

**Analysis of Responses to our  
Consultation on Conditions and  
Guidance for AS and A level Music  
Technology**



March 2016

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## **Executive Summary**

Our consultation about the Conditions and guidance for AS and A level music technology took place between 17th December 2015 and 20th January 2016. The consultation questions were available to complete online or to download. A copy of the consultation is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/as-and-a-level-reform-regulations-for-music-technology>

There were nine responses to the consultation. Two of these were from organisations and seven were personal responses. One respondent, who was an organisation, did not comment directly on our proposals, but instead provided general comments on the process for reform of GCSEs, AS and A levels.

Respondents largely supported our proposals, but did raise some concerns in relation to our proposed controls for non-exam assessment. Specifically, concerns were raised about:

- the proposed minimum duration for the composition component of the non-exam assessment – those who responded recommended a shorter minimum duration than we had proposed; and
- the proposed release date for the brief for the recording non-exam assessment – those who responded recommended an earlier release date than the one we proposed.

We set out the responses in more detail below.

## **1. Introduction**

### **The consultation on the Conditions and guidance for AS and A level music technology**

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 music technology which took place between 17th December 2015 and 20th January 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 2015,<sup>1</sup> and for the subjects which will be introduced for first teaching from September 2016.<sup>2</sup>

Following an earlier consultation, we took decisions on the design of the reformed AS and A level qualifications in music technology that are to be introduced for first teaching from September 2017.<sup>3</sup>

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 music technology in line with our policy decisions.

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> 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.

<sup>3</sup> [www.gov.uk/government/consultations/development-of-new-gcse-and-a-levels-for-teaching-from-2017](http://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/development-of-new-gcse-and-a-levels-for-teaching-from-2017)

## **2. Who responded?**

We received a total of nine responses to our consultation. Eight of these were from individuals or organisations based in England. One was from an individual based outside of the EU.

**Table 1: Breakdown of consultation responses**

<b>Personal / organisation response</b>	<b>Respondent type</b>	<b>Number</b>
Personal response	Teacher	5
Personal response	Educational specialist	1
Personal response	Other	1
Organisation response	Awarding organisation	1
Organisation response	Union	1

### **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 14 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 any specific group.

#### **Data presentation**

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

The consultation asked 14 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 free-form narrative comments on our proposals.

For these questions, we set out respondents' views using the 5-point scale. Where respondents provided further comments, we present these separately.

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.

As noted above, one respondent chose not to answer our questions directly, and instead submitted more general comments. We set these out under 'Other issues' below.

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 music technology**

**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 eight respondents (one organisation, seven individuals) that answered this question either agreed or strongly agreed with our proposal.

They commented that it is important that qualifications are comparable across exam boards.

**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?**

Five respondents (one organisation, four individuals) strongly agreed and two (both individuals) agreed with our proposals. One individual neither agreed nor disagreed.

Four respondents (individuals) provided additional comments. They commented that the guidance was important to ensure qualifications are comparable across exam boards. One respondent also commented that it would be important to ensure that the guidance was not too prescriptive.

**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?**

Five respondents (one organisation, four individuals) strongly agreed with our proposals. The reasons given were that non-exam assessment is vital for assessing recording and composition skills.

Two respondents (individuals) neither agreed nor disagreed with our proposals.

One individual commented that whilst they agreed that the proportion of non-exam assessment should be set, they did not agree with the amount. The proportion of non-exam assessment was outside of the scope of this consultation.

**Question 4: To what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposal that there should be two non-exam assessment tasks in AS and A level music technology, both weighted at 20 per cent of total marks – a recording task which assesses only AO1, and a composition task which assesses only AO2?**

Four respondents (one organisation, three individuals) strongly agreed with this proposal. They commented that this covers both the recording and sequencing aspects of music technology and that it is appropriate for them to be weighted equally.

Two respondents (both individuals) neither agreed nor disagreed with our proposals. One of these respondents commented that whilst they felt our proposal was appropriate, it would also be possible to assess recording and composition skills through more than one task.

Two respondents (both individuals) strongly disagreed with our proposals. Both provided comments on the overall proportion of non-exam assessment, preferring that more than 40 per cent of the qualification was allocated to non-exam assessment. The proportion of non-exam assessment was outside of the scope of this consultation.

**Question 5: To what extent do you agree or disagree with our minimum restrictions on the length and complexity of non-exam assessment tasks in AS and A level music technology?**

Two respondents (both individuals) strongly agreed with our proposals and one respondent (an individual) agreed. These respondents provided additional comments that it was important for the assessment to be practical and realistic for students and assessors.



One respondent (an individual) neither agreed nor disagreed with our proposals. They provided additional comments that whilst they agreed with our proposal to set a minimum duration for these tasks, the minimum we proposed was too long.

One respondent (an individual) strongly disagreed with our proposal and three respondents (one organisation, two individuals) disagreed. All of these respondents provided additional comments.

