

AST/RCL/GHA

Dear Parents and Carers

**Re: Proposed changes to the Assessment of GCSEs, AS and A levels in 2021**

We hope this correspondence finds you and your respective families well.

A couple of weeks ago, after a COVID-19 related consultation period, Ofqual, the examinations regulator, announced changes to how 15 A-levels and 25 GCSEs will be assessed next year. With these changes in mind, we would like to take this opportunity to share these with you whilst offering further related information, advice and guidance at the same time.

In summary, these decisions mean that for summer 2021, examination boards:

- Should change how they assess content in **GCSE Geography and History**;
- should change how they assess **GCSE English literature** to allow for some choice in the content to be covered;
- should not, unless to accommodate subject specific decisions, make greater use of optional questions in examinations;
- should remove the requirement for centres to make a declaration to them confirming they provided all students with the opportunity to undertake a mandated number of days of fieldwork in **GCSE, AS and A level Geography**. The non-examination assessment should be retained at A level but the examination boards should consider how they can be flexible in their requirements for the non-exam assessment to use primary data;
- will not be required to change the length, number or format of the examination papers, except as necessary to accommodate specific changes to the examination and assessment arrangements;
- should, for **GCSEs in Modern Foreign Languages**, report the assessment of spoken language as an endorsement alongside the 9 to 1 grade; and
- should allow for a range of adjustments to the assessment arrangements in a number of subjects to accommodate potential public health requirements, for example, **GCSE Food Preparation and Nutrition, GCSE Music and GCSE Physical Education**.

Should you wish to read the full report relating to this proposed changes, please access the following hyperlink:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/proposed-changes-to-the-assessment-of-gcse-as-and-a-levels-in-2021>.

Please find below a summary of the decision for each GCSE, AS and A level subject.

**Summary of decisions for each GCSE subject**

GCSE Subject	Decision
<b>Art and Design</b>	Assessment to be portfolio only. Permit examination boards to carry out moderation by photographic and/or digital portfolio.
<b>Biology</b>	Permit observation of demonstrations and/or simulations to cover required apparatus and techniques.
<b>Business</b>	At GCSE - no change to assessment arrangements.
<b>Chemistry</b>	Permit observation of demonstrations and/or simulations to cover required apparatus and techniques.
<b>Combined Science</b>	Permit observation of demonstrations and/or simulations to cover required apparatus and techniques.

<b>Computer science</b>	Permit programming project to be undertaken in unsupervised time
<b>Design and technology</b>	Permit examination boards to accept mock-ups and/or clear and detailed intentions of prototypes. Examination boards to provide clarification about their requirements. Permit demonstration of using machinery /tools/processes.
<b>Drama</b>	<p>Permit <b>live performance statements</b> to be satisfied through streamed or recorded performances. Require examination boards to permit students to analyse and evaluate the work of others based on live theatre and/or streamed or recorded performances.</p> <p><b>Devised Performance:</b> Require each student to participate as either a performer or designer in a devised performance of at least one-and-a-half minutes (for monologue), and/or two minutes (for duologue or group). Permit examination boards to accept alternative evidence to illustrate the intended final piece, the student's contribution to the creation and development of ideas, and their analysis and evaluation of their own work, as appropriate to the task. Alternative evidence may include audio-visual recordings of complete performance/physical demonstrations of key aspects with explanation of how they inform final piece/original and non-original photographs, images, drawings or sketches with annotations to illustrate intentions for performance or design/scripts/written accounts/video diary. Examination boards to provide clarification about their requirements.</p> <p><b>Text Based Performance:</b> Require each student to participate as either a performer or designer in a text based performance of at least one-and-a-half minutes (for monologue), and/or two minutes (for duologue or group). Require students to evidence their application of theatrical skills to realise artistic intentions, contribution to the creation and development of ideas, and analysis and evaluation of their own work, as appropriate to the task. Permit evidence to include either a complete and unedited audio-visual recording of the text based performance and/or presentation of each discrete aspect/each student's individual contribution. For performance, permit audio-visual recording of acting performance alone without need for fully designed set/lighting/costumes. For designers, permit alternative evidence that may include prototype of product/original photographs, drawings or annotated sketches of designs /annotated scripts/video or written account/physical demonstrations. Examination boards to provide clarification about their requirements.</p> <p><b>Both NEA components:</b> Permit participation in a monologue for both the devised performance and text based performance. Permit both NEA components to be marked by the teacher and moderated by the examination board or to be marked directly by the examination board. Examination boards to provide clarification about their requirements. Where permitted changes to non-examination assessments affect usual coverage, permit examination boards to assess one complete and substantial performance text and one key extract from a second contrasting performance text - no change to coverage in written examinations.</p>
<b>English Language</b>	<p>No requirement for teachers to submit sample of audio-visual recordings of spoken language assessment for examination board monitoring.</p> <p>Spoken language assessment permitted to take place before a single teacher who can represent an 'audience'. Spoken language assessment may be conducted by the teacher at any time during the course and by virtual means.</p>
<b>English Literature</b>	<p>Choice of topics on which students have to answer questions, giving centres choice over the content that must be taught. A minimum common core (e.g. a play by Shakespeare) that all students will be assessed on. Centre level content choices for students to answer questions on two of the three remaining content areas: poetry; 19th century novel; fiction/drama from British Isles from 1914.</p>
<b>Food Preparation and Nutrition</b>	<p>Remove NEA1 and permit an earlier release of NEA2. To reduce the requirements for NEA2 to two dishes to be completed within three hours to allow for students to use complex processes such as baking, lamination, making ice-cream and to accommodate public health restrictions.</p>
<b>Geography</b>	<p>Remove requirements for (i) written statement that centres have given students the opportunity to undertake two days of fieldwork and (ii) students to answer questions in the examination relating to their own fieldwork experience.</p>

