

Decisions on Conditions and guidance for GCSE Statistics



In February 2016 we published a consultation about the rules and guidance we proposed to put in place for new GCSEs in statistics.

This consultation set out draft Subject Level Conditions, requirements and guidance which would apply to all new GCSEs in this subject.

We have reviewed the responses to the consultation and are now announcing our decisions. We are also publishing a more detailed analysis of the responses alongside this document.¹

Compliance with content requirements

We proposed that all reformed GCSEs in statistics should comply with the subject content requirements published by the Department for Education,² and with our assessment objectives.

All the respondents who commented on this proposal supported it. No respondents raised any concerns with this aspect of our proposals.

We have therefore decided to confirm our proposals in this area.

Assessment objective weightings

The weightings of the assessment objectives in GCSE statistics were outside the scope of this consultation,³ but two respondents raised concerns that the weighting of assessment objective AO3 was too high, and could lead to predictable assessments.

Although we would not normally reconsider the weighting of assessment objectives at this stage, the concerns raised were sufficiently serious (and supported by sufficient additional evidence) that we decided to look again at our earlier decision.

We have considered the additional evidence that respondents provided, as well the need to ensure a coherent approach across GCSE, AS and A level statistics. We

¹ www.gov.uk/government/consultations/gcse-reform-regulations-for-statistics

² www.gov.uk/government/publications/gcse-statistics

³ We took decisions on the weighting of the assessment objectives following our earlier consultation '[Developing new GCSEs, AS and A Levels for first teaching in 2017 - Part 2](#)'

have decided that we should reduce the weighting of AO3 in GCSE statistics, as the current weighting would create an unacceptable risk of assessment predictability.

Alongside this, we have made a number of changes to our guidance on assessment objectives to ensure we are as clear as possible about the distinction between AO2 and AO3.

Assessment objective tolerances

We proposed to introduce limited tolerances around the weightings of the assessment objectives, provided that (on average) the required weightings are met in each 4 year period.

Most respondents supported this proposed approach, but some commented that the requirement to meet prescribed weightings over a 4 year period was complex and would have different impacts each year.

Our view remains that – in line with other GCSE subjects where we have allowed such flexibility – exam boards should be required to meet the specified assessment objective weightings over a four-year period. This is to ensure that exam boards cannot consistently under- or over-reward one or more of the assessment objectives.

We have therefore decided to adopt our consultation proposals unchanged.

Tiering

Following our earlier decision⁴ that GCSEs in statistics should be tiered, we proposed to adopt the same broad approach to tiering as in the other tiered new GCSEs (maths, the sciences and modern foreign languages).

Respondents to the consultation supported our approach and we have decided to adopt it in full.

Guidance

We proposed to introduce guidance clarifying the interpretation of our assessment objectives.

Respondents supported introducing this guidance, but some also commented on the detailed wording.

⁴ www.gov.uk/government/consultations/developing-new-gcses-as-and-a-levels-for-first-teaching-in-2017

As noted above, we have made drafting changes to clarify the distinction between assessment objectives AO2 and AO3. We also made other minor drafting changes to address respondents' comments which are not covered by these larger changes.

Next steps

We have published the following documents which formally introduce our rules and guidance for GCSE statistics:

- *GCSE Subject Level Conditions for Statistics*⁵
- *GCSE Subject Level Guidance for Statistics*⁶

⁵ www.gov.uk/government/publications/gcse-9-to-1-subject-level-conditions-and-requirements-for-statistics

⁶ www.gov.uk/government/publications/gcse-9-to-1-subject-level-guidance-for-statistics