- One respondent (an organisation) was concerned that the minimum durations being proposed for the composition assessment focussed too much on the length rather than the complexity of the composition. It proposed minimum durations instead of two and a half minutes at AS level and three minutes at A level. Another individual also proposed alternative minimum durations of two minutes at AS level and three minutes at A level.
- One respondent (an individual) commented that a longer minimum duration could lead to repetition in compositions in order to meet the minimum requirement, which would not provide any educational or assessment advantage. They also commented that a longer minimum duration may be too challenging for some students.
- One respondent (an individual) was concerned that setting minimum requirements for the complexity of the recording assessment could be difficult to assess accurately.
- One respondent (an individual) commented that the proposed guidance on the number of instrumental parts to be recorded should be more prescriptive and should set out the type of instrument, recognising that some instruments can be harder to record than others.

**Question 6: To what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposed approach to setting non-exam assessment tasks in AS and A level music technology?**

Two respondents (one individual, one organisation) strongly agreed with our proposals. One respondent (an individual) agreed, without providing further comment.

Four respondents (all individuals) neither agreed nor disagreed with our proposals. The one comment received from these respondents was that they would need more information about the form this would take in practice.

One respondent strongly disagreed with our proposals.

**Question 7: To what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposal that the brief(s) for non-exam assessment in AS and A level music technology should be released no earlier than 1 September in the academic year exams are taken?**

Three respondents (individuals) strongly agreed with our proposals and two (individuals) agreed with our proposal. These respondents commented that having a release date would ensure parity for students.

Two respondents (one organisation, one individual) disagreed with our proposals and one (an individual) strongly disagreed. The reasons provided by these respondents related to the logistical arrangements for schools delivering these assessments, in particular the recording assessment.

- For the recording assessment, schools may need to locate musicians and instruments. As the brief may require instruments/instrumentalists that are not readily available to the school, sufficient time is required to source them.
- Many schools only have one recording studio. The restricted access to studio space and the time needed to set up and clear away equipment between students means that more time will be needed.

Respondents proposed a release date in June of the year before the assessment is taken. They suggested that this would help schools with their logistical arrangements. It would ensure there is not an undue focus on the specific non-exam assessment tasks and allow students sufficient time to study the required techniques before they are expected to demonstrate them in the non-exam assessment

**Question 8: To what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposed approach to authenticating non-exam assessment in AS and A level music technology?**

Two respondents (both individuals) strongly agreed with our proposals and two (both individuals) agreed. They commented that this approach suited the practicalities of the subject.

Four respondents (all individuals) neither agreed nor disagreed. They commented they would need to see how this would work in practice, but in principle had no concerns.

**Question 9: To what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposed approach to marking of non-exam assessment in AS and A level music technology?**

Six respondents (one organisation, five individuals) strongly agreed with our proposals, commenting that they supported assessments being marked by exam boards.

One respondent (an individual) neither agreed nor disagreed with our proposals. One respondent (an individual) strongly disagreed with our proposals citing concerns with current assessments.

### **Our proposed Conditions and guidance**

**Question 10: Do you have any comments on our proposed Conditions and requirements for AS and A level music technology?**

**Question 11: Do you have any comments on our proposed guidance for AS and A Level music technology?**

Three respondents (one organisation, two individuals) provided comments on these questions.

- One of these comments related to the weighting of AO2. This was outside of the scope of this consultation.
- One comment repeated comments made under question five that they would like to see further guidance on the type of instrument to be recorded in the recording assessment.
- One comment related the way in which the evidence for non-exam assessment will be assessed, citing concerns with the current qualification.

### **Equality Impact Assessment**

**Question 12: We have not identified any ways in which the proposals for AS and A Level music technology would impact (positively or negatively) on persons who share a protected characteristic. Are there any potential impacts we have not identified?**

**Question 13: Are there any additional steps we could take to mitigate any negative impact resulting from these proposals on persons who share a protected characteristic?**

**Question 14: Do you have any other comments on the impacts of the proposals on students who share a protected characteristic?**

All respondents answered no to these questions and provided no further comments.

**Other issues**

As noted above, one respondent did not comment directly on our proposals. Instead they noted that it was important that relevant subject associations were consulted in individual subjects, that qualifications reforms needed to take account of the needs of all relevant stakeholders, and that reforms should be phased in gradually over time.

As set out above, respondents also raised issues that were outside the scope of this consultation, including the overall weighting of non-exam assessment in this subject, and the weighting given to AO2. These issues were considered and resolved following our earlier consultation on this subject.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> [www.gov.uk/government/consultations/development-of-new-gcses-and-a-levels-for-teaching-from-2017](http://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/development-of-new-gcses-and-a-levels-for-teaching-from-2017)

## **5. 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.

ASCL

Pearson

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Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation

Spring Place  
Coventry Business Park  
Herald Avenue  
Coventry CV5 6UB

2nd Floor  
Glendinning House  
6 Murray Street  
Belfast BT1 6DN

Telephone 0300 303 3344  
Textphone 0300 303 3345  
Helpline 0300 303 3346