



Qualifications and
Curriculum Authority



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government



GCSE qualification and subject criteria

Consultation summary report

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Introduction

The Qualification and Curriculum Authority's (QCA) online consultation on the draft GCSE qualification and subject criteria involved a questionnaire placed on the QCA website between 20 May and 14 September 2007. The questionnaire included both generic and subject-specific questions.

QCA asked respondents to identify which set of subject criteria they were responding to. We have analysed these responses first as a whole, and then by the specific subject areas.

The 28 subject criteria are as follows:

- art and design
- business and business-related subjects
- citizenship studies
- classical subjects
- construction and the built environment
- dance
- design and technology
- drama
- economics
- engineering
- expressive arts
- geography
- health and social care
- history
- home economics
- hospitality and catering
- humanities
- law
- leisure and tourism
- manufacturing
- media studies
- modern foreign languages
- music
- physical education
- psychology
- religious studies

- sociology
- statistics.

Respondent by type

Centre type	%	No.
Teacher – secondary comprehensive	48.0	892
Teacher – secondary selective	6.0	112
Teacher – secondary non-selective	2.3	42
Teacher – independent	10.8	202
Teacher – other	1.5	28
Lecturer – further education college	1.8	34
Lecturer – sixth form college	1.2	22
Lecturer – tertiary college	0.2	3
Lecturer – university	1.5	28
Lecturer – other	0.1	2
Head of curriculum	3.7	69
Subject association	1.5	27
Teacher association	0.2	4
Local authority	1.8	34
Awarding body	4.4	81
Disability group	0.2	3
Employer	1.1	20
Sector skills council	0.3	5
Student	3.5	65
Other	9.9	183
Total	100.0	1,856*

*126 respondents did not complete this question

Responses by subject

Subject	%	No.
Art and design	1.7	22
Business and business-related subjects	3.4	43
Citizenship studies	3.3	42
Classical subjects	12.9	162
Construction and the built environment	0.2	3
Dance	2.1	27
Design and technology	3.0	38
Drama	0.7	9
Economics	0.5	6
Engineering	0.9	11
Expressive arts	0.6	8
Geography	5.3	67
Health and social care	0.4	5
History	2.6	33
Home economics	0.6	7
Hospitality and catering	0.6	8
Humanities	0.7	9
Law	0.2	3
Leisure and tourism	2.0	25
Manufacturing	0.3	4
Media subjects	12.6	158
Modern foreign languages	11.7	147
Music	2.5	32
Physical education	1.3	16
Psychology	1.0	13
Religious studies	24.8	312
Sociology	1.0	12
Statistics	2.9	36
Total	99.8	1,258

All respondents

Total respondents: 1,925

This section reflects the responses from all respondents; it is not split by subject.

Response rates to each question do not necessarily equal the total subject respondents. Percentages given are the percentage of respondents who *answered the question* and the total number of respondents giving that response is given in brackets.

When looking at all respondents, 64.3% (812) felt that the GCSE qualification criteria for the subject they were responding to are appropriate, 22.3% (282) of respondents did not feel they are appropriate.

43% (532) of respondents did not feel that the unitisation of their GCSE subject would cause any problems, however 34.8% (431) of respondents thought it would.

71.3% (888) of respondents agreed that in order to ensure that assessment in unitised GCSEs does not become fragmented and atomised; at least 50% of all assessment should be at the end of the course.

Balance of assessment

47.3% (567) of respondents did not agree with the balance of assessment being reduced to two broad groups for their subject. Whereas fractionally fewer, 43.9% (526), did agree with the reduction of the assessment balance.

Aims

75.4% (866) of all respondents felt that the aims and learning outcomes for their subject were appropriate.

Content

71.1% (785) of all respondents felt that the content of the subject criteria for the GCSE they were responding for is up to date.

65.5% (709) of all respondents felt that the content of their subject is an appropriate basis for progression to A level and further study.

70.6% (772) of all respondents agreed that the content covered the areas of study that should be required of all students in their subject at GCSE.

Assessment objectives

76.3% (790) of respondents agreed that the assessment objectives indicate clearly what is to be assessed.

49.6% (501) respondents felt that there was no overlap between assessment objectives. 25% felt there was an overlap and 25% had no comment.

69.9% (713) of respondents felt that the assessment objectives collectively cover all that is essential to the assessment of their subject at GCSE.

59.5% (609) of respondents agreed that the relative weightings of the assessment objectives were appropriate.

Scheme of assessment and tiering

47.2% (456) of respondents agreed that the proposed tiering arrangements specified in the criteria were appropriate, 21.4% disagreed and 31.4% had no comment.

Controlled assessment

59.5% (599) of respondents felt that the proposed balance between controlled and external assessment for their subject was *not* appropriate (this was not the view from history and MFL respondents, the majority of whom felt the balance was appropriate).

Maximising accessibility for all learners

56.4% (541) of respondents agreed that that the criteria enable awarding bodies to develop specifications that take into account the needs of all learners.