<b>History</b>	Permit choice of content topics beyond a core identified for each specification that all students will be assessed on, giving centres a choice over the content that must be taught.
<b>Mathematics</b>	No change to assessment arrangements.
<b>Media Studies</b>	Permit examination boards to accept a prototype or mock-up, with supporting evidence as necessary, of an individual media production (single product) in response to an examination board's set brief. Supporting evidence may include original and non-original photographs, images, drawings or sketches with annotations to illustrate intentions/storyboards/television screenplay/shooting script/radio script and directions. Examination boards to provide clarification about their requirements.
<b>Modern Foreign Languages</b>	Remove requirement for assessments to use words outside of vocabulary lists and permit glossing where necessary, whilst maintaining level of knowledge and accuracy needed for the highest grades. Make the spoken language assessment an endorsement reported on a three-point scale (Pass, Merit and Distinction) against common assessment criteria. To be assessed by teachers during the course of study. Permit examination boards to include an additional optional question in the writing assessment which would enable students to focus on fewer themes in their writing.
<b>Music</b>	<b>Performance Assessment:</b> Require students to perform one or more pieces of music with a combined duration of at least one-and-a-half minutes (if all solo performance) or two minutes (if including performance as part of an ensemble). No requirement to perform as part of an ensemble. Requirement to submit complete and unedited recording of the live performance and, where available, the score or lead sheet for that performance.  <b>Composition Assessment:</b> Require students to compose one or more pieces of music with a combined duration of at least two minutes. Compositions may be in response to an examination board set brief and/or be freely composed, with no requirement to do both. Examination boards to provide clarification about their requirements for students who compose more than one piece. Requirement to submit complete recording of each composition with a score, lead sheet or written account of the composition, produced by the student. NB: The student does not have to perform their own composition(s). The recording(s) may be computer generated.  <b>Both NEA components:</b> Permit both NEA components to be marked by the teacher and moderated by the examination board or to be marked directly by the examination board. Examination boards to provide clarification about their requirements.
<b>Physical Education</b>	Permit exam boards to reduce requirement to two activities and allow both to be individual. Permit remote moderation using videoed evidence for all activities. Permit examination boards to explore relaxation of the requirements for provision of evidence for example, type and quality of videoed evidence and the evidence of participation in competitive sport.
<b>Physics</b>	Permit observation of demonstrations and/or simulations to cover required apparatus and techniques.
<b>Psychology</b>	GCSE - no change to assessment arrangements.
<b>Religious studies</b>	GCSE - no change to assessment arrangements.
<b>Sociology</b>	GCSE - no change to assessment arrangements.

