

GCSE Business and GCSE Economics consultation on Conditions and guidance

How to respond to this consultation

The closing date for responses is **20 January 2016**.

Please respond to this consultation in one of three ways:

- Complete the online response at <https://www.surveygizmo.com/s3/2496071/GCSE-reform-regulations-for-business-and-economics>;
- Complete these consultation questions and email your response to consultations@ofqual.gov.uk. Please include the consultation title (GCSE Business and Economics Consultation 2015) in the subject line of the email and make clear who you are and in what capacity you are responding; or
- Post your response to: GCSE Business and Economics Consultation 2015, Ofqual, Spring Place, Herald Avenue, Coventry, CV5 6UB, making clear who you are and in what capacity you are responding.

Evaluating the responses

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 information page.

Any personal data (such as your name, address and any other identifying information) will be processed in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and our standard terms and conditions.

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 respond by **20 January 2016**.

Responding to the consultation

Your 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*

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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 response’...”)

Official response (please answer the question “If you ticked ‘Official response’...”)

***If you ticked “Personal response”, 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 organisations
- 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

Questions

Question 1: To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should introduce a Condition which requires exam boards to comply with the relevant subject content and assessment objectives?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Question 2: To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should introduce guidance which clarifies how exam boards should interpret our assessment objectives?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Question 3: To what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposed approach to assessing quantitative skills in exams (including the 10 per cent minimum weighting) for GCSE business and GCSE economics?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

We strongly agree with the proposed approach to assessing quantitative skills in exams for GCSE business and strongly agree that the 10 per cent minimum weighting is appropriate and will support progression to level 3 study.

Question 4: Do you have any comments on our proposed Conditions and requirements for GCSE business?

- Yes No

Assessment objectives

We support the proposed assessment objectives and weightings. However, we have concerns that the proposed wording of AO1 and AO2 does not provide clarity of expectations in relation to *“concepts”* and *“issues”*.

Further guidance relating to “*concepts*” and “*issues*” provide separate definitions which relate to aspects of subject content. However, the elements 1a and 1b require both “concepts and issues” to be addressed in order for the element to be met. For example, AO1 element 1a says “*Demonstrate knowledge of business concepts and issues*”. This would suggest that questions targeting 1a must require students to use both concepts **and** issues at the same time. Given that the definitions provided for both “concepts” and “issues” are different and relate to aspects of subject content this wording is not appropriate.

We strongly recommend that the guidance makes clear that concepts and issues may be assessed separately or together depending on the focus of the question. This change should be made to both AO1 and AO2.

Question 5: Do you have any comments on our proposed guidance for GCSE business?

(X) Yes () No

We are in agreement that the guidance broadly provides clarity of expectations within the assessment objectives but further clarity is required. We recommend the following changes:

AO1 and AO2 (also raised in Question 4)

The conditions and guidance relating to AO1 and AO2 do not make clear the requirements for questions to cover both “concepts” and “issues”.

For example, AO1 element 1a says “*Demonstrate knowledge of business concepts and issues*”. This would suggest that questions targeting 1a must require students to use both concepts **and** issues at the same time. Given that the definitions provided for both “concepts” and “issues” are different and relate to aspects of subject content this wording is not appropriate.

We strongly recommend that the guidance makes clear that concepts and issues may be assessed separately or together depending on the focus of the question. This change should be made to both AO1 and AO2.

AO2

There is no reference to quantitative skills within this assessment objective which may lead to different approaches by different awarding organisations. The use of calculations will always be in context and therefore always applied. We therefore recommend adding within the interpretations and definitions section a reference to the use of calculations. For instance, ‘the carrying out of calculations will always be done in context and therefore assessed against AO2’.

AO3

We have concerns about the elements and definitions within this assessment objective and recommend that changes need to be made to ensure this assessment objective is approached consistently by awarding organisations.