67.9% (651) of respondents felt that the criteria enable awarding bodies to develop specifications that promote cultural understanding, diversity and gender equality appropriately.

67.5% (643) of respondents did not feel that any requirements in their subject's criteria might restrict any disabled candidates' access to the qualification.

50.7% (480) of respondents agreed that the criteria enable awarding bodies to develop specifications that allow centres to make reasonable adjustments that are manageable, 15.6% disagreed and 33.7% had no comment.

Curriculum opportunities within the GCSE subject criteria

47.1% (426) of respondents agreed that the revised criteria make clear the ways in which their subject complements and reflects the revisions to the overall objectives of key stage 4 curriculum. 40.8% of respondents had no comment.

42.9% (385) of respondents felt that the revised criteria contribute to making the key stage 4 curriculum as a whole more coherent.

55.9% (508) of respondents agreed that the criteria supported the aims to enable young people to become:

- successful learners who enjoy learning, make progress and achieve
- confident individuals who are able to live safe, healthy and fulfilling lives
- responsible citizens who make positive contribution to society.

72.1% (649) of respondents felt that schools could use the subject they were responding about to develop learning in contexts beyond the school.

76% (685) of respondents agreed that the criteria support the development of personal, learning and thinking skills.

51.3% (461) agreed that the revised subject criteria give sufficient flexibility for awarding bodies to develop specifications that reflect subject and curriculum initiatives and developments.

Classical subjects

Total respondents: 162

Where the number of total respondents and total respondent types differ, this is where responses were not given.

Response rates to each question do not necessarily equal the total subject respondents. Percentages given are the percentage of respondents who *answered* the question and the total number of respondents giving that response is given in brackets.

Respondent by type

	%	No.
Teacher – secondary comprehensive	16.3	26
Teacher – secondary selective	13.8	22
Teacher – secondary non-selective	1.3	2
Teacher – independent	56.3	90
Teacher – other	–	0
Lecturer – further education college	–	0
Lecturer – sixth form college	–	0
Lecturer – tertiary college	–	0
Lecturer – university	1.3	2
Lecturer – other	–	0
Head of curriculum	–	0
Subject association	1.3	2
Teacher association	1.3	2
Local authority	–	0
Awarding body	2.5	4
Disability group	–	0
Employer	–	0
Sector skills council	–	0
Student	0.60	1
Other	5.6	9
Total	100.3	160

Changes to subject criteria

When looking at classical subject respondents 52.1% (71) felt that the GCSE criteria are appropriate, 21.2% (31) of respondents did not feel they are appropriate.

Only 24.8% (36) of classical subject respondents did not feel that the unitisation of GCSEs would cause any problems, 33.1% (48) thought it would but the largest proportion of respondents 42.1% (61) had no comment about the impact of unitisation.

76% (114) of classical subject respondents agreed that in order to ensure that assessment in unitised GCSEs does not become fragmented and atomised; at least 50% of all assessment should be at the end of the course.

Balance of assessment

47% (70) of classical subject respondents did not agree with the balance of assessment being reduced to two broad groups. Fractionally fewer, 37.6% (56) did agree with the reduction of the assessment balance.

Aims

68.5% (98) of respondents felt that the aims and learning outcomes for classical subjects were appropriate.

Content

65.7% (94) of respondents felt that the content of the classical subject's criteria is up to date.

67.1% (96) of respondents felt that the content is an appropriate basis for progression to A level and further study in classical subjects.

56.6% (81) of respondents agreed that the content covered the areas of study that should be required of all students in classical subjects at GCSE.

Assessment objectives

76.3% (100) of classical subject respondents agreed that the assessment objectives indicate clearly what is to be assessed.

57% (73) classical subject respondents felt that there was no overlap between assessment objectives.

46.5% (60) of respondents felt that the assessment objectives collectively cover all that is essential to the assessment of GCSEs in classical subjects; one third of respondents (43) disagreed with this.

47.7% (62) of respondents felt that the relative weightings of the assessment objectives are not appropriate for classical subjects, 37.7% (49) felt they were.

Scheme of assessment and tiering

54.3% (70) of respondents disagreed that the proposed tiering arrangements specified in the classical subject's criteria were appropriate, only 28.7% (37) respondents actually agreed they are appropriate.

Controlled assessment

65.4% (85) of respondents felt that the proposed balance between controlled and external assessment for classical subjects was *not* appropriate.

Maximising accessibility for all learners

37.5% (48) of respondents agreed that that the classical subject's criteria enable awarding bodies to develop specifications that take into account the needs of all learners. 34.4% (44) disagreed with this and 28.1% (36) had no comment on this aspect of the criteria.

49.2% (62) of respondents felt that the classical subject's criteria enable awarding bodies to develop specifications that promote cultural understanding, diversity and gender equality appropriately, 25.4% had no comment and 18.3% disagreed.

71% (88) of respondents did not feel that any requirements in the classical subject's criteria might restrict any disabled candidates' access to the qualification.

