



A Response from NSEAD to the DfE Consultation for GCSE and A Level Subject Content Reform

Question

Is the revised GCSE content in each of these subjects appropriate? Please consider:

- Whether there is a suitable level of challenge
- Whether the content reflects what students need to know in order to progress to further academic and vocational education?

Please provide evidence to support your response

Yes /**No** /Not sure

Answer

Assessment Objectives

The Society considers that the level of challenge is not rigorous enough because the assessment objectives are too vague and generic to fully define content, specifically within the context of the knowledge and content of each of the specialist qualification titles (fine art, graphic communication, textile design, three dimensional design, photography and critical and contextual studies). The assessment objectives and their success criteria do not suitably address progression and mastery or inform the ways in which teachers thinking and their pedagogy will stretch and challenge students to achieve highly. In particular, there is insufficient distinction in the learning and industry relevance between those objectives particular to specialisms which are predominantly design focused as opposed to fine art or to a craft.

The Society recommends revising the assessment objectives to reflect the assessment and progression objectives and framework written by NSEAD as '*The Framework for Progression, Planning for Learning, Assessment, Recording and Reporting*' currently available on the NSEAD website.

http://www.nsead.org/curriculum-resources/assessment_and_progression.aspx

The Society recommends greater clarity for each assessment objective to set out knowledge, skills, understanding and industry/cultural awareness. The Society recommends the following headings.

AO1. Generating ideas. The knowledge and skills applied as part of designing and developing ideas.

AO2. Making. The knowledge and skills applied in the making of art craft and design

AO3. Evaluation. The knowledge and understanding applied through evaluation and critical judgement

AO4. Knowledge. The knowledge and skills gained and applied in the exploration of process and context.

Subject aims and learning outcomes

The Society considers that the subject aims and learning outcomes are aspirational but not assessable and this again significantly weakens the rigour of the subject.

The Society recommends revising the subject aims and learning outcomes and making them more distinctive in line with each specialist qualification title (fine art, graphic communication, textile design, three dimensional design, photography and critical and contextual studies) and with the measurable and specific knowledge and understanding demanded by the subject.

The Society recommends revising the success criteria within each of the assessment objectives to more clearly define and specify suitable differences in the progression steps relevant to the broad course of study as well as each specialist qualification title and representative of creative, media and design industry learning.

The Society recommends that the revised subject aims and learning outcomes include the words 'must' and 'will' to ensure the subject is sufficiently defined by what must be taught, so that it will be suitably resourced in schools with the materials and equipment necessary to gain high grades. The Society is aware that 54% of Heads of Department are reporting inconsistent department funding and that budget cuts are impacting directly on curriculum depth and attainment at all levels.

The qualification titles

The Society does not consider that the GCSE art and design content is appropriate because it does not effectively pick out the differences and distinctiveness between the specialist qualification titles, therefore the content cannot be guaranteed to reflect what students need to know in order to progress to further academic and vocational education.

The DfE Art and Design Subject Content Paper, July 2014, lists the approved list of qualification titles.

Art and design, art craft and design

Art and design, fine art

Art and design, graphic communication

Art and design, textile design

Art and design, three dimensional design

Art and design, photography

Art and design, critical and contextual studies

The DfE Art and Design Subject Content Paper, July 2014, also states.

'Awarding organisations offering GCSEs in art and design must provide students with a choice of at least three titles. This must include the qualification title art, craft and design, which is the broad course of study, and to ensure students have access to this, awarding organisations must offer at least two other qualifications from the above list.

Each title will be recognised as a distinct art and design GCSE qualification, and must use the titling conventions specified above on all relevant documentation.'

The Society is in agreement with the coverage of the subject within the context of the specialist qualification titles.

The Society is rigorously opposed to a shared generic '*subject content, knowledge and understanding and skills*' between the specialist qualification titles and proposes bespoke '*subject content, knowledge and understanding and skills*' that will suitably reflect the essential and unique attributes of each title, thus ensuring the rigour expected within their distinctive industries and further and higher educational and vocational pathways.

'Subject content, knowledge and understanding and skills' cannot be simplistically shared between photography, textile design, graphic communication, critical and contextual studies, three dimensional design and fine art.

The Society is currently preparing specific subject content, knowledge and understanding and skills for each qualification title to present to the DfE during autumn 2014. The Society hopes that this will be instrumental in both defining the necessary rigour for the subject at GCSE level, and will prompt the separation of the discount codes between the remaining qualification titles, fine art, textile design, graphic communication, critical and contextual studies and three dimensional design. The Society is aware that 47% of Heads of Department agree that discount codes have adversely influenced the organisation of the art and design curriculum. *'Students are only allowed to take one GCSE in art, textiles or graphics.'*

Evidence

The evidence the Society can present to support its response, is gathered from members and a tranche of NSEAD Art Craft and Design Educator Surveys.