

Consultation Summary Paper

Ofqual consultation on 2016 GCSE and GCE reform

22 September 2014

Opened 25/07/2014, closed 22/09/2014, 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 assessment arrangements for some of the reformed qualifications that will be introduced from September 2016.

- GCSE and A levels 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.
- Facilitating A levels where content was drafted on the basis of ALCAB's recommendations: GCE MFL, Ancient Languages, Mathematics, Further Mathematics and Geography.

The consultation considers whether the proportion of non-exam assessment (NEA), tiering, the assessment objectives, and the weightings of those objectives, are appropriate.

A summary of the Pearson response

Pearson welcomes the opportunity to contribute to this consultation on proposed assessment arrangements for reformed GCSEs and A levels. We also welcome the opportunities that we as an awarding organisation have been afforded to feed in to the process of shaping these content criteria. The qualifications featured in this consultation fall into two groups:

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

With regard to the latter group, Pearson worked alongside colleagues at AQA, OCR and WJEC, as well as DfE and Ofqual colleagues, to listen to the views of stakeholder groups. We also have a detailed base of evidence of our own, including analysis of international high-performing jurisdictions, stakeholder engagement, and data and qualitative analysis. We believe that the proposed NEA/exam proportions and positions on tiering are appropriate.

We add one note to this: the drafting process has inevitably required a degree of compromise. It has involved finding a balance between ensuring the content provides the best possible progression, ensuring the skills, knowledge and understanding represented are the right ones for the subject, and 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 are broadly supportive of the assessment objectives and their weightings; however, our participation in recent Technical Interpretation meetings with Ofqual has afforded the opportunity to work through the individual elements of each in more detail. This has brought certain required amendments to light and our proposed changes reflect these.

With regard to A level mathematics, further mathematics, geography and MFL, we are generally supportive of the assessment arrangements. 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.