35.5% (44) of respondents agreed that the classical subject's criteria enable awarding bodies to develop specifications that allow centres to make reasonable adjustments that are manageable, 51.6% had no comment and 12.9% disagreed.

Curriculum opportunities within the GCSE subject criteria

71.8% (89) of respondents had no comment about the revised classical subjects criteria making clear the ways in which the subject complements and reflects the revisions to the overall objectives of key stage 4 curriculum, 21% of respondents felt that it would.

67.5% (81) of respondents had no comment about the revised classical subjects criteria contributing to making the key stage 4 curriculum as a whole more coherent, 21.7% (26) respondents felt that it would.

30.6% (38) of respondents agreed that the classical subject's criteria supported the aims to enable young people to become:

- successful learners who enjoy learning, make progress and achieve
- confident individuals who are able to live safe, healthy and fulfilling lives
- responsible citizens who make positive contribution to society.

The same percentage of respondents disagreed.

45.5% (56) of respondents felt that schools could use classical subjects to develop learning in contexts beyond the school, 45.5% had no comment.

60.3% (76) of respondents agreed that the classical subjects criteria support the development of personal, learning and thinking skills.

Respondents were quite evenly split in terms of whether they felt the revised classical subjects criteria give sufficient flexibility for awarding bodies to develop specifications that reflect subject and curriculum initiatives and developments – 30.9% (38) agreed, 33.3% (41) disagreed and 35.8% (44) had no comment.

Geography

Total respondents: 67

Respondent by type

	%	No.
Teacher – secondary comprehensive	62.1	41
Teacher – secondary selective	6.1	4
Teacher – secondary non-selective	1.5	1
Teacher – independent	12.1	8
Teacher – other	1.5	1
Lecturer – further education college	–	0
Lecturer – sixth form college	1.5	1
Lecturer – tertiary college	–	0
Lecturer – university	–	0
Lecturer – other	–	0
Head of curriculum	4.5	3
Subject association	1.5	1
Teacher association	–	0
Local authority	–	0
Awarding body	1.5	1
Disability group	–	0
Employer	–	0
Sector skills council	–	0
Student	4.5	3
Other	3	2
Total	100.1	66

Changes to GCSE criteria

When looking at respondents 73.4% (47) felt that the GCSE geography criteria are appropriate.

56.3% (47) of respondents did not feel that the unitisation of the geography GCSE would cause any problems.

71.9% (46) of respondents agreed that in order to ensure that assessment in unitised GCSEs does not become fragmented and atomised; at least 50% of all assessment should be at the end of the course.

Balance of assessment

53.8% (35) of respondents agreed with the balance of assessment being reduced to two broad groups for geography GCSE. 44.6% (29) disagreed with the reduction of the assessment balance.

Aims

82.8% (53) of respondents felt that the aims and learning outcomes for geography were appropriate.

Content

65% (39) of respondents felt that the content of the geography criteria is up to date.

63.3% (38) of respondents felt that the content is an appropriate basis for progression to A level and further study in geography.

70% (42) of respondents agreed that the content covered the areas of study that should be required of all students in geography GCSE.

Assessment objectives

82% (41) of respondents agreed that the assessment objectives indicate clearly what is to be assessed.

55.1% (27) respondents felt that there was no overlap between assessment objectives. 22.4% felt there was an overlap and 22.4% had no comment.

71.4% (35) of respondents felt that the assessment objectives collectively cover all that is essential to the assessment of geography GCSE.

59.2% (29) of respondents agreed that the relative weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate.

Scheme of assessment and tiering

67.4% (31) of respondents agreed that the proposed tiering arrangements specified in the criteria are appropriate.

Controlled assessment

58.3% (28) of respondents felt that the proposed balance between controlled and external assessment for their subject was *not* appropriate, 39.6% felt the balance was appropriate.

Maximising accessibility for all learners

57.4% (27) of respondents agreed that that the geography criteria enable awarding bodies to develop specifications that take into account the needs of all learners, 25.5% disagreed with this.

65.2% (30) of respondents felt that the geography criteria enable awarding bodies to develop specifications that promote cultural understanding, diversity and gender equality appropriately.

70.2% (33) of respondents did not feel that any requirements in the geography criteria might restrict any disabled candidates' access to the qualification.

66% (31) of respondents agreed that the geography criteria enable awarding bodies to develop specifications that allow centres to make reasonable adjustments that are manageable.

Curriculum opportunities within the GCSE subject criteria

60% (24) of respondents agreed that the revised geography criteria make clear the ways in which the subject complements and reflects the revisions to the overall objectives of key stage 4 curriculum.

56.1% (23) of respondents felt that the revised geography criteria contribute to making the key stage 4 curriculum as a whole more coherent, 26.8% had no comment and 17.1% disagreed.

68.3% (28) of respondents agreed that the geography criteria supported the aims to enable young people to become:

- successful learners who enjoy learning, make progress and achieve

- confident individuals who are able to live safe, healthy and fulfilling lives
- responsible citizens who make positive contribution to society.