### Summary of decisions for each GCSE AS and A level subject

GCSE AS and A level subject	Decision
<b>Art and Design AS and A level</b>	Assessment to be portfolio only. Permit examination boards to carry out moderation by photographic and/or digital portfolio.

<b>Biology AS level</b>	Permit observation of demonstrations and/or simulations of practical activities to cover required apparatus and techniques.
<b>Biology A level</b>	Change the requirements for the Practical Endorsement to allow assessment of the Common Practical Assessment Criteria (CPAC) across the minimum number of practical activities required to demonstrate competence. Permit examination boards to monitor centres' application of CPAC by remote means.
<b>Business</b>	AS and A level - no change to assessment arrangements.
<b>Chemistry AS level</b>	Permit observation of demonstrations and/or simulations of practical activities to cover required apparatus and techniques.
<b>Chemistry A level</b>	Change the requirements for the Practical Endorsement to allow assessment of the Common Practical Assessment Criteria (CPAC) across the minimum number of practical activities required to demonstrate competence. Permit examination boards to monitor centres' application of CPAC by remote means.
<b>Computer Science</b>	AS and A level - no change to assessment arrangements.
<b>Design &amp; Technology AS and A level</b>	Permit mock-ups and/or clear and detailed intentions of prototypes. Examination boards to provide clarification about their requirements. Permit demonstration of using machinery /tools /processes.
<b>Drama and Theatre AS level</b>	<p>Permit live performance statement to be satisfied through streamed or recorded performances. Require examination boards to permit students to analyse and evaluate the work of others based on live theatre and/or streamed or recorded performances.</p> <p><b>Text Based Performance:</b> Require students to participate as either a performer, director or designer in a text based performance of at least one-and-a-half minutes (for monologue), and/or three minutes (for duologue or group). Requirement for student to evidence their application of theatrical skills to realise artistic intentions, contribution to the creation and development of ideas, and analysis and evaluation of their own work, as appropriate to the task. Permit evidence to include a complete and unedited audio-visual recording of the text based performance and/or presentation of each discrete aspect/each student's individual contribution. For performance, permit audio-visual recording of acting performance alone without the need for fully designed set/lighting/costumes. For directors and designers, permit alternative evidence that may include prototype of product(s)/original photographs, drawings or annotated sketches of designs /annotated scripts/video or written account/physical demonstrations. Examination boards to provide clarification on their requirements.</p> <p><b>Both NEA components:</b> Permit the NEA component to be marked by the teacher and moderated by the examination board or to be marked directly by the examination board. Examination boards to provide clarification about their requirements. Where permitted changes to non-examination assessments affect usual coverage, permit examination boards to assess one complete and substantial performance text and one or more key extracts from (a) different text(s) – no change to written examinations.</p>
<b>Drama and Theatre A level</b>	<p>Permit live performance statement to be satisfied through streamed or recorded performances. Require examination boards to permit students to analyse and evaluate the work of others based on live theatre and/or streamed or recorded performances.</p> <p><b>Devised Performance:</b> Require each student to participate as either a performer, director or designer in a devised performance of at least one-and-a-half minutes (for monologue), and/or three minutes (for duologue or group). Permit examination boards to accept alternative evidence.</p> <p>To illustrate the intended final piece, the student's contribution to the creation and development of ideas, and their analysis and evaluation of their own work, as appropriate to the task. Alternative evidence may include audio-visual recordings of complete performance /physical demonstrations of key aspects with explanation of how they inform final piece/original and non-original photographs, images, drawings or sketches with annotations to illustrate intentions for performance or design/scripts/written accounts/video diary. Examination boards to provide clarification about their requirements.</p>

