

# Pearson response to the Ofqual consultation on developing new GCSEs, AS and A Levels for first teaching in 2017 – Part 1

September 2015

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## Organisation details

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**Position**

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**Organisation name (if applicable)**

Pearson

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**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  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'...')

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

## Consultation response

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### GCSE Astronomy, GCSE Business, AS and A level Music Technology

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#### Questions 1-10, 44-49

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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
- positions on tiering
- assessment objectives
- assessment objective weightings

are appropriate across this group of qualifications and offer no further detailed comment on each subject.

We would add one further 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.

## AS and A Level Design and Technology

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### Question 11

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To what extent do you agree or disagree that for AS qualifications in design and technology, 50 per cent of the available marks should be allocated to exams and 50 per cent to non-exam assessment?

Strongly Agree.

Awarding Organisations were involved in a much earlier draft of the proposal for non-exam assessment (NEA). Pearson worked collaboratively alongside colleagues at AQA, OCR and WJEC, as well as Ofqual colleagues to create a rationale for the proportion of available marks allocated to exams and NEA. We feel that the weighting of 50% NEA is appropriate and representative of the proposed content.

### Question 12

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To what extent do you agree or disagree that for A levels in design and technology, 50 per cent of the available marks should be allocated to exams and 50 per cent to non-exam assessment?

Agree.

Awarding Organisations were involved in a much earlier draft of the proposal for non-exam assessment (NEA). Pearson worked collaboratively alongside colleagues at AQA, OCR and WJEC, as well as Ofqual colleagues to create a rationale for the proportion of available marks allocated to exams and NEA. We feel that the weighting of 50% NEA is appropriate and representative of the proposed content.

### Question 13

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To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate for AS and A levels in design and technology?

Agree.

As the assessment objectives have been further developed for the 2017 reform consultation, we would anticipate minor amendments may be made to wording during the technical interpretation process as clarification and definitions of this wording is agreed across the awarding organisations.



### Question 14

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To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for AS qualifications in design and technology?

Agree.

### Question 15

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To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for A levels in design and technology?

Agree.

### Question 16

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Do you have any further comments relating to the assessment of this subject?

No

## GCSE Psychology

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### Question 56

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To what extent do you agree or disagree that GCSEs in psychology should be assessed entirely by exams?

Agree.

### Question 57

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To what extent do you agree or disagree that GCSEs in psychology should not be tiered?

Agree.

### Question 58

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To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate for GCSEs in psychology?

Pearson agree with the underpinning approach to the assessment objectives and agree that AO1 should be Demonstrate knowledge and understanding, AO2 should be Apply knowledge and understanding and AO3 should be Analyse and evaluate to make judgments and conclusions.

However we do feel that to show progression better to the A level Psychology the AOs could be more in line with the GCSE Science AOs so that they reflect better the skills assessed within the subject. We propose the following amendments to the assessments objectives:

AO1: Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of scientific ideas, processes techniques and procedures

AO2: Apply knowledge and understanding of scientific ideas, processes, techniques and procedures

AO3: Analyse information and ideas to:

interpret and evaluate

make judgements and draw conclusions

develop and refine procedures in psychological research

*Changes in AO1 and AO2*

Not all areas of subject content will fall under the umbrella of psychological ideas

such as biological concepts and therefore the term 'scientific' rather than psychological, as used in A level, would be appropriate in AO1 and AO2.

Pearson do not believe that handling data is needed in the wording of AO2. Handling data will lead to confusion and could be misinterpreted as to whether it is qualitative data or quantitative data. Part of the maths skills includes a section titled handling data, this could lead to misunderstanding and therefore limit the assessment of AO2 that this assessment objective is solely assessing those maths skills. In line with other subjects this assessment objective should be about the application of knowledge and understanding.

### *Changes to AO3*

The wording suggested for this assessment objective better reflects the skills being assessed and mirrors the approach at GCSE Science and support progression to GCE Psychology.

## Question 59

To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for GCSEs in psychology?

It is important that the proposed assessment objective weightings appropriately reflect the level of skills required at the qualification level. At GCSE students will predominantly be building and developing their knowledge and understanding across a breadth of topic areas. In order to ensure full coverage of this knowledge over the course of the lifetime of the qualification, we would recommend that the 35% weighting is reviewed and consideration given to increase to 40%.

Equally, the AO3 element accounts for a high proportion of marks at present. AO3 in the AS level from 2015 will be apportioned 30-35%. As this is the more challenging AO then there is an inherent risk in having a higher proportion in GCSE than in A level. Therefore Pearson would recommend that this is lowered slightly to 25%.

Pearson propose the following weightings:

AO1: 40%

AO2: 35%

AO3: 25%

### Question 60

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Do you have any further comments relating to the assessment of this subject?

It would be preferable if the requirement that the 10% of maths content to be assessed was not embedded within the 20% research method requirement, and instead the two were separated. So that an awarding organisation must design and set the assessments for each GCSE Qualification in Psychology which it makes available, or proposes to make available, to ensure that:

- a) 10% of the qualification is assessed through research methods
- b) 10% of the qualification is assessed through mathematical skills.

Opportunities to only assess mathematical skills within research methods is too restrictive a requirement here could lead to predictability. It is appropriate that the assessment of research methods and mathematical skills will be linked throughout the specification, but we do not feel it should always be the case.

GCSE Economics, GCSE Engineering, AS and A level Environmental Science, GCSE Geology, AS and A level History of Art, AS and A level Philosophy, GCSE Sociology

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### Questions 17-43, 50-55, 61-65

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

### Question 66

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We have identified a number of ways the proposed requirements for reformed GCSEs, AS and A levels may impact (positively or negatively) on persons who share a protected characteristic. Are there any other potential impacts we have not identified? If so, what are they?

No.

### Question 67

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Are there any additional steps we could take to mitigate any negative impact resulting from these proposals on persons who Developing New GCSEs, AS and A Levels for First Teaching in 2017 – Part 1 Ofqual 2015 56 share a protected characteristic? If so, please comment on the additional steps we could take to mitigate negative impacts.

No.

### Question 68

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Have you any other comments on the impacts of the proposals on persons who share a protected characteristic?

No.