specific large data set(s) in advance of the final assessment (these data must be real and sufficiently rich to enable the statistical concepts in the specification to be explored)
- have used technology such as spreadsheets or specialist statistical packages to explore the data set(s) in advance of the final assessment..."

This suggests calculations being done with the data in advance of the exam with marks in the exam being dependent on those calculations. This amounts to non-exam assessment so it will be impossible to meet the Ofqual requirement for assessment entirely by written examination. We therefore strongly recommend that this requirement is removed.

Consultation Question 34: To what extent do you agree or disagree that A level mathematics should be assessed entirely by exam?

Agree. Please see comment above.

Consultation Question 35: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate for A level and AS qualifications in mathematics?

Strongly disagree

Please give reasons for your answer.

Whilst the broad intention of the three assessment objectives is fine, we believe that some of the detail has the potential to pose problems in interpretation, and some are impossible to assess in timed written exams.

We recommend that the following statement in AO2 and its equivalent in AO3 are removed:

'Where problems require candidates to 'use and apply standard techniques' or to 'solve problems' independently a proportion of those marks should be attributed to the corresponding assessment objective'

Within a mathematics mark scheme, all marks are awarded for standard mathematical processes. In some cases, the process is part of solving a problem and in some cases it is a step in the chain of reasoning that forms a proof. No marks are available in a problem solving question to students who can't 'solve the problem' and

no marks are awarded in a proof question for steps which are not an essential part of the proof. Inclusion of equivalent statements in the GCSE mathematics assessment objectives has caused confusion with a lack of clarity about allocating marks between AO1 and AO3 in particular.

AO2: The third bullet point – ‘assess, critique and improve the validity of a mathematical argument, making deductions and inferences, finding and correcting errors in reasoning and evaluating evidence’ – should be removed. In order to assess this in a meaningful way, we would need to set comprehension and extended writing questions. The alternative is trivial ‘spot the mistake’ questions which really do not test this skill.

AO3: There are three bullet points which relate to the process of mathematical modelling:

- “evaluate methods used and solutions obtained, recognising limitations and sources of error
- construct, select and refine mathematical models
- interpret the outcomes of a modelling process in real world terms and recognise the limitations of a model”

These relate to the stages of modelling which are:

1. Make simplifying assumptions to set up a model to represent a situation.
2. Use the model to make calculations of required information.
3. Interpret the results in terms of the initial situation.
4. Decide whether the results are appropriate and if necessary refine the model.

We believe that these bullet points should be removed.

There are a number of problems with meaningfully testing the modelling process in a timed written exam. To meaningfully test stage 1 requires a massive amount of information about the context in order for students to make an informed decision as to what assumptions are appropriate. It is also very rare that there will be a single correct set of simplifying assumptions for a context (hence stage 4).

Stage 2 is mathematical processing but the nature and demand of the mathematical processing is entirely dependent on the decisions made in stage 1. This leads to a problem in allocating marks to students who made uninformed decisions at stage 1, particularly where this has resulted in the demand of the mathematical processing to be significantly reduced. There is also the problem of students who make perfectly reasonable but different sets of assumptions resulting in processing of significantly different levels of demand. Finally there are those who make assumptions (reasonable or not) which result in them needing processes outside the scope of the A level content).

In stage 4 it is only necessary to refine the model if the results are unsatisfactory. In many cases, experimental data would need to be collected in order to evaluate the results.

This means that any non-trivial modelling question will entirely change in nature depending on the assumptions made in stage 1, and not necessarily because incorrect assumptions were made. Because of the level of information needed and the amount of work needed, such a question would inevitably take up a large proportion of the available assessment time.

In the current A level, most of the modelling takes place in the mechanics units and the modelling assumptions are made by the examiner. The reason for the modelling assumptions is usually to ensure the question only covers processes that students have been taught.

Consultation Question 36: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for AS qualifications in mathematics?

