

GCE AS AND A LEVEL GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS



**Summary of decisions and analysis of responses
to our consultation on reforming GCE AS and
A Level Government and Politics for first teaching
in September 2017**

Summary of decisions and analysis of responses to our consultation on reforming GCE AS and A Level Government and Politics, for first teaching in 2017

Executive Summary

Between 4 April and 15 May 2016, Qualifications Wales consulted on proposals for the reformed GCE AS and A Level Government and Politics qualifications to be Approved for first teaching in Wales from September 2017. A copy of the consultation proposals and questions is available at [this link](#).

In July 2016 we published Approval Criteria for GCE AS and A Level Government and Politics (2016)¹, which set out the detailed requirements for how the reformed qualifications should be designed and assessed. The requirements are informed by the responses to our online consultation and by views expressed by learners through a supplementary engagement exercise.

This report summarises the responses we received to the consultation of the proposals and explains the decisions that we took in light of these, which are reflected in the Approval Criteria for GCE AS and A Level Government and Politics (2016)¹.

This report is available in English and in Welsh. Respondents' comments have been translated, where appropriate, in accordance with the language of the report.

Percentages used throughout this document have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

Background

AS and A Level Government and Politics qualifications are being reformed in Wales for first teaching from September 2017, as part of a wider programme of reforms to GCSEs, AS and A Levels. The only awarding body who will develop and offer the reformed AS and A Level Government and Politics qualifications in Wales will be WJEC, as it is the only awarding body who have agreed to develop reformed AS and A Levels designed specifically for award in Wales.

The proposals on which we consulted were developed through engagement with a number of stakeholders including the awarding body WJEC, schools and further education institutions (FEIs), higher education institutions (HEIs) and the Welsh Government (WG).

Consultation responses

In total, eleven respondents completed all, or part of, the online consultation for AS and A Level Government and Politics. Of these, the majority of participants identified

¹ [Approval Criteria for GCE AS and A Level Government and Politics](#)

themselves as teachers or lecturers. One respondent identified themselves as “other”.

Summary of proposals and decisions

Subject aims and objectives

We proposed a set of aims and objectives for the reformed qualifications. In the Approval Criteria, we have made some small amendments to the final wording of the subject aims and objectives to improve the clarity of the statements.

Subject content

We proposed the high level subject content in the consultation. Following the completion of the consultation we developed more detailed content based on these subject themes.

Assessment objectives and weightings

We proposed a set of assessment objectives and their weightings, we have made small amendments to the wording and weightings of the assessment objectives to ensure clarity.

Non-examination assessment

As we proposed, the qualification will be wholly assessed through written examination only.

Subject aims and objectives

For the reformed GCE Government and Politics qualifications, Qualifications Wales proposed the following subject aims and objectives:

A Level Government and Politics must enable learners to:

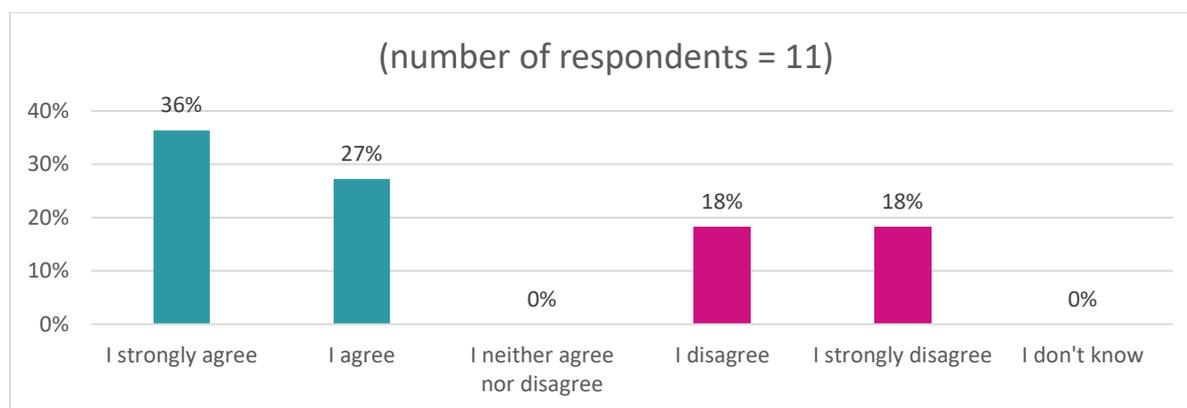
- develop knowledge and an informed understanding of contemporary political structures and issues in their historical context, both within the United Kingdom (UK) and globally;
- develop a critical awareness of the changing nature of politics and the relationships between political ideas, institutions and processes;
- develop knowledge and an informed understanding of influences and interests which have an impact on decisions in government and politics;
- develop knowledge and an informed understanding of the rights and responsibilities of individuals and groups;
- develop the ability to critically analyse, interpret and evaluate political information to form arguments and make judgements;
- develop an interest in, and engagement with, contemporary politics.

