



Department
for Education

Consultation Response Form

Consultation closing date: 16 April 2013
Your comments must reach us by that date.

Reform of the National Curriculum in England

Consultation Response Form

THIS FORM IS NOT INTERACTIVE. If you wish to respond electronically please use the online response facility available on the Department for Education e-consultation website (<http://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.

Reason for confidentiality:

Name Nick Johnstone
Organisation (if applicable) GuildHE
Address: Woburn House
20 Tavistock Square
London WC1H 9HB

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 tick one category that best describes you as a respondent

<input type="checkbox"/> Primary School	<input type="checkbox"/> Secondary School	<input type="checkbox"/> Special School
<input type="checkbox"/> Organisation representing school teachers	<input type="checkbox"/> Subject Association	<input type="checkbox"/> Parent
<input type="checkbox"/> Young Person	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Higher Education	<input type="checkbox"/> Further Education
<input type="checkbox"/> Academy	<input type="checkbox"/> Employer/Business Sector	<input type="checkbox"/> Local Authority
<input type="checkbox"/> Teacher	<input type="checkbox"/> Other	

Please Specify:

GuildHE is a formally recognised representative body for higher education institutions in the UK. Our members include smaller, specialist and vocationally-focused universities and university colleges, many of which specialise in subject areas which are critical for the UK's skills base, growth industries, and cultural sector.

We have not responded to every consultation question, but have made comments which relate to (1) progression to higher levels of learning, including Higher Education, and (2) breadth of subject focus within the National Curriculum.

Are you answering this consultation in response to particular subjects? Please tick all those that apply.

<input type="checkbox"/> English	<input type="checkbox"/> mathematics	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> art & design	<input type="checkbox"/> citizenship	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> computing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> design & technology	<input type="checkbox"/> geography	<input type="checkbox"/> history
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> languages	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> music	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> physical education
<input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable		

1 Do you have any comments on the proposed aims for the National Curriculum as a whole as set out in the framework document?

Comments:

We agree with the proposed intention that the curriculum should prepare pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life. To achieve this, the curriculum must have regard to the wide variety of career outcomes which may be appropriate to different learners with different strengths, and the wide range of social contexts in which learners may find themselves in later life.

As part of this, the curriculum must therefore continue to enable and encourage progression to high quality Vocational Qualifications at higher levels of learning.

While we welcome an approach would help prepare pupils for progression to higher levels of learning and eventually into Higher Education, the curriculum should be designed with the following in mind:

(1) Higher education is not the only appropriate progression route for individual learners.

(2) Higher education courses are not homogenous. Many courses, including those with high employability ratings, emphasise a skills-based, practice-oriented approach to HE rather than a narrowly academic focus. It is important that the National Curriculum retains a focus on skills.

(3) Higher education institutions place value on a broad range of subject learning from an early stage in life. The approach to learning at Key Stages 1 to 4 must not stifle this breadth.

(4) Similarly, we remain concerned that the combined impact of reforms to Key Stage 4 and accountability requirements will lead schools to concentrate on 'core' subjects at the expense of others. This will stifle the pipeline of talent in certain strategically important sectors where the UK is currently globally competitive. In particular, the KS4 reforms do not adequately reflect the importance of the wide range of subjects that are required for progression to higher education courses in economically and culturally important specialisms such as Art, Design, Music, or Modern Languages.

2 Do you agree that instead of detailed subject-level aims we should free teachers to shape their own curriculum aims based on the content in the programmes of study?

Agree

Disagree

X Not sure

Comments:

It is not clear to us what the impact of this freedom would be on the progression of pupils through to successive levels of study across the full range of qualifications – including progression beyond Key Stage 4. Pupils in some institutions may have more opportunities for progression than others.

3 Do you have any comments on the content set out in the draft programmes of study?

Comments:

See our response to Question 1, above.

4 Does the content set out in the draft programmes of study represent a sufficiently ambitious level of challenge for pupils at each key stage?

Sufficiently ambitious

Not sufficiently ambitious

Not sure

Comments:

No response.

5 Do you have any comments on the proposed wording of the attainment targets?

Comments:

Care should be taken to ensure transparency and consistency about the level which pupils have attained at each key stage. This is important where pupils are progressing to higher levels of learning. The current system is familiar to colleges and higher education institutions (some HE courses look at applicants' GCSE qualifications, for example). Therefore it is important that these institutions continue to be able to understand pupils' attainment up to KS4.

Decisions on the proposed structure of attainment targets should also be taken into account in the proposals on accountability for secondary and primary schools, which are being consulted on separately.

6 Do you agree that the draft programmes of study provide for effective progression between the key stages?

Agree

Disagree

X Not sure

Comments:

7 Do you agree that we should change the subject information and communication technology to computing, to reflect the content of the new programmes of study?

Agree

Disagree

X Not sure

Comments:

We do not have a view on the name of the subject. We would, however, argue strongly for the importance of skills in this subject to the wider digitisation of the economy and the workforce. The digital economy is a key strength of UK plc and will be crucial for our future economic competitiveness. Developing learners' competence in ICT requires an emphasis on skills training as well as academic ability. A skills-based approach will facilitate progression to a wide range of Higher Education courses, including courses which focus on the creation of new digital technologies, such as Computer Games Design, and their application to existing fields, such as Graphic Design. These courses are often taught in specialist universities which have a focus on practice-based degrees.

8 Does the new National Curriculum embody an expectation of higher standards for all children?

Yes

No

Not sure

Comments:

No response.

9 What impact - either positive or negative - will our proposals have on the 'protected characteristic' groups?

Comments:

No response.

10 To what extent will the new National Curriculum make clear to parents what their children should be learning at each stage of their education?

Comments:

No response.

11 What key factors will affect schools' ability