Department for Education

Consultation Response Form

Consultation closing date: 19 September 2014
Your comments must reach us by that date

Reformed GCSE and A level subject content

If you would prefer to respond online to this consultation please use the following link: https://www.education.gov.uk/consultations

The government is reforming GCSEs and A levels to ensure that they prepare students better for further and higher education, and employment. GCSEs are being reformed so that they set expectations which match those of the highest performing countries, with rigorous assessment that provides a reliable measure of students' achievement. The new A levels will be linear qualifications that make sure that students develop the skills and knowledge needed for progression to undergraduate study.

Information provided in response to this consultation, including personal information, may be subject to publication or disclosure in accordance with the access to information regimes, primarily the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 1998.

If you want all, or any part, of your response to be treated as confidential, please explain why you consider it to be confidential.

If a request for disclosure of the information you have provided is received, your explanation about why you consider it to be confidential will be taken into account, but no assurance can be given that confidentiality can be maintained. An automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system will not, of itself, be regarded as binding on the Department.

The Department will process your personal data (name and address and any other identifying material) in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998, and in the majority of circumstances, this will mean that your personal data will not be disclosed to third parties.

Please tick if you want us to keep your response confidential.	
Reason for confidentiality:	

Name: Claire Toogood	
Please tick if you are responding on behalf of your organisation.	x
Name of Organisation (if applicable): Arts Council England	
Address: 2nd Floor 21 Bloomsbury Street London WC1B 3HF	

If your enquiry is related to the DfE e-consultation website or the consultation process in general, you can contact the Ministerial and Public Communications Division by e-mail: consultation.unit@education.gsi.gov.uk or by telephone: 0370 000 2288 or via the GOV.UK 'Contact Us' page.

What best describes you as a respondent?

	Academies		Awarding organisations		Colleges
	Employers/business sector		Further education		Headteachers
	Higher education		Local authorities		Organisations representing school teachers and lecturers
	Parents		Schools		Subject associations
	Teachers		Young people	x	Other

Please Specify:

Non Departmental Public Body

1 Is the revised GCSE content in each of these subjects appropriate? Please consider:

- whether there is a suitable level of challenge

- whether the content reflects what students need to know in order to progress to further academic and vocational education

  Please provide evidence to support your response.

1 a) Art and design

☐ Yes	☐ No	☒ Not Sure

Comments:

Arts Council England recognises that applying the requirement for students to show knowledge and understanding of communication through visual language using formal elements across all GCSE specifications, has potential to increase demand and provide appropriate level of skills for progressing to A level and beyond. Additionally it could better support assessment of comparable skills development between students

The proposed subject content offers improved balance between the emphasis on development of technical and critical skills. There could be further detail included on appropriate methods for developing critical reflection of students' own work, peers and professionals, and requirements for students to receive regular and informative feedback through a variety of means including self-reflection, peer assessment, one-to-one sessions, and group critiques.

Arts Council England also recognises that in order to support the delivery of this refresh subject content and to ensure it successfully serves students in developing the relevant experience and skill to progress, that teachers must be supported by appropriate CPD and the freedom to collaborate with external partners and practitioners in course planning and delivery.

We would question whether the outline of the qualification title 'Critical and Contextual Studies' is sufficiently clearly defined and aligns with the practical skills outlined in section 9 of the Subject Content. Additionally we would recommend that critical analysis should be included as a core skill applicable to all Art & Design titles.

In recognition of the distinctiveness of the different disciplines within the art form as valid individual areas of study, we would strongly oppose the current proposal that the specialist titles within the Art & Design GCSE potentially discount each

other. We are concerned that the current discount codes will discourage students from making the most appropriate choices in the subject and impact on sector skills

Arts Council England welcomes the inclusion to encourage students to develop their knowledge of industry, which will offer opportunity for students to identify and develop appropriate working practices and employment opportunities. However this could be developed further by explicit reference to opportunities for connecting with external partners and professionals such as requirements for students to experience art, craft and design both in galleries and museums and by meeting practitioners and witnessing process within studios and places of production.

Arts Council funded Bridge organisations can play a role in supporting schools and teachers to develop positive and beneficial arts partnerships. Additionally, Artsmark is an excellent tool through which schools could monitor and grow the level and contribution of external practitioners, organisations and professionals to the delivery and enrichment of arts teaching. We would suggest that the opportunities these resources present are highlighted in guidance for teaching this qualification.