In relation to the subject aims and objectives we asked:

Question 1a: To what extent do you agree/disagree with the proposed subject aims for the reformed A Level Government and Politics in Wales?

As shown in Chart 1 below, the majority of respondents (63%) agreed or strongly agreed with the proposal, the remaining respondents (36%) disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Chart 1. Responses to question 1 of the GCE Government and Politics consultation.



- Of the respondents who agreed or strongly agreed with the proposal, one respondent stated “subject content [...] is overloaded”.
- Of the respondents who disagreed or strongly disagreed with the proposal, respondents stated
 - “I am concerned at the inclusion of references to history in the aims”,
 - “historical context is confusing”.

As shown below, we have made a number of small amendments to the wording of the subject aims and objectives, which includes the removal of reference to historical contexts, to improve the clarity of the statements. These are reflected in the published Approval Criteria GCE AS and A Level Government and Politics (2016)¹.

1. AS and A Level Government and Politics specifications must enable learners to develop:
 - 1.1. knowledge and understanding of contemporary political structures and issues within Wales and the United Kingdom (UK);
 - 1.2. knowledge and understanding of broader global political structures and issues;
 - 1.3. knowledge and understanding of the influences and interests which have an impact on decisions in government and politics;

- 1.4. knowledge and understanding of the rights and responsibilities of individuals and groups;
- 1.5. an awareness of the changing nature of politics and the relationships between political ideas, institutions and processes;
- 1.6. the ability to critically analyse, interpret and evaluate political information to form arguments and make judgments;
- 1.7. an interest in, and engagement with, contemporary politics.

Subject Content

For the reformed AS and A Level Government and Politics qualification, Qualifications Wales proposed that the subject content should be based on the current subject criteria. We further proposed that the specification must:

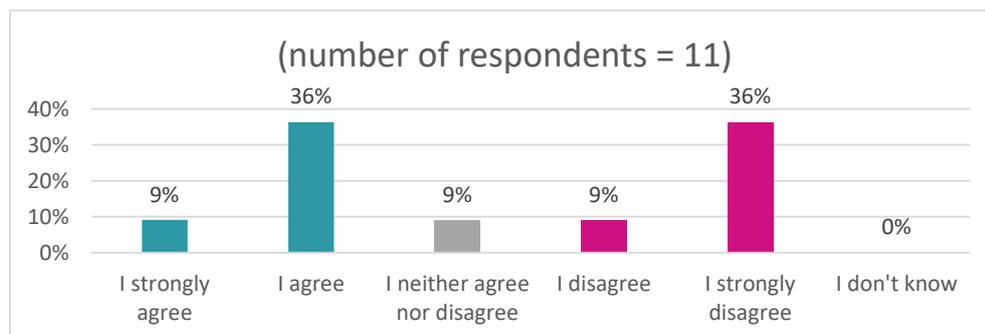
- require learners to study the themes of:
 - government in Wales, United Kingdom and European Union;
 - political participation in Wales, United Kingdom and European Union;
 - political ideas including; liberalism, conservatism, socialism, communism, nationalism, feminism and environmentalism;
 - the government and politics of the United States of America (USA)
 - global politics and international relations.
- require learners to understand the interrelationships between the different areas of study and develop and awareness of their significance.

