

## **Confirmed assessment arrangements for reformed GCSE, AS and A level qualifications for first teaching in 2017**

### **GCSEs**

Physical education (short course)

### **AS and A levels**

Geology

Politics



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## **Confirmed assessment arrangements for reformed GCSE, AS and A level qualifications for first teaching in 2017**

From 3 November 2015 to 4 January 2016, we consulted on proposed assessment arrangements for GCSE physical education (short course) and AS and A levels geology and politics. The Department for Education (DfE) consulted on the content for each subject in parallel with our consultations on assessment arrangements.

We set out the decisions we have taken on assessment arrangements for these subjects. The DfE also confirmed the content requirements, which they published on their website<sup>1</sup>. Our decisions were made in relation to this final content.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/gcse-and-a-level-reform-geology-and-politics-pe-short-course>

## **Assessment arrangements**

When deciding on assessment arrangements for these subjects, we considered responses to our consultation and potential impacts of our decisions, in terms of regulatory burden and in relation to protected characteristics. Alongside this document, we publish an evaluation of responses to our consultation together with our assessments of potential impacts of our decisions<sup>2</sup>.

We have already made qualification level decisions about the purpose and the design of reformed GCSEs, AS and A levels. Information on the changes we are making to these qualifications is found on our website.

## **Tiering**

We previously confirmed that new GCSEs should only be tiered where a single set of assessments cannot assess students across the full ability range in a valid and manageable way. Accordingly, in line with our consultation proposals, we decided that GCSE physical education (short course) should not be tiered. In line with current practice, all reformed AS and A levels will be untiered.

## **Balance of exam and non-exam assessment**

To determine how new GCSEs, AS and A levels should be assessed we will apply a common set of principles to each subject. Where subject content can be validly assessed by exams, set and marked by exam boards, this should be the default method of assessment. Where other forms of assessment are necessary to assess essential subject skills or knowledge, the non-exam assessment must:

1. strike a balance between valid assessment of essential knowledge and skills, sound assessment practice and manageability;
2. be designed to fit the requirements of the particular subject, including relative weighting of exams and other components assigned to it;
3. be designed so qualification is not easily distorted by external pressures from the wider system.

If we determine a subject should include a proportion of non-exam assessment, that proportion will apply to all qualifications offered by exam boards in that subject. We applied these principles to the updated content requirements and considered the responses to our consultation. Our decisions on the balance of exam and non-exam assessment for the subjects on which we consulted are summarised in Table 1. Our

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<sup>2</sup> All documents available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/developing-geology-politics-and-pe-short-course-for-2017-teaching>

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final decisions are the same as our proposals at consultation. Our reasoning is set out below.

**Table 1** – Overview of our decisions on the proportion of non-exam assessment

Subject	GCSE		A level		AS	
	Legacy weighting of non-exam assessment	New weighting of non-exam assessment	Legacy weighting of non-exam assessment	New weighting of non-exam assessment	Legacy weighting of non-exam assessment	New weighting of non-exam assessment
<b>PE short course</b>	60%	40%				
<b>Geology</b>			20-30%	0% (but with separately reported assessment of practical skills)	20-30%	0%
<b>Politics</b>			0%	0%	0%	0%

For physical education and politics, most respondents agreed with our proposals on non-exam assessment. In these subjects, respondents who did not favour our proposals, generally asking for a higher percentage of non-exam assessment, tended to argue this would be appropriate because of the practical nature of the subject, and the benefits of non-exam assessments for some students. We were not persuaded that the weightings of exam and non-exam assessment we proposed would not lead to valid assessment.

For A level geology we consulted on both the weighting of non-exam assessment and whether there should be separate assessment and reporting of practical skills at A level, in a similar way to other A level science qualifications. The small number of respondents to the consultation were evenly split on both whether the weighting of non-exam assessment and the separate assessment and reporting of practical skills we proposed were suitable for this subject. Having considered the consultation responses, we continue to judge our proposals to be appropriate. We do not believe the subject content provides a basis for a different approach. We will outline further details on the operation of practical assessments in geology in our consultation on our detailed regulations in this subject shortly.

Our regulations require awarding organisations to design and deliver effective assessments. As with all of the reforms to GCSE, AS and A levels, we will keep awarding organisations' development of assessments under review, both as we accredit their qualifications and throughout its lifetime.

## **Assessment Objectives**

The majority of respondents were broadly supportive of our proposed assessment objectives and their relative weightings. We also received helpful suggestions to improve the clarity of our requirements in each subject. After considering the responses to our consultation, and reviewing the changes the DfE made to the content requirements following their consultation, we finalised the assessment objectives for the subjects on which we consulted. The final versions are set out at the end of this document.

The assessment objectives we consulted on were aligned with the proposed subject content. Where there were changes to the subject content following consultation, we reviewed the assessment objectives and amended them where necessary. We also made a number of changes to clarify and sharpen their focus. For consistency with other reformed AS and A level subjects, we added small ranges for the weightings of the assessment objectives where they were not present in the consultation version.

In AS and A level politics we made more significant changes to AO2 and AO3. The abilities set out in the new assessment objectives, when considered in combination, are largely the same as we consulted on, but they are more clearly expressed and grouped very differently. We also presented them in the order in which they are most likely to be demonstrated.

## Assessment arrangements for GCSE physical education (short course)

### Tiering

Assessment will not be tiered in this subject

### Non-exam assessment

40% of the marks in this subject will be allocated to non-exam assessment

### Assessment objectives

	Assessment objective	Weighting
<b>AO1</b>	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the factors that underpin performance and involvement in physical activity and sport.	25%
<b>AO2</b>	Apply knowledge and understanding of the factors that underpin performance and involvement in physical activity and sport.	20%
<b>AO3</b>	Analyse and evaluate the factors that underpin performance and involvement in physical activity and sport.	15%
<b>AO4</b>	Demonstrate and apply relevant skills and techniques in physical activity and sport.	40%

## Assessment arrangements for AS and A level Geology

### Tiering

Assessment will not be tiered in this subject

### Non-exam assessment

There will be no marks for non-exam assessment in this subject that contribute to the lettered grade. There will be a separate assessment of student's practical skills, the outcome of which will be separately reported on the qualification certificate, alongside the lettered grade. We will consult separately on the detail of this.

### Assessment objectives

	Assessment objective	Weighting	
		A level	AS
<b>AO1</b>	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of geological ideas, skills and techniques.	30-35%	35-40%
<b>AO2</b>	Apply knowledge and understanding of geological ideas, skills and techniques.	40-45%	40-45%
<b>AO3</b>	Analyse, interpret and evaluate geological ideas, information and evidence to make judgements, draw conclusions, and develop and refine practical design and procedures.	25-30%	20-25%



## Assessment arrangements for AS and A level Politics

### Tiering

Assessment will not be tiered in this subject

### Non-exam assessment

There will be no non-exam assessment in this subject

### Assessment objectives

	Assessment objective	Weighting	
		A level	AS
<b>AO1</b>	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of political institutions, processes, concepts, theories and issues.	30-40%	40-50%
<b>AO2</b>	Analyse aspects of politics and political information, including in relation to parallels, connections, similarities and differences.	35-45%	30-40%
<b>AO3</b>	Evaluate aspects of politics and political information, including to construct arguments, make substantiated judgements and draw conclusions.	25-35%	20-30%

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