

**Potential short term changes to
A levels - Consultation Response
Booklet**

Comments and responses should be submitted by **8 March 2013** to:

Assessment & Qualifications Team

Department of Education

Rathgael House

43 Balloo Road

Rathgill

BANGOR

BT19 7PR

Section A - General Information

Please Enter:

1. Your Name

2. Your Age:

0-18

19-25

26-45

46-60

60+

3. Your Organisation Type

Not Applicable

School/College

Training Provider

Higher Education Institute

Awarding Organisation

Student/Learner

Parent/Carer

Section A - General Information

	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Employer</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Representative group/Interest Group</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Government Body/Organisation (national and local)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other (including General Public)</p>
4. Your Organisation Name:	
5. Representative Group	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Learned Body / Subject expert group</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Equalities group</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Unions</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Sector Skills Council (SSC)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> QAA</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> UCAS</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other voluntary or community group</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> None of the above</p>
6. Would you like us to treat your response as confidential	The Department may make responses available on the website www.deni.gov.uk , although contact names and addresses would be removed.

Section A - General Information

Please note that under the Freedom of Information Act (2000) (Annex A) your response may be made available, on request, to the public.

If you would prefer your response to remain confidential, please tick this box

Yes

Section B - Changes proposed by Ofqual

	Please tick <u>one</u> box as appropriate					
There needs to be:	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Please feel free to comment
7. Improvements made in the standard of A levels.						
8. Greater clarity over the core knowledge required in some subjects.						
9. Improved skills in researching, problem solving, analysis and critical reflection for entry to university.						
10. A reduction in modularisation.						
11. A reduction in the number of resits.						
12. Better discrimination between the most able candidates applying for oversubscribed undergraduate degree courses.						

Section B - Changes proposed by Ofqual

	Please tick <u>one</u> box as appropriate					
There needs to be:	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Please feel free to comment
<p>13. Changes proposed under Condition 1 (Objective): A levels should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. define and assess knowledge & skills needed for university ii. set out a robust and internationally comparable post-16 academic course of study iii. Permit UK universities to identify level of attainment of learners 						
<p>14. Changes proposed under Condition 2 (Size and grading):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Assigns 360 guided learning hours ii. Has specified levels of attainment of A*, A, B, C, D, E, U 						

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	Please tick <u>one</u> box as appropriate					
There needs to be:	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Please feel free to comment
iii. Publishes clear, minimum expectations of the performance of learners to achieve grade A and grade E						
15. Changes proposed under Condition 3 Option 1 - (Qual structure & availability of assessments) – remove AS qualification – return to a 2 year linear course with assessment at end of course.						
16. Changes proposed under Condition 3 Option 2 ¹ - (Qual structure & availability of assessments) – make AS a standalone qualification but where results do not contribute to A level. AS could be completed in 1 year but A level would be a 2 year course of study as in option 1.						

¹ This means that the AS would be a qualification in its own right and would no longer contribute to the full A level qualification. This would mean that learners would have to determine at the start of year 13, those subjects they wished to take as either AS or full A levels”

Section B - Changes proposed by Ofqual

	Please tick <u>one</u> box as appropriate					
There needs to be:	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Please feel free to comment
17. Changes proposed under Condition 3 Option 3 - (Qual structure & availability of assessments) –retain the AS qualification and its relationship to the A level as at present but eradicate Jan assessments and reduce resitting opportunities.						
18. Changes proposed under Condition 4 (variety of question types): i. Use a variety of question types including responses requiring extended writing. ii. Use multiple choice, single and / or low mark tariff questions where valid.						
19. Changes proposed under Condition 5 (synoptic assessment) – requires learners to draw together different areas of knowledge, skills and understanding						

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	Please tick <u>one</u> box as appropriate					
There needs to be:	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Please feel free to comment
learned from various parts of the course of study.						
20. Changes proposed under Condition 6 (Purpose of assessment) – makes clear the purpose of the assessment and sets out balance between knowledge, application of skills, research etc.						
21. Changes proposed under Condition 7 (Assessment requirements) i. includes at least 60% external assessment. ii. Has comparable assessment requirements to similar GCE qualifications made available by other Awarding Organisations.						
22. Changes proposed under Condition 8						

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There needs to be:	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Please feel free to comment
<p>(Evidence of support)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. has had significant and relevant subject engagement in the content and design from Higher Education and learned societies; ii. Has the support² of universities respected in the specific field of study and / or from those deemed to be leading research institutions. iii. Has been developed in consultation with schools and / 						

² Support means that those universities endorse the qualification, in particular its content as suitable for progression to UK Higher Education courses in that subject or related subjects and are satisfied that the qualification should present no barriers to equal access for students to the full range of universities and there will be an expectation that the local Regulator should engage with universities and ensure at the point of accreditation that GCEs taken here should be comparable in standard and demand to GCEs taken elsewhere.