In relation to the subject content we asked:

Question 1b: To what extent do you agree/disagree with the proposed subject content for the reformed A Level Government and Politics in Wales?

As illustrated in Chart 2 below, 45% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the proposal, 45% disagreed or strongly disagreed and the remaining 9% of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed.

Chart 2. Responses to question 1b of the GCE Government and Politics consultation.



- Of the five respondents who agreed or strongly agreed with the proposal, one respondent stated “delighted to see an emphasis on Government in Wales and Political participation in Wales”.
- Of the five respondents who disagreed or strongly disagreed with the proposal, some respondents expressed concern about the additional content.

The subject content requirement in the Approval Criteria is reflective of the subject themes we proposed. Following the consultation, we have added more detailed content which aligns with these themes and have included some optionality in regards to which political ideas need to be studied. Although there were concerns in regards to the amount of content that would be in the new qualifications, we have taken a balance approached to what content should be included, which allows learner to study a breadth of subject themes at an appropriate depth.

Assessment objectives and weightings

For the reformed AS and A Level Government and Politics qualification we proposed the following assessment objectives and weightings:

Objective	Requirements	AS Level	A2 Level	Full A Level
AO1	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of relevant institutions, processes, political concepts, theories and issues.	49%	34%	40%
AO2	Comprehend and interpret political information to construct and communicate arguments and explanations.	20%	20%	20%
AO3	Analyse and evaluate the areas of government and politics studied in order to identify relevant parallels, similarities, connections and differences, leading to reasoned conclusions.	31%	46%	40%

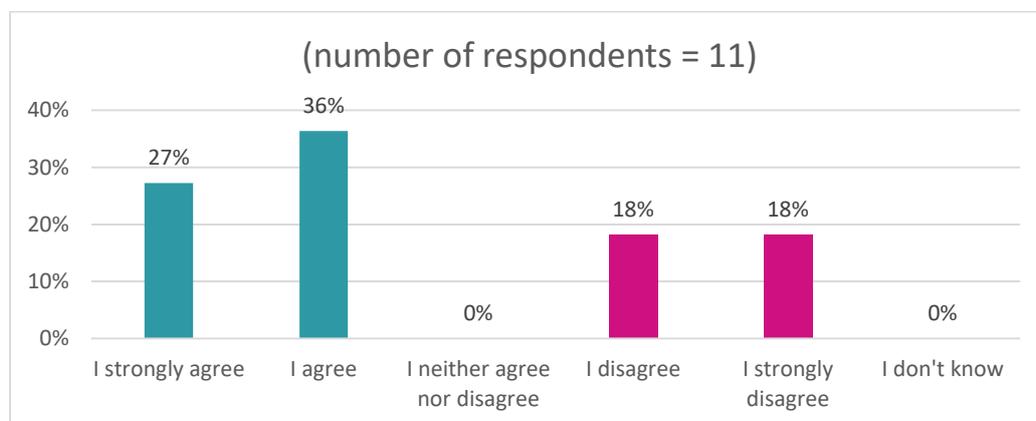
Table 1. showing the proposed assessment objectives and weightings for the reformed AS and A Level Government and Politics.

In our consultation, we asked:

Question 2: To what extent do you agree/disagree that the proposed weightings of the assessment objectives are appropriate for AS and A Level Government and Politics?

As Chart 3 below shows, the majority (63%) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the proposal, the remaining respondents (36%) disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Chart 3. Responses to question 2 of the GCE Government and Politics consultation.



