

October 2020

Dear Parent/Carer,

This is a brief outline of the changes to each GCSE subject area for the 2021 exam series. Individual teachers will discuss these changes with their groups to provide further information.

## 2021 GCSE Exam Changes

### Art and design

Assessment will be based on portfolio only, with exam boards permitted to carry out moderation of photographic or digital portfolios.

### Biology, chemistry, physics, combined science

Pupils will be able to cover required apparatus and techniques through observations of demonstrations or simulations.

### Citizenship studies

Exam boards will be required to provide guidance on citizenship action in the context of public health restrictions.

### Computer science

Pupils will be allowed to undertake their programming project in unsupervised time.

### Dance

#### **Component 1 - Performance**

Students will complete two dance performances (one set phrase and one solo/duo/trio)

The duo/trio assessment grid has been altered so that it can also be used to assess solo performances (two of the remaining three set phrases must also be developed into the solo/duo/trio)

Teachers will mark the single set phrase out of 12 marks

#### **Component 1 - Choreography**

Students will choreograph either a solo for at least one and a half minutes, or a group dance for at least two minutes focusing on one of the exam questions. This can be performed by the student or someone else.

#### **Component 2 - Dance appreciation**

The three six-mark questions in Section B of the written paper relate directly to the students practical work in component 1. Therefore AQA is ensuring these three questions will reflect the slight changes, so that no student is disadvantaged.

### Design and technology

Exam boards will be able to accept mock-ups and/or “clear and detailed intentions of prototypes”. The boards will “provide clarification” about their requirements.

Demonstration of using machinery, tools and processes will be permitted.

## Drama

Live performance statement will be satisfied through “streamed or recorded performances”, and exam boards will be able to accept “alternative evidence” to illustrate pupils’ intended devised performance. For text-based performances, exam boards will be allowed to accept either a complete and unedited audio-visual recording or a “presentation of each discrete aspect/each student’s individual contribution”. For both NEA elements, participation in a monologue will be permitted. Exam boards will “provide clarification” about their requirements.

## Engineering

Exam boards will be able to accept “clear and detailed intentions of prototypes” and pupils will be allowed to observe demonstration of using machinery, tools and processes.

## English language

There will be no requirement for recordings of spoken language assessment for exam board monitoring. Instead, the assessment will be allowed to take place before a single teacher representing an “audience”. Spoken assessments can also be taken at any time during the course and “by virtual means”.

## English literature

Schools will be given a choice of topics on which students have to answer questions in exams. A Shakespeare play will make up a “minimum common core”, which all pupils will be assessed on, and schools will be able to choose two more options from poetry, 19th century novel and fiction/drama from the British Isles from 1914. However, the document states that exam boards can add to the core “if they wish”.

## Food preparation and nutrition

NEA1 will be removed, and earlier release of NEA2 will be permitted. Requirements for NEA2 will be reduced to two dishes to be completed within **three** hours (not two as originally proposed), to allow for students to use “complex processes such as baking, lamination, making ice-cream and to accommodate public health restrictions”.

## Geography

Schools will no longer have to make a written statement declaring that pupils have been given the opportunity to undertake two days of fieldwork. Pupils will also not have to answer questions in the exam relating to their own fieldwork experience.

## History

Schools will be given a choice of topics on which students have to answer questions in exams. As with English literature, there will be a core topic identified for each specification, but schools will have choices beyond that.

## Media studies

Exam boards will be allowed to accept a prototype or mock-up, with supporting evidence, of an individual media production in response to an exam board set brief. Boards will “provide clarification” about their requirements.

## Modern foreign languages

Ofqual is removing the requirement for assessments to use words outside vocabulary lists, and will “permit glossing where necessary whilst maintaining level of knowledge and accuracy needed for the highest grades”.

The spoken-language assessment will be an endorsement reported on a three-point scale (pass, merit, distinction) and will be assessed by teachers during the course of study.

Exam boards will also be allowed to include an additional optional question in the writing assessment “which would enable students to focus on fewer themes in their writing”

## Music

For the performance assessment, there will be no requirement for pupils to perform as part of an ensemble. Pupils will need to submit a complete and unedited recording of their live solo performances, and the score or lead sheet for that performance “where available”. Performances must be a minimum of 1 ½ minutes long.

For the composition assessment, the composition may be in response to an exam board brief or freely-composed, and pupils will have to submit a “complete recording” of each composition with a score, lead sheet or written account of the composition produced by the pupil. Compositions should be between 2-4 minutes long.

However, the pupil does not have to perform their own compositions, and recordings may be computer-generated.

Exam boards will “provide clarification” about their requirements.

## Physical education

Exam boards will be allowed to reduce their requirements to just two activities, and allow both to be individual. Remote moderation of video evidence will be permitted for all activities.

Boards have also been told they can explore relaxation of requirements for provision of evidence “for example, type and quality of videoed evidence and the evidence of participation in competitive sport”.

For the short course, the changes will be the same as above, except the requirement will be reduced to just one individual activity.

