

CONSULTATION

Ofqual Subject-level conditions and guidance for new French, German and Spanish GCSEs.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/subject-level-conditions-and-guidance-for-new-french-german-and-spanish-gcse>

Helen Myers. Draft responses as at 09.04.22.

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SUMMARY OF MY KEY RESPONSES TO THE CONSULTATION

NB: References to recording refer to ALL webinar:

<https://all-london.org.uk/webinars/all-webinar-on-ofqual-consultation-gcse-fgs-april-22/>

Link to Consultation documents:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/subject-level-conditions-and-guidance-for-new-french-german-and-spanish-gcses>

Direct link to consultation response form:

<https://ofqual.citizenspace.com/public/new-gcse-fgs-conditions-and-guidance/>

Proposed subject level conditions

Question 1: Do you have any comments on the proposed subject level conditions?

Element	Issue	Response
All elements in this section	Reflects what has already been decided either in GCSE conditions for all subjects or new Subject Content French German Spanish + Ofqual Assessment arrangements	<i>No proposals for change</i>

Proposed requirements

Question 2: Do you have any comments on the proposed Requirements?

Element	Issue	Response
Tiering	Reflect what has already been decided either in new Subject Content FGS + Ofqual Assessment arrangements	<i>No comment, since nothing can be changed, but note the reasons for different views.</i>
Grammar and sound-symbol correspondence	No indication as to what approach to grammar is expected e.g. expectation as to how much can be covered in any one exam series.	<i>Please could you give an example of what would be an acceptable approach to covering the requirements?</i>
Vocabulary	Requirement to include an overview of parts of speech distribution e.g. % nouns	<i>Remove this requirement or be explicit that no further artificial limit will be applied.</i>
	Requirement for AO to demonstrate its approach to covering the vocabulary in the assessments	<i>It is difficult to word an amendment to the requirement, but I would wish to urge that Ofqual adopt a flexible and realistic approach to this requirement.</i>
Speaking	Time allocation for preparation unchanged although number of tasks to be prepared has increased.	<i>I propose an increase in the time allocated to preparation.</i>
	No explicit requirement regarding 'read aloud' task.	<i>In order to ensure a consistent, fair approach, I propose a requirement which stipulates</i>

		<i>whether the opportunity to read aloud during preparation time is required or not allowed.</i>
	Number of words to be read aloud No definition of 'word' No reference to differences between languages	<i>In order to ensure parity across Awarding Organisations, I propose</i> <i>1. a definition of the interpretation of a 'word' in the requirements and</i> <i>2. explicit acknowledgement of the differences between languages.</i>
Understanding spoken extracts	Ratio of maximum word limit between Foundation and Higher does not match overall ratio of maximum word lists (1200:1700 = 70%).	<i>If there is to be a limit imposed, I propose that the proportion of foundation to higher in the minimum and maximum reflect the same ratio of 70% i.e. keep Higher at 700-850 and increase Foundation to 500-600.</i>
	Implication that there needs to be a maximum number of words. Additional words used for repetition; rewording can aid comprehension.	<i>I would recommend the removal of the number of words</i>
	Implication of expectation that number of words in an extract should equate to number of marks	<i>I would recommend the removal of the requirement to reference a link of the number of words to the number of marks</i>
	Recognition that reading time is necessary, but no requirement to allow sufficient pause after an extract to answer a limited number of questions.	<i>In addition to requiring reading time, require insertion of adequate pauses to answer and an explicit strategy towards the number of questions applied to each track.</i>
Dictation	Number of words to be dictated No definition of 'word' No reference to differences between languages	<i>In order to ensure parity across Awarding Organisations, I propose a definition of the interpretation of a 'word' in the requirements and explicit acknowledgement of the differences between languages.</i> <i>[This comment for all requirements referencing number of words]</i>
	AOs are required to set out their approach to different languages and the level of accuracy required the reference to 'different languages'. No doubt about the relative difficulty of French over	<i>I would request reassurance that Awarding Organisations will be supported in adjusting demands / expectations for French.</i>

