

Consultation on arrangements for an autumn 2021 exam series

1. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the grades awarded to students in 2021 should reflect the standard at which they are performing? **Strongly agree**
2. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the alternative approach to awarding grades in summer 2021 should seek to encourage students to continue to engage with their education for the remainder of the academic year? **Strongly Agree**
3. When would you prefer that teachers make their final assessment of their students' performance?
June and July
4. To what extent do you agree or disagree that teachers should be able to use evidence of the standard of a student's performance from throughout their course? strongly agree- strongly disagree
Agree
5. Should there be any limit on the period from which previous work could be drawn? **Yes**
6. If you answered 'yes', what should that limit be?
Work completed in the previous 18 months
7. Do you have any comments on when students should be assessed? **The timing of when pupils should be assessed is crucial for pupils to have the time to consider their options moving forward and prepare for their next stage of learning and/ or employment. Retaining the engagement of learning is a key concern for NGA and therefore to ensure that pupils are engaging in their learning for as long as possible before assessments, we propose that the final assessment of student performance should take place in June and July. If students' teachers are to use evidence of the standard of a student's performance from throughout their course, clarification needs to be provided on whether 'throughout their course' means the entirety of the course or a specific time frame.**
8. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the exam boards should provide a set of papers to support teachers in assessing their students' work? **Agree**
9. Do you think the use of the papers provided by the exam boards should be compulsory or optional, for GCSEs, AS and A levels? All alevel, all as, all gcse, gcse eng language, gcse maths (compulsory/optional choices)
Compulsory GCSE,AS and A level
10. To what extent do you agree or disagree that if teachers use exam board papers they should have choice about the topics covered in the questions their students answer, for example through choice of which papers they use with their students from the set of papers provided? **Agree**
11. To what extent do you agree or disagree that teachers should mark any papers their students are asked to complete? **Disagree**

12. To what extent do you agree or disagree that teachers should be required to assess (either by use of the exam board papers or via other evidence) a certain minimum proportion of the overall subject content, for each subject? **Agree**

13. Do you have any comments on the use of exam board papers?

Teaching staff should be provided with robust training and guidance to support their marking of evidence or papers if these are the outcomes of the consultation. To minimise the burden of teachers and their workload, the exam boards should mark the papers that have been chosen by teachers to ensure that marking is kept consistent. A collaborated

NGA are concerned about the impact that the process of using exam board papers and marking processes have on teachers. There needs to be in-depth consideration on the pressure that teachers may face with having to make a judgement call on a student's future. A decision-making process needs to be established that is rooted by a clear framework and does not put teachers in an inappropriate or vulnerable position.

If papers are to be provided by the exam board, NGA are of the view that this should be either compulsory or optional for all levels of assessment. However, Optionality of students sitting papers may undermine the consistency and comparability between centres and schools. On the other hand, making papers mandatory raises the question of how this process would work in line with the public health guidelines at the time, ease anxiety of students, parents and teachers and a process that does not replicate the exam system that is already in place.

NGA is concerned about the mixed messages that a mini exam series can send to parents and pupils, grappling with how different work will be weighted against a grade and enabling support to those who have lost learning for reasons out of a pupil's control.

15. To what extent do you agree or disagree that teachers should take account of a student's performance in any non-exam assessment where that has been completed in full for a subject?
Agree

16. To what extent do you agree or disagree that teachers should take account of a student's performance in any non-exam assessment where that has been completed in part for a subject?
Agree

17. To what extent do you agree or disagree that teachers should mark their students' non-exam assessments? **Agree**

18. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the marking of non-exam assessments should not be moderated by the exam boards this year? **Agree**

19. Do you have any comments on the use of non-exam assessment and separately reported results and grades? **To maintain the integrity of the assessment system and validity of grade awarding, there needs to be a clear standard of the evidence that schools and teachers should look to assess so that grading can be accurate and consistent for all pupils, including those that have missed out on learning due to sickness, bereavement and limited access to learning resources. The process of how non-exam assessments will contribute to an overall grade needs to be explicit to all stakeholders. Parents supporting their children with remote learning need to be provided with clarity and guidance on how the process will work as a whole for their child. NGA agree that there**

needs to be a robust quality assurance in place so that grades awarded with a weighting of non-exam assessments is fair across all pupils of all abilities, demographic and geography.

20. To what extent do you agree or disagree that a breadth of evidence should inform teachers' judgements? **Strongly agree**
21. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the provision of training and guidance from exam boards should support teachers to reach their assessment of a student's deserved grade? **Strongly agree**
22. To what extent do you agree or disagree that teachers should be able to take into account other performance evidence for a student before submitting a grade? **Strongly agree**
23. To what extent do you agree or disagree that performance evidence from closer to the time of the final assessment, should carry more weight in determining a student's final grade? **Agree**
24. Do you have any comments on the use of other performance evidence? **The different types of performance evidence should be recorded for circumstances such as appeals. A question could be raised on how fairly and consistent the evidence used is across schools e.g. one teacher using candidate work to determine one grade and another teacher using formal assessment for the same topic. The weighting of different assessments may be difficult to mandate and providing guidance to teachers seems to go against the government asking teachers to exercise their judgement on awarding grades. NGA agree that performance evidence from closer to the time of final assessment should carry more weight to a final grade as students will have a clearer idea of what they are being assessed on.**
25. To what extent do you agree or disagree that all students should be assessed within a given time period for each subject – whether or not their school or college must or is using exam board papers? **Strongly agree**
26. To what extent do you agree or disagree that exam boards should publish all of their papers shortly before the assessments in order to manage the risk of some students being advantaged through papers being leaked? **Strongly agree**
27. Do you have any comments about the assessment period for the use of exam board papers or teacher devised assessments? **It is important that the lines are not blurred between providing candidates with a fair and robust process of examination and increasing risk of 2021 candidates being at an either advantage or disadvantage compared to other years. The exams process should continue to reflect the ability of candidates and accurately represent their knowledge and performance in subjects. However, if students are assessed within a time period, there needs to be a process to enable students who are affected by factors beyond their control i.e. bereavement, technology access.**
28. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the assessments should, if possible, be taken within the student's school or college? **Agree**