Whilst there is reference to experimentation and students developing personal responses there could be greater emphasis placed on innovation and permission to test and to fail within experimentation, which are key to the creative development process within the subject professionally.

We would welcome explicit inclusion of moving image as a distinct discipline and not just a subset of photography.

We are pleased to see reference to developing technical skills and using digital media.

It is felt that the content outline should highlight opportunities for broader cross curricular learning and encourage students to collaborate across subjects. In particular, across STEM knowledge and skills and other art forms, as is reflective of industry practice.

1 b) Computer science

☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not Sure

Comments:

1 c) Dance

☐ Yes	☐ No	x Not Sure

Comments:

Arts Council England acknowledges that increased emphasis on critical appreciation, and knowledge and understanding of professional works and the context of choreography and performance should extend the level of demand in this area. However we would welcome explicit reference to a requirement for students to engage with local, national and international dance companies and studios to gain personal experience and insight and to experience live performances.

Additionally there should be some recognition within the subject content of the ways in which the study of professional works can contribute to an understanding of the evolution of choreography, performance and practice.

Arts Council England also recognises that in order to support the delivery of this refreshed subject content and to ensure it successfully serves students in developing the relevant experience and skill to progress, that teachers must be supported by appropriate CPD and the freedom to collaborate with external partners and practitioners in course planning and delivery. In the course of our own research teachers have highlighted that an increase in practical focussed CPD

support would benefit delivery of the qualification.

Arts Council England feels strongly that engagement with industry and professional practitioners is key to developing the necessary skills and experiences for students to progress professionally. We would welcome the inclusion of reference to engagement with external partners and professional input in the development of course content, supporting teacher CPD and creating opportunities for students to engage directly with professional practitioners, for example providing feedback on students work.

Arts Council funded Bridge organisations can play a role in supporting schools and teachers to develop positive and beneficial arts partnerships. Additionally, Artsmark is an excellent tool through which schools could monitor and grow the level and contribution of external practitioners, organisations and professionals to the delivery and enrichment of arts teaching. We would suggest that the opportunities these resources present are highlighted in guidance for teaching this qualification.

It would be helpful to include some reference to the ways in which the study of GCSE Dance can contribute to transferable skills including leadership and teamwork.

Arts Council is concerned that the proposed subject content does not make explicit reference to the use of ICT and digital media. Our research findings show that teachers and practitioners consider new technology and digital media to be an essential tool in the study and practice of Dance, providing significant opportunities in regard to teaching, learning and assessment at KS4.This opportunity is currently undermined by lack of skills and understanding which should be supported through CPD provision.

It is also felt that the content outline should highlight opportunities for cross curricular learning, in particular across STEM knowledge and skills, as is accurately reflective of industry practice.

1 d) Music

☐ Yes	☐ No	☒ Not Sure

Comments:

Arts Council England acknowledges that the level of demand has been increased through greater focus on the knowledge and understanding that students need to be able to demonstrate in terms of their theoretical knowledge. However this increased level of demand is not as clear within the revisions made to practical aspects of the qualification, performing and composing. As such there is some concern that the focus within the subject content reads as biased towards theory and technical knowledge over practical skills. We believe that both a revision of the subject content and more explicit detail given about the practical expectations of students, along with revising the assessment weighting to an increased proportion of non exam assessment would help to address this imbalance.

We would also support altering the language in the 'subject aims and learning outcomes' to encourage more active engagement than 'awareness of', particularly with reference to:

- *develop awareness of a variety of instruments, styles and approaches to performing and composing*
- *develop awareness of music technologies and their use in the creation and presentation of music*

This would further support achievement of a balance of focus between theory and practical activity that is appropriate in this art form and representative of the skills required by employers and the sector.

Arts Council would question whether the stated reform that *'students are able to engage critically with a wide range of music, including music from the Western Classical Tradition'* has been achieved. The wording within the 'Areas of Study' feels heavily focussed towards Western classical tradition and we are concerned this could deter study of music in wider contexts and prove limiting in terms of creative expression, progression and development of the art form. We would encourage more explicit reference to a wider range of music periods and genres, supporting students to develop their understanding of and aesthetic sensitivity to a range of music styles in contemporary culture and in cultures from other times and places. Additionally we would be keen to see inclusion of music post 1900 included in the Areas of Study.

Arts Council England also recognises that in order to support the delivery of this refresh subject content and to ensure it successfully serves students in developing the relevant experience and skill to progress, that teachers must be supported by

appropriate CPD and the freedom to collaborate with external partners and practitioners in course planning and delivery.