	German and Spanish in terms of SSC	
	The AO3 reference to SSC seems to be designed for this task, but the AO3 also references grammar.	<i>Question: Is the dictation to test phonics and/or grammar? e.g. if tested as AO3, will spelling be accepted if it follows SSC rule but not necessarily grammar? e.g. ce/se ; c'est/sait ; aller allez allé</i>
Understanding written language	Limit to words allowed. indication that expect a relation of number of words to marks allocated. A text with fewer words does not necessarily equate to a better exam experience / lower credit-bearing. Constrained word list will lead to more predictable / repeated content for later years of qualification.	<i>I propose removing this requirement to limit the number of words.</i>
	Limit to number of texts and maximum word likely to lead to long chunks of text – daunting for the foundation and likely to result in pupils giving up at an early stage.	<i>For the sake of the foundation level pupils in particular, I strongly urge you to remove the requirement of a limit on the number of texts.</i>
Translation		<i>I urge the Ofqual guidance to include guidance on what “appropriate and sufficient rendering of meaning” might look like for each language in order to achieve a consistent approach across AOs.</i>

Proposed subject level guidance

Question 3: Do you have any comments on the proposed subject guidance?

Element	Issue	Response
Assessment of speaking	READING ALOUD: Follow up to show understanding of ‘the passage’ or ‘the theme’. Note that this does not match the subject content requirements ‘undertake a short unprepared conversation relating to the text’.	<i>The subject guidance should be explicit that questions should not be on comprehension of the text.</i>
	ROLE PLAYS. In order to satisfy the subject content requirements that the	<i>I urge the requirement to be explicit about the requirement to give</i>

	task be unambiguous, with respect, the instructions and prompts must be in English. This is not explicit.	<i>unambiguous instructions in English for the role play task.</i>
	VISUAL STIMULI.	<i>I urge the requirement to be explicit that AO2 is appropriate for the 'presentation' element of this task (describing the picture), while AO1 is appropriate for the interactive part of the task (the unseen conversation).</i>
Assessment of writing		<i>I urge the requirement to be explicit about the requirement to give unambiguous instructions in English for the written task.</i>
Undertake dictation of short spoken texts	I do not understand the guidance that 'an adaptation of what has already been heard' can be used. Presumably someone has in mind what the task could be.	<i>I suggest a clearer explanation of this guidance.</i>

Guidance on Assessment Objectives.

Although not included in the consultation, it is essential to allow response to guidance on Assessment Objectives.

Element	Issue	Response
AOs	As they stand, they do not explicitly allow for a stimulus in English for reading, listening, the role play and writing.	<p><i>I propose that the original assessment objectives be re-worded to ensure consistency between subject content and Assessment Objectives.</i></p> <p><i>If it is absolutely impossible to correct the oversight made when AOs were formulated, I propose that at the very least the guidance be clarified further to ensure that the tasks required by the subject content paragraph 9 be assessed as required. i.e. that 'written' can be interpreted as 'written English'.</i></p>

Equality impact assessment (Questions 4 & 5)

Questions 4-5: Equality impact assessment [Recording : 54:00]

Question 4: We have set out our view that our proposals would not impact (positively or negatively) on students who share a particular protected characteristic. Are there any potential impacts that we have not identified?

Question 4

RACE/RELIGION/BELIEF

Ofqual should identify that the proposed subject content, and in particular, the vocabulary list is biased / discriminatory e.g. for French, 'French' and 'Christian' appears within top 2,000 words while 'Muslim' and 'African' do not appear within the top 2,000. Therefore, any assessment on the biased and discriminatory list will itself be biased and discriminatory.

DISABILITY

Ofqual should identify the specific needs of those with hearing or speech impairment (e.g. those who rely on lip-reading or have readers in exams) which would pose specific barriers in succeeding in this GCSE, especially with its increased emphasis on SSC through dictation and reading aloud.

I urge guidance to AOs regarding how assessments could be adapted for those with physical impairments which can directly affect the way in which they communicate e.g.