Agree, subject to the sentences:

'Where problems require candidates to 'use and apply standard techniques' or to 'solve problems' independently a proportion of those marks should be attributed to the corresponding assessment objective'

In the statements for AO2 and equivalent in AO3 being removed.

However, should the sentence be retained, the weighting for AO1 needs to be **significantly** increased as within AO2 and AO3 the vast majority of marks would be for routine procedure.

Consultation Question 37: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for A level mathematics?

Agree, subject to the sentences:

'Where problems require candidates to 'use and apply standard techniques' or to 'solve problems' independently a proportion of those marks should be attributed to the corresponding assessment objective'

In the statements for AO2 and equivalent in AO3 being removed.

However, should the sentence be retained the weighting for AO1 needs to be **significantly** increased as within AO2 and AO3 the vast majority of marks would be for routine procedure.

Consultation Question 38: Do you have any further comments relating to the assessment of this subject?

Work is needed to ensure there are no contradictions between the assessment objectives and the DfE content proposal. The DfE content proposal comments on a number of issues relating to assessment rather than content and in some cases, for example the use of technology, the two documents are contradictory. In the case of

the use of technology, the DfE has specified that technology should be available and that graphing and spreadsheet functions must be assessed but there is no requirement for use of technology in the assessment objectives.

A level and AS qualifications in further mathematics

Consultation Question 39: To what extent do you agree or disagree that AS qualifications in further mathematics should be assessed entirely by exam?

Agree

Consultation Question 40: To what extent do you agree or disagree that A level further mathematics should be assessed entirely by exam?

Agree

Consultation Question 41: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate for A level and AS qualifications in further mathematics?

Strongly disagree – please see our response to question 35.

Consultation Question 42: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for AS qualifications in further mathematics?

Agree, subject to the sentences:

'Where problems require candidates to 'use and apply standard techniques' or to 'solve problems' independently a proportion of those marks should be attributed to the corresponding assessment objective'

In the statements for AO2 and equivalent in AO3 being removed.

However, should the sentence be retained, the weighting for AO1 needs to be **significantly** increased as within AO2 and AO3 the vast majority of marks would be for routine procedure.

Consultation Question 43: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for A level further mathematics?

Agree

Consultation Question 44: Do you have any further comments relating to the assessment of this subject?

Please see our response to question 38.

A level and AS qualifications in modern foreign languages

Consultation Question 45: To what extent do you agree or disagree that for AS qualifications in modern foreign languages 70 per cent of the available marks should be allocated to exams and 30 per cent to non-exam assessment?

Agree

Please give reasons for your answer.

Our stakeholder research with employers, teachers and learners makes it extremely clear that speaking is valued as the most important skill for modern foreign language learners.

Our research into languages in high performing international jurisdictions indicates how curricula in a dozen countries (or regions within countries) explicitly recommend that teachers put more emphasis on oral skills when they start teaching foreign languages. Our research with stakeholders also indicates that the creation of confident speakers is their priority, and the CBI reports of 2011 and 2012¹ reinforce the message that conversational ability is the most important language skill to develop. There are therefore compelling reasons for making the oral assessment 30% of the overall marks.

We also agree that the remaining 70% of the qualification should be assessed via examination. Although some international jurisdictions do utilise NEA for writing and listening, we believe that the documented issues with controlled assessment in languages, together with the need to ensure comparability across centres, and the difficulty many teachers would encounter trying to find listening tasks at the right level, all lead to the conclusion that assessing listening, reading and writing through an exam is the most appropriate method. This view is reinforced by Ofqual's review of controlled assessment, recent CILT/CfBT Language Trends reports² and our own stakeholder research.

Consultation Question 46: To what extent do you agree or disagree that for A levels in modern foreign languages 70 per cent of the available marks should be allocated to exams and 30 per cent to non-exam assessment?

Agree

Please give reasons for your answer. As above

¹ pg.45 and pg.56 Education & Skills survey 2012 - Learning to Grow: what employers need from education and skills. CBI/Pearson.

² Language Trends 2013/14 -The state of language learning in primary and secondary schools in England, CfBT.

