

Consultation Summary Paper

DfE Consultation on 2016 GCSE and GCE reform

22 September 2014

Opened 25/07/2014, closed 19/09/2014, Pearson lead: Emma Whale

A brief introduction to Pearson

Pearson is the world's leading learning company. Our education business combines 150 years of experience in publishing with the latest learning technology and online support. We are also part of the wider Pearson family which includes Penguin, Dorling Kindersley and the Financial Times. We provide education and assessment services in more than 70 countries. Our qualifications, courses and resources are available in print, online and through multi-lingual packages, helping people learn whatever, wherever and however they choose.

A summary of the consultation

This consultation seeks views on proposed subject content for some of the reformed qualifications that will be introduced from September 2016. The qualifications in question fall into two tranches:

- Those GCSE and A level subjects where the content has been penned by awarding organisations in conjunction with the DfE, Ofqual, and assorted stakeholders: GCSE Art and Design, Dance, Computer Science, Music and Physical Education; GCE Dance, Music and PE.
- Those facilitating A level subjects where the content was drafted on the basis of ALCAB's recommendations: GCE MFL, Ancient Languages, Mathematics, Further Mathematics and Geography.

The consultation asks respondents to consider whether the proposed content is appropriate.

A summary of the Pearson response

Pearson welcomes the opportunity to contribute to this consultation on proposed content for reformed GCSEs and A levels. We also welcome the opportunities that we have been afforded to feed in to the process of shaping these content criteria, drawing on our extensive research with Higher Education Institutions, stakeholder groups, teachers and learners. The qualifications featured in this consultation fall into two groups:

- A levels where content criteria have been drafted on the basis of recommendations from ALCAB.
- GCSE and A level qualifications where the awarding organisations have worked closely on the drafting, in collaboration with the DfE, Ofqual and groups of stakeholders/HEIs.

As our involvement in drafting the latter set of content was extensive; we are supportive of the proposed requirements as they currently stand and are not proposing further changes.

With regard to A level mathematics, further mathematics, geography and MFL, we are generally supportive of the content requirements and agree they are broadly appropriate in light of the issues raised in the ALCAB reports. However, there are some specific elements in each subject where we have recommended changes based on our research evidence. There are also some areas where further clarification will be needed:

- The requirement in the MFL criteria to include an essay written in English on a literary work and the impact on target-language competence/skills development.
- Further clarity regarding the proposed approach to fieldwork at both AS and A level in the geography criteria.
- The format of the detailed content statement in mathematics and how it relates to the new assessment objectives being developed by Ofqual. We are also concerned that there has been a significant increase in the amount of content for AS and A level Mathematics.

As we do not offer qualifications in ancient languages or dance, we are not best placed to comment on the proposed subject content in those areas.