29. To what extent do you agree or disagree that if the pandemic makes it necessary a student should be able to take their assessments at an alternative venue, including at home? **strongly Agree**
30. Do you have any comments on the conditions under which students should be assessed?
Students should not be disadvantaged or deprived from the ability to sit their exams however, clarity is required from the DfE and Ofqual on what may permit a student not being able to sit their exams in school and college. To prevent anxiety to students that have underlying health issues and other factors that may prevent them from sitting exams in their school or college, this clarification needs to be made as soon as possible and the necessary arrangements need to be put in place to support these students. Not only to ensure fairness and compliance to legal processes, a robust system must be in place to avoid cheating, internet access issues and or other factors that may further advantage or disadvantage pupils in comparison to their peers. If assessments are taken place in schools and other venues, NGA is concerned as to how this can be done safely, under public health guidance. Allowing pupils to sit assessments at home raises a serious concern of how these assessments will be invigilated and completed without further disadvantaging our most disadvantaged students and enabling a gateway for cheating and technical error. Under known exam conditions, students deserve a safe space to complete their assessment and enabling exams to be conducted in homes not only calls for a disparity for opportunity in socio-economically deprived areas but does not allow students to show their full potential.
31. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the exam boards should provide support and information to schools and colleges to help them meet the assessment requirements? **Strongly agree**
32. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the exam boards should set requirements for school and college internal quality assurance arrangements and provide guidance on these requirements to support centres? **Agree**
33. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the head of a school or college should make a declaration to the exam board confirming its requirements had been followed and teachers had regard to the guidance and support materials provided? **Neither agree or disagree**
34. Do you have any comments about internal quality assurance? **A declaration from the school enables consistency and accountability across all schools and colleges.**
35. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the exam boards should quality assure the overall approach for all schools and colleges? **Agree**
36. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the exam boards should sample, at subject level, the evidence on which the submitted grades were based? **Agree**
37. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the exam boards should target their more in-depth quality assurance activities? **Agree**
38. To what extent do you agree or disagree that exam boards could only change a student's grade after a review of the evidence and discussion with the school or college? **Strongly Agree**

39. Do you have any comments about external quality assurance?
NGA have heard from concerned members and we propose that as school departments have good moderation strategies and should be expected to ensure that there is grade equivalence across teachers within the school. Exam boards should demand clear descriptions of that process for each school, provide guidance and sample evidence to ensure grade equivalence across schools.
41. To what extent do you agree or disagree that students should not be told the grade their teacher has submitted before results day? **Agree**
42. To what extent do you agree or disagree that students should be able to appeal their grade on the grounds that their teacher made an error when assessing the student's performance? **Agree**
43. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the school or college should consider the appeal? **Agree**
44. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the appeal should normally be considered by a competent person within the student's school or college who was not involved with the original assessment? **Agree**
45. To what extent do you agree or disagree that a school or college should be able to appoint a competent person from outside of the school or college to consider the appeal? **Neither agree or Disagree**
46. To what extent do you agree or disagree that a grade should only be changed if it is found not to represent a legitimate exercise of academic judgement? **Agree**
47. To what extent do you agree or disagree that a student should be able to appeal to the exam board on the grounds that the school or college did not follow the exam board's requirements when it assessed the student's performance? **Agree**
48. To what extent do you agree or disagree that a student should be able to appeal to the exam board on the grounds that the school or college did not properly consider the student's appeal? **Agree**
49. To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should seek to bring forward results day(s), in order for appeals to begin earlier? **Agree**
50. To what extent do you agree or disagree that if results day are brought forward, we should seek to decouple when a student is informed of their results, and universities are informed of their formal result for the purpose of admissions decisions? **Strongly Agree**
51. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the exam boards should provide information for schools and colleges on how they should handle appeals? **Agree**

52. Do you have any comments on the proposed appeal arrangements? **Schools and colleges should be informed and supported during an appeals process however, it is important to ensure that students have the time and ability to follow a reasonable route for appeals where they feel their grade has not been based on their true ability. Students should face minimal disruption when progressing on to the next stage but teacher assessed grades can run the risk of bias and discrimination to which needs to be followed through an appeals process. The proposal of recruiting a 'competent' person to consider an appeal raises questions as to how this post would be funded and how easy it may be to find someone with the expertise. The proposed appeals process places an emphasis on the error of one teacher which can be damaging to that teacher undergoing an appeals process. The language of this proposal should not place the weight of an appeal on the error solely on one teacher. If schools are to be responsible for an appeals process, clear and robust guidance should be available to schools and colleges.**
53. Should the exam boards be prohibited from offering GCSE, AS and A level exams in any country in 2021? **No**
54. If you answered no, which students should be allowed to enter for them? **AS and A level**
55. Do you believe the proposed arrangements (any or all) would have a positive impact on particular students because of their protected characteristics? **Yes**
56. If you have answered 'yes' please explain your reason for each proposed arrangement you have in mind. **While students across the country have been impacted by COVID-19, those with particular disabilities or those with EAL may have been disproportionately disadvantaged due to factors such as a lack of support or guidance available during the partial closure of schools. The use of evidence assessment can possibly enable a clear view on the academic abilities of these pupils**
57. Do you believe the proposed arrangements (any or all) would have a negative impact on particular students because of their protected characteristics? **No**