Consultation Question 47: To what extent do you agree or disagree that all A level and AS qualifications in modern foreign languages should have the same requirements for non-exam assessment and that no exceptions should be made for specific languages?

Agree

Please give reasons for your answer.

As noted above, speaking is a key element of learning a language and all language learners should have the opportunity to master this skill. They also have the right to feel confident that their qualification is comparable to other languages at the same level.

Currently at AS and A level, some of the lesser taught languages only contain the assessment of two skills (although in the teaching and learning we would expect all four skills to be covered). This is not the case at GCSE where all four skills are assessed in every language. Our research with stakeholders indicates a desire to standardise the languages in this respect.

Consultation Question 48: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate for A level and AS qualifications in modern foreign languages?

Disagree

Please give reasons for your answer.

We have concerns about the wording of some of the assessment objectives, and recommend amendments as follows:

AO1: We recommend the removal of 'including face-to-face interaction'. Currently, for some of the lesser-taught languages the oral assessment is carried out using technology, i.e. the candidate is given questions on screen and then required to record their answer. Such specific wording precludes this model, which would disadvantage such candidates.

AO2: Our understanding is that this AO refers to speaking, reading and writing skills. However we believe the expectations regarding the sentence: 'understand and respond, in speech ... to written language' are not currently clear. It is not clear whether the 'written language' in relation to speech refers to the reading that candidates will do to undertake their independent research, which they will then present in their oral assessment, or whether the oral assessment should include some written stimulus as part of the task itself. As the independent research task is not stipulated for AS, we recommend that a written stimulus that the candidate sees in their preparation time would be the most appropriate model.

AO3: We believe that the wording of this assessment objective is appropriate for AS and A2 as grammar and structures form the basis of any language qualification.

AO4: Target language cultural understanding: We welcome the aspect of AO4 that states 'Show knowledge and understanding of the culture and society of countries and communities where the language is spoken...'. Research (both our own and external) indicates that since the removal of the requirement to test cultural knowledge, teachers have not been focusing on this aspect in their teaching. This is primarily due to the demands of covering the topics (which are not related to the TL country) and the language demands as required by the assessment. Whilst the previous assessment of AO4 did bring about some unwelcome practice and in the end resulted in a facts-and-figures approach, we believe there is a way to assess cultural understanding more qualitatively. Although it is clear that a significant proportion of teachers and intercultural experts are currently not in favour of and do not recommend formal assessment of TL cultural understanding, there is also a body of academic research that suggests the study of target language culture increases motivation and thus language capability.

Literary essay in English: However, AO4 now also covers critical analysis through the medium of an English essay on a work. The particular emphasis on assessing critical analysis through the medium of an English essay is of considerable concern. Whilst we recognise the desire for students to learn to apply skills associated with higher cognitive demand, for example analysis, we feel that this would be better achieved utilising the target language. From an assessment point of view, requiring 10% (AO4) of the marks to be allocated to an essay written in English based on literature or a film leaves no possibility of including a target language essay on the themes.

This means that very little of the written assessment will be carried out in the target language, and could ultimately result in more English being used within the classroom. Ofsted's 2011 report 'Modern languages: achievement and challenge 2007-2010' outlined that one of the most important weaknesses and barriers preventing good language learning was insufficient use of the target language in secondary schools, yet requiring students to prepare to write essays in English could impact negatively on its use. It could also lower the level that a candidate would be able to reach in their language competence at A level. The new criteria for GCSE aim to address this by requiring additional use of the target language in rubrics and questions, and in what learners produce. The same emphasis on the use of the target language should be placed at A Level in order to focus on the development of increased linguistic competence and provide a sensible progression from KS4.

Consultation Question 49: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for AS qualifications in modern foreign languages?

Disagree

Please give reasons for your answer.

On the basis of our current understanding of the assessment objectives, and our concern with certain elements of the content criteria (and the assessment thereof) we believe that some of the proposed weightings are in need of revision.

