

Analysis of Responses to our Consultation on Conditions and Guidance for GCSE Food Preparation and Nutrition



August 2015

Ofqual/15/5763

Contents

Executive summary	2
1. Introduction	3
Background	3
2. Who responded?.....	4
3. Approach to analysis.....	5
Data presentation	5
4. Views expressed – consultation response outcomes.....	6
Other issues	11
Appendix A: List of organisational consultation respondents.....	13

Executive summary

Our consultation about the Conditions and guidance for GCSE food preparation and nutrition took place between 26th March 2015 and 24th April 2015.

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/gcse-reform-regulations-for-food-preparation-and-nutrition.

There were 188 responses to the consultation – 148 from individuals and 40 from organisations. All responses were in a form that matched or broadly followed the layout of the online consultation.

Responses focused on two main aspects of our proposals:

- the release date for non-exam assessment tasks, which respondents felt was too late in the course; and
- the length of the non-exam assessment task testing cooking skills, which respondents felt was excessive for a GCSE qualification.

A number of respondents also commented on issues outside the scope of the consultation, including the title of the new GCSE, the subject content, and the weighting of exams and non-exam assessment.

1. Introduction

This report is a summary of the views expressed by those who responded to our consultation on the Conditions and guidance for GCSE food preparation and nutrition which took place between 26th March 2015 and 24th April 2015.

Background

Reformed GCSEs are being introduced in England. The primary purpose of the new qualifications will be to provide evidence of students' achievements against demanding and fulfilling content and a strong foundation for further academic and vocational study and employment. If required, the qualifications should be able to provide a basis for schools and colleges to be held accountable for the performance of all of their students.

Following earlier consultations, we have already taken decisions on:

- the general design of reformed GCSEs;
- our policy and technical arrangements relating to those subjects that will be taught from September 2015;¹ and
- the design of the reformed GCSEs in food preparation and nutrition that are to be introduced for first teaching in 2016.²

This consultation focused on more technical matters – that is, on the regulatory arrangements that we must put in place to make sure that exam boards design, deliver and award the new GCSEs in food preparation and nutrition in line with our policy decisions.

¹ Reformed GCSEs in English language, English literature and mathematics will be taught from September 2015.

² www.gov.uk/government/consultations/gcses-as-and-a-levels-new-subjects-to-be-taught-in-2016

2. Who responded?

We received a total of 188 responses to our consultation.³ One hundred and forty-eight were from individuals and 40 were from organisations. There was one response from an individual from a non-EU country. All the remaining responses were from individuals or organisations based in England or Wales.

Table 1: Breakdown of consultation responses

Personal / Organisation response	Respondent type	Number
Personal	Teacher	142
Personal	Educational specialist	5
Personal	Parent or carer	1
Organisation	School or college	34
Organisation	Exam board	3
Organisation	Other representative or interest group	2
Organisation	Union	1

³ Where responses were received in hard copy we entered them into the online platform.

3. 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 eight questions.

This was a consultation on the views of those who wished to participate and while we tried 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 eight questions and each had a different focus. Respondents could choose to answer all or just some of the questions.

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

4. 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.

Question 1 – Do you have any comments on the draft Conditions for new food preparation and nutrition GCSEs?
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Our draft Conditions stated that exam boards must:

- comply with the Department for Education’s subject content requirements for new GCSEs in food preparation and nutrition,⁴ and with our published assessment objectives;
- allocate 50 per cent of total marks to non-exam assessment, with the remaining 50 per cent of marks allocated to exams; and
- comply with any rules and guidance we put in place around non-exam assessment (we asked a separate question about our proposed rules).

Eighty-four respondents (67 individuals, 17 organisations) did not answer this question.

Ten respondents (seven individuals, three organisations) expressed general support for our proposals.

The remaining respondents did not comment directly on our proposed Conditions. We have analysed comments on our proposed assessment rules under question 2, and all other comments under ‘Other issues’ below.

⁴ www.gov.uk/government/publications/gcse-food-preparation-and-nutrition

Question 2 – Do you have any comments on our draft requirements and guidance for assessments in new food preparation and nutrition GCSEs?

This question referred to our draft assessment rules, which specified the nature, structure and conduct of non-exam assessment for new food preparation and nutrition GCSEs.

Fifty-three respondents (43 individuals, ten organisations) did not answer this question.

Fifty respondents (34 individuals, 16 organisations) expressed concerns that the release dates for non-exam assessment tasks were too late in the course, noting that this could cause manageability problems for schools.

