

Confirmed assessment arrangements for reformed GCSE, AS and A level qualifications for first teaching in 2017

GCSEs

Ancient history

Classical civilisation

Electronics

Film studies

Media studies

Statistics

AS and A levels

Accounting

Ancient history

Archaeology

Classical civilisation

Electronics

Film studies

Law



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Contents

Confirmed assessment arrangements for reformed GCSE, AS and A level qualifications for first teaching in 2017	3
Assessment arrangements	4
Tiering	4
Balance of exam and non-exam assessment	4
Assessment Objectives	6
Assessment arrangements for GCSE ancient history	8
Assessment arrangements for GCSE classical civilisation	9
Assessment arrangements for GCSE electronics	10
Assessment arrangements for GCSE film studies	11
Assessment arrangements for GCSE media studies	12
Assessment arrangements for GCSE statistics	13
Assessment arrangements for AS and A level accounting	14
Assessment arrangements for AS and A level ancient history	15
Assessment arrangements for AS and A level archaeology	16
Assessment arrangements for AS and A level classical civilisation	17
Assessment arrangements for AS and A level film studies	19
Assessment arrangements for AS and A level law	20
Assessment arrangements for AS and A level media studies	21

Confirmed assessment arrangements for reformed GCSE, AS and A level qualifications for first teaching in 2017

From 10 September to 5 November 2015 we consulted on proposed assessment arrangements for a number of the remaining reformed subjects, planned for first teaching in September 2017. The Department for Education (DfE) consulted in parallel on proposed content requirements for the same subjects.

Our consultation covered proposed assessment arrangements for:

GCSEs in:

- ancient history
- classical civilisation
- electronics
- film studies
- media studies
- statistics

AS qualifications and A levels in:

- accounting
- ancient history
- archaeology
- classical civilisation
- electronics
- film studies
- law
- media studies
- statistics*

We set out in this document the decisions we took on the assessment arrangements for these subjects. The DfE has also confirmed the content requirements for them, which they published on their website¹. Our decisions were confirmed in relation to this final content.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/further-gcse-and-a-level-content-for-teaching-from-september-2017>

* We will not announce assessment arrangements for AS and A level statistics today as DfE is addressing issues raised by respondents in their consultation on the subject content. We will need to consider our assessment arrangements in light of the final qualification content.

Assessment arrangements

In deciding on the assessment arrangements for these subjects, we considered the responses to our consultation and the potential impacts of our decisions in terms of regulatory burden and in relation to protected characteristics. Alongside this document, we are publishing an evaluation of the responses to our consultation together with our assessments of the potential impact of our decisions².

We have already made qualification level decisions about the purpose and the design of reformed GCSEs, AS and A levels. You can find more information on the changes we are making to these qualifications on our website.

Tiering

We previously confirmed that new GCSEs should only be tiered where a single set of assessments cannot in a valid and manageable way assess students across the full ability range. Accordingly, and in line with our consultation proposals, we have decided that the only GCSE qualification from these subjects that should have a tiered assessment is GCSE Statistics. In line with current practice, all reformed AS qualifications and A levels will be untiered.

Balance of exam and non-exam assessment

To determine how new GCSEs, AS qualifications and A levels should be assessed we are applying a common set of principles to each subject. Where subject content can be validly assessed by exams, set and marked by exam boards, this should be the default method of assessment. Where other forms of assessment are necessary to assess essential subject skills or knowledge, the non-exam assessment must:

1. strike a balance between valid assessment of essential knowledge and skills, sound assessment practice and manageability;
2. be designed to fit the requirements of the particular subject, including the relative weighting of exams and other components assigned to it;
3. be designed so that the qualification is not easily distorted by external pressures from the wider system.

² All documents available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/developing-new-gcse-as-and-a-levels-for-first-teaching-in-2017>

*Confirmed assessment arrangements for reformed
GCSE, AS and A levels for first teaching in 2017*

If we determine that a subject should include a proportion of non-exam assessment, that proportion will apply to all qualifications offered by exam boards in that subject. We applied these principles to the updated content requirements and considered the responses to our consultation. Our decisions on the balance of exam and non-exam assessment for the subjects on which we consulted are summarised in Table 1. Our final decisions are the same as the proposals we made at consultation; we set out our reasoning below.