The introduction of AO4 and the increase in weighting of AO3 has resulted in a considerable reduction in the weighting of AO1 and AO2 compared to the current syllabus. The effect of this is that listening (AO1) will ultimately have the lowest weighting of all the skills at 15%. European research indicates that aural/oral skills are the most important skills for language learning. Our research with stakeholders also indicates that the creation of confident speakers is their priority, and the CBI reports of 2011 and 2012 repeat the message that conversational ability is the most important language skill to develop. However, the weighting for oral/aural skills is now only 45%, compared to the written and reading skills of 55%. We recommend that the weighting of AO3 be reduced to 25% so that more emphasis is placed on the skill of listening. To counteract any concern that the grammar weighting was too low, a greater focus on grammatical accuracy could be ensured by tightening the rules on acceptable error.

As many learners undertake an AS in languages as their fourth option, usually to complement other subjects, the focus of the AS qualification should remain on language acquisition and we would therefore suggest that AO4 be reduced to 15%.

We therefore recommend AS weightings as follows:

AO1: Understand and respond, in speech and writing, to spoken language drawn from a variety of sources, including face-to-face interaction	30%
AO2: Understand and respond, in speech and writing, to written language drawn from a variety of sources	30%
AO3: Manipulate the language accurately and appropriately, in spoken and written forms, using a range of lexis and structure	25%
AO4: Show knowledge and understanding of the culture and society of countries and communities where the language is spoken and demonstrate critical analysis and evaluation of works created in the language studied	15%

Consultation Question 50: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for A levels in modern foreign languages?

Disagree

Please give reasons for your answer.

On the basis of our current understanding of the assessment objectives, and our concern with certain elements of the content criteria (and the assessment thereof) we believe that some of the proposed weightings are in need of revision.

Increase the weighting of AO1 and AO2: As discussed above there is a considerable reduction in weighting of AO1 and AO2 in comparison to the current syllabus, which will result in the receptive skills carrying less weight. Language acquisition at this level is, as shown in the AOs, essentially mixed-skill and there is no clear reasoning for reducing the prominence of listening in the A level. Indeed, the absence of listening and reading in our own current A2 units has come in for criticism from some stakeholders. We therefore recommend increasing AO1 to 25%.

AO3 and grammatical accuracy: The ALCAB panel raise concerns in their report that not enough focus is given to the grammatical accuracy of learners' work in the current assessment criteria. As a result, the report suggests increasing the weighting of AO3. However, whilst we agree that the focus of the A level should be on the acquisition and the correct production of language, it is possible to be more rigorous with regard to grammatical accuracy through tightening the rules on what is acceptable. This could be implemented throughout assessments where candidates are writing or speaking the language. This would prevent the need to increase the weighting of AO3 and safeguard the weight given to the key skills of reading and listening. We would recommend the grammar percentage be lowered to 25% as currently stands in the specification

AO3: remove the English essay: Moreover, the inclusion of an English essay is at odds with the philosophy of mastering the language. It is also highly likely that to prepare for writing a critical analysis in English, more time will be spent teaching through the medium of English in the classroom, particularly as the main focus of the English essay is critical analysis, i.e. teaching the skill of analysis rather than linguistic structures. By replacing the English essay with a target-language essay, we believe there is a greater chance candidates will be immersed in the language throughout their A level course and as a result, see improvement of their grammatical knowledge and understanding.

AO4 and TL cultural knowledge: As discussed above we do welcome the introduction of the cultural knowledge and understanding element of this assessment objective, but we do not believe that assessing critical analysis through the medium of English is appropriate and would therefore recommend that this requirement is removed completely.

Recommended AO weightings:

AO1: Understand and respond, in speech and writing, to spoken language drawn from a variety of sources, including face-to-face interaction	25%
AO2: Understand and respond, in speech and writing, to written language drawn from a variety of sources	30%
AO3: Manipulate the language accurately and appropriately, in spoken and written forms, using a range of lexis and structure	25%
AO4: Show knowledge and understanding of the culture and society of countries and communities where the language is spoken and demonstrate critical analysis and evaluation of works created in the language studied	20%

Consultation Question 51: Do you have any further comments relating to the assessment of this subject?