Firstly it is not clear how awarding organisations will map to elements 1b and 1c because these cannot be assessed in isolation and therefore should not be separate elements. For example, questions could assess “analyse” only (element 1a). However, a question cannot separate element 1b (“Evaluate business information and issues to demonstrate understanding of business activity”) and 1c (“Make judgements and draw conclusions”) given the definition for evaluation of: “Evaluate means appraising and/or making judgements with respect to information and/or issues”. Taken on its own, this definition for element 1b does not make clear the distinction between “analysis” which is defined as “deconstructing information and/or issues to find connections and provide logical chains of reasoning” and “evaluation” in respect of element 1b which would be defined as “appraising with respect to information and/or issues”.

To address this concern we recommend having two elements within AO3 as follows:

1a: Analyse business information and issues to demonstrate understanding of business activity

1b: Evaluate business information and issues to make judgements and draw conclusions

This would ensure that there is a clear distinction between, and consistent approach to, the skills of analysis and evaluation.

Secondly, the interpretations and definitions section for AO3 reference the requirement that “Analysis and Evaluation should draw upon underpinning knowledge and understanding”. Further clarity is required as to whether this statement requires that any questions assessing AO3 must also assess elements of AO1 as AO1 refers to knowledge and understanding. Alternatively does this statement relate to ‘assumed’ knowledge and understanding, whereby students will use knowledge and understanding in order to demonstrate analytical and evaluative skills but will not be discretely credited marks for this in the question and therefore AO1 marks will not be allocated to questions assessing AO3.

Question 6: Do you have any comments on our proposed Conditions and requirements for GCSE economics?

(X) Yes () No

Pearson does not offer a GCSE in Economics so it would not be appropriate to comment on the proposed conditions and guidance. We support consistency between GCSE Business and GCSE Economics qualifications as appropriate but recommend considerations are also given to the individual qualifications to reflect differences in the subjects and ensure the appropriate conditions and guidance for both subjects.

Question 7: Do you have any comments on our proposed guidance for GCSE economics?

Yes No

Pearson does not offer a GCSE in economics so it would not be appropriate to comment on the proposed conditions and guidance. We support consistency between GCSE business and economics qualifications as appropriate but recommend considerations are also given to the individual qualifications to reflect differences in the subjects and ensure the appropriate conditions and guidance for both subjects.

Question 8: We have not identified any ways in which the proposals for GCSE business and GCSE economics would impact (positively or negatively) on persons who share a protected characteristic.¹ Are there any potential impacts we have not identified?

Yes No

Question 9: 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 10: Do you have any other comments on the impacts of the proposals on students who share a protected characteristic?

Yes No

¹ 'Protected characteristic' is defined in the Equality Act 2010. Here, it means disability, racial group, age, religion or belief, pregnancy or maternity, sex, sexual orientation and gender reassignment.

Accessibility of our consultations

We are looking at how we provide accessible versions of our consultations and would appreciate it if you could spare a few moments to answer the following questions. Your answers to these questions will not be considered as part of the consultation and will not be released to any third parties.

We want to write clearly, directly and put the reader first. Overall, do you think we have got this right in this consultation?

Yes No

Do you have any comments or suggestions about the style of writing?

Yes No

Do you have any special requirements to enable you to read our consultations? (for example, screen reader, large text, and so on)

Yes No

Which of the following do you currently use to access our consultation documents? (select all that apply)

- Screen reader / text-to-speech software
- Braille reader
- Screen magnifier
- Speech-to-text software
- Motor assistance (blow-suck tube, mouth stick, and so on)
- Other

Which of the following document formats would meet your needs for accessing our consultations? (select all that apply)

- A standard PDF
- Accessible web pages
- Large-type PDF (16 point text)
- Large-type Word document (16 point text)
- eBook (Kindle, iBooks, or similar format)
- Braille document
- Spoken document
- Other

How many of our consultations have you read in the last 12 months?

More than 5