85% (34) of respondents felt that schools could use the subject they were responding about to develop learning in contexts beyond the school.

84.6% (33) of respondents agreed that the criteria support the development of personal, learning and thinking skills.

67.5% (27) agreed that the revised subject criteria give sufficient flexibility for awarding bodies to develop specifications that reflect subject and curriculum initiatives and developments.

History

Total respondents: 33

Respondent by type

	%	No.
Teacher – secondary comprehensive	41.9	13
Teacher – secondary selective	6.5	2
Teacher – secondary non-selective	–	0
Teacher – independent	6.5	2
Teacher – other	–	0
Lecturer – further education college	–	0
Lecturer – sixth form college	–	0
Lecturer – tertiary college	–	0
Lecturer – university	–	0
Lecturer – other	–	0
Head of curriculum	3.2	1
Subject association	–	0
Teacher association	–	0
Local authority	6.5	2
Awarding body	–	0
Disability group	3.2	1
Employer	6.5	2
Sector skills council	–	0
Student	9.7	3
Other	16.1	5
Total	100.1	31

Changes to GCSE criteria

When looking at the history respondents 76.9% (20) felt that the GCSE qualification criteria are appropriate.

50% (13) of respondents did not feel that the unitisation of history GCSE would cause any problems, however 38.5% (10) of respondents thought it would.

84.6% (22) of respondents agreed that in order to ensure that assessment in unitised GCSEs does not become fragmented and atomised; at least 50% of all assessment should be at the end of the course.

Balance of assessment

81.5% (22) of respondents did agree with the balance of assessment for history being reduced to two broad groups.

Aims and learning outcomes

84% (21) of respondents felt that the aims and learning outcomes for history GCSE were appropriate.

Content

82.6% (19) of respondents felt that the content of the history criteria is up to date.

73.9% (17) of respondents felt that the content is an appropriate basis for progression to A level and further study in history.

82.6% (19) of respondents agreed that the content covered the areas of study that should be required of all students in GCSE history.

Assessment objectives

81.8% (18) of respondents agreed that the assessment objectives indicate clearly what is to be assessed.

61.9% (13) respondents felt that there was no overlap between assessment objectives.

81% (17) of respondents felt that the assessment objectives collectively cover all that is essential to the assessment of GCSE history.

57.1% (12) of respondents agreed that the relative weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate.

Scheme of assessment and tiering

71.4% (15) of respondents agreed that the proposed tiering arrangements specified in the criteria are appropriate.

Controlled assessment

85.7% (18) of respondents felt that the proposed balance between controlled and external assessment for their subject was appropriate.

Maximising accessibility for all learners

70% (14) of respondents agreed that the criteria enable awarding bodies to develop specifications that take into account the needs of all learners.

75% (15) of respondents felt that the criteria enable awarding bodies to develop specifications that promote cultural understanding, diversity and gender equality appropriately.

80% (16) of respondents did not feel that any requirements in the criteria might restrict any disabled candidates' access to the qualification.

80% (16) of respondents agreed that the criteria enable awarding bodies to develop specifications that allow centres to make reasonable adjustments that are manageable.

Curriculum opportunities within the GCSE subject criteria

66.7% (12) of respondents agreed that the revised criteria make clear the ways in which history complements and reflects the revisions to the overall objectives of key stage 4 curriculum.

66.7% (12) of respondents felt that the revised history criteria contribute to making the key stage 4 curriculum as a whole more coherent.

72.2% (13) of respondents agreed that the history criteria supported the aims to enable young people to become:

- successful learners who enjoy learning, make progress and achieve
- confident individuals who are able to live safe, healthy and fulfilling lives
- responsible citizens who make positive contribution to society.

83.3% (15) of respondents felt that schools could use history to develop learning in contexts beyond the school.

83.3% (15) of respondents agreed that the history criteria support the development of personal, learning and thinking skills.

72.2% (13) agreed that the revised history criteria give sufficient flexibility for awarding bodies to develop specifications that reflect subject and curriculum initiatives and developments.

Subject-specific questions

62.5% (10) respondents agreed that the fact that GCSE history was not tiered was appropriate

Media subjects

Total respondents: 158

Respondent by type

	%	No.
Teacher – secondary comprehensive	68.6	107
Teacher – secondary selective	4.5	7
Teacher – secondary non-selective	2.6	4
Teacher – independent	1.3	2
Teacher – other	0.6	1
Lecturer – further education college	4.5	7
Lecturer – sixth form college	1.3	2
Lecturer – tertiary college	1.3	2
Lecturer – university	–	0
Lecturer – other	–	0
Head of curriculum	9.0	14
Subject association	0.6	1
Teacher association	–	0
Local authority	–	0
Awarding body	1.9	3
Disability group	–	0
Employer	–	0
Sector skills council	–	0
Student	0.6	1
Other	3.2	5
Total	100.0	156

Changes to GCSE criteria

When looking at all respondents 57.5% (88) felt that the media subjects GCSE criteria are appropriate, 36.6% (56) of respondents did not feel they are appropriate.

