

Year 10 Forum

13th July 2021



Ofqual says it is "considering how best to grade qualifications in 2022 in a way that is as fair as possible to students in that year, those who took qualifications in previous years, and those who will take them in future", and that it would make this decision following the 2021 results release.



Consultation summary

1. Choice of topics for some GCSEs

The government is proposing that exam boards will offer a “choice of topics beyond a common core on which students would answer questions in the exams” in some GCSE subjects. This will apply in GCSE English literature, history and ancient history. For GCSE geography, the government is proposing a “choice of content beyond a common core on which students would answer questions in the exams”. The changes to geography would be in addition to changes to fieldwork assessments already announced by the government.

2. Advance information for most subjects

The government is proposing that exam boards provide advance information about the “focus of the content of the exams” in the “majority of subjects” at GCSE, AS and A level for 2022 exams. This would apply to all subjects except GCSE English literature, ancient history, history and geography and GCSE, AS and A level art and design. Advance information is not being proposed for subjects where a choice of topics is proposed because the government fears this would “be likely to give an unfair advantage to students studying those subjects, and could undermine the rigour and value of the qualifications”. However, if the government decides not to introduce a choice of topic or content in these subjects, it would propose offering advance information instead.



3. Advance information in the spring, but could come earlier

The consultation states it is the government's intention that advance information be issued in the spring term "to help students to focus their revision time". However, "should the impact of the pandemic worsen, it would be possible for the exam boards to issue advance information earlier in the academic year to help teachers focus their remaining teaching time".

4. Practical science by demonstration

The government is proposing that for GCSE biology, chemistry, physics and combined science, teachers will be given the opportunity to deliver practical science work by demonstration. This means students "could observe a demonstration by the teacher or observe the practical work being undertaken remotely, for example, by watching a demonstration on-line or on video".

5. Art and design assessed on portfolio only

The government is proposing that for GCSE, AS and A-level art and design subjects, students should be assessed on their portfolio only. "This means that where specifications include an exam board set task, this would be removed in 2022."



6. Exam room formulae sheet for GCSE maths

The government is proposing that students sitting GCSE maths be allowed access to a formulae sheet in the exam room. Ofqual consulted on a similar measure for 2021 exams last year, and GCSE maths was “identified as a subject where this support would be particularly appropriate”. The consultation is also seeking views on whether a revised equation sheet covering “all relevant equations” should be provided in the exam room for GCSE physics and combined science in 2022.

7. Exams to take place at the same time as a ‘typical year’

Before exams were cancelled this year, the government consulted on whether there should be a short delay to the start of the exam period to allow for more teaching time. However, government said that consultation and subsequent conversations with exam boards have “indicated that there would be significant delivery risks and that these would be exacerbated if a similar change were to be made in 2022”. The government said that the summer exam series for 2022 “will therefore take place at the same time as in a typical year, for all AS and A levels and GCSEs, allowing students, parents and teachers to plan ahead”. The Joint Council for Qualifications, which represents exam boards, will consult schools and colleges in the autumn term “on how the exams should be sequenced during this period, ensuring that papers in the same subject are spaced out as much as possible”.



8. Decisions to be announced in the autumn term

The consultation was launched on 12th July and will run until August 1, with the government “aiming to announce our decisions by early September”. Ofqual is also considering “how best to grade qualifications in 2022 in a way that is as fair as possible to students in that year, those who took qualifications in previous years, and those who will take them in future”. The exams regulator “will make a decision once 2021 results are known, and will announce its decisions in the autumn”

9. DfE and Ofqual working on ‘contingency plans’

The consultation states that the government believes it “should be possible for students to take exams safely next year”. However, it acknowledges they “need to have plans in place for the unlikely event that that is not possible”. There is also a “small risk” that there is further disruption to education during the next academic year “which is so extensive that even with remote education in place and the adaptations we propose, going ahead with exams would not be the fairest approach for students”. DfE and Ofqual are “therefore working together to develop contingency plans for scenarios where exams cannot be held for any reason, either locally or nationally, or where individual students are unable to sit exams due to illness or self-isolation”. They said they would “undertake further planning on contingencies and announce measures in the autumn term, once this summer’s results have been published and we have been able to reflect with stakeholders on lessons learned from this year’s experience”.



Non-examined assessment (coursework)

The government consulted from 14 May to 28 May 2021 on proposals to carry forward the changes made last year for some subjects for the academic year 2021 to 2022.

Non-exam assessment

There are a range of adjustments to the non-exam assessment (NEA) arrangements to accommodate public health restrictions in:

- dance
- design and technology
- drama
- film studies
- food preparation and nutrition
- media studies
- music
- music technology
- physical education



Additional support

1. Coursework catch up – 12th July to 16th July.
2. Reading tests for all students – identify additional support and literacy intervention and inform choices of students attending the National Tutoring Programme next term.
3. Summer school – information will be emailed to parents and carers.
4. Optional summer tasks, reading and revision.

