

# Potential Changes to GCSEs - Response Booklet



Department of  
**Education**

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**Oideachais**

MÁNNYSTRIE D  
**Lear**

Name:

Please tick the box that best describes you as a respondent:

Pupil

Member of the public

Teacher

Parent

Organisation

Trade Union rep

Other

If Other please specify:

Name of School (if applicable):

School Reference Number (if applicable):

The Department may make responses available on the website [www.deni.gov.uk](http://www.deni.gov.uk), although contact names and addresses would be removed.

Please note that under the Freedom of Information Act (2000) (Annex A) your response may be made available, on request, to the public.

If you would prefer your response to remain confidential, please tick this box

## Potential Changes to GCSEs - Response Booklet

Comments and responses should be submitted by **30 December 2011** to:

Assessment & Qualifications Team,  
Department of Education,  
Rathgael House,  
43 Balloo Road,  
Rathgill,  
BANGOR,  
BT19 7PR.

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### Question 1

Please tick **one** of the options below which you agree with most:

Description	Please tick one only
GCSEs should remain as unitised assessment (continuous assessment over 2 years)	
GCSEs should return to linear assessment (all the examinations at the end of the GCSE period)?	
GCSEs should be a mix of both unitised and linear assessment (depending upon GCSE subject chosen)?	

Please explain your answer. In doing so, you may want to think about the main advantages of your preferred approach to assessment.

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### Question 2

If there was a more general move away from unitisation here, are there any specifications or subjects that should remain unitised?

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Reason why unitisation makes sense</b>
Maths	
English	
Sciences	
Languages	
Vocational / Occupational subjects	
Other	(please specify)

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### Question 3

To what extent are the following a concern under the current system of unitisation?

Concern	Tick as appropriate				
	No opinion on this	Not at all	Moderately concerned	Very concerning	Critical – has to change
Some teachers are focusing too much of their time on assessment rather than on teaching the course					
Taking assessment in parts doesn't allow for the candidate to get a feel for the wholeness of the subject					
There are too many opportunities to re-sit examinations, thereby calling into question the robustness of GCSE grades					
GCSEs are considered by some to be too small to be unitised effectively, in other words there is insufficient breadth to the units within some GCSEs					
Younger students, 14/15 year olds, are entering examinations that they may not be fully ready for					

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Any other concern – please provide comment and level of concern.



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### Question 4

If GCSEs were to change from unitised to linear, what in your view would be the impact on the following:

	Tick as appropriate					
Issue	No opinion on this	Very Positive Impact	Positive Impact	Neutral Impact	Negative Impact	Very Negative Impact
The amount of time available to cover everything in class						
Revision time						
The number of examinations you have to take						

Any other concern – please provide comment and nature of impact (very positive, positive, neutral, negative, very negative).

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### Question 5

Are there any particular groups / people that are likely to be affected by a change from unitised to linear GCSEs?

<b>Section 75 (Equality) Group (Section 75 is explained at Annex B)</b>	<b>Reason</b>
Persons of different religious belief	
Persons of different political opinion	
Persons of different racial group	
Persons of different age	
Persons of different marital status	
Persons of different sexual orientation	
Men / women generally	
Persons with a disability and those without	
Persons with dependants and those without	

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### Question 6

Are there any particular groups / people that are likely to be affected by an increased emphasis on Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar in marks for examinations?

<b>Section 75 (Equality) Group (Section 75 is explained at Annex B)</b>	<b>Reason</b>
Persons of different religious belief	
Persons of different political opinion	
Persons of different racial group	
Persons of different age	
Persons of different marital status	
Persons of different sexual orientation	
Men / women generally	
Persons with a disability and those without	
Persons with dependants and those without	

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### Any Other Comments

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for users to provide any other comments or feedback regarding the proposed changes to GCSEs.

**Thank you for providing your views on the proposed changes to GCSEs**

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## ANNEX A

### FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 – CONFIDENTIALITY OF CONSULTATIONS

The Department will publish a summary of responses following completion of the consultation process. Your response, and all other responses to the consultation, may be disclosed on request. The Department can only refuse to disclose information in exceptional circumstances. Before you submit your response, please read the paragraphs below on the confidentiality of consultations and they will give you guidance on the legal position about any information given by you in response to this consultation.

The Freedom of Information Act gives the public a right of access to any information held by a public authority, namely, the Department in this case. This right of access to information includes information provided in response to a consultation. The Department cannot automatically consider as confidential information supplied to it in response to a consultation. However, it does have the responsibility to decide whether any information provided by you in response to this consultation, including information about your identity should be made public or be treated as confidential.

This means that information provided by you in response to the consultation is unlikely to be treated as confidential, except in very particular circumstances. The Lord Chancellor's Code of Practice on the Freedom of Information Act provides that:

- the Department should only accept information from third parties in confidence if it is necessary to obtain that information in connection with the exercise of any of the Department's functions and it would not otherwise be provided;
- the Department should not agree to hold information received from third parties "in confidence" which is not confidential in nature;
- acceptance by the Department of confidentiality provisions must be for good reasons, capable of being justified to the Information Commissioner.

For further information about confidentiality of responses please contact the Information Commissioner's Office (or see web site at: <http://www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk/>).

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## ANNEX B

### Section 75 of the NI Act 1998

Section 75 of the 'NI Act 1998' requires all public authorities in carrying out their functions relating to the north of Ireland, to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between –

- persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation;
- men and women generally;
- persons with a disability and persons without; and
- persons with dependants and persons without.

In addition, without prejudice to the above obligation, public authorities must also, in carrying out their functions relating to the north of Ireland, have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.