

Pearson response to the Ofqual Consultation  
On GCSE Mathematics Requirements and Guidance  
June 2015

Organisation details

**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 4292

**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.

( ) Yes (X) No

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

( ) Personal response (Please answer the question 'If you ticked 'Personal views')

(X) Official response (Please answer the question 'Type of responding organisation')

**If you ticked 'Personal views' which of the following are you?**

- Student
- Parent or carer
- Teacher (but responding in a personal capacity)
- Other, including general public (Please state below)

If you ticked "Official response from an organisation/group", please respond accordingly:

**Type of responding organisation\***

- Awarding organisation
- Local authority
- School or college (please answer the question below)
- Academy chain
- Private training provider
- University or other higher education institution
- Employer
- Other representative or interest group (please answer the question below)

**School or college type**

- Comprehensive or non-selective academy
- State selective or selective academy
- Independent
- Special school
- Further education college
- Sixth form college
- Other (please state below)

**Type of representative group or interest group**

- Group of awarding organizations
- Union
- Employer or business representative group
- Subject association or learned society
- Equality organisation or group
- School, college or teacher representative group
- Other (please state below)

**Nation\***

- England
- Wales
- Northern Ireland
- Scotland
- Other EU country
- Non-EU country

**How did you find out about this consultation?**

- Our newsletter or another one of our communications
- Our website
- Internet search
- Other

**May we contact you for further information?**

- Yes  No

**Question 1**

---

**Do you have any comments on our proposal to allow limited flexibility in assessment objective weightings for new mathematics GCSEs?**

(X) Yes ( ) No

If yes, please provide them here:

We support the proposed approach to allow assessments in any given assessment series to vary assessment objective weightings by +/-3 per cent. This small flexibility will allow us to produce good quality assessments, however we do not support the proposal for the assessments (on average) to meet the specified weightings over the course of four assessment series as stated on page 7.

We propose that this approach is set out in the same way as awarding organisations apply the tolerance of the weightings of the content domains as outlined in the document - Ofqual/14/5455, *GCSE Subject Level Conditions and Requirements for Mathematics Version 2 – May 2014, page 15 point 24*. Awarding organisations apply the weightings to the content domains, subject to a +/-3% tolerance for each content domain area, across the assessments for each tier in each assessment series, where the exact weightings are achieved in as few assessment sessions as possible.

If the weightings of the content domains and the weightings of the assessment objectives are both monitored in the same way, using the same methodology, then this will allow awarding organisations more effective flexibility, which in turn, will produce assessments that are comparable over time, and that will be reliable, robust and manageable, where the exact weightings, for both, are achieved in as few assessment series as possible.

**Question 2****Do you have any comments on the additional guidance on assessment objective A03 for the new mathematics GCSEs?**

(X) Yes ( ) No

If yes, please provide them here:

On pages 11 and 12 of the *GCSE Mathematics: Consultation on Requirements and Guidance*, it is not clear if the *Interpretations and definitions* column relates to all strands within A03. We raise this as an issue as the design and layout of the table, over two pages, suggests that that the first six bullets on page 11 relate to Strand 1 only, and that the remaining five bullets, on page 12, relate to Strands 2-5 only. Clearly, from the original *Technical interpretations of assessment objectives* document, version 4.0 dated 13<sup>th</sup> March 2014, all bullets points in the *Interpretations and definitions* column relate to all strands of A03. Nevertheless, this will not be clear to future users of Ofqual's updated *GCSE Subject Level Guidance for Mathematics*, in particular, those who have not been involved in the development of the new GCSE Mathematics qualifications. We propose that, on page 12, after the title *Interpretations and definitions*, that the word 'continued' is inserted after this heading, or equivalent, to clarify that all bullets in this column (on both pages 11 and 12) relate to all the five strands of A03.

In the *Interpretations and definitions* column on page 11, in the fourth bullet; *'The strands of A03 reflect a problem-solving cycle and as such could be considered as parts of a continuum rather than as independent strands. Each assessment series should provide opportunities for Learners to undertake extended, or multi-step tasks.'*

The use of the terms 'cycle' and 'continuum' in this context suggest that there cannot be a problem which only assesses some but not all the strands of A03, and that all the strands of A03 should be met in any problem every time. As not all problem solving involves all strands from 1 to 5 each time, we propose that to clarify this statement, a statement 'Not all problems will cover all five strands of A03' should be included in this bullet.

**Question 3**

**We have not identified any ways in which our additional requirements and guidance for new mathematics GCSEs would impact (positively or negatively) on persons who share a protected characteristic. Are there any potential impacts we have not identified?**

Yes  No

**Question 4**

---

**Are there any additional steps we could take to mitigate any negative impact resulting from these proposals on persons who share a protected characteristic?**

Yes  No

**Question 5**

---

**Have you any comments on the impacts of the proposals on students who share a protected characteristic?**

Yes  No