Hearing impaired:

assistance in accessing spoken word;

allowance made for SSC difficulties (dictation / read aloud)

Question 5 Are there any additional steps we could take to mitigate any negative impact you have identified from our proposals, on students who share a protected characteristic?

Ofqual should acknowledge that because the subject content has been specified by the DfE, there are no mitigations which Ofqual could take that would remove the bias and discrimination other than to insist that the DfE change the subject content.

Regulatory impact assessment (Questions 6&7)

Questions 6-7 Regulatory impact assessment [Recording: 55:20]

Question 6

We have set out our understanding of the cost implications and burdens of our proposals for schools, colleges and exam boards. Are there any other potential costs or regulatory burdens that we have not identified?

Ofqual should identify that the proposed subject content, and in particular, the replacement of requiring common themes by a tightly prescribed vocabulary list, would have a significant cost, and place a substantial burden on schools. There will be the cost of new textbooks, other resources and training. There will be the burden of planning change at a time when the system is overwhelmed as a result of COVID, as well as the highly demoralising requirement to discard many years of work which have gone into preparing theme-based materials.

Question 7

Are there any additional steps we could take to reduce the costs or regulatory burdens of our proposals?

Question 7

Ofqual should acknowledge that because the subject content has been specified by the DfE, there are no steps which Ofqual could take that would remove these additional costs and burdens other than to challenge the DfE to change the subject content.

FULL VERSION OF MY KEY RESPONSES TO THE CONSULTATION

- *References to recording refer to ALL webinar:*
<https://all-london.org.uk/webinars/all-webinar-on-ofqual-consultation-gcse-fgs-april-22/>
- **Link to Consultation documents:**
<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/subject-level-conditions-and-guidance-for-new-french-german-and-spanish-gcse>
- **Direct link to consultation response form:**
<https://ofqual.citizenspace.com/public/new-gcse-fgs-conditions-and-guidance/>

Proposed subject level conditions.

Question 1 : Do you have any comments on the proposed subject level conditions?

[Recording: 14:59]

No. These conditions reflect what has already been decided in the subject conditions.

[Recording 16:23 – 18:45]

I notice that you do not ask for any response to the Assessment Objectives and understand that they have already been decided, but I will be commenting in these in the ‘guidance;’ section as their interpretation has a significant impact on the proposed requirements.

Proposed requirements

Question 2: Do you have any comments on the proposed Requirements?

Yes. I will address them under the headings given in the consultation.

Tiering requirements [Recording 21:30]

I note that these are confirmed and accept the reason for this decision.

Having tiering makes it more feasible to make the experience of sitting an exam more appropriate to the ability of the student, in particular with respect to testing reading and listening.

Not allowing a mixed tier approach means that for some students who have differing abilities in different skills) may not as a consequence have access to exams which allow them to show the full extent of what they know, understand and can do. For example, dyslexic students and native speakers may operate at a relatively much higher level in listening and speaking than reading and writing.

However, I understand that in a ‘comparable outcomes’ framework, allowing for mixed tier entry can lead to unfair outcomes when the overlap between the tiers is not fine-tuned.

Assessment requirements: Grammar and sound-symbol correspondence [Recording 21:54]

I note that Awarding Organisations are required to set out their approach to covering grammar requirements in assessments including SSC.

I am concerned that AOs may be required to impose an artificial limit on the grammatical features being tested in any one series, which, along with the imposed word limit, may reduce the chance of students showing the full extent of what they know, understand and can do.

Please could you give an example of what would be an acceptable approach to covering the requirements?

Assessment requirements: Vocabulary [Recording 22:23]

- (1) I note that an AO must set out its approach to compiling the vocabulary list including an overview of the parts of speech distribution.

The proposed subject content required a ‘balance’ of parts of speech (not quantified, but presumably reflecting NCELP’s concern about the proportion of nouns in relation to other parts of speech).