Seventy-one (53 individuals, 18 organisations) commented that a single 4-hour assessment of cooking skills was too long. Respondents commented that this would place too much pressure on students and could be difficult and costly for schools – particularly schools with limited resources – to organise.

Nine (five individuals, four organisations) expressed concerns that the length of report suggested for the Food Investigation Assessment was too long and would be too demanding for GCSE students.

Question 3 – Do you have any comments on our proposed change to the assessment objectives for new food preparation and nutrition GCSEs?

We proposed to make a minor change to the wording of three of the assessment objectives, replacing “food, cooking and nutrition” with “nutrition, food, cooking and preparation”. This would ensure that our assessment objectives matched the wording used in the subject content requirements.

One hundred and twenty respondents (98 individuals, 22 organisations) did not answer this question. One further organisation commented that it did not understand the question.

Eleven respondents (six individuals, five organisations) expressed support for our proposed change. One further organisation suggested alternative wording.

The remaining respondents did not comment directly on our proposed change. We have analysed comments on our proposed assessment rules under question 2, and all other comments under ‘Other issues’ below.

Question 4 – Do you have any comments on our proposed approach to limiting the amount of recall rewarded by new food preparation and nutrition GCSEs?

One hundred and forty-one respondents (111 individuals, 30 organisations) did not answer this question. A further seven respondents (six individuals, one organisation) commented that they did not understand the question.

Twenty-one respondents (18 individuals, three organisations) expressed support for our proposal.

Nine (seven individuals, two organisations) expressed concerns that our proposals could disadvantage lower-ability students.

Eight (four individuals, four organisations) commented that application of knowledge necessarily required recall.

Seven (six individuals, one organisation) commented that a mix of questions would be needed – some targeting recall of knowledge and others targeting application of knowledge.

One (an individual) suggested that exams should not include too many essay-style questions.

One (an individual) commented that exams should focus more on recall because the non-exam assessment tested application of knowledge.

Question 5 – Do you have any comments on the draft Guidance on assessment objectives for reformed GCSEs in food preparation and nutrition?

This question referred to the draft guidance on assessment objectives which outlines how we expect exam boards to interpret the assessment objectives in terms of discrete 'elements' within each assessment objective, coverage expectations and key areas of emphasis in each assessment objective.

One hundred and seventy-seven respondents (141 individuals, 36 organisations) did not comment on our proposed guidance.

Ten respondents (seven individuals, three organisations) expressed support for our proposals.

One (an organisation) suggested that there needed to be more emphasis on nutrition in AO1 and that AO3 should include food safety and hygiene.

Question 6 – We have not identified any ways in which the proposed requirements for new food preparation and nutrition GCSEs would impact (positively or negatively) on persons who share a protected characteristic.⁵ Are there any potential impacts we have not identified?

One hundred and thirty-seven respondents (106 individuals, 31 organisations) did not comment on this question.

Nineteen respondents (17 individuals, two organisations) commented that students with certain disabilities would struggle to complete a 4-hour practical assessment, and that this could be compounded if they are normally allowed extra time for assessments.

Nine (eight individuals, one organisation) were concerned that the qualification focused too much on scientific theory and written assessment, and that this could disadvantage low-achieving students or those with learning disabilities.

Eight (five individuals, three organisations) commented that the cost of ingredients could be a barrier for students from low-income families.

Seven (four individuals, three organisations) commented that tasks and assessments needed to be designed to ensure that they were accessible to as wide a range of students as possible, and capable of being adapted to suit students' needs. Some suggested specific adjustments.

Six (five individuals, one organisation) commented that some of the practical skills might not be accessible to all students, including those who – for religious or ethical reasons – could not handle certain food products.

Six (five individuals, one organisation) suggested that clear guidance was needed around the support that schools could provide to students with physical and other disabilities in assessments.

Two (both individuals) suggested that the timing of non-exam assessment could cause particular difficulties for some disabled students.

Two (both individuals) suggested that requiring students to prepare a “3 course meal”⁶ might disadvantage students from certain ethnic groups where the concept of a “3 course meal” is not familiar.

⁵ ‘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.

⁶ To clarify, our proposals did not include a requirement for students to produce a “3 course meal” but rather a “menu of 3 dishes”.

Two (both individuals) commented that our proposals would have a significant impact on students with learning disabilities, but did not explain what that impact would be.

Question 7 – Are there any additional steps we could take to mitigate any negative impact resulting from these proposals on persons who share a protected characteristic?