42.8% (65) of respondents did not feel that the unitisation of GCSEs would cause any problems, however 28.9% (44) of respondents thought it would.

56.2% (86) of respondents agreed that in order to ensure that assessment in unitised GCSEs does not become fragmented and atomised; at least 50% of all assessment should be at the end of the course.

Balance of assessment

76% (117) of respondents did not agree with the balance of assessment being reduced to two broad groups.

Aims

85.8% (127) of respondents felt that the aims and learning outcomes for media subjects are appropriate.

Content

84.8% (123) of respondents felt that the content of the media subject's criteria is up to date.

74.1% (106) of respondents felt that the content is an appropriate basis for progression to A level and further study in media subjects.

80.6% (116) of respondents agreed that the content covered the areas of study that should be required of all students in media subjects at GCSE.

Assessment objectives

87.9% (123) of respondents agreed that the assessment objectives indicate clearly what is to be assessed.

52.2% (72) respondents felt that there was no overlap between assessment objectives.
27.5% felt there was an overlap.

85.5% (118) of respondents felt that the assessment objectives collectively cover all that is essential to the assessment of their media subjects at GCSE.

59% (82) of respondents agreed that the relative weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate.

Scheme of assessment and tiering

53.3% (72) of respondents agreed that the proposed tiering arrangements specified in the media subject's criteria are appropriate.

Controlled Assessment

87% (120) of respondents felt that the proposed balance between controlled and external assessment for their subject was *not* appropriate

Maximising accessibility for all learners

62.7% (84) of respondents agreed that that the media subject's criteria enable awarding bodies to develop specifications that take into account the needs of all learners.

78.4% (105) of respondents felt that the criteria enable awarding bodies to develop specifications that promote cultural understanding, diversity and gender equality appropriately.

75.9% (101) of respondents did not feel that any requirements in the criteria might restrict any disabled candidates' access to the qualification.

57.9% (77) of respondents agreed that the criteria enable awarding bodies to develop specifications that allow centres to make reasonable adjustments that are manageable.

Curriculum opportunities within the GCSE subject criteria

44.8% (56) of respondents agreed that the revised criteria make clear the ways in which media subjects complement and reflect the revisions to the overall objectives of key stage 4 curriculum. 40% of respondents had no comment.

34.1% (43) of respondents felt that the revised criteria contribute to making the key stage 4 curriculum as a whole more coherent, 40.5% of respondents had no comment and 25.4% disagreed.

46.4% (58) of respondents agreed that the media subject's criteria supported the aims to enable young people to become:

- successful learners who enjoy learning, make progress and achieve
- confident individuals who are able to live safe, healthy and fulfilling lives
- responsible citizens who make positive contribution to society.

32% (40) of respondents disagreed.

70.4% (88) of respondents felt that schools could use media subjects to develop learning in contexts beyond the school.

75.6% (93) of respondents agreed that the criteria support the development of personal, learning and thinking skills.

43.5% (54) agreed that the revised subject criteria for media subjects give sufficient flexibility for awarding bodies to develop specifications that reflect subject and curriculum initiatives and developments, 31.5% disagreed and 25% had no comment.

Modern foreign languages (MFL)

Total respondents: 147

Respondent by type

	%	No.
Teacher – secondary comprehensive	55.3	78
Teacher – secondary selective	7.1	10
Teacher – secondary non-selective	0.7	1
Teacher – independent	7.8	11
Teacher – other	0.7	1
Lecturer – further education college	–	0
Lecturer – sixth form college	1.4	2
Lecturer – tertiary college	–	0
Lecturer – university	2.1	3
Lecturer – other	0.7	1
Head of curriculum	2.8	4
Subject association	2.1	3
Teacher association	–	0
Local authority	1.4	2
Awarding body	4.3	6
Disability group	–	0
Employer	–	0
Sector skills council	–	0
Student	2.1	3
Other	11.3	16
Total	99.8	141

Changes to GCSE criteria

When looking at respondents 70.1% (96) felt that the MFL GCSE criteria are appropriate.

37.5% (51) of respondents felt that the unitisation of GCSEs would cause any problems,
34.6% (47) of respondents thought it would not.

82.7% (115) of respondents agreed that in order to ensure that assessment in unitised GCSEs does not become fragmented and atomised; at least 50% of all assessment should be at the end of the course.

Balance of assessment

63.8% (88) of respondents agreed with the balance of assessment being reduced to two broad groups.

Aims

76% (98) of respondents felt that the aims and learning outcomes for their MFL subject were appropriate.

Content

55.8% (67) of respondents felt that the content of their subject criteria is up to date.

47% (55) of respondents felt that the content is an appropriate basis for progression to A level and further study in MFL subjects, 41% (48) felt the content was not appropriate.

60.5% (72) of respondents agreed that the content covered the areas of study that should be required of all students in MFL subjects at GCSE, 29.4% of respondents disagreed with this.

Assessment objectives

85.6% (95) of respondents agreed that the assessment objectives indicate clearly what is to be assessed.

