Arts Council England

Response to Ofqual

Developing new GCSEs, A levels and AS qualifications for first teaching in 2016 − Part 2

19th November 2014

# 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\*

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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 (X) No

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

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

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

(X) Other representative or interest group (please answer the question 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

(X) Other (please state below)

Non-departmental public body supporting arts and culture in England.

**Nation\***

(X) England

How did you find out about this consultation?

(X) Our newsletter or another one of our communications

May we contact you for further information?

(X) Yes ( ) No

# Questions

## GCSE in design and technology

Question 11: To what extent do you agree or disagree that for GCSEs 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

( ) Agree

( ) Neither agree nor disagree

(X ) Disagree

( ) Strongly disagree

Please give reasons for your answer

We recommend that the non-examined content for the GCSE remains at 60% as a minimum. We believe that the practical nature of the art form must be properly recognised through the appropriate focus of non-exam assessment.

While we acknowledge that the written element gives an opportunity to demonstrate product research, design, reflection and evaluation, this element means that the practical creation of a product is given much less emphasis than it should be afforded.

Feedback from teachers has suggested that an emphasis on examined content leads teachers to focus on evaluation and writing, rather than a focus on the practical and tactile skills of creating and making which are vital elements of the course.

Teachers have suggested that the skills required by the industry are not easily examined in writing. Demonstrating skills such as making and taking a collaborative approach in product development can be better assessed through non-exam methods. While writing, research and the creation of briefs are integral to product design, teachers suggest the practical skill of being able to make a product is most valuable when offering vocational pathways such as apprenticeships.

It was also felt that the trend towards more examined and written content in Design and Technology has a negative impact on those with weaker literacy skills or those with different learning styles. Evidence suggests that a higher than average proportion of professional craft makers are dyslexic. We would not want those with different learning needs to be disadvantaged or discouraged to take up this subject by the move towards more written assessment, if it is not absolutely necessary for assessing achievement in this subject area

 **Question 12: To what extent do you agree or disagree that GCSEs in design and technology should not be tiered?**

(X) Strongly agree

( ) Agree

( ) Neither agree nor disagree

( ) Disagree

( ) Strongly disagree

Please give reasons for your answer

Given the nature of the subject we agree that is appropriate that GCSEs in design and technology should not be tiered.

Question 13: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate for GCSEs in design and technology?

( ) Strongly agree

( ) Agree

(X) Neither agree nor disagree

( ) Disagree

( ) Strongly disagree

Please give reasons for your answer

Overall, we welcome the clarity brought about in the new assessment objectives. However, we note that there is an overlap between certain objectives, for example, between the developments of knowledge A04 to achieve assessment objective A02.

It is important that the assessment process acknowledges the ability of students to practically manipulate products and that they can demonstrate their experience of a physical interaction with a product. This is an important part of product design and will better support progression into apprenticeships, higher education and entrepreneurship.

As we outlined in our response to the Department of Education on the subject content, we welcome the requirement of students to collaborate and communicate as part of the design process. We would like to see the demonstration of these skills highlighted within assessment.

Question 14: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for GCSE qualifications in design and technology?

( ) Strongly agree

( ) Agree

(X) Neither agree nor disagree

( ) Disagree

( ) Strongly disagree

Please give reasons for your answer

Based on feedback from teachers, we recommend that more weighting is given to the most practical assessment objective (A02) given the importance of this in the understanding and progression of skills within the subject.

There is a high weighting for ‘understanding’ and we would like to see that sufficiently expressed and judged through the non-exam assessment.

Question 15: Do you have any further comments relating to the assessment of this subject?

( ) Yes (X) No

## GCSEs, A levels and AS qualifications in drama and drama and theatre

Question 16: To what extent do you agree or disagree that for GCSEs in drama 40 per cent of the available marks should be allocated to exams, and 60 per cent to non-exam assessment?

( ) Strongly agree

( ) Agree

( ) Neither agree nor disagree

( ) Disagree

(X) Strongly disagree

Please give reasons for your answer

We disagree with this change in weighting. We feel that reducing the non-exam assessment to 60% does not accurately reflect the emphasis of the subject content and we believe that the practical nature of the art form must be properly recognised through the appropriate focus of non-exam assessment.

