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The Department for Education (DfE) has recently made [changes to the subject content for GCSE drama](#), and for [AS and A level drama and theatre](#). These changes introduce an explicit requirement for GCSE, AS and A level specifications to:

- “ require students to experience live performance, where they are a member of the audience in the same performance space as the performers. This may be a professional or amateur, but not a peer, performance.

We are seeking views on the changes we propose to make to our rules to reflect this new requirement.

1. Our proposed approach

The new subject content requirements relate to activities that students should carry out as part of their course of study. Consequently, they are similar to subject content requirements in a number of other reformed GCSE, AS and A level subjects, for example the requirements to:

- participate in citizenship action, as part of GCSE citizenship studies
- undertake fieldwork in GCSE, AS and A level geography
- complete practical activities in GCSE science

In all of these other subjects, we have required exam boards to collect annual statements from schools and colleges which confirm that the school or college has taken reasonable steps to ensure that students taking exams that year have completed the required activities. We have also required exam boards to treat any failure to provide such a statement as malpractice and/or maladministration by the school or college. One important feature of this approach is that exam boards can only take action against schools and colleges if they do not provide the expected statement. They cannot take any action against individual students in relation to this requirement.

We see no reason to take a different approach in either GCSE drama or AS and A level drama and theatre, so we are proposing to introduce an equivalent rule for both.

Our proposed new rules are set out in full in [Appendix 1 \(GCSE drama\)](#) and [Appendix 2 \(AS and A level drama and theatre\)](#).

2. Impact of our proposals

We have not identified any positive or negative impacts on students who share protected characteristics that would result from our proposed changes to our rules for GCSE drama, and AS and A level drama and theatre.

‘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.

We are not consulting on the new subject content requirements about students attending performances. DfE has already taken this decision. We have therefore not assessed the impact on schools and colleges of the changes to the subject content requirements.

The changes we propose to make to our rules will result in some additional administrative burden for exam boards, schools and colleges. Schools and colleges will need to complete the new annual statement, and exam boards will need to collect them.

As in other subjects, we have deliberately chosen not to specify the format or content of these statements. This provides exam boards with flexibility to develop approaches that minimise the burden on schools and colleges. In other reformed GCSEs, AS and A levels which require similar statements, exam boards have integrated them into the normal procedures for exam entry, resulting in minimal additional costs. We have therefore assumed that any additional costs arising from the requirement to provide live performance statements in GCSE drama and AS and A level drama and theatre will not be material.

3. Your views

We are seeking your views on both the way we are proposing to change our rules to reflect the new subject content, and on the detailed drafting of those changes.

We would also welcome your views on our assessment of the likely impact of our proposals, including whether there are any additional impacts we have overlooked, and any steps we could take to mitigate

such impacts.

4. Appendix 1: Proposed new Condition for GCSE drama

4.1 Condition GCSE (Drama) 3

Live performance statements

4.2 GCSE (Drama) 3.1

In respect of each assessment cycle for a GCSE Qualification in Drama which it makes available, an awarding organisation must –

- (a) require each Centre to provide a live performance statement to the awarding organisation, and
- (b) treat any failure by a Centre to provide a live performance statement to the awarding organisation in a timely manner as malpractice and/or maladministration (under General Condition A8 (Malpractice and maladministration)).

4.3 GCSE (Drama) 3.2

For the purposes of this condition, a 'live performance statement' is a true and accurate written statement made by a Centre to an awarding organisation which confirms that it has taken reasonable steps to secure that each Learner to which that Centre has delivered the assessments to be taken in a particular assessment cycle for a GCSE Qualification in Drama which the awarding organisation makes available has met the requirement to experience live performance specified in Paragraph 7 of the document published by the Secretary of State entitled '[Drama GCSE subject content](#)', document reference DFE-00039-2015.

5. Appendix 2: Proposed new Condition for GCE AS and A level drama and theatre

5.1 Condition GCE (Drama and Theatre) 3

Live performance statements

5.2 GCE (Drama and Theatre) 3.1

In respect of each assessment cycle for a GCE Qualification in Drama and Theatre which it makes available, an awarding organisation must –

- (a) require each Centre to provide a live performance statement to the awarding organisation, and
- (b) treat any failure by a Centre to provide a live performance statement to the awarding organisation in a timely manner as malpractice and/or maladministration (under General Condition A8 (Malpractice and maladministration)).

5.3 GCE (Drama and Theatre) 3.2

For the purposes of this condition, a 'live performance statement' is a true and accurate written statement made by a Centre to an awarding organisation which confirms that it has taken reasonable steps to secure that each Learner to which that Centre has delivered the assessments to be taken in a particular assessment cycle for a GCE Qualification in Drama and Theatre which the awarding organisation makes available has met the requirement to experience live performance specified in Paragraph 10 of the document published by the Secretary of State entitled '[Drama and theatre AS and A level subject content](#)', document reference DFE-00038-2015.

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