46.8% (52) respondents felt that there was no overlap between assessment objectives. 26.1% felt there was an overlap and 27% had no comment.

76.4% (84) of respondents felt that the assessment objectives collectively cover all that is essential to the assessment of their subject at GCSE.

74.1% (80) of respondents agreed that the relative weightings of the assessment objectives appropriate.

Scheme of assessment and tiering

56.7% (59) of respondents agreed that the proposed tiering arrangements specified in the criteria appropriate, just over a third of respondents (34.6%) felt that the proposed tiering was not appropriate.

Controlled assessment

64.8% (70) of respondents felt that the proposed balance between controlled and external assessment for their subject was appropriate, 30.6% felt the balance was not appropriate.

Maximising accessibility for all learners

58% (58) of respondents agreed that that the criteria enable awarding bodies to develop specifications that take into account the needs of all learners.

73% (73) of respondents felt that the criteria enable awarding bodies to develop specifications that promote cultural understanding, diversity and gender equality appropriately.

58.2% (57) of respondents did not feel that any requirements in the criteria might restrict any disabled candidates' access to the qualification; just under a quarter of respondents (24.5%) felt they might.

66% (66) of respondents agreed that the criteria enable awarding bodies to develop specifications that allow centres to make reasonable adjustments that are manageable, 10% disagreed

Curriculum opportunities within the GCSE subject criteria

51.6% (48) of respondents agreed that the revised criteria make clear the ways in which the subject complements and reflects the revisions to the overall objectives of key stage 4 curriculum, 38.7% of respondents had no comment.

47.8% (44) of respondents felt that the revised criteria contribute to making the key stage 4 curriculum as a whole more coherent, 40.2% had no comment.

54.8% (51) of respondents agreed that the criteria supported the aims to enable young people to become:

- successful learners who enjoy learning, make progress and achieve

- confident individuals who are able to live safe, healthy and fulfilling lives
- responsible citizens who make positive contribution to society.

77.4% (72) of respondents felt that schools could use the subject they were responding about to develop learning in contexts beyond the school.

76.3% (71) of respondents agreed that the criteria support the development of personal, learning and thinking skills.

68.8% (64) agreed that the revised subject criteria give sufficient flexibility for awarding bodies to develop specifications that reflect subject and curriculum initiatives and developments.

Religious studies

Total respondents: 312

Respondent by type

	%	No.
Teacher – secondary comprehensive	62.6	193
Teacher – secondary selective	5.2	16
Teacher – secondary non-selective	3.6	11
Teacher – independent	7.5	23
Teacher – other	2.3	7
Lecturer – further education college	–	0
Lecturer – sixth form college	0.3	1
Lecturer – tertiary college	–	0
Lecturer – university	1.0	3
Lecturer – other	–	0
Head of curriculum	5.8	18
Subject association	–	0
Teacher association	–	0
Local authority	1.6	5
Awarding body	1.3	4
Disability group	–	0
Employer	–	0
Sector skills council	–	0
Student	2.6	8
Other	6.2	19
Total	100.0	308

Changes to GCSE criteria

When looking at all respondents 59.7% (173) felt that the GCSE qualification criteria are appropriate, 22.8% (66) of respondents did not feel they are appropriate.

42.5% (121) of respondents did not feel that the unitisation of GCSEs would cause any problems, however 36.8% (105) of respondents thought it would.

72.7% (213) of respondents agreed that in order to ensure that assessment in unitised GCSEs does not become fragmented and atomised; at least 50% of all assessment should be at the end of the course.

Balance of assessment

71.2% (208) of respondents did not agree with the balance of assessment being reduced to two broad groups.

Aims

77.78% (223) of all respondents felt that the aims and learning outcomes for their subject were appropriate.

Content

78.4% (222) of all respondents felt that the content of their subject criteria is up to date.

70.1% (192) of all respondents felt that the content is an appropriate basis for progression to A level and further study in their subject.

79.9% (222) of all respondents agreed that the content covered the areas of study that should be required of all students in this subject at GCSE.

Assessment objectives

71% (191) of respondents agreed that the assessment objectives indicate clearly what is to be assessed, 19.7% disagreed.

45.8% (119) respondents felt that there was no overlap between assessment objectives. 27.7% felt there was an overlap.

67.7% (180) of respondents felt that the assessment objectives collectively cover all that is essential to the assessment of their subject at GCSE.

63.4% (168) of respondents agreed that the relative weightings of the assessment objectives appropriate.

Scheme of assessment and tiering

39.5% (94) of respondents agreed that the proposed tiering arrangements specified in the criteria appropriate, 15.1% felt it was not appropriate and 45.5% had no comment.

Controlled assessment

89% (234) of respondents felt that the proposed balance between controlled and external assessment for their subject was *not* appropriate, only 6.8% thought it was appropriate.

Maximising accessibility for learners

45.8% (114) of respondents agreed that the criteria enable awarding bodies to develop specifications that take into account the needs of all learners, 31.3% disagreed with this.