Table 1 – Overview of our decisions on the proportion of non-exam assessment

Subject	GCSE		AS qualification		A level	
	Current weighting of non-exam assessment	New weighting of non-exam assessment	Current weighting of non-exam assessment	New weighting of non-exam assessment	Current weighting of non-exam assessment	New weighting of non-exam assessment
Accounting	N/A	N/A	0%	0%	0%	0%
Ancient history	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Archaeology	N/A	N/A	0%	0%	20%	20%
Classical civilisation	25%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Electronics	25%	20%	26-30%	20%	26%-30%	20%
Film studies	50%	30%	40-50%	30%	45-50%	30%
Law	N/A	N/A	0%	0%	0%	0%
Media studies	60%	30%	40-50%	30%	40-50%	30%
Statistics	25%	0%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

This table does not include final weightings of non-exam assessment for AS and A level Statistics. DfE is reviewing the content for this subject following consultation. We will need to consider our assessment arrangements in light of any changes

In eight of the qualifications (AS and A level accounting, GCSE, AS and A level ancient history, AS and A level archaeology, AS and A level classical civilisation, GCSE, AS and A level electronics and AS and A level law) there was broad support for the proposed weighting of non-exam assessment on which we consulted.

In film studies and media studies (at GCSE, AS and A level), GCSE classical civilisation, and GCSE statistics, our proposals were less well received and for each of these subjects a majority of respondents disagreed with our proposals.

Respondents who did not favour our proposals generally asked for a higher percentage of non-exam assessment. They tended to argue this would be

appropriate because of the practical nature of the subject, and the benefits of non-exam assessments for some students.

For example, in film studies and media studies, a majority of respondents favoured a higher weighting of non-exam assessment than we had proposed. Respondents emphasised the importance of practical work in these subjects. They suggested skills necessary in the subjects cannot be easily developed outside of practical tasks and that such tasks engage students. They did not persuade us that the content could only be validly assessed through the use of more non-exam assessment. We concluded for these subjects a 30% weighting for non-exam assessment and a 70% weighting for examinations would provide for valid assessment.

In GCSE statistics respondents highlighted the practical nature of the subject and the difficulties of assessing some of the content through examination. Convincing arguments were made for about 10% non-exam assessment. Following consultation, however, the DfE changed the content and removed the elements that would have required non-exam assessment. As a result, although we agreed with the arguments respondents made, we decided that the final content can be assessed by exam only.

Our regulations require awarding organisations to design and deliver effective assessments. As with all of the reforms to GCSE, AS and A level qualifications we will keep awarding organisations' development of assessments under review, both as we accredit their qualifications and throughout the lifetime of the qualification.

Assessment Objectives

After considering the responses to our consultation and reviewing the changes the DfE made to the content requirements following its consultation, we finalised the assessment objectives for the subjects on which we consulted. The final versions are set out at the end of this document.

For each subject, we consulted on the wording and weighting of the assessment objectives that we require awarding organisations to target their assessment against. The assessment objectives we consulted on were aligned with the proposed subject content. Where, following consultation, there have been changes to the subject content, we have reviewed the assessment objectives and amended them where necessary.

With the exception of film studies and media studies, the majority of respondents supported both the wording and weighting of the assessment objectives we proposed. However, we considered the full range of comments made to us through consultation and decided to make some limited changes to the wording and/ or the weighting of the assessment objectives in all subjects.

*Confirmed assessment arrangements for reformed
GCSE, AS and A levels for first teaching in 2017*

In some subjects the final assessment objectives we are setting out have been changed significantly since the version we consulted on. In particular:

- In AS and A level ancient history we reduced the range of the weighting for AO4 to secure greater consistency between exam boards' qualifications.
- In AS and A level archaeology we made a significant number of changes to the wording to make it more concise and avoid duplication of the detailed subject content.
- In both AS and A level classical civilisation and law we have separated some of the assessment objectives between the AS qualification and the A level to better reflect differences in the subject content between the two qualifications.
- In AS and A level film studies and AS and A level media studies we made changes in response to consultation feedback and to align the wording of GCSE assessment objectives. We also produced different versions of AO2 at AS and A level in both subjects to reflect differences in the subject content.
- In GCSE statistics we reduced the number of assessment objectives from four to three by combining two of the proposed objectives. This change was made as the abilities to be assessed are interlinked and would always be assessed in combination. We also changed the wording of AO2 to ensure it is sufficiently distinct from AO1, and the wording of AO3 to more closely reflect what candidates are expected to demonstrate at this level.

