



Department
for Education

GCSE design and technology draft content

Government consultation

Launch date 1 July 2015

Respond by 26 August 2015

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Introduction

This consultation seeks views on proposed subject content for GCSE design and technology (D&T) which will be introduced for first teaching from September 2017.

Who this is for

- schools
- colleges
- organisations representing school teachers and lecturers
- subject associations
- parents
- young people
- higher education
- further education
- academies
- employers/business sector
- local authorities
- teachers
- awarding organisations

Issue date

The consultation was issued on 1 July 2015.

Respond online

You should respond to the consultation by visiting:

www.education.gov.uk/consultations

If for exceptional reasons you are unable to use the online system, for example because you use specialist accessibility software that is not compatible with the system, you may download a word document version of the form and email it or post it.

By email

- GCSEDesignTech.CONSULTATION@education.gsi.gov.uk

By post

Alex Smith
Department for Education
Sanctuary Buildings

Great Smith Street
London SW1P 3BT

Deadline

The consultation closes on 26 August 2015.

Enquiries

If your enquiry is related to the policy content of the consultation you can contact the team on:

- 020 7340 7232 and ask for Alexandra Smith

or email:

- GCSEDesignTech.CONULTATION@education.gsi.gov.uk

If your enquiry is related to the DfE e-consultation website or the consultation process in general, you can contact the DfE Ministerial and Public Communications Division by email: consultation.unit@education.gsi.gov.uk or by telephone: 0370 000 2288 or via the [DfE Contact us page](#).

Additional copies

Additional copies are available electronically and can be downloaded from [GOV.UK DfE consultations](#).

The response

The results of the consultation and the Department's response will be [published on GOV.UK](#) in Autumn 2015.

About this consultation

This consultation seeks views on proposed subject content for GCSE design and technology which will be introduced for first teaching from September 2017.

The proposed subject content requirements will become regulatory documents that set out the minimum knowledge, understanding and skills needed for GCSE design and technology. They provide the framework for awarding organisations to create the detail of qualification specifications.

Whilst responsibility for specifying the subject content of GCSEs and A levels lies with the Department for Education (DfE), responsibility for determining the assessment arrangements lies with Ofqual, the independent regulator. Ofqual is therefore consulting in parallel on assessment arrangements for this subject, including the assessment objectives. In order to understand how students will be expected to engage with this subject it is important to consider both the content and the assessment objectives. The Ofqual consultation can be found [here](#)

Background

GCSE and A level reform

The government is reforming GCSEs and A levels to ensure that they prepare students better for further and higher education, and for employment. GCSEs are being reformed so that they set expectations which match those of the highest performing countries, with rigorous assessment that provides a reliable measure of students' achievement. The new A levels will be linear qualifications that ensure that students develop the skills and knowledge needed for progression to undergraduate study. Reforms to these qualifications are already underway. [GCSE subject content](#) in English literature, English language and mathematics was published in November 2013 and will be taught from September 2015. [GCSE subject content](#) in art and design, ancient languages, modern foreign languages, science, citizenship studies, computer science, cooking and nutrition, dance, drama, geography, history, music, physical education and religious studies has been published and will be taught from September 2016.

At AS and A level, [subject content](#) in art and design, biology, business, chemistry, computer science, economics, English language, English literature, English language and literature, history, physics, psychology and sociology has been published and will be taught from September 2015. AS and A level [subject content](#) in ancient languages, dance, drama and theatre, geography, modern foreign languages, music, physical education and religious studies has been published and will be taught from September 2016. Mathematics and further mathematics subject content has been published and will be taught from 2017.

Content for a further phase of reformed GCSEs and A levels, to be first taught from 2017, will be consulted upon shortly.

Design and technology

A first draft of content for the new GCSE in design and technology was consulted on in Autumn 2014. In the draft, the subject had moved on significantly from its craft-based roots into a cutting edge qualification focused upon both design and making.