66.7% (166) of respondents felt that the criteria enable awarding bodies to develop specifications that promote cultural understanding, diversity and gender equality appropriately.

61.2% (150) of respondents did not feel that any requirements in the criteria might restrict any disabled candidates' access to the qualification.

Respondents were quite equally split about whether the criteria enabled awarding bodies to develop specifications that allow centres to make reasonable adjustments that are manageable:

- 32.5% agreed
- 32.1% disagreed
- 35.4% had no comment.

Curriculum opportunities within the GCSE subject criteria

45.6% (108) of respondents agreed that the revised criteria make clear the ways in which the subject complements and reflects the revisions to the overall objectives of key stage 4 curriculum, 38% of respondents had no comment.

37.6% (89) of respondents felt that the revised criteria contribute to making the key stage 4 curriculum as a whole more coherent, 38.8% had no comment.

60.8% (144) of respondents agreed that the criteria supported the aims to enable young people to become:

- successful learners who enjoy learning, make progress and achieve
- confident individuals who are able to live safe, healthy and fulfilling lives
- responsible citizens who make positive contribution to society.

72.1% (168) of respondents felt that schools could use the subject they were responding about to develop learning in contexts beyond the school.

75.9% (176) of respondents agreed that the criteria support the development of personal, learning and thinking skills.

41.2% (96) agreed that the revised subject criteria give sufficient flexibility for awarding bodies to develop specifications that reflect subject and curriculum initiatives and developments, 34.3% disagreed with this.

Appendix: Questions for consultation on the GCSE subject criteria

About this questionnaire

The GCSE subject criteria are rules that govern the creation of specifications by awarding bodies. They do not contain the detail of the specification. They are a set of regulatory tools: short, sharp rules to guide awarding bodies in developing specifications.

GCSEs are governed by both GCSE qualification criteria and GCSE subject-specific criteria. Any GCSE specification must meet the requirements of both.

Please complete the following questionnaire to indicate whether you believe that the criteria requirements are appropriate for your subject. Please complete one questionnaire per subject.

Completing the questionnaire

It should take no more than about 30 minutes to complete the questionnaire. This questionnaire can only be completed if you remain online.

There are 10 sections. You will be guided through the sections in numerical order. It is probably easiest to understand the questions if they are answered in order, but at any stage while completing the questionnaire you can go back to previous sections to revise an answer. You can do this by clicking on the previous section button at the bottom of the page. The questionnaire stores your responses as you move between sections.

Submitting the questionnaire

Please submit your questionnaire by 8 September 2007.

When you reach the end of the last section you will find a button labelled Submit. Clicking on this button will automatically send us your completed questionnaire. At any point before clicking Submit you can revise your answers. Your response will contribute to the development of the new GCSE specifications which will be available from September 2008 for first teaching in 2009 except science, which will remain unchanged, and English, English literature, ICT and mathematics, which will be consulted upon in the spring of 2008 for first teaching in 2010. If you have any queries about the questionnaire please contact gcse@gca.org.uk.

Questions

1. In what capacity are you responding to this questionnaire?

- Teacher
 - Secondary comprehensive
 - Secondary selective
 - Secondary non-selective
 - Independent
 - Other
- Lecturer
 - Further education college
 - Sixth-form college
 - Tertiary college
 - University
 - Other
- Head of curriculum
- A subject association
- A teacher association
- Local authority
- Awarding body
- Disability group
- Employer
- A sector skills council
- Student

Other – please state

1a) Are you responding to this consultation as an individual or on behalf of a named group?

Individual ☐

On behalf of a named group ☐

2. Changes to the GCSE qualification criteria

GCSEs are governed by both GCSE qualification criteria and GCSE subject-specific criteria. Any GCSE specification must meet the requirements of both, with the subject criteria taking precedence.

2a) Do you think the GCSE qualification criteria are appropriate? We would particularly welcome comments on unitisation within GCSE.

Yes/No/Don't know

If not, why not?

2b) Unitisation in GCSEs can enhance flexibility and choice. Are there, in your opinion, any problems that might arise from this?

Yes/No/No comment

If yes, please describe what these problems might be.

2c) In order to ensure that assessment in unitised GCSEs does not become fragmented and atomised, we propose that at least 50% of all assessment should be at the end of the course. Do you agree with this?

Yes/No/No comment

If not, please explain why.

2d) We propose that there should be a maximum of one resit for each GCSE component/unit. Do you agree with this?

Yes/No/No comment

If not, please explain what a better arrangement might be, and why.

The following questions address specific sections of the subject criteria. Please answer the following questions having reviewed the relevant sections of the criteria.

3. Please indicate which set of GCSE subject criteria you are responding to

Art and design
Business and business-related subjects
Citizenship studies
Classical subjects
Construction and the built environment
Dance
Design and technology
Drama
Economics
Engineering
Expressive arts
Geography
Health and social care
History
Home economics
Hospitality and catering
Humanities
Law
Leisure and tourism
Manufacturing
Media subjects
Modern foreign languages
Music
Physical education
Psychology
Religious studies
Sociology
Statistics

4. Aims and learning outcomes

The aims and learning outcomes provide statements about what a student can gain from studying for the qualification.

