

Analysis of Responses to our Consultation on Conditions and Guidance for AS and A level Archaeology



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Executive summary

Our consultation about the Conditions and guidance for AS and A level archaeology took place between 5th February 2016 and 6th March 2016.

The consultation questions were available to either complete online or to download. A copy of the consultation is available at www.gov.uk/government/consultations/as-and-a-level-reform-regulations-for-archaeology.

There were five responses to the consultation. One of the responses received did not comment directly on our proposals, but instead provided general comments on the process for reform of GCSEs, AS and A levels. Two responses were received from individuals who were expressing their personal views. They agreed with all our proposals and did not make any specific comments. One response was received from a Director of Curriculum and teacher of archaeology who was responding on behalf of a Sixth Form College which agreed with our proposals. One of the responses was received from an awarding organisation.

The respondents broadly supported our proposals. However, they did raise some specific concerns in relation to some of our proposals. We set out the responses in more detail below.

Introduction

This report is a summary of the views expressed by those who responded to our consultation on the Conditions and guidance for AS and A level archaeology which took place between 5 February 2016 and 6 March 2016.

Background

New GCSE, AS and A level qualifications are being introduced in England. We have consulted on and announced our policy on the general design of these new qualifications. We have also set out our policy and technical arrangements for the subjects where first courses began in September 2015¹, and for the subjects which will be introduced for first teaching from September 2016².

Following an earlier consultation, we took decisions on the design of the reformed AS and A level qualifications in archaeology that are to be introduced for first teaching from September 2017³.

This consultation focused on the regulatory arrangements that we must put in place to make sure that awarding organisations design, deliver and award the new AS and A levels in archaeology in line with our policy decisions.

¹ New GCSEs in English language, English literature and mathematics, as well as new AS and A levels in art and design, biology, business, chemistry, computer science, economics, English language, English language and literature, English Literature, history, physics, psychology and sociology.

² New GCSEs in art and design, biology, chemistry, citizenship studies, classical Greek, combined science, computer science, dance, drama, food preparation and nutrition, French, geography, German, history, Latin, music, physical education, physics, religious studies and Spanish. New AS and A levels in classical Greek, dance, drama and theatre, French, geography, German, Latin, music, physical education, religious studies and Spanish.

³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/developing-new-gcse-as-and-a-levels-for-first-teaching-in-2017>

Who responded?

We received a total of five responses to our consultation.⁴ The responses were from organisations based in England or Wales.

Table 1: Breakdown of consultation responses

Personal / Organisation response	Respondent type	Number
Organisation response	Awarding Organisation	1
Organisation response	Professional Body	1
Organisation response	Sixth Form College	1
Personal response	Individual	1
Personal response	Individual	1

⁴ Where responses were received in hard copy we entered them into the online platform.

Approach to analysis

We published the consultation on our website. Respondents could choose to respond using an online form, by email or by posting their answers to the consultation questions to us. The consultation included 11 questions.

This was a consultation on the views of those who wished to participate and while we made every effort to ensure that as many respondents as possible had the opportunity to reply, it cannot be considered as a representative sample of the general public or of any specific group.

Data presentation

We present the responses to the consultation questions in the order in which they were asked.

The consultation asked 11 questions and each had a different focus. Respondents could choose to answer all or just some of the questions.

For some of the questions, respondents could indicate the extent to which they agreed with our proposals, using a 5-point scale (Strongly agree, Agree, Neither agree nor disagree, Disagree and Strongly disagree), as well as providing comments on our proposals.

During the analysis phase we reviewed every response to each question.

Views expressed – consultation response outcomes

In this section we report the views, in broad terms, of those who responded to the consultation document. We have structured this around the questions covered in the consultation document and provide analysis of the data broken down by stakeholder.

A consultation is not the same as a survey and the responses only reflect the views of those who chose to respond. Typically these will be those with strong views and/or particular experience or interest in a topic. What follows is a fair reflection of the views expressed by respondents to the consultation.

A list of the organisations that responded to the consultation is included in Appendix A.

Our approach to regulating AS and A level archaeology

Question 1: To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should introduce a Condition which requires exam boards to comply with the relevant subject content and assessment objectives?

All respondents strongly agreed with our proposal. One respondent commented that this was essential to ensure comparability between awarding organisations.

Question 2: To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should introduce guidance which clarifies how exam boards should interpret our assessment objectives?

All respondents strongly agreed with our proposal. One respondent commented that this was essential to ensure comparability between awarding organisations.

Question 3: To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should introduce a Condition which permits non-exam assessment, specifies the proportion of exam and non - exam assessment, and allows us to set more detailed rules and guidance on non-exam assessment?

All respondents strongly agreed with our proposal. One respondent commented that a condition which allows the setting of more detailed rules and guidance on non-exam assessment would ensure exam boards employ a consistent approach.

Question 4: To what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposed approach to allocating non-exam assessment marks to assessment objectives in AS and A level archaeology?

All respondents agreed with our proposal. One respondent commented that the approach to allocating non-exam assessment marks to assessment objectives, is appropriate to the demands of archaeological fieldwork.

Question 5: To what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposed approach to task setting in non-exam assessment for A level archaeology?

All respondents strongly agreed with our proposal. One respondent commented that our approach was appropriate for the subject, and will facilitate the setting of tasks which meet the detailed requirements specified in the subject content.

Question 6: To what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposed approach to authentication and marking of non-examination assessment for A level archaeology?

All respondents strongly agreed with our approach. One respondent commented that the proposed approach to authentication will ensure that appropriate arrangements are put in place to enable exam boards to authenticate students' work.

Our proposed Conditions and guidance

Question 7: Do you have comments on our proposed Conditions and requirements for AS and A level archaeology?

No specific comments were made in relation to this question.

Question 8: Do you have any comments on our proposed guidance for AS and A level archaeology?

One respondent commented on the way that 'archaeological themes, issues and contexts' had been grouped together within the elements of the assessment objectives.

The respondent stated that as a consequence of the way that they had been grouped, questions would always have to cover themes, issues and contexts. They stated that it is possible to assess themes, issues and contexts in isolation. The respondent requested that guidance should be introduced to make it clear that questions could cover themes, issues or contexts in isolation, as long as an appropriate balance between the three was maintained, and the approach justified in an exam board's assessment strategy.

In addition, the respondent raised the point that the term 'issues' is referred to in the DfE's A level subject content only, and that it should be removed from the AS assessment objectives.

Equality Impact Assessment

Question 9: We have not identified any ways in which our proposals would impact (positively or negatively) on persons who share a protected characteristic. Are there any potential impacts we have not identified?

All respondents answered no to this question.

Question 10: Are there any additional steps we could take to mitigate any negative impact resulting from these proposal on persons who share a protected characteristic?

All respondents answered no to this question.

Question 11: Do you have any other comments on the impacts of the proposals on students who share a protected characteristic?

All respondents answered no to this question.

Appendix A: List of organisational consultation respondents

When completing the questionnaire, respondents were asked to indicate whether they were responding as an individual or on behalf of an organisation.

Below we list those organisations that submitted a response to the consultation. We have not included a list of those responding as an individual. However, all responses were given equal status in the analysis.

AQA

Association of School and College Leaders

Worcester Sixth Form College

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