	<p><b>Text Based Performance:</b> Require each student to participate as either a performer, director or designer in a text based performance of at least one-and-a-half minutes (for monologue), and/or three minutes (for duologue or group). Requirement for student to evidence their application of theatrical skills to realise artistic intentions, contribution to the creation and development of ideas, and analysis and evaluation of their own work, as appropriate to the task.</p> <p>Permit evidence to include a complete and unedited audio-visual recording of the text based performance and/or presentation of each discrete aspect/each student's individual contribution. For performance, permit audio-visual recording of acting performance alone without need for fully designed set/lighting/costumes. For directors and designers, permit alternative evidence that may include prototype of product(s)/original photographs, drawings or annotated sketches of designs /annotated scripts/video or written account/physical demonstrations. Examination boards to provide clarification about their requirements.</p> <p><b>Both NEA components:</b> Permit participation in a monologue for both the devised performance and text based performance. Permit both NEA components to be marked by the teacher and moderated by the examination board or to be marked directly by the examination board.</p> <p>Examination boards to provide clarification about their requirements. Where permitted changes to the non-examination assessments affect usual coverage, permit examination boards to assess two complete and substantial performance texts and one or more key extracts from (a) different text(s) – no changes to coverage in written examinations.</p>
<b>English Language</b>	AS and A level - no change to assessment arrangements.
<b>English Literature</b>	AS and A level - no change to assessment arrangements.
<b>Further Mathematics</b>	AS and A level - no change to assessment arrangements.
<b>Geography AS level</b>	Remove requirements for (i) written statement that centres have given students the opportunity to undertake two days of fieldwork and (ii) to answer questions in the examination relating to their own fieldwork experience. Retain unfamiliar fieldwork questions in the examinations but not require them to cover both Human and Physical Geography.
<b>Geography A level</b>	Remove requirement for written statement that centres have given students the opportunity to undertake four days of fieldwork. Examination boards to review their guidance about their expectations relating to primary data for the non-examination assessment.
<b>History</b>	AS and A level - no change to assessment arrangements.
<b>Law</b>	AS and A level - no change to assessment arrangements.
<b>Mathematics</b>	AS and A level - no change to assessment arrangements.
<b>Media Studies AS level</b>	Permit examination boards to accept a prototype/mock-up, with supporting evidence as necessary, of an individual media production (single product) in response to an examination board set brief. Supporting evidence may include original and non-original photographs, images, drawings or sketches with annotations to illustrate intentions/storyboards/television screenplay / shooting script/radio script and directions. Examination boards to provide clarification about their requirements.
<b>Media Studies A level</b>	Permit examination boards to accept prototypes/mock-ups, with supporting evidence as necessary, of an individual cross-media production in response to an examination board set brief. Supporting evidence may include original and non-original photographs, images, drawings or sketches with annotations to illustrate intentions /storyboards /television screenplay /shooting script / radio script and directions. Examination boards to provide clarification about their requirements.
<b>MFL AS and A level</b>	<b>Modern Foreign Languages (MFL)</b> - no change to assessment arrangements. <b>Listening, reading, writing</b> - no change to assessment arrangements.
<b>Philosophy</b>	AS and A level - no change to assessment arrangements.
<b>Physical Education AS and A level</b>	Permit remote moderation using videoed evidence for all activities. Permit examination boards to explore relaxation of the requirements for provision of evidence e.g. type and quality of videoed evidence and the evidence of participation in competitive sport.

<b>Physics AS</b>	Permit observation of demonstrations and/or simulations of practical activities to cover required apparatus and techniques.
<b>Physics A level</b>	Change the requirements for the Practical Endorsement to allow assessment of the Common Practical Assessment Criteria (CPAC) across the minimum number of practical activities required to demonstrate competence. Permit examination boards to monitor centres' application of CPAC by remote means.
<b>Psychology</b>	AS and A level - no change to assessment arrangements.
<b>Sociology</b>	AS and A level - no change to assessment arrangements.

Should you wish to discuss any of the changes outlined above, please do not hesitate to liaise with your child's subject teacher(s) as your earliest convenience.

Further to the changes at GCSE, AS and A level, Ofqual has also launched a further consultation on examinations and assessments in Vocational and Technical qualifications, and soon as the final report has been published following the period of consultation, we will update you with regards the relevant changes.

We hope the information above outlines in detail the proposed changes to the assessment of GCSEs, AS and A levels in 2021. However, should you wish to discuss any aspect of this correspondence, do not hesitate to contact Mr Stoneman for any Year 11 related matters, or Mrs Clark for any Year 12 and Year 13 related matters and we will respond as quickly and as comprehensively as we possibly can.

Yours sincerely



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