- 4a) Do you think that the aims and learning outcomes for this subject, as currently stated, are appropriate?

Yes/No/Don't know

If not, please indicate what you think should be changed or added.

5. Content

The content in the subject criteria represents the **core** material (skills, knowledge and understanding) that should be present in all specifications and thus studied by all students, irrespective of the awarding body.

Note that this does not necessarily make up the total content of a final specification. Awarding bodies may introduce additional and/or optional content that make the volume of content to be studied appropriate for a GCSE.

- 5a) Do you agree that the content for this subject is current/up-to-date?

Yes/No/Don't know

If not, please explain why not, including examples.

- 5b) Do you agree that the content enables appropriate progression to A level and further study in this subject? [Please click here for the A level criteria.](#)

Yes/No/Don't know

If not, please explain why not.

- 5c) Do you agree that the content covers the areas of study that should be required of all students at GCSE?

Yes/No/Don't know

If not, please explain why not.

6. Assessment objectives

- 6a) Assessment objectives specify what students need to demonstrate, i.e. knowledge and understanding, application of knowledge and understanding, analysis, evaluation, practical skills. Do you agree that the assessment objectives indicate clearly what is to be assessed?

Yes/No/Don't know

If not, please explain why not.

- 6b) Is there any overlap between assessment objectives, i.e. do any requirements occur in more than one assessment objective?

Yes/No/Don't know

If yes, please give details.

- 6c) Do the assessment objectives collectively cover all that is essential to the assessment of this subject at GCSE?

Yes/No/Don't know

If no, which requirements do you think should be added?

- 6d) Are the relative weightings of the assessment objectives appropriate?

Yes/No/Don't know

If not, please explain why not.

7. Scheme of assessment and tiering

- 7a) Are the proposed tiering arrangements specified in the criteria appropriate?

Yes/No/Don't know

If not, please explain why not.

Controlled assessment will replace coursework from 2009 to address concerns about public confidence in coursework.

7b) Is the balance between controlled and external assessment in your subject appropriate?

Yes/No/Don't know

If not, please explain why not.

8. Maximising accessibility and equality

The regulators wish to ensure that these criteria fully meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act and other equalities legislation. We therefore need to check whether there are any requirements in these criteria that might form an unnecessary barrier to candidates with disabilities.

8a) Do you think that the criteria enable awarding bodies to develop specifications that take into account the needs of all learners? Please consider the needs of all learners, including those with special educational needs, disabled learners, gifted and talented, students from minority ethnic groups and those whom English or Welsh is not their first language.

Yes/No/Don't know

If not, please explain why not.

8b) Do you see any requirements in these criteria that you believe might restrict any disabled candidates' access to the qualification?

Yes/No/Don't know

If so, please list them in the table and indicate whether you believe the requirement to be essential, desirable or not needed in the assessment of this subject.

Requirement restricting access	Disability group(s) likely to be restricted	Essential	Desirable	Not needed

8c) Do the criteria require the specifications to promote cultural understanding, diversity and gender equality appropriately?

Yes/No/Don't know

If not, please explain why not.

8d) Can centres make reasonable adjustments for controlled assessment that are manageable?

Yes/No/Don't know

9. Curriculum opportunities within the GCSE subject criteria

The criteria are being developed so that the subsequent revised specifications can incorporate ideas from the secondary curriculum review and on the wider curricular issues. [Please click here for the secondary curriculum review.](#)

9a) Having read through the revised subject criteria, do you agree that these make it clear the ways in which the subject complements and reflects the revisions to the overall aims of key stage 4 curriculum?

Yes/No/Don't know

If not, please explain why not.

9b) Do you agree that the revised subject criteria contribute to making the key stage 4 curriculum as a whole more coherent?

Yes/No/Don't know

If not, please explain why not.

The aims for the curriculum are to enable young people to become:

- successful learners who enjoy learning, make progress and achieve
- confident individuals who are able to live a safe, healthy and fulfilling life
- responsible citizens who make a positive contribution to society.

9c) Do you think that the criteria should require that the specifications show how they contribute to these aims?

Yes/No/Don't know

If not, please explain why not.

9di) Do you think that schools could use this subject to develop learning in contexts beyond the school?

Yes/No/Don't know

If yes, please suggest how; if not, please explain why not.

9dii) Should all GCSEs include **explicit requirements** to use and develop learning in contexts beyond the school?

Yes/No/Don't know

If not, please explain why not.

9e) Do the criteria support the development of personal, learning and thinking skills?

Yes/No/Don't know

If not, please explain why not.

9f) Overall do you agree that the revised subject criteria give sufficient flexibility for awarding bodies to develop specifications that reflect subject and curriculum initiatives and developments?

Yes/No/Don't know

If not, please explain why not.

Thank you for taking part in this questionnaire.