

Ofqual consultation on the arrangements for non-exam assessment and fieldwork requirements for students entering qualifications in 2022

Response from the Association of School and College Leaders

May 2021

A. Introduction

1. The Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL) represents over 21,000 education system leaders, heads, principals, deputies, vice-principals, assistant heads, business managers and other senior staff of state-funded and independent schools and colleges throughout the UK. ASCL members are responsible for the education of more than four million young people in more than 90 per cent of the secondary and tertiary phases, and in an increasing proportion of the primary phase. This places the association in a strong position to consider this issue from the viewpoint of the leaders of schools and colleges of all types.
2. ASCL welcomes the opportunity to contribute to this consultation.

B. General points

3. ASCL agrees that it is sensible to approach non-exam assessment in 2022 in a similar way to the confirmed approach for 2021. We therefore agree with all of the proposals in the consultation.
4. Ofqual is right to identify that schools and colleges need early reassurance on these issues to plan ahead. We therefore urge a quick response to this consultation.
5. This raises the wider question of what adaptations and contingency plans should be made to exam assessments, particularly in light of the continued impact of the pandemic, variations in learning, and school closures. We would welcome a full consultation on this as soon as possible, drawing on the early work of the expert group convened by the Secretary of State in autumn 2020.

C. In response to your specific questions

Questions 1 and 2: To what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposal to carry forward specific assessment arrangements for 2021 into 2022 for each GCSE and GCE subject in the section above? Do you have any comments on these approaches?

6. We AGREE with the proposals to carry forward specific arrangements for 2021 into 2022 for all the subjects listed.

Question 3: To what extent do you agree or disagree that for GCSE MFL we should carry forward the arrangements for 2021 into 2022 in relation to the inclusion of additional optional questions for the writing tasks and avoiding the use of unfamiliar vocabulary?

7. We STRONGLY AGREE with this proposal. ASCL would also welcome greater optionality in other GCSE and GCE assessments.

Question 4: To what extent do you agree or disagree that for GCSE MFL, so long as it remains practicable to do so, students should take formal speaking assessments in 2022?

8. We AGREE that formal speaking assessments should be undertaken in GCSE MFL, providing it is practicable and safe to do so. Oracy is a fundamental part of the discipline and should be formally assessed.

Question 5: To what extent do you agree or disagree that for GCSE MFL, if it is not practicable to complete formal speaking assessments in 2022, spoken language should be assessed by teachers, using the common criteria for the endorsement approach set in respect of the assessment of spoken language in 2021?

9. We AGREE that, if it is not practicable to complete formal speaking assessments, spoken language should be assessed by teachers.

Question 6: To what extent do you agree or disagree that for GCSE MFL, Ofqual should make a final decision whether or not it is practicable for spoken language to be assessed by formal speaking assessments?

10. We AGREE that Ofqual should make this decision to ensure consistency across schools and colleges. However, this decision must take into account the ongoing variation in disruption caused by the pandemic.

Question 7: To what extent do you agree or disagree that for GCSE MFL, Ofqual should make the final decision no later than 31 January 2022?

11. We STRONGLY AGREE that Ofqual must make a final decision on this before 31 January 2022.

Question 8: Do you have any comments on our proposed approach to the assessment arrangements for GCSE MFL in 2022?

12. N/A

Question 9, 10 and 11: Are there other potential equality impacts that we have not explored?

13. N/A

Question 12 and 13: Are there additional activities associated with changing the exam and assessment arrangements for students taking the qualifications in summer 2022 that we have not identified above?

14. NO. Schools and colleges will already have planned for the changes proposed in 2021. Adopting the same changes for NEA and coursework in 2022 is therefore likely to reduce the workload of staff.

Question 14 and 15: What additional costs do you expect you would incur if the proposed changes to the exam and assessment arrangements were carried forward for summer 2022?

15. N/A

C. Conclusion

16. We hope that this response is of value to your consultation. ASCL is willing to be further consulted and to assist in any way we can.

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