No further comment.

GCSE, A level and AS qualifications in music

Consultation Question 52: To what extent do you agree or disagree that for GCSEs in music 40 per cent of the available marks should be allocated to exams, and 60 per cent should be allocated to non-exam assessments?

Agree

Consultation Question 53: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate for GCSEs in music?

Disagree. We recommend the following amendments to AO1 and AO2:

AO1: Current wording: Apply performance skills with technical control, expression and interpretation.

Recommended wording: Perform with technical control, expression and interpretation.

This amendment has been recommended to add clarity to the assessment objective. The use of apply infers a set of skills that must be learned first, and so the AO would more accurately read 'Learn and apply...'. Our view is that starting with 'Perform' encapsulates both these elements.

AO2: Current wording: Apply composing skills to create and develop musical ideas with technical control and coherence.

Recommended wording: Compose and develop musical ideas with technical control and musical coherence.

As above, we feel that starting with the command word 'Apply' is problematic, and that to adopt 'Compose' encapsulates both the skills that need to be learned and then applied with more clarity.

Consultation Question 54: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for GCSEs in music?

Agree.

Consultation Question 55: To what extent do you agree or disagree that new GCSEs in music should not be tiered?

Agree.

Consultation Question 56: To what extent do you agree or disagree that for AS qualifications in music 40 per cent of the available marks should be allocated to exams, and 60 per cent should be allocated to non-exam assessments?

Agree.

Consultation Question 57: To what extent do you agree or disagree that for A levels in music 40 per cent of the available marks should be allocated to exams, and 60 per cent should be allocated to non-exam assessments?

Agree.

Consultation Question 58: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate for A level and AS qualifications in music?

Disagree. We recommend the following amendments:

AO1: Current wording: Interpret musical ideas with technical and expressive control and an understanding of style and context.

Recommended wording: Interpret musical ideas through performing with technical and expressive control and an understanding of style and content.

The inclusion of the words 'through performing' are designed to add clarity, as currently the assessment objective could be realised through a variety of means. We believe that it should pertain specifically to the performance aspect of GCE music.

AO2: Current wording: Create, develop and refine musical ideas with technical control and expressive understanding, making creative and coherent use of musical devices, conventions and resources.

Recommended wording: Create, develop and refine musical ideas with technical and expressive control, and coherence.

The phrase 'expressive understanding' is not clear, and we believe 'expressive control' is more accurate. We also recommend the removal of 'use of musical devices, conventions and resources' as these are covered in the subject content, and also included in the process of creating, developing and refining musical ideas.

AO3: Current wording: Use analytical, evaluative and reflective skills to make critical judgments about music.

Recommended change: Use analytical, reflective and evaluative skills to make critical judgments about music.

This recommendation simply swaps the words 'evaluative' and 'reflective' to better reflect the order in which students would employ these skills.

Consultation Question 59: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for AS qualifications in music?

Agree.

Consultation Question 60: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for A levels in music?

Agree.

Consultation Question 61: Do you have any further comments relating to the assessment of this subject?

No further comment.

GCSE, A level and AS qualifications in physical education

Consultation Question 62: To what extent do you agree or disagree that for GCSEs in physical education 70 per cent of the available marks should be allocated to exams, and 30 per cent should be allocated to non-exam assessments?

Agree

Consultation Question 63: To what extent to you agree or disagree that new GCSEs in physical education should not be tiered?

Agree.

Consultation Question 64: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate for GCSEs in physical education?