Assessment arrangements for GCSE ancient history

Tiering

Assessment will not be tiered in this subject

Non Exam assessment

There will be no non-exam assessment in this subject

Assessment Objectives

	Assessment objective	Weighting
AO1	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the key features and characteristics of the historical periods studied	45%
AO2	Analyse and explain historical events and historical periods to arrive at substantiated judgements	25%
AO3	Use, analyse and evaluate ancient sources within their historical context to make judgements and draw conclusions about: <ul style="list-style-type: none">historical events and historical periods studiedhow the portrayal of events by ancient writers/sources relates to the historical contexts in which they were written/produced	30%

Assessment arrangements for GCSE classical civilisation

Tiering

Assessment will not be tiered in this subject

Non Exam assessment

There will be no non-exam assessment in this subject

Assessment Objectives

	Assessment objective	Weighting
AO1	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• literature and visual/material culture from the classical world• how sources reflect their cultural contexts• possible interpretations of sources by different audiences and individuals	60%
AO2	Analyse, interpret and evaluate literature and visual/material culture from the classical world, using evidence and producing coherent and reasoned arguments	40%

Assessment arrangements for GCSE electronics

Tiering

Assessment will not be tiered in this subject

Non Exam assessment

20% of the marks in this subject will be allocated to non-exam assessment

Assessment Objectives

	Assessment objective	Weighting
AO1	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the ideas, techniques and procedures of electronics	35%
AO2	Apply knowledge and understanding of the ideas, techniques and procedures of electronics	35%
AO3	Analyse problems and design, build, test and evaluate electronic systems to address identified needs	30%

Assessment arrangements for GCSE film studies

Tiering

Assessment will not be tiered in this subject

Non Exam assessment

30% of the marks in this subject will be allocated to non-exam assessment

Assessment Objectives

	Assessment objective	Weighting
AO1	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of elements of film	30%
AO2	Apply knowledge and understanding of elements of film to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• analyse and compare films• analyse and evaluate own work in relation to other professionally produced work	50%
AO3	Apply knowledge and understanding of elements of film to the production of film or screenplay	20%

Assessment arrangements for GCSE media studies

Tiering

Assessment will not be tiered in this subject

Non Exam assessment

30% of the marks in this subject will be allocated to non-exam assessment

Assessment Objectives

	Assessment objective	Weighting
AO1	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the theoretical framework of media• contexts of media and their influence on media products and processes	30%
AO2	Analyse and evaluate media products using the theoretical framework of media, including in relation to their contexts, to make judgements and draw conclusions	40%
AO3	Create media products for an intended audience, by applying knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework of media to communicate meaning	30%

Assessment arrangements for GCSE statistics

Tiering

The assessment in this subject will be tiered

Non Exam assessment

There will be no non-exam assessment in this subject

Assessment Objectives

	Assessment objective	Weighting
AO1	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding, using appropriate terminology and notation, of standard statistical techniques used to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• collect and represent data• calculate summary statistics and probabilities	50%
AO2	Interpret statistical information and results in context and reason statistically to draw conclusions	25%
AO3	Assess the appropriateness of statistical methodologies and the conclusions drawn through the application of the statistical enquiry cycle	25%

Assessment arrangements for AS and A level accounting

Tiering

Assessment will not be tiered in this subject

Non Exam assessment

There will be no non-exam assessment in this subject

Assessment Objectives

	Assessment objective	Weighting	
		AS	A level
AO1	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of accounting principles, concepts and techniques	30-40%	20-30%
AO2	Apply knowledge and understanding of accounting principles, concepts and techniques	35-45%	25-35%
AO3	Analyse and evaluate accounting data to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• present information• make judgements• draw conclusions	25-35%	35-45%

Assessment arrangements for AS and A level ancient history

Tiering

Assessment will not be tiered in this subject

Non Exam assessment

There will be no non-exam assessment in this subject

Assessment Objectives

	Assessment objective	Weighting	
		AS	A level
AO1	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the key features and characteristics of the historical periods studied	20–30%	20–30%
AO2	Analyse and evaluate historical events and historical periods to arrive at substantiated judgements	20–30%	20–30%
AO3	Use, analyse and evaluate ancient sources within their historical context to make judgements and draw conclusions about: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• historical events and historical periods studied• how the portrayal of events by ancient writers/sources relates to the historical contexts in which they were written/produced	50–60%	35–45%
AO4	Analyse and evaluate, in context, modern historians' interpretations of the historical events and topics studied	N/A	15–20%

Assessment arrangements for AS and A level archaeology

Tiering

Assessment will not be tiered in this subject

Non Exam assessment

20% of the marks in this subject will be allocated to non-exam assessment at A level