While we acknowledge that there may be a case to be made for increasing exam assessment in order to support students’ progression to A/AS level, our research has shown that the Higher Education sector and industry are confident that non-written elements of the exam are important and robust and should form an integral part of the assessment process. For that reason, we feel that the minimum acceptable assessment balance would be 70%:30%.

We recognise that although the non-examined assessment is considered to be the practical aspect of the course, a significant amount of this will inevitably be non-practical and include the other activities which accompany practical work. For this reason the non-examined element should remain high to allow a focus on the practical, creative process.

Our research suggests that portfolio assessment should be valued as an assessment measure. This format expects experimentation, in-depth reflection, critical analysis and extended commentary as a matter of course. If the percentage of non-examined assessment is reduced, we would be concerned that the creation of creative portfolios, development of practical skills and creation of new work would be detrimentally affected.

Question 17: To what extent do you agree or disagree that GCSEs in drama should not be tiered?

(X) Strongly agree

( ) Agree

( ) Neither agree nor disagree

( ) Disagree

( ) Strongly disagree

Please give reasons for your answer

Given the nature of the subject and the variety of personal and creative expression that inform processes and outcomes we agree that is appropriate that GCSEs in Drama should not be tiered.

Question 18: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate for GCSEs in drama?

( ) Strongly agree

( ) Agree

(X) Neither agree nor disagree

( ) Disagree

( ) Strongly disagree

Please give reasons for your answer

In our response to the Department for Education, we recommend that the name for this qualification is changed to ‘Drama and Theatre’ to align better with the skills that are taught through the course content, the AS and A-Level qualifications, and progression into the industry through higher education or vocational studies. Research undertaken with the sector suggests this change is broadly supported. This change will have an impact on the assessment objectives for this course by ensuring that theoretical, practical and creative practices are explored in full.

We recommend that the proposed assessment objectives are clarified to avoid overlap between objectives. At present, for example, elements of objective A03 would be found in the fulfilment of objective A01.

Question 19: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for GCSEs in drama?

( ) Strongly agree

( ) Agree

( ) Neither agree nor disagree

(X) Disagree

( ) Strongly disagree

Please give reasons for your answer

As mentioned above, we are concerned by the decrease in non-examined assessment of Drama at GCSE. While we are pleased to see that there remains a greater weighting on the non-examined assessment of Drama, feedback from teachers has confirmed that non-examined assessment contains a significant proportion of non-practical work, for example, a portfolio of work around a practical performance.

We are aware that assessment objectives are not necessarily created to be categorised as examined or non-examined assessed. However, we would recommend clarification on the balance of the examined and non-examined assessment objectives. Other subjects (for example, music) are able to demonstrate assessment objectives that clearly align with either practical or theoretical discipline practice. The descriptions of the assessment objectives provided suggest that A01 and A02 are non-exam assessed (total 55% of the weighting) and that A03 and A04 are exam assessed (total 45% of the weighting). We are unsure how this aligns with the objective of 60%:40%.

The overlap between assessment objectives and differentiation between the examined and non-examined assessment objectives causes concern as to the extent to which practical creative processes will continue to be the core of the subject content. We recommend that further consultation with the sector is needed in order to further define the assessment objectives clearly so that they more clearly align with the theoretical and practical subject content and teaching practice.

Question 20: Do you have any further comments relating to the assessment of this subject?

(X) Yes ( ) No

Our research has shown that there is a value in supporting Qualified Drama teachers to work with each other to assess and moderate as part of an internal and external assessment process. This would also form part of the moderators’ ongoing professional development and could be supported by Drama subject associations, Teaching Schools, academy chains and Arts Council England funded Bridge organisations, as well as examining bodies.

Question 21: To what extent do you agree or disagree that for AS qualifications in drama and theatre 40 per cent of the available marks should be allocated to exams, and 60 per cent to non-exam assessment?

( ) Strongly agree

( ) Agree

( ) Neither agree nor disagree

(X) Disagree

( ) Strongly disagree

Please give reasons for your answer

We recognise that there is a need for a greater proportion of written work at AS/A level to support entry into higher education. However, we disagree with this change in weighting.