Furthermore, rather than several titles as there are currently, it set out the content for a single GCSE in D&T. Feedback from the consultation showed many positive reactions to the creation of a single title and the way in which the content had changed to reflect better the process of designing. Given the degree of change, the DfE concluded that it would be helpful to move its implementation to 2017 to allow more time to work with experts and teachers to finalise the content, and as much time as possible for teachers to prepare their approach.

Since that time the Department for Education has continued to work closely with the Design and Technology Association, the Dyson Foundation, the Royal Academy of Engineering and other important stakeholders to help our expert drafters finalise the subject content. We have also worked closely with Ofqual and awarding organisations. We have ensured that the content is sufficiently robust and challenging and that Ofqual will be able to regulate qualifications against it.

Proposed changes to GCSE design and technology

Current design and technology GCSEs have a wide range of titles each of which is focused on separate material areas (such as resistant materials, textiles or graphics). The new content will support a single qualification title, a change which subject experts felt is critical to development of a qualification that requires students to have a broad knowledge of the design processes, materials, techniques and equipment that are core to the subject. The new qualification will allow both breadth and depth of knowledge, without limiting students on the materials they can work with. It will enable them to make choices appropriate to their design. The material specific knowledge and skills of teachers will remain critical to students' knowledge and maintaining the breadth of expertise within a D&T department will continue to be important. The new qualification builds naturally on what has already been introduced through the National Curriculum D&T programmes of study that have been implemented in schools from September 2014.

The content emphasises iterative processes of designing which all students should understand and be able to demonstrate. Subject experts have advised that such processes of designing are at the core of contemporary practice. By teaching students this knowledge, the new qualification will prepare them for further study and careers in design, engineering, manufacturing and related areas.

The content sets out, in detail, the mathematical and scientific content that students must know and use that relate closely to design and technology. This includes, for example, number, geometry and measure, materials, energy, moments and forces, and electricity and electromagnetism.

Together these changes aim to ensure that all students have the knowledge and skills to design and make products or prototypes, using the best material, equipment and techniques, to solve real world and relevant problems across a range of contexts.

We recognise that these changes, combined, constitute a significant reform of previous specifications. We also recognise that this may concern some teachers, many of whom will have a great deal of experience in the subject. We have worked closely with awarding organisations and the Design and Technology Association to understand the implications of the reforms. Certainly, as for all reformed GCSEs, there will be content which is new for many teachers and design and technology departments will need to plan ahead to equip themselves with new knowledge, understanding and skills. Awarding organisations and the D&T Association will be working to provide support to schools preparing for the introduction of the new qualification.

This new expertise will however, complement, rather than replace, the existing expertise that design and technology teachers already have. It will provide the context for enabling students to approach their work in new and interesting ways – drawing upon a broader understanding of design principles and materials and encouraging them to be more creative and innovative as a result. Within that context, students will still need to develop an in-depth understanding of particular materials, tools and techniques.

The full subject content can be downloaded from the consultation page on GOV.UK. We would be grateful for the views of anyone with an interest in the design and technology GCSE.

Consultation questions

1. Is the revised GCSE content in design and technology appropriate? Please consider:
 - whether there is a suitable level of challenge
 - whether the content reflects what students need to know in order to progress to further academic and vocational education
 - whether the amount of content in the qualification is appropriate and, if not, whether you have any suggestions for removing or adding content

Please provide evidence to support your response.

Equalities Impact

In accordance with the Equality Act 2010, public bodies must have “due regard”, when making decisions, to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation; advance equality of opportunity; and foster good relations, in relation to relevant protected characteristics. It would therefore be very helpful to understand if, in your view, there is any potential for the subject content to have a disproportionate impact upon any student with relevant protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010. It would be particularly helpful to understand if any respondents have evidence to support concerns they may have about such impacts.

2. Do you think that the proposal has the potential to have a disproportionate impact, positive or negative, on specific students, in particular those with 'relevant protected characteristics'? (The relevant protected characteristics are disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.) Please provide evidence to support your response.
3. How could any adverse impact be reduced and how could the subject content of the GCSE be altered to better advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who do not share it? Please provide evidence to support your response.



Department
for Education

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