



Department
for Education

Consultation Response Form

Consultation closing date: 19 September 2014

Your comments must reach us by that date

Reformed GCSE and A level subject content

If you would prefer to respond online to this consultation please use the following link: <https://www.education.gov.uk/consultations>

The government is reforming GCSEs and A levels to ensure that they prepare students better for further and higher education, and 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 make sure that students develop the skills and knowledge needed for progression to undergraduate study.

Information provided in response to this consultation, including personal information, may be subject to publication or disclosure in accordance with the access to information regimes, primarily the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 1998.

If you want all, or any part, of your response to be treated as confidential, please explain why you consider it to be confidential.

If a request for disclosure of the information you have provided is received, your explanation about why you consider it to be confidential will be taken into account, but no assurance can be given that confidentiality can be maintained. An automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system will not, of itself, be regarded as binding on the Department.

The Department will process your personal data (name and address and any other identifying material) in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998, and in the majority of circumstances, this will mean that your personal data will not be disclosed to third parties.

Please tick if you want us to keep your response confidential.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reason for confidentiality:	

Name: Claire Donovan	
Please tick if you are responding on behalf of your organisation.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Name of Organisation (if applicable): UK Forum for Computing Education	
Address: c/o The Royal Academy of Engineering, Prince Philip House, 3 Carlton House Terrace, London SW1Y 5DG	

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

What best describes you as a respondent?

<input type="checkbox"/> Academies	<input type="checkbox"/> Awarding organisations	<input type="checkbox"/> Colleges
<input type="checkbox"/> Employers/business sector	<input type="checkbox"/> Further education	<input type="checkbox"/> Headteachers
<input type="checkbox"/> Higher education	<input type="checkbox"/> Local authorities	<input type="checkbox"/> Organisations representing school teachers and lecturers
<input type="checkbox"/> Parents	<input type="checkbox"/> Schools	<input type="checkbox"/> Subject associations
<input type="checkbox"/> Teachers	<input type="checkbox"/> Young people	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other

<p>Please Specify:</p> <p>The UK Forum for Computing Education (UKForCE) brings together representatives from across the communities of education, computer science, digital media, IT, engineering and telecommunications. This expert body, independent of government and awarding organisations, works towards improving 5-19 computing education across all education sectors of the UK.</p>
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1 Is the revised GCSE content in each of these subjects 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

Please provide evidence to support your response.

1 a) Art and design

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Sure
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Comments:

1 b) Computer science

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Sure
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Comments:

Overall UKForCE endorse all the feedback to the consultation provided in the CAS response, but we would like to enlarge on one particular aspect.

The Computer Science GCSE (the subject of this consultation) focuses on the computer science part of the Computing curriculum, just as the Physics GCSE focuses on the physics part of the Science curriculum. Both appeal to an important minority of students who find the subject (computer science, physics, biology etc) fascinating. But there is a larger, and equally important, constituency of students who want to take their study of the subject beyond KS3, but for whom a single-subject GCSE (physics, or computer science) is too specialized.

In science this need is addressed by the combined-science GCSE, but nothing

equivalent exists for Computing, because the subject itself is so new.

We therefore need a broadly appealing but nonetheless rigorous “computing” GCSE, covering the entire breadth of the Computing Programme of Study, providing a natural progression from the KS3 Computing curriculum. We acknowledge that there may be a naming issue to be resolved here due to the similarity between the titles Computing and Computer Science. Therefore in the following, we have simply used the title “computing” to refer to the broader qualification which might, for example, be called Digital Systems, IT, Digital Engineering, or a variety of other possible names.

Bearing in mind the massive importance of advanced digital skills across the entire workforce, irrespective of specific career choice, almost all pupils would benefit substantially from the opportunity of continued study of computing beyond KS3. We specifically do *not* advocate *replacing* the existing Computer Science GCSE with a broad “computing” GCSE; that would disenfranchise and discourage the enthusiasts who will progress to A level and later drive our economy. The science model is helpful here. If there is concern about the overlap between a Computer Science GCSE and a “computing” GCSE, it could be stipulated that students cannot get credit for both. But it is the business of the examination system to serve the needs of the students, not the other way around.