Where previously non-examined assessment has ranged from 40-100%, we feel that the proposed reduction of non-examined assessment to a maximum of 60% will restrict the breadth of further learning and progression opportunities that can be explored through AS Level Drama and Theatre through non-exam assessment. We recommend that instead of being the maximum of non-exam assessment, 60% (or greater) is considered the minimum balance. Our research has shown that practitioners in Higher Education are “very confident that non-written elements of the exam are robust and important and make an important contribution to assessment”.

However, due to the practical nature of the subject a more appropriate minimum weighting for non-examined assessment would be within the realm of 70% - 80%. We note the value of maintaining some flexibility in the weightings between the examined and non-examined elements of the course, particularly for those who may wish to pursue academic study through higher education.

Question 22: To what extent do you agree or disagree that for A levels in drama and theatre 40 per cent of the available marks should be allocated to exams, and 60 per cent to non-exam assessment?

( ) Strongly agree

( ) Agree

( ) Neither agree nor disagree

(X) Disagree

( ) Strongly disagree

Please give reasons for your answer

We recognise that there is need for a greater proportion of written work at AS/A level to support entry into higher education. However, we disagree with this change in weighting.

Where previously non-examined assessment has ranged from 40-100%, we feel that the proposed reduction of non-examined assessment to a maximum of 60% will restrict the breadth of further learning and progression opportunities that can be explored through AS Level Drama and Theatre through non-exam assessment. We recommend that instead of being the maximum of non-exam assessment, 60% (or greater) is considered the minimum balance. Our research has shown that practitioners in Higher Education are “very confident that non-written elements of the exam are robust and important and make an important contribution to assessment”.

However, due to the practical nature of the subject a more appropriate minimum weighting for non-examined assessment would be within the realm of 70% - 80%. We note the value of maintaining some flexibility in the weightings between the examined and non-examined elements of the course, particularly for those who may wish to pursue academic study through higher education.

Question 23: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed assessment objectives are appropriate for A levels and AS qualifications in drama and theatre?

( ) Strongly agree

( ) Agree

( ) Neither agree nor disagree

(X) Disagree

( ) Strongly disagree

Please give reasons for your answer

We recommend that assessment objective A04 retains an emphasis on ‘live’ theatre (as found in the current assessment objectives). The proposed assessment objectives are clear and defined, however we would wish to see weightings revised to reflect the 70% minimum focus on practical non exam based assessment as stated above.

Question 24: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for AS qualifications in drama and theatre?

( ) Strongly agree

( ) Agree

( ) Neither agree nor disagree

(X) Disagree

( ) Strongly disagree

Please give reasons for your answer

We recommend that assessment objective A04 retains an emphasis on ‘live’ theatre (as found in the current assessment objectives). The proposed assessment objectives are clear and defined, however we would wish to see weightings revised to reflect the 70% minimum focus on practical non exam based assessment as stated above.

Question 25: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for A levels in drama and theatre?

( ) Strongly agree

( ) Agree

( ) Neither agree nor disagree

(X) Disagree

( ) Strongly disagree

Please give reasons for your answer

We would wish to see weightings revised to reflect the 70% minimum focus on practical non exam based assessment as stated above.

**Question 26: Do you have any further comments relating to the assessment of this subject?**

( ) Yes (X) No

Our research has shown that there is a value in supporting Qualified Drama teachers to work with each other to assess and moderate as part of an internal and external assessment process. This would also form part of the moderators’ ongoing professional development and could be supported by Drama subject associations, Teaching Schools, academy chains and Arts Council England funded Bridge organisations, as well as examining bodies.

# Equality impact

Question 27: We have identified a number of ways the proposed requirements for reformed GCSEs, A levels and AS qualifications 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?

( ) Yes (X) No

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Question 28: Are there any additional steps we could take to mitigate any negative impact from resulting from these proposals on persons who share a protected characteristic? If so, please comment on the additional steps we could take to mitigate negative impacts.

( ) Yes (X) No

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**Question 29: Have you any other comments on the impacts of the proposals on persons who share a protected characteristic?**

( ) Yes (X) No

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# 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.**

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

( ) Yes (X) 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, etc.)

( ) 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?**

( ) 1

( ) 2

( ) 3

( ) 4

( ) 5

( ) More than 5