Section B - Changes proposed by Ofqual

	Please tick <u>one</u> box as appropriate					
There needs to be:	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Please feel free to comment
<p style="text-align: center;">or colleges to ensure that the qualification is manageable for successful delivery and where appropriate, with employers.</p>						
<p>23. Changes proposed under Condition 9 (Exceptions)</p> <p>i. A rationale for each instance of exception, accompanied by evidence of support from relevant universities.</p> <p>ii. Details of how comparability & consistency in assessment will be achieved within a subject.</p> <p>An Awarding Organisation seeking an exception must demonstrate:</p> <p>iii. That the qualification is specialised and there is limited expertise at university</p>						

Section B - Changes proposed by Ofqual

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	Please tick <u>one</u> box as appropriate					
There needs to be:	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Please feel free to comment
department level or limited requirement for university entry. iv. That those universities that have departments with sufficient expertise do support it. v. That other universities support it in principle even if they do not specifically require it for entry.						
24. Changes proposed under Implementation: i. Changes to assessment and resits should take place from Sep 2013. ii. From Sep 2014, changes to A levels would take place in some priority subjects (Q25) iii. From 2015 to 2018, new A levels in the						

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	Please tick <u>one</u> box as appropriate					
There needs to be:	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Please feel free to comment
remaining subjects would be evaluated & if necessary redeveloped and rolled-out.						

Section B - Changes proposed by Ofqual

	Physics, Chemistry Biology	French, German Spanish	Maths	English Literature	Geography History	A combination	Any other suggestions?
25. Please rank in order of preference, the subjects you would recommend changing first - 1 being your first choice							

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	Please tick <u>one</u> box as appropriate					
There needs to be:	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Please feel free to comment
26. Similar changes made for NI so that we can maintain parity with England.						
27. No changes made since the Regulator here can ensure that standards of A levels are the same as in England.						
28. Some changes made here to maintain parity with England however not all of the changes are needed given NI's differing curriculum and policy.						

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29. Are there any particular concerns you would have regarding differential impact on Section 75 (1) categories? i.e. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Religious Belief 	

Section B - Changes proposed by Ofqual

- Political Opinion
- Racial Group
- Age
- Marital Status
- Sexual Orientation
- Men and Women generally
- People with a disability and those without
- People with dependants and those without

30. Are there any particular concerns you would have regarding differential impact on Section 75 (2) (Good Relations) categories? i.e.

- Religious Belief
- Political Opinion
- Racial Group

31. Any other comments?

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 – CONFIDENTIALITY OF CONSULTATIONS

The Department will publish a summary of responses following completion of the consultation process. Your response, and all other responses to the consultation, may be disclosed on request. The Department can only refuse to disclose information in exceptional circumstances. Before you submit your response, please read the paragraphs below on the confidentiality of consultations and they will give you guidance on the legal position about any information given by you in response to this consultation.

The Freedom of Information Act gives the public a right of access to any information held by a public authority, namely, the Department in this case. This right of access to information includes information provided in response to a consultation. The Department cannot automatically consider as confidential information supplied to it in response to a consultation. However, it does have the responsibility to decide whether any information provided by you in response to this consultation, including information about your identity should be made public or be treated as confidential.

This means that information provided by you in response to the consultation is unlikely to be treated as confidential, except in very particular circumstances. The Lord Chancellor's Code of Practice on the Freedom of Information Act provides that:

- the Department should only accept information from third parties in confidence if it is necessary to obtain that information in connection with the exercise of any of the Department's functions and it would not otherwise be provided;
- the Department should not agree to hold information received from third parties "in confidence" which is not confidential in nature;
- acceptance by the Department of confidentiality provisions must be for good reasons, capable of being justified to the Information Commissioner.

For further information about confidentiality of responses please contact the Information Commissioner's Office (or see web site at: <http://www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk/>).