In terms of readying students for progression into further education and the sector then it is imperative that both the subject content and criteria are more explicit about the level of performing competency that needs to be reached by students. For example the established system of Grades within music playing is not referenced but is an existing sector standard that arguably, would be expected by institutions and employers to be achieved in addition to GCSE. If the required or equivalent level of practical tuition is not provided within the course of study to enable the student to realistically progress then it should be made explicit that additional learning is required. Furthermore education providers must make some provision for supporting access to this additional study so that no student is disadvantaged.

We would strongly encourage reference to industry collaboration and input within the subject content. Our research identified this as a key element missing from the existing GCSE content. Teachers and industry specialists proposed that contextual knowledge and understanding should be further developed through first-hand experiences of a wide range of scores, performances and recordings and through interaction with musicians, composers and technicians, both in and out of school.

We would be keen to see explicit reference to requirements for students to:

- *understand the differences and relationships between the roles of composer, performer and audience/critic through personal experience and through interaction with professionals*
- *be aware of the professional pathways open to music students.*

These both can be achieved by greater engagement with sector professions and arts organisations. Arts Council funded Bridge organisations and Music Education Hubs can play a role in supporting schools and teachers to develop positive and beneficial music partnerships. Additionally, Artsmark is an excellent tool through which schools could monitor and grow the level and contribution of external practitioners, organisations and professionals to the delivery and enrichment of arts teaching. We would suggest that the opportunities these resources present are highlighted in guidance for teaching this qualification.

Recognising the growing integration of technology into the creation and production of music, Arts Council England welcomes the references to music technology and

would encourage even greater emphasis on live and practical experience in this area to better support progression to A level and accurately reflect the needs and practices of the sector.
The content outline should highlight opportunities for cross curricular learning, in particular across STEM knowledge and skills.

1 e) PE

[ ] Yes	[ ] No	[x] Not Sure

Comments:

The Arts Council is commenting only on the specific inclusion of Dance within this qualification.

Arts Council strongly supports the inclusion of Dance as an activity within PE GCSE. However, we question whether the definition of Contemporary Dance as an activity is limiting to students and the skills of teachers and suggest that a range of dance genres be included.

2 Is the revised A level content in each of these subjects appropriate? Please consider:

- whether the content reflects what students need to know in order to progress to undergraduate study

Please provide evidence to support your response.

2 a) Dance

[x] Yes	[ ] No	[ ] Not Sure

Comments:

Arts Council England is concerned about the exclusive focus of the consultation on whether the A/AS level is fit for purpose in order to progress to undergraduate study. For A/AS level arts subjects, the link between A/AS levels and higher education is not as strong as in other subjects. Some students who take A/AS levels in arts subjects enter the sector through alternative entry routes into the arts and cultural sector such as vocational training, apprenticeships, or entry level positions.

The subject content should prepare students for eventual progression into the workforce via a variety of routes. We would therefore suggest the wording in the Aims and Objectives is amended to 'develop particular strengths, skills and interests which will encourage life-long learning, equip students for further academic and vocational study and provide access to future careers in dance'.

The Arts Council broadly agrees that the AS and A level specifications in dance does build on the requirements for dance at Key Stage 4 and GCSE qualifications. However in order to ensure students are given opportunity to develop the necessary skills for progressing into the workforce, through a range of progression routes, the Arts Council believes the A level subject content would benefit from:

- Explicit reference to engagement with industry and professional practitioners which is key to developing the necessary skills and experiences for students to progress professionally.
- Specific reference and encouragement of the use of new technology and digital media in regard to teaching, learning and assessment, reflecting its expanding use in professional practice.
- It would be helpful to include some reference to the ways in which the study of A-level Dance can contribute to transferable skills including leadership and teamwork

2 b) Music

☐ Yes	x No	☐ Not Sure

Comments:

Arts Council England is concerned about the exclusive focus of the consultation on whether the A/AS level is fit for purpose in order to progress to undergraduate study. For A/AS level arts subjects, the link between A/AS levels and higher education is not as strong as in other subjects. Some students who take A/AS levels in arts subjects enter the sector through alternative entry routes into the arts and cultural sector such as vocational training, apprenticeships, or entry level positions.

