



Department
for Education

Consultation Response Form

Consultation closing date: 1 May 2013
Your comments must reach us by that date.

Secondary School Accountability Consultation

Consultation Response Form

Information provided in response to this consultation, including personal information, may be subject to publication or disclosure in accordance with the access to information regimes, primarily the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 1998.

If you want all, or any part, of your response to be treated as confidential, please explain why you consider it to be confidential.

If a request for disclosure of the information you have provided is received, your explanation about why you consider it to be confidential will be taken into account, but no assurance can be given that confidentiality can be maintained. An automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system will not, of itself, be regarded as binding on the Department.

The Department will process your personal data (name and address and any other identifying material) in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998, and in the majority of circumstances, this will mean that your personal data will not be disclosed to third parties.

Please tick if you want us to keep your response confidential.

Reason for confidentiality:

Name

Dr Rita Gardner CBE

Organisation (if applicable) Royal Geographical Society (with IBG)

Address:

1 Kensington Gore
London
SW7 2AR

If your enquiry is related to the DfE e-consultation website or the consultation process in general, you can contact the Public Communications Unit by e-mail: consultation.unit@education.gsi.gov.uk or by telephone: 0370 000 2288 or via the Department's ['Contact Us'](#) page.

Please mark an 'x' in the box that best describes you as a respondent.

<input type="checkbox"/> Teacher	<input type="checkbox"/> Head teacher	<input type="checkbox"/> School
<input type="checkbox"/> Parent-Carer	<input type="checkbox"/> Local Authority	<input type="checkbox"/> Awarding Body
<input type="checkbox"/> Subject Association	<input type="checkbox"/> Union	X Other

Please Specify: The learned society & professional body for geography & geographers

The Royal Geographical Society (with IBG) is the learned society and professional body for geography and geographers. The Society maintains a strong overview of the discipline, its standing and its practice in schools, higher education, and the workplace, including professional accreditation. We advise on and support its advancement, dissemination and practice in these realms and within wider public engagement and policy. We have 16,500 members and Fellows and our work currently reaches more than three million people per year. Each year the Society works with teachers and pupils from about 50% of English secondary schools and our online educational resources receive c. 1 million 'user sessions' annually.

1 Do you agree with the proposals for the headline accountability measures?

Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments:

The Society **welcomes** a broader measure and also the inclusion of only GCSEs and other high value qualifications. The previous situation where some vocational courses could be reported as equivalents to multiple GCSEs was unhelpful. In some schools this limited the opportunity for pupils to study the full range of academic GCSEs.

The Society has one area of significant concern and a proposed small amendment that overcomes the concern.

This is in relation to the fact that young people can qualify for the 'measure of 8', without studying either a humanities subject (either geography or history) or a language at GCSE.

This is counter to the concept of a broad and balanced education and has the potential to close down options for young people at too early an age, rather than opening them up. It also runs counter to the spirit of the EBac which has done so much to boost academically focused subject-based learning, including the study of geography and history – the 'civilising' subjects that are essential to a well-balanced education. For example, entry levels for geography GCSE have, following the introduction of the EBac, reached their highest levels for more than 10 years, undoing much of the harm to the foundation subjects that was done by the current accountability measure and the way in which schools used it.

The Society suggests a small, but important, amendment to the proposed 'measure of 8'. The Society believes the new measure should include a requirement for young people to study (alongside English and maths) at least one science, one modern or ancient foreign language and either history or geography at GCSE - within the group of their 8 qualifications. This would still leave plenty of capacity for those who (1) wished to specialise in all four separate sciences; or (2) study three arts or vocational subjects; or (3) top up' with additional humanities or languages. However, it would secure breath and ensure all young people studied both a language and a humanity at GCSE, together with English, maths, a science and three other subjects/study areas.

The Society recognises that not every pupil will be able to achieve this breadth and range of study at Key Stage 4. However, we believe that our suggested amendment should be applicable to the majority of pupils.

2 Is there any further information we should provide about the performance of disadvantaged students?

Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments:

No comment made

3 Should we look to use a relative measure as the floor standard in the first year of the new exams?

Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments:

No comment made

4 Are there any other measures we should consider publishing?

Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments:

The Society strongly supports the continuation of the EBac and the reporting of pupils' achievement across the family of EBac subjects.

5 Do you think we should collect and publish test data from internal assessments through the Data Warehouse?

Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments:

No comment made

6 What other data could be published to create the right incentives for schools, including special schools, to ensure the best progress and attainment for all of their students?

Comments:

No comment made

7 Do you agree that the Department should stop the collection of Key Stage 3 teacher assessment results?

Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments:

No comment made

8 How should we ensure that achievement beyond formal qualifications is recognised?

Comments:

The Society recognises that not every pupil will achieve formal qualifications at the end of Key Stage 4.

In addition, not everything that a pupil experiences or achieves at school can be readily recognised through formal qualifications. For example, geographical fieldwork is an opportunity for pupils to work in a team and undertake research tasks together. However, the Society does not believe it is the place of geography GCSE examinations to attempt to assess a pupil's ability in teamwork.

The Society feels it is appropriate for all pupils to be provided with an end of Key Stage 4 statement which should recognise their abilities, experiences and contribution to school life. This should complement the reporting of formal qualifications and be provided for all pupils.

9 How can national sample tests best be introduced?

Comments:

The Society notes the Department's interest in the provision of sample tests, such as the recognised suite of international tests in English, maths and science.

The Society believes there is the need for a wider range of national sample tests to include tests on geography and history and potentially MFL.

The Society would welcome further discussions with the Department to explore how best this might be achieved for geography.

Thank you for taking the time to let us have your views. We do not intend to acknowledge individual responses unless you place an 'X' in the box below.

Please acknowledge this reply X

E-mail address for acknowledgement: r.gardner@rgs.org

Here at the Department for Education we carry out our research on many different topics and consultations. As your views are valuable to us, would it be alright if we were to contact you again from time to time either for research or to send through consultation documents?

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> X Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
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All DfE public consultations are required to meet the Cabinet Office [Principles on Consultation](#)

The key Consultation Principles are:

- departments will follow a range of timescales rather than defaulting to a 12-week period, particularly where extensive engagement has occurred before
- departments will need to give more thought to how they engage with and consult with those who are affected
- consultation should be 'digital by default', but other forms should be used where these are needed to reach the groups affected by a policy; and
- the principles of the Compact between government and the voluntary and community sector will continue to be respected.

Responses should be completed on-line or emailed to the relevant consultation email box. However, if you have any comments on how DfE consultations are conducted, please contact Carole Edge, DfE Consultation Coordinator, tel: 0370 000 2288 / email: carole.edge@education.gsi.gov.uk

Thank you for taking time to respond to this consultation.

Completed questionnaires and other responses should be sent to the address shown below by 1 May 2013

Send by post to:
Phil Elks
Department for Education
Level 2
Sanctuary Buildings
Great Smith Street
London
SW1P 3BT

Send by e-mail to: accountability.consultation@education.gsi.gov.uk