Given the fact that this requirement was removed in the final version of the subject content, this must be removed from the Ofqual requirements in order to be consistent.

However, if it is impossible to remove this, it is vital to be explicit that no further artificial limit will be applied.

- (2) I note that Awarding Organisations have to demonstrate its approach to covering the vocabulary in the assessments. Presumably this is to explain how they will test the vocabulary in their assessments in each exam series and over time- to ensure the same words are not repeated too often, and that all words are tested. This will be an extremely difficult task, especially given the fact that word lists will be made up of high frequency words.

It is difficult to word an amendment to the requirement, but I would wish to urge that Ofqual adopt a flexible and realistic approach to this requirement.

Assessment requirements: Speaking assessment [Recording 23:37]

- (1) I note that the time allocated for preparation is the same as for the current specifications. However, the new requirements will have one additional task as a minimum (read aloud), and possibly more (AOs may choose to do more than one role play and/or more than one visual stimulus task.) The ‘read aloud’ task will require thinking and preparing for possible follow up questions on the text or related theme (though unseen).

I propose an increase in the time allocated to preparation.

- (2) Given one of the tasks is to ‘read aloud’, the natural approach would be to allow candidates to read aloud when preparing. But to put this into practice would pose practical problems in some centres but not in others.

In order to ensure a consistent, fair approach, I propose a requirement which stipulates whether the opportunity to read aloud during preparation time is required or not allowed.

- (3) The number of words for the reading aloud task is stipulated.

There are two issues regarding defining numbers of words which need to be clarified in order to ensure consistency across Awarding Organisations and languages.

- (a) Awarding Organisations tend to have different approaches as to what constitutes a word (e.g. having a space on either side)
- (b) Different languages differ in the number of words needed to express meaning (e.g. French ‘il y a’ German ‘es gibt’ Spanish ‘hay’)

In order to ensure parity across Awarding Organisations, I propose a definition of the interpretation of a 'word' in the requirements and explicit acknowledgement of the differences between languages.

Assessment requirements: Understanding spoken extracts [26:20]

The DfE subject content specifies the number of words for Foundation as 1200 and for Higher 1700 i.e. ratio of 70%. However, the limit on the number of words in this requirement does not follow the same ratio. [Lower limit for Foundation: 450, for \Higher, 500 [64% ratio) ; Higher limit for Foundation 500, Higher 850. [59% ratio]

If there is to be a limit imposed, I propose that the proportion of the minimum and maximum reflect the same ratio of 70% i.e. keep High at 700-850 and increase Foundation to 500-600.

I would note that 'fewer word's does not necessarily equate to 'better exam experience / lower credit-bearing'. Natural repetition of a word / helpful context (rather than deliberate distractor) can be helpful, especially for Foundation. Indeed, sometimes a very short track with limited context and no repetition can be more demanding of comprehension,

I would recommend the removal of the requirement to link the number of words to the number of marks

I understand that teachers may feel that current listening exams are overwhelming for students. However, the **total number of words** is not necessarily the factor which causes this. Indeed, if the words heard are reinforcing understanding through natural repetition or giving context (and not introducing a deliberate distractor), additional words can make a track easier to understand.

The more likely factors are:

- (1) Needing to process 3 skills of reading, listening and writing in the target language simultaneously, as required by the current subject content. *[I welcome the requirement to put comprehension questions in English]*
- (2) time allocated to read the question *[I welcome the requirement for sufficient reading time]*
- (3) number of questions allocated to one track [This may put a burden on memory rather than understanding]
- (4) time allocated to the pause between tracks and allowing time to answer. [Lack of time to process what has been heard and respond]

In summary, I suggest the following requirements:

Allow for an overall higher number of words in order to allow for repetition, reinforcement, helpful context

If a limit has to be given, I propose requiring same proportion (70%)

In addition to requiring reading time, require insertion of adequate pauses to answer and an explicit strategy towards the number of questions applied to each track.

Assessment requirements: Dictation [Recording : 30:07]

There are two issues regarding defining numbers of words which need to be clarified in order to ensure consistency across Awarding Organisations and languages.

