AS and A level Ancient Languages: Decisions on Conditions and Guidance

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In February 2015 we published a consultation about the rules and guidance we proposed to put in place for reformed AS and A level qualifications in ancient languages.

This consultation set out draft Subject Level Conditions and guidance that would apply to all reformed AS and A level qualifications in classical Greek and Latin.

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]

Conditions and requirements for AS and A level ancient languages

Content requirements

We proposed that all reformed AS and A level qualifications in classical Greek and Latin should comply with the subject content requirements published by the Department for Education,[2] and with our assessment objectives.

Most respondents did not comment directly on this proposal. Those who did supported our proposed approach.

This is the same approach we have taken for all other reformed AS and A level qualifications, and we see no reason to take a different approach here. We have therefore decided to confirm our consultation proposals.

Assessment requirements

We proposed to introduce a Condition and requirement setting out the approach that exam boards should take to vocabulary lists in AS and A level ancient languages. We

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[1] www.gov.uk/government/consultations/as-and-a-level-reform-regulations-for-ancient-languages

[2] www.gov.uk/government/publications/gce-as-and-a-level-ancient-languages

proposed that vocabulary lists should be permitted, as long as they do not make assessments predictable.

Again, most respondents did not comment directly on this proposal. One teacher welcomed the scope for exam boards to publish vocabulary lists, commenting that they act as a useful aid to teaching and learning.

We have decided to confirm our consultation proposals, with one minor change to clarify that any vocabulary list must be included in the specification for the qualification.

Guidance for AS and A level ancient languages

Guidance on subject content

We proposed to introduce guidance that clarified the amount of translation that should be offered to students as part of the option to translate from English into the ancient language.

Respondents were unclear how this guidance sat alongside the content requirements in this area.

In response to this feedback, we have looked again at our proposed guidance. We have decided that we do not need to supplement the requirements in the subject content with further guidance. We have therefore chosen to withdraw this proposed guidance.

Guidance on assessment objectives

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

Respondents welcomed our proposed guidance, and the clarity it provided. We have therefore decided to confirm our proposals.

Other issues

Some respondents reiterated concerns they had raised in response to earlier consultations[3] around the decoupling of AS and A level, and its possible impact on the teaching of ancient languages in non-selective schools.

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[3] http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20141110161323/http://comment.ofqual.gov.uk/a-level-regulatory-requirements-october-2013 and www.gov.uk/government/consultations/gcses-as-and-a-levels-reform-of-subjects-for-september-2016

We have already considered this issue in response to our earlier consultations. The responses to this consultation have not raised any new issues that cause us to revisit this earlier decision.

Next steps

Alongside this document, we have published final Subject Level Conditions[4] and Subject Level Guidance[5] for AS and A level ancient languages.

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[4] www.gov.uk/government/publications/gce-subject-level-conditions-and-requirements-for-ancient-languages

[5] www.gov.uk/government/publications/gce-subject-level-guidance-for-ancient-languages