We have left the detailed commentary on this current Computer Science specification to CAS. However, UKForCE would nonetheless like to host a meeting with all awarding bodies developing qualifications conforming to the Computer Science GCSE specification, as we believe UKForCE are well placed to help these awarding bodies develop their materials in a way that will encourage engaging and creative teaching of the Computer Science GCSE. Although this is, by its nature, a technical and quite academic specification, there is much scope for best practice teaching of Computer Science to engage pupils with the real world application of the theory and relate the content to their own experiences and a broad spectrum of potential careers.

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss with the DFE how such a meeting with the awarding bodies can best be facilitated.

1 c) Dance

Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments:

1 d) Music

Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments:

1 e) PE

Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments:

2 Is the revised A level content in each of these subjects appropriate? Please consider:

- whether the content reflects what students need to know in order to progress to undergraduate study

Please provide evidence to support your response.

2 a) Dance

Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments:

2 b) Music

Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments:

2 c) PE

Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments:

3 Is the revised AS qualification content in each of these subjects appropriate?

Please provide evidence to support your response.

3 a) Dance

Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments:

3 b) Music

Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments:

3 c) PE

Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments:

4 Is the revised A level content in each of these subjects appropriate in view of the issues raised in ALCAB's reports? Please consider:

- whether the content reflects what students need to know in order to progress to undergraduate study

Please provide evidence to support your response.

4 a) Modern foreign languages

Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments:

4 b) Ancient languages

Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments:

4 c) Mathematics

Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments:

4 d) Further mathematics

Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments:

4 e) Geography

Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments:

5 Is the revised AS qualification content in each of these subjects appropriate?

Please provide evidence to support your response.

5 a) Modern foreign languages

Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments:

5 b) Ancient languages

Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments:

5 c) Mathematics

Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments:

5 d) Further mathematics

Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments:

5 e) Geography

Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments:

- 6 Is the revised modern foreign languages content, covering assessment of all four skills (reading, writing, speaking and listening), applicable to all languages currently available for study at AS and A level?

Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments:

- 7 Do you think that any of the proposals have 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.

Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments:

- 8 How could any adverse impact be reduced and how could the subject content of GCSEs and/or A levels 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.

Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments:

Thank you for taking the time to let us have your views. We do not intend to acknowledge individual responses unless you place an 'X' in the box below.

Please acknowledge this reply.	X
E-mail address for acknowledgement: claire.donovan@raeng.org.uk	

Here at the Department for Education we carry out our research on many different topics and consultations. As your views are valuable to us, please confirm below if you would be willing to be contacted again from time to time either for research or to send through consultation documents?

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
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All DfE public consultations are required to meet the Cabinet Office [Principles on Consultation](#)

The key Consultation Principles are:

- departments will follow a range of timescales rather than defaulting to a 12-week period, particularly where extensive engagement has occurred before
- departments will need to give more thought to how they engage with and use real discussion with affected parties and experts as well as the expertise of civil service learning to make well informed decisions
- departments should explain what responses they have received and how these have been used in formulating policy
- consultation should be 'digital by default', but other forms should be used where these are needed to reach the groups affected by a policy
- the principles of the Compact between government and the voluntary and community sector will continue to be respected.

If you have any comments on how DfE consultations are conducted, please contact Aileen Shaw, DfE Consultation Coordinator, tel: 0370 000 2288 / email: aileen.shaw@education.gsi.gov.uk

Thank you for taking time to respond to this consultation.

Completed responses should be sent to the address shown below by 19 September 2014.

Send by e-mail to: Gcseandalevel.consultation@education.gsi.gov.uk

Send by post to: Alex Smith, Floor 2, Sanctuary Buildings, Great Smith Street, Westminster, London SW1P 3BT, UK