- (a) Awarding Organisations tend to have different approaches as to what constitutes a word (e.g. having a space on either side)
- (b) Different languages differ in the number of words needed to express meaning (e.g. French 'il y a' German 'es gibt' Spanish 'hay')

In order to ensure parity across Awarding Organisations, I propose a definition of the interpretation of a 'word' in the requirements and explicit acknowledgement of the differences between languages.

I note that awarding organisations are required to set out their approach to different languages and the level of accuracy required the reference to 'different language'.

I assume this allows some variation across languages, recognising the relative difficulty of French over German and Spanish in terms of SSC and the relatively larger number (F- 55, G-47, S-34] of SSC items listed in the subject content.

I would request reassurance that Awarding Organisations will be supported in adjusting demands / expectations for French.

The AO3 reference to SSC seems to be designed for this task, but the AO3 also references grammar.

Question: Is the dictation to test phonics and/or grammar?

e.g. if tested as AO3, will spelling be accepted if it follows SSC rule but not necessarily grammar? e.g. ce/se ; c'est/sait ; aller allez allé

Assessment requirements: Understanding written language [Recording: 32:36]

NUMBER OF WORDS

I note that the ratio 70% 1200:1700 is respected in the word requirement. (Unlike listening).

I make the same comment as I did for listening with regard to the link between the number of words and marks allocated. I note that a text with fewer words does not necessarily equate to a better exam experience / lower credit-bearing. Thee natural repetition of a word, word which help to provide context (rather than deliberate distractor) can be helpful, especially for Foundation.

I note that constrained word list will lead to more predictable / repeated content for later years of qualification.

There are inherent differences between languages regarding typical text lengths. E.g. il y a / es gibt / hay .

For these reasons, I propose removing this requirement to limit the number of words.

There are two issues regarding defining numbers of words which need to be clarified in order to ensure consistency across Awarding Organisations and languages.

(a) Awarding Organisations tend to have different approaches as to what constitutes a word (e.g. having a space on either side)

(b) Different languages differ in the number of words needed to express meaning (e.g. French 'il y a' German 'es gibt' Spanish 'hay')

In order to ensure parity across AOs, if word limits are retained, I propose a definition of the interpretation of a 'word' in the requirements and explicit acknowledgement of the differences between languages.

NUMBER OF TEXTS

I strongly believe that the restriction of number of texts combined with a word limit of maximum 100 words is extremely unhelpful and could lead to a daunting and depressing experience,

especially for foundation level students who may well ‘give up’ at an early stage of an exam which launches into long texts. The constraint given could lead to 7 tests of nearly 100 words for Foundation with no opportunity to break these up. [In contrast to an example of a current example - AQA 2019 Foundation has 938 words and 13 texts while Higher has 1549 words and 13 texts). Long texts make for daunting exam experience. It is better (and more authentic) to have an accessible experience involving reading, for example, several short notices, adverts. Candidates would be more overwhelmed by 7 long texts than by, say, 12 shorter texts. If this were addressed by introducing short texts and thereby being forced to reduce the number of words overall, this could compromise the validity of the exam, as fewer words would be insufficient to allocate marks in a way that would discriminate sufficiently over 5 grades at Foundation and 6 grades at Higher.

For the sake of the foundation level pupils in particular, I strongly urge you to remove the requirement of a limit on the number of texts.

Assessment requirements: Translation [Recording: 36:05]

I note that in its assessment strategy an Awarding Organisation must set out its approach to meeting the requirements of paragraph 9e of the content document in relation to a range of the vocabulary and grammar specified for each tier and to an appropriate and sufficient rendering of the meaning of the original language.

I am also aware that AOs need to be able to discriminate for grades 1-9.

I urge the Ofqual guidance to include guidance on what “appropriate and sufficient rendering of meaning” might look like for each language in order to achieve a consistent approach across AOs.

For example, is there no need to include pronouns where context makes it obvious?