One hundred and forty-six respondents (113 individuals, 33 organisations) did not comment on this question.

Thirteen respondents (eight individuals, five organisations) suggested changes to the length and/or structure of the Food Preparation Assessment, such as a shorter overall assessment time, allowing the assessment to be split across multiple sessions, or requiring students to prepare fewer dishes.

Nine (seven individuals, two organisations) suggested that there should be clear arrangements for funding the cost of ingredients and equipment to avoid disadvantaging students from lower-income families.

Five (all individuals) suggested that there should be optional routes through the qualification (perhaps focusing on specific skills), or that tasks should be broad enough to allow for a range of different approaches.

Five (four individuals, one organisation) suggested that there needed to be clear guidance on assistance for disabled students.

Four (three individuals, one organisation) suggested more extensive consultation with, or training for, teachers.

Two (both individuals) suggested changing the release dates for the non-exam assessment tasks.

One (an individual) suggested making exams accessible to the less able.

One (an individual) suggested a separate grade for practical skills.

One (an individual) suggested that we should allow different approaches to evidencing students' planning (such as blogs, videos).

Question 8 – Have you any other comments on the impacts of the proposals on persons who share a protected characteristic?

One hundred and seventy-eight respondents (139 individuals, 39 organisations) did not comment on this question.

Three respondents (all individuals) expressed concerns that the new GCSE would be too difficult for students who are less academically adept. One noted that this group typically included a higher proportion of students with protected characteristics, and one expressed particular concern about the length of the written report for the non-exam assessment.

Three (all individuals) commented on the way that the assessments should be delivered, with one recommending schools be given freedom to adapt assessments to their students' needs, one commenting that early controlled assessments should be avoided, and one suggesting that more guidance was needed on group sizes.

Two (both individuals) commented that there be proper provision for special diets and a focus on multiculturalism.

Two (both individuals) commented that the cost implications of the proposals could disadvantage some groups of students or schools.

One (an organisation) commented that teachers needed support and guidance (including exemplar work and mark schemes) well before the course is first taught.

Other issues

Respondents also commented on a number of issues that were outside the scope of the consultation, including:

- the name of the new GCSE – which a number of respondents felt could discourage take-up of the subject;
- the subject content requirements – including the range of cooking skills that students needed to learn;
- the relative weighting of exams and non-exam assessment, and the inclusion of food science in non-exam assessment – respondents felt that a higher weighting of non-exam assessment and a greater focus on cooking skills would be more appropriate for this subject; and
- the balance between the assessment objectives – again, respondents felt that there should be a greater focus on cooking skills.

The name of the GCSE course and the subject content requirements are matters for the Department for Education, which has carried out its own consultation.⁷

We have already considered the concerns raised about the weighting of exams and non-exam assessment, and the balance between assessment objectives in response to our earlier consultation.⁸ None of the responses to this consultation raised new issues, and our view remains that the assessment arrangements – and the weighting of the different assessment objectives – reflect the balance between theoretical and practical aspects of the subject content.

⁷ www.gov.uk/government/consultations/gcse-and-a-level-reform--2

⁸ www.gov.uk/government/consultations/gcses-as-and-a-levels-new-subjects-to-be-taught-in-2016

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.

Alderbrook School, West Midlands

AQA

ASCL

Beauchamp College, Leicester

Blatchington Mill School, Hove

Brighton and Hove High School

Cartmel Priory C of E School, Cumbria

Charles Dickens School, Kent

Chilled Food Association

Duchess's Community High School, Northumberland

Duchess's High, Alnwick

Hamilton Lodge School, Brighton

Highclare School, Birmingham

Hitchin Girls' School, Hertfordshire

Huddersfield Grammar School

Huntington School, York

Institute of Food Science and Technology

Lutterworth High School, Leicestershire

Maidstone Grammar School for Girls, Kent

North Durham Academy

OCR

Park Community School, Barnstaple

Penglais School, Ceredigion

Pipers Corner School, Buckinghamshire

Rosebery School, Surrey

Sacred Heart of Mary Girls' School, Greater London

Sharnbrook Upper School, Bedfordshire

St Edward's School, Gloucestershire

St Michael's Catholic High School, Hertfordshire

St Thomas à Becket School, Wakefield

St Wilfrid's School, Exeter

Staindrop Academy, Darlington

Stalham High School, Norfolk

Tapton Academy Trust, Sheffield

The British Nutrition Foundation

The Lady Eleanor Holles School, Middlesex

Top Valley Academy, Nottingham

Upton Court Grammar School, Berkshire

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