



Department
for Education

Consultation Response Form

**Consultation closing date: 26 May 2014
Your comments must reach us by that date**

Core maths technical guidance

If you would prefer to respond online to this consultation please use the following link: <https://www.education.gov.uk/consultations>

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.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reason for confidentiality:	

Name: Charlie Stripp	
Please tick if you are responding on behalf of your organisation.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Name of Organisation (if applicable): Mathematics in Education and Industry	
Address: Monckton House Epsom Centre White Horse Business Park Trowbridge	

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If your enquiry is related to the DfE e-consultation website or the consultation process in general, you can contact the Ministerial and Public Communications Division 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"/> Awarding organisation	<input type="checkbox"/> School/College/University	<input type="checkbox"/> FE representative body
<input type="checkbox"/> HE representative body	<input type="checkbox"/> Employer & representative body	<input type="checkbox"/> Union
<input type="checkbox"/> Society or professional body	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Maths education organisation	<input type="checkbox"/> Individual
<input type="checkbox"/> Other		

Please specify:

MEI is a charity and a membership organisation. It is an independent curriculum development body for mathematics. It is a major provider of mathematics teaching and learning resources, and of mathematics CPD for secondary school and post-16 mathematics teachers.

MEI developed and manages the DfE-funded Further Mathematics Support Programme.

1 Have the qualification requirements been clearly set out in the guidance?

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not Sure
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First some general comments, which form the background to our response to the following sections.

MEI very much welcomes the introduction of new Core Maths qualifications, and wishes to be actively and enthusiastically involved in all aspects of their implementation. We also welcome the aspirational tone of this technical guidance, but we are aware that some of the pressures 'on the ground' in many schools and colleges could make it difficult to realise these aspirations.

As well as reforms to A levels, post-16 providers are faced with two new challenges in mathematical provision for students, both requiring heavy investment in teaching capacity and other resources. Students without grade C in GCSE maths are required to continue studying towards the qualification as a condition of funding; this driver is immediate and unavoidable. Students who have grade C may be encouraged to continue with a Core Maths course by their school/college if it is mindful of performance tables to be published in over two years' time; this driver has its effect in the future, does not produce compulsion and is not an incentive for the student. It seems very likely that schools and colleges will focus on the 'resit' group of students in the allocation of scarce resources and will consider Core Maths a lower priority.

In particular, schools and colleges will be very reluctant to allow students to start a Core Maths course if they think that students are unlikely to succeed. There is also a risk that centres that do choose to offer Core Maths qualifications will select the specification they perceive to be easiest to pass, rather than the one which they believe is most helpful for their students in terms of what they will learn by doing the qualification.

An opportunity to learn from what happens from Sept 2014 should be built into the process of developing this new type of qualification. The qualifications are being introduced at unprecedented speed and there are bound to be lessons to be learned.

Now comments about the clarity of qualification requirements in the technical guidance.

We feel there is a lack of clarity in the following areas.

In section 2.5

- Under Objective 1 Statistics appears to be a content area which may or may not appear in the qualification, whereas Objective 2 seems to imply that 'statistical approaches' are compulsory.

In section 2.6

- We are not clear what the requirement that 25% of the qualification assessment should be synoptic means, either in theory or in practice.

In section 2.7

- It is not clear what 'repeat submission of coursework' means, nor how disallowing it would be monitored.

What are your views, if any, on the requirements and process set out in the guidance of the following characteristics that qualifications must demonstrate to meet the Core Maths performance table requirement? This may include comment on implementation as well as design.

2 a) Qualification purpose (section 2.2)

The expected purpose of a Core Maths qualification seems fine. The distinction between Core Maths and GCE Mathematics is important, and well-articulated.

2 b) Size (section 2.3)

No comment.

2 c) Recognition (section 2.4)

Broad support from employers, HEI departments and professional or learned bodies should be expected for each qualification, indicating that they deem the qualification to be useful.

2 d) Content (section 2.5)

We welcome the move towards greater commonality of content in Core Mathematics qualifications.

Generally, the broad approach to GCSE content in Objective 1 seems about right, particularly the stress on choosing items that fit the qualification purpose. We welcome the requirement for some mathematics 'beyond GCSE' (a sensible phrase that permits selection from the wide range of mathematics available) and that this is not restricted to content from GCE mathematics.

We recommend strongly that common assessment objectives be written for all Core Maths qualifications. We also recommend strongly that statistical reasoning should be a compulsory element of all Core Maths qualifications.

2 e) Linear and synoptic assessment (section 2.6)

We are disappointed that all Core Mathematics qualifications are required to be linear and do not feel the justification given is valid. Awarding organisations have been successfully meeting Ofqual targets for modular GCSE and GCE qualifications for several years; a few problems have arisen when these qualifications have been reformed and comparability is required between old and new versions - this does not arise with Core Mathematics.

Students for whom most of their programme of study comprises a vocational course which is continually assessed are likely to consider a course with assessment only at the end of the course a lower priority. Students who are studying A levels (all linear) will find the extra assessment of a linear maths qualification burdensome.

We are not clear what the requirement that 25% of the qualification assessment should be synoptic means, either in theory or in practice. Is this an evidence-based requirement?

2 f) External assessment (section 2.7)

The likely effect of coursework being an optional requirement is that awarding organisations will bow to market forces from schools and colleges and only offer qualifications which have no coursework. This seems to go against the thrust of Objectives 2 and 3 in section 2.5 – how can these be assessed validly in timed written examinations? It also goes against the advice of the ACME expert panel, which recommended 50% internal assessment in order that problem-solving and modelling aspects could be properly assessed. Nevertheless, we recognise the difficulties schools and colleges would have in implementing this.

2 g) Grading (section 2.8)

We recommend strongly that there should be a common approach to grading across all Core Maths requirements, with Ofqual ensuring comparability. This makes a sensible UCAS tariff possible, and end-users will understand the grading system.

2 h) Process (section 3)

This is a very tight timeline for awarding organisations, and coincides with development work on GCSE and GCE mathematics. This is likely to mean that the quality of the qualifications and the assessment will not be as good as it might be under other circumstances. It is essential that review is built into the process.

3 Do you have any other comments?

We welcome the establishing of three pathways in mathematics for post-16 students. However we remain concerned about the difficulties of progression between them.

- A student who succeeds at obtaining grade C at GCSE maths one year after leaving KS4 will find it difficult to progress to Core Maths – the qualifications are designed to take two years and such a student’s achievement in Core Maths after one year does not appear to count towards the Level 3 maths measure.
- We would like to see the drivers working in favour of students taking a Core Maths course for one year and then starting AS mathematics; such bridging courses are available now and should continue. A student (with grade B at GCSE say) may find their aspirations limited by being forced to continue with Core Maths for two years because progression to GCE Mathematics is not possible.

Please see also the comments made in answer to question 1.

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: charlie.stripp@mei.org.uk	

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

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 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 use real discussion with affected parties and experts as well as the expertise of civil service learning to make well informed decisions
- departments should explain what responses they have received and how these have been used in formulating policy
- consultation should be 'digital by default', but other forms should be used where these are needed to reach the groups affected by a policy
- the principles of the Compact between government and the voluntary and community sector will continue to be respected.

If you have any comments on how DfE consultations are conducted, please contact Aileen Shaw, DfE Consultation Coordinator, tel: 0370 000 2288 / email: aileen.shaw@education.gsi.gov.uk

Thank you for taking time to respond to this consultation.

Completed responses should be sent to the address shown below by 26 May 2014

Send by post to:

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SW1P 3BT

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