J’aime Londres. J’y vais tous les weekends/ le weekend / chaque weekend. I like/love/adore London. I go [there?] at the / every/each weekend.

Proposed subject level guidance [Recording: 37:07]

Question 3: Do you have any comments on the proposed subject level guidance?

Assessment of speaking [Recording 39:32]

READING ALOUD:

I note that guidance allows for follow-up as understanding ‘the passage’ **or** ‘the theme’. The ‘or’ is essential since any questions to test comprehension of a read passage should, according to the subject content, be in English. However, the subject content wording is as follows: ‘undertake a short unprepared conversation relating to the text’.

I suggest that the guidance wording be changed accordingly in order to achieve consistency between subject content and requirements and avoid confusion.

ROLE PLAYS.

In order to satisfy the subject content requirements that the task be unambiguous, with respect, the instructions and prompts must be in English. The format of prompts in English and output in the assessed language does not apparently match any of the AOs (speaking in response to spoken/written) if we assume that ‘written’ means ‘written in the assessed language’.

The guidance given on AOs (which you do not include in this consultation) seem to allow for interpreting ‘written’ as ‘written English’ in AO2.

I urge the requirement to be explicit about the requirement to give unambiguous instructions in English for the role play task.

VISUAL STIMULI.

As with the role play, this format does not match any of the AOs (speaking in response to spoken/written) The format of a visual stimulus (not in written French) and output in the assessed language does not apparently match any of the AOs (speaking in response to spoken/written) if we assume that ‘written’ means ‘written in the assessed language’.

The guidance given on AOs (which you do not include in this consultation) seems to allow for interpreting ‘written’ as ‘visual stimulus’ in AO2.

I urge the requirement to be explicit that AO2 is appropriate for the ‘presentation’ element of this task (describing the picture) , while AO1 is appropriate for the interactive part of the task (the unseen conversation).

Assessment of writing [42:51]

I note that an assessment of writing with clear instructions in English does not match any of the AOs (writing in response to spoken/written) if we assume that ‘written’ means ‘written in the assessed language’.

The guidance given on AOs (which you do not include in this consultation) seem to allow for interpreting ‘written’ as ‘written English’ in AO2.

I urge the requirement to be explicit about the requirement to give unambiguous instructions in English for the written task.

If an AO were to choose to test writing through a mixed skill task involving responding to written assessed language, there could be a double penalty (not understanding task, producing irrelevant assessed language).

I urge the requirement to be explicit about the requirement to give unambiguous instructions in English for the written task.

Infer meaning [Recording 43:58]

I understand the definition of this word which matches the subject content. [Annex D: Families of inflected words].

Undertake dictation of short spoken texts [Recording 44:32]

I do not understand the guidance that ‘an adaptation of what has already been heard’ can be used. Presumably someone has in mind what the task could be.

I suggest a clearer explanation of this guidance.

Guidance on assessment objectives [Recording 45:31]

You have not included the guidance on assessment objectives in consultation but as referenced in my answers to previous requirements, I feel it is essential to address the anomalies between subject content and Assessment Objectives.

I understand that in order to accommodate the new tasks of dictation and reading aloud, it was necessary to combine 2 skills. This could have been done without defining mixed AOs. An Awarding Organisation could have selected the relevant skills and apportioned the appropriate weighting for the task. I suggest that the move away from the traditional wording of 'skills' is to reflect the current ideology of avoiding the words 'skill' and 'communication.' But this ideology has led to a very confusing situation.

[I note that some would say that the mixed skill AOs are appropriate to A level. Certainly, A level students are more likely to be able to cope with the prospect of mixed skills, but the reality is that this does not lead to fully valid and reliable testing. A student who fully understands a text but does not represent that understanding in their own words can be doubly penalised, since they fail to gain any marks for their understanding. Certainly, for GCSE which tests grades 1-9, it is essential to allow for the opportunity to reward foundation students for what they know, understand and can do., without imposing barriers. I welcome the fact that the subject content requires testing of comprehension in English.