- Of the respondents who agreed or strongly agreed with the proposal, one respondent stated they have “reservations as understand and comprehend largely mean the same thing[...] interpret and apply would be more appropriate for AO2”.
- Of the four respondents who disagreed or strongly disagreed with the proposal, one respondent stated “too much is given to knowledge at AS. AO2 and AO3 appear to have been switched. Round numbers would be more logical”.

We have made some amendments to the assessment objectives and weightings which we consulted on. These amendments have been made to ensure that there is clarity in the wording of the objectives and that the assessment objective weightings allow for appropriate assessment. We have included the following (Table 2) assessment objectives and weightings in the published Approval Criteria for GCE AS and A Level Government and Politics (2016)¹.

Objective	Requirements	Weighting		
		AS	A2	A Level
AO1	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of relevant institutions, processes, political concepts, theories and issues.	40-50%	30-40%	30-40%
AO2	Interpret and apply political information to identify and explain relevant similarities, differences, and connections.	20-30%	25-35%	25-35%
AO3	Analyse and evaluate the areas of government and politics studied to construct arguments, make substantiated judgements and draw conclusions.	30-40%	35-45%	35-45%

Table 2. showing the published assessment objectives and weightings for the reformed AS and A Level Government and Politics.

Non-Examination Assessment (NEA)

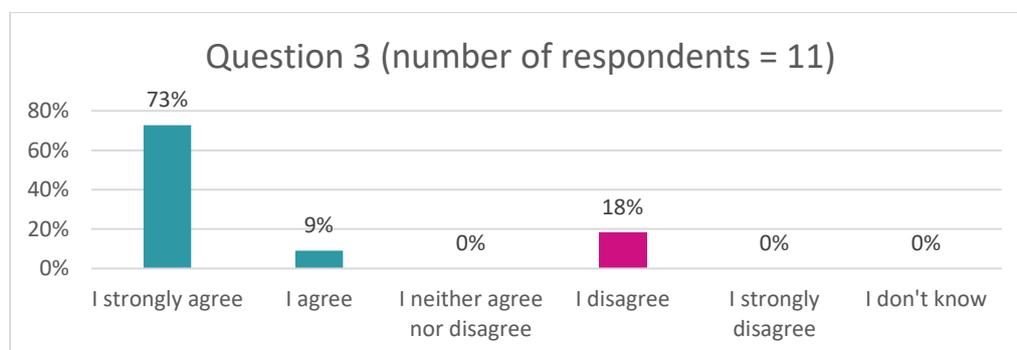
We proposed that the reformed AS and A Level Government and Politics qualification will be wholly assessed through written examinations only.

In our consultation, we asked:

Question 3: To what extent do you agree/disagree that A Level Government and Politics should be fully assessed through written examination?

Chart 4 below, shows 82% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the proposal, with the remaining 18% disagreeing.

Chart 4. Responses to question 3 of the GCE Government and Politics consultation.



- Of the respondents who agreed or strongly agreed with the proposal, one stated “I do not see what it could usefully achieve for politics that could not be just as well achieved through examinations”.
- Of the respondents who disagreed with the proposal, one stated “there should be an oral element of assessment to test debating and comprehension skills”.

The published *Approval Criteria GCE Government and Politics (2016)*¹ reflects the proposal.

Support and Resources

In all our consultations, we asked the following question:

What support and resources do you feel centres and teachers may require to achieve maximum readiness to deliver the revised specification? Please provide comments

Those who responded to this question highlighted, amongst others:

- the need to provide textbooks and other resources (including that for Welsh constitution, local government etc.)
- CPD events
- INSET training
- Specimen papers

We will share the points raised with the awarding body, consortia and Welsh Government.

Impact on individuals with protected characteristics

In all our consultations, we asked the following question:

Please highlight below if you feel any of this proposal has the potential to have a positive or negative impact on individuals with protected characteristics and whether any of the proposal would cause accessibility issues for learners in Wales.

For the reformed GCE Government and Politics consultation, no respondents highlighted any positive or negative impacts on individuals with protected characteristics.

**Further
information**

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