Disagree. We strongly recommend the following amendments:

GCSE assessment objectives as currently proposed:

	Assessment objectives	Weighting
AO1	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of scientific, socio-cultural and practical aspects of physical activity and sport, including concepts and theories	30%
AO2	Apply knowledge and understanding of scientific, socio-cultural and practical aspects of physical activity and sport, including concepts and theories, in theoretical and practical contexts	40%
AO3	Analyse and evaluate scientific, socio-cultural and practical aspects of physical activity and sport, including concepts and theories, in theoretical and practical contexts.	30%

Recommended amendments to assessment objectives:

	Assessment objectives	Weighting
AO1	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the theoretical content underpinning physical education.	30%
AO2	Apply knowledge and understanding of the theoretical content underpinning physical education.	20%
AO3	Demonstrate skills/techniques in performance	20%
AO4	Analyse and evaluate physical activity drawing on theoretical content underpinning physical education	30%

The above amendments to the assessment objectives have been recommended to add clarity and ensure comparability of interpretation between awarding organisations. Specifically:

- AO1: The current descriptor is too specific. We recommend removing the reference to individual topic areas and inserting a more general statement.
- AO2: We recommend splitting this assessment objective into two - the new AO2 then focuses on the theoretical application with the new AO3 focusing on the practical. As the current AO2 stands, it implies we are assessing the application of theoretical content through a performance (i.e. physiological or biomechanical understanding) when the purpose of the practical is to assess skills and techniques in performance.
- AO3: We recommend the formulation of a new AO designed to directly assess skills and techniques in performance.
- AO4: The current descriptor is too specific. We recommend removing the reference to individual topic areas and inserting a more general statement.

Consultation Question 65: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for GCSEs in physical education?

Please see above.

Consultation Question 66: To what extent do you agree or disagree that for AS qualifications in physical education 70 per cent of the available marks should be allocated to exams, and 30 per cent should be allocated to non-exam assessments?

Please see above.

Consultation Question 67: To what extent do you agree or disagree that for A levels in music 70 per cent of the available marks should be allocated to exams, and 30 per cent should be allocated to non-exam assessments?

Agree.

Consultation Question 68: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate for A level and AS qualifications in physical education?

Disagree. We strongly recommend the following amendments:

AS and A level objectives as currently proposed:

	Assessment objectives	Weighting	
		AS	A level
AO1	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of scientific, socio-cultural and practical aspects of physical activity and sport, including concepts and theories	25–30%	25–30%
AO2	Apply knowledge and understanding of scientific, socio-cultural and practical aspects of physical activity and sport, including concepts and theories, in theoretical and practical contexts	35–40%	30–40%
AO3	Analyse and evaluate scientific, socio-cultural and practical aspects of physical activity and sport, including concepts and theories, in theoretical and practical contexts.	35–40%	35–40%

Recommended amendments to assessment objectives:

	Assessment objectives	Weighting	
		AS	A level
AO1	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the theoretical content underpinning physical education.	25–30%	25–30%
AO2	Apply knowledge and understanding of the theoretical content underpinning PE and to inform physical activity.		
AO3	Demonstrate skills/techniques in performance	15%	15%
AO4	Analyse and evaluate physical activity drawing on theoretical content underpinning physical education	35–40%	35–40%

The above amendments to the assessment objectives have been recommended to add clarity and ensure comparability of interpretation between awarding organisations. Specifically:

- AO1: The current descriptor is too specific. We recommend removing the reference to individual topic areas and inserting a more general statement.
- AO2: We recommend splitting this assessment objective into two - the new AO2 then focuses on the theoretical application with the new AO3 focusing on the practical. As the current AO2 stands, it implies we are assessing the application of theoretical content through a performance (i.e. physiological or biomechanical understanding) when the purpose of the practical is to assess skills and techniques in performance.
- AO3: We recommend the formulation of a new AO designed to directly assess skills and techniques in performance. At A level the expectation is that greater proficiency and consistency will be demonstrated.
- AO4: The current descriptor is too specific. We recommend removing the reference to individual topic areas and inserting a more general statement. This assessment objective extends to analyse and evaluate performance both in the theory and practical components e.g. impact of sport in society, social cultural impacts.

Consultation Question 69: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for AS qualifications in physical education?

Please see above.

Consultation Question 70: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for A levels in physical education?

Please see above.

Consultation Question 71: Do you have any further comments relating to the assessment of this subject?

No further comment.