There will be no non-exam assessment in this subject for AS

Assessment Objectives

	Assessment objective	Weighting	
		AS	A level
AO1	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of archaeological skills, methods, themes, issues and contexts	35-45%	25-35%
AO2 (AS)	Apply archaeological skills and methods, using archaeological terminology and conventions, to interpret secondary archaeological material and data	30-40%	-
AO2 (A level)	Apply archaeological skills and methods, using archaeological terminology and conventions, to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> interpret primary archaeological material and data interpret secondary archaeological material and data 	-	30-40%
AO3 (AS)	Analyse and evaluate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> secondary archaeological material and data archaeological interpretations archaeological themes, issues and contexts 	25-35%	-
AO3 (A level)	Analyse and evaluate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> primary archaeological material and data secondary archaeological material and data archaeological interpretations archaeological themes, issues and contexts 	-	35-45%

Assessment arrangements for AS and A level classical civilisation

Tiering

Assessment will not be tiered in this subject

Non Exam assessment

There will be no non-exam assessment in this subject

Assessment Objectives

	Assessment objective	Weighting	
		AS	A level
AO1 (AS)	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • literature and either visual/material culture or classical thought • how sources and ideas reflect, and influence, their cultural contexts • possible interpretations of sources and perspectives by different audiences and individuals 	45–55%	-
AO1 (A level)	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • literature, visual/material culture, and classical thought • how sources and ideas reflect, and influence, their cultural contexts • possible interpretations of sources and perspectives by different audiences and individuals 	-	40–50%
AO2 (AS)	Critically analyse, interpret and evaluate literature, and either visual/material culture or classical thought, using evidence to make substantiated judgements and produce coherent and reasoned arguments	45–55%	-
AO2 (A level)	Critically analyse, interpret and evaluate literature, visual/material culture, and classical thought, using evidence to make substantiated judgements and produce coherent and reasoned arguments	-	50–60%

*Confirmed assessment arrangements for reformed
GCSE, AS and A levels for first teaching in 2017*

Assessment arrangements for AS and A level electronics

Tiering

Assessment will not be tiered in this subject

Non Exam assessment

20% of the marks in this subject will be allocated to non-exam assessment

Assessment Objectives

	Assessment objective	Weighting	
		AS	A level
AO1	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the ideas, techniques and procedures of electronics	30–35%	30–35%
AO2	Apply knowledge and understanding of the ideas, techniques and procedures of electronics	35–40%	35–40%
AO3	Analyse problems and design, build, test and evaluate electronic systems to address identified needs	30%	30%

Assessment arrangements for AS and A level film studies

Tiering

Assessment will not be tiered in this subject

Non Exam assessment

30% of the marks in this subject will be allocated to non-exam assessment

Assessment Objectives

	Assessment objective	Weighting	
		AS	A level
AO1	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of elements of film	30-40%	30-40%
AO2 (AS)	Apply knowledge and understanding of elements of film to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> analyse and compare films, including through the use of critical approaches analyse and evaluate own work in relation to other professionally produced work 	40-50%	-
AO2 (A level)	Apply knowledge and understanding of elements of film to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> analyse and compare films, including through the use of critical approaches evaluate the significance of critical approaches analyse and evaluate own work in relation to other professionally produced work 	-	40-50%
AO3	Apply knowledge and understanding of elements of film to the production of film or screenplay	20%	20%

Assessment arrangements for AS and A level law

Tiering

Assessment will not be tiered in this subject

Non Exam assessment

There will be no non-exam assessment in this subject

Assessment Objectives

	Assessment objective	Weighting	
		AS	A level
AO1	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the English legal system and legal rules and principles	40-50%	30-40%
AO2	Apply legal rules and principles to given scenarios in order to present a legal argument using appropriate legal terminology	25-35%	25-35%
AO3 (AS)	Analyse and evaluate legal rules, principles and concepts	20-30%	-
AO3 (A level)	Analyse and evaluate legal rules, principles, concepts and issues	-	30-40%

Assessment arrangements for AS and A level media studies

Tiering

Assessment will not be tiered in this subject

Non Exam assessment

30% of the marks in this subject will be allocated to non-exam assessment

Assessment Objectives

	Assessment objective	Weighting
AO1	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the theoretical framework of media• contexts of media and their influence on media products and processes	25-35%
AO2 (AS)	Apply knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework of media to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• analyse media products, including in relation to their contexts and through the use of academic theories• make judgements and draw conclusions	35-45%
AO2 (A level)	Apply knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework of media to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• analyse media products, including in relation to their contexts and through the use of academic theories• evaluate academic theories• make judgements and draw conclusions	35-45%
AO3	Create media products for an intended audience, by applying knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework of media to communicate meaning	30%

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