The subject content should prepare students for eventual progression into the workforce via a variety of routes. We would therefore suggest the wording in the Aims and Objectives is amended to '*develop particular strengths, skills and interests which will encourage life-long learning, equip students <u>for further academic and vocational study</u> in music and music-related subjects as well as music-related and other careers*.'

As is the case with GCSE subject content we would be keen to see:

- increased emphasis on industry and professional input to teaching and study
- increased emphasis on music technology within subject content
- the imbalance addressed between the theoretical and technical focus and practical elements
- the apparent overemphasis on Western Classical tradition and pre 1900 music addressed

2 c) PE

☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not Sure

Comments:

3 Is the revised AS qualification content in each of these subjects appropriate?

Please provide evidence to support your response.

3 a) Dance

[x] Yes	[ ] No	[ ] Not Sure

Comments:

Arts Council England is concerned about the exclusive focus of the consultation on whether the A/AS level is fit for purpose in order to progress to undergraduate study. For A/AS level arts subjects, the link between A/AS levels and higher education is not as strong as in other subjects. Some students who take A/AS levels in arts subjects enter the sector through alternative entry routes into the arts and cultural sector such as vocational training, apprenticeships, or entry level positions.

The subject content should prepare students for eventual progression into the workforce via a variety of routes. We would therefore suggest the wording in the Aims and Objectives is amended to ‘develop particular strengths, skills and interests which will encourage life-long learning, equip students for further

academic and vocational study and provide access to future careers in dance'.

The Arts Council broadly agrees that the AS and A level specifications in dance does build on the requirements for dance at Key Stage 4 and GCSE qualifications. However in order to ensure students are given opportunity to develop the necessary skills for progressing into the workforce, through a range of progression routes, the Arts Council believes the A level subject content would benefit from:

- Explicit reference to engagement with industry and professional practitioners which is key to developing the necessary skills and experiences for students to progress professionally
- Specific reference and encouragement of the use of new technology and digital media in regard to teaching, learning and assessment, reflecting its expanding use in professional practice
- Ensuring students understand the learning methods used in this subject so that they are able to take these forward and use them to fulfil their own creative ambition. This is particularly pertinent to Dance where a high proportion of successful Dance students will likely progress to deliver teaching themselves

3 b) Music

☐ Yes	☐ No	☒ Not Sure

Comments:

Arts Council England is concerned about the exclusive focus of the consultation on whether the A/AS level is fit for purpose in order to progress to undergraduate study. For A/AS level arts subjects, the link between A/AS levels and higher education is not as strong as in other subjects. Some students who take A/AS levels in arts subjects enter the sector through alternative entry routes into the arts and cultural sector such as vocational training, apprenticeships, or entry level positions.

The subject content should prepare students for eventual progression into the workforce via a variety of routes. We would therefore suggest the wording in the Aims and Objectives is amended to '*develop particular strengths, skills and*

interests which will encourage life-long learning, equip students *<u>for further academic and vocational study</u>* *in music and music-related subjects as well as music-related and other careers*.'

As is the case with GCSE subject content we would be keen to see:

- increased emphasis on industry and professional input to teaching and study
- increased emphasis on music technology within subject content
- the imbalance addressed between the theoretical and technical focus and practical elements
- the apparent overemphasis on Western Classical tradition and pre 1900 music addressed

3 c) PE

☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not Sure

Comments:

4 Is the revised A level content in each of these subjects appropriate in view of the issues raised in ALCAB's reports? Please consider:

- whether the content reflects what students need to know in order to progress to undergraduate study

Please provide evidence to support your response.

4 a) Modern foreign languages

☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not Sure

Comments:

4 b) Ancient languages

☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not Sure

Comments:

4 c) Mathematics

☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not Sure

Comments:

4 d) Further mathematics

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Sure

Comments:

4 e) Geography

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Sure

Comments:

5 Is the revised AS qualification content in each of these subjects appropriate?

Please provide evidence to support your response.

5 a) Modern foreign languages

☐	Yes	☐	No	☐	Not Sure

Comments:

5 b) Ancient languages

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Sure

Comments:

5 c) Mathematics

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Sure

Comments:

5 d) Further mathematics

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Sure

Comments:

5 e) Geography

☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not Sure

Comments:

6 Is the revised modern foreign languages content, covering assessment of all four skills (reading, writing, speaking and listening), applicable to all languages currently available for study at AS and A level?

☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not Sure

Comments:

7 Do you think that any of the proposals have the potential to have a disproportionate impact, positive or negative, on specific students, in particular those with 'relevant protected characteristics'? (The relevant protected characteristics are disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.) Please provide evidence to support your response.