I have noted with respect to the role play, visual stimulus, writing, translation, understanding spoken word (listening) and understanding written word (reading) the wording of the AOs does not apparently allow for questions / prompts in English, even though subject content clearly states that comprehension questions should be in English and speaking tasks should be unambiguous.

I propose that the original assessment objectives be reworded to ensure consistency between subject content and Assessment Objectives.

If it is absolutely impossible to correct the oversight made when AOs were formulated, I propose that at the very least the guidance be clarified further to ensure that the tasks required by the subject content paragraph 9 be assessed as required. i.e. that 'written' can be interpreted as 'written English'.

Example of how the AOs could be worded in the requirements (not only in the guidance)

AO1

*Understand and respond to spoken language in speaking and writing.
[Note that 'in writing' can be in English]*

AO2

*Understand and respond to written language in speaking and writing.
[Note that when assessing speaking, 'written language' can be English or a visual stimulus and when assessing understanding written assessed language, 'writing' can be English or the assessed language].*

AO3

Note that this AO will be assessed in the dictation and reading aloud.

This will then make the following clear:

9d writing

AO2 'Understand and respond to written language in writing'

ASSUME THE WRITTEN LANGUAGE IS IN ENGLISH

9e Translation into assessed language

AO2 'Understand and respond to written language in writing'

ASSUME THE WRITTEN LANGUAGE IS IN ENGLISH

9g (ii) Role Play

AO2 'Understand and respond to written language in speech'

ASSUME THE WRITTEN LANGUAGE IS IN ENGLISH

9g (ii) Visual stimulus

AO2 'Understand and respond to written language in speech'

ASSUME THE WRITTEN LANGUAGE IS REPRESENTED VISUALLY

Questions 4-5: Equality impact assessment [Recording: 54:00]

Question 4: We have set out our view that our proposals would not impact (positively or negatively) on students who share a particular protected characteristic. Are there any potential impacts that we have not identified?

Question 4

RACE/RELIGION/BELIEF

Ofqual should identify that the proposed subject content, and in particular, the vocabulary list is biased / discriminatory e.g. for French, 'French' and 'Christian' appears within top 2,000 words while 'Muslim' and 'African' do not appear within the top 2,000. Therefore, any assessment on the biased and discriminatory list will itself be biased and discriminatory.

DISABILITY

Ofqual should identify the specific needs of those with hearing or speech impairment (e.g. those who rely on lip-reading or have readers in exams) which would pose specific barriers in succeeding in this GCSE, especially with its increased emphasis on SSC through dictation and reading aloud.

I urge guidance to AOs regarding how assessments could be adapted for those with physical impairments which can directly affect the way in which they communicate e.g.

Hearing impaired:

assistance in accessing spoken word;

allowance made for SSC difficulties (dictation / read aloud)

Question 5

- **Are there any additional steps we could take to mitigate any negative impact you have identified from our proposals, on students who share a protected characteristic?**

Ofqual should acknowledge that because the subject content has been specified by the DfE, there are no mitigations which Ofqual could take that would remove the bias and discrimination other than to insist that the DfE change the subject content.

Questions 6-7 Regulatory impact assessment [Recording: 55:20]

Question 6

- **We have set out our understanding of the cost implications and burdens of our proposals for schools, colleges and exam boards. Are there any other potential costs or regulatory burdens that we have not identified?**

Ofqual should identify that the proposed subject content, and in particular, the replacement of requiring common themes by a tightly prescribed vocabulary list, would have a significant cost, and place a substantial burden on schools. There will be the cost of new textbooks, other resources and training. There will be the burden of planning change at a time when the system is overwhelmed as a result of COVID, as well as the highly demoralising requirement to discard many years of work which have gone into preparing theme-based materials.

Question 7

Are there any additional steps we could take to reduce the costs or regulatory burdens of our proposals?

Ofqual should acknowledge that because the subject content has been specified by the DfE, there are no steps which Ofqual could take that would remove these additional costs and burdens other than to challenge the DfE to change the subject content.