☒ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not Sure

Comments:

Art & Design

Overall the proposal for Art and Design GCSE is likely to prove very accessible to students falling under particular protected characteristics. In particular those with learning disabilities and nonverbal learners are likely to find the subject accessible, with research demonstrating real links between dyslexia and visual spatial ability.

For young people who may wish to progress to further study and an eventual career within Art & Design there are particular economic barriers common across protected characteristics which have not been addressed. Further consideration of

the economic barriers would address the diversity within specific individuals, groups or families which fall under protected characteristics.

Dance

The increased focus on theoretical knowledge, suggested by reduction in the proportion of non exam assessment, has the potential to reduce practical teaching time and therefore disadvantage students falling under protected characteristics who may experience economic barriers to accessing additional practical dance tuition outside of core teaching.

Currently there is no reference within the subject content to acknowledge how the qualification could be taught to ensure that students with disability are not disadvantaged.

Music

The narrow focus of the Areas of Study presents potential negative impact to advance equality and provision across protected characteristics, which could be addressed through a better balance of musical genres and traditions in all aspects of the content and in the areas of study.

There is evidence to show that there are particular economic barriers common across protected characteristics that present a real issue for engagement with music. For example there is concern that there is a ‘hidden’ requirement of practical ability within the GCSE that can disadvantage those students who are unable to undertake additional private instrumental lessons.

8 How could any adverse impact be reduced and how could the subject content of GCSEs and/or A levels be altered to better advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who do not share it? Please provide evidence to support your response.

☐	Yes	☐	No	☐	Not Sure

Comments:

Art & Design

There is a need to ensure that improved careers advice is provided for students and their families to inform them about the broad range of pathways and opportunities within the creative industries. This should be built into the teaching of the qualification to support students in their understanding and progression to further education and role within industry.

Dance

The proportion of non exam based assessment should not be reduced to 60%. There is also a need to ensure that improved careers advice is provided for students and their families to inform them about the broad range of pathways and opportunities within the dance sector. This should be built into the teaching of the qualification to support students in their understanding and progression to further education and role within industry.

Explicit reference and guidance should be included to ensure that teaching and assessment is inclusive to disabled students.

Music

We would encourage more explicit reference to a wider range of music periods and genres, within the 'Areas of Study' supporting students to develop their understanding of and aesthetic sensitivity to a range of music styles in contemporary culture and in cultures from other times and places.

If the required or equivalent level of practical tuition is not provided within the course of study to enable the student to realistically progress then it must be made explicit that additional learning is required. Furthermore education providers must make some provision for supporting access to this additional study so that no student is disadvantaged.
There is also a need to ensure that improved careers advice is provided for students and their families to inform them about the broad range of pathways and opportunities within the music sector. This should be built into the teaching of the qualification to support students in their understanding and progression to further education and role within industry.

Thank you for taking the time to let us have your views. We do not intend to acknowledge individual responses unless you place an 'X' in the box below.

Please acknowledge this reply.	x
E-mail address for acknowledgement: claire.toogood@artscouncil.org.uk	

Here at the Department for Education we carry out our research on many different topics and consultations. As your views are valuable to us, please confirm below if you would be willing to be contacted again from time to time either for research or to send through consultation documents?

x	Yes		No

All DfE public consultations are required to meet the Cabinet Office Principles on Consultation

The key Consultation Principles are:

- departments will follow a range of timescales rather than defaulting to a 12-week period, particularly where extensive engagement has occurred before
- departments will need to give more thought to how they engage with and use real discussion with affected parties and experts as well as the expertise of civil service learning to make well informed decisions
- departments should explain what responses they have received and how these have been used in formulating policy
- consultation should be ‘digital by default’, but other forms should be used where these are needed to reach the groups affected by a policy
- the principles of the Compact between government and the voluntary and community sector will continue to be respected.

If you have any comments on how DfE consultations are conducted, please contact Aileen Shaw, DfE Consultation Coordinator, tel: 0370 000 2288 / email: aileen.shaw@education.gsi.gov.uk

Thank you for taking time to respond to this consultation.

Completed responses should be sent to the address shown below by 19 September 2014.

Send by e-mail to: Gcseandalevel.consultation@education.gsi.gov.uk

Send by post to: Alex Smith, Floor 2, Sanctuary Buildings, Great Smith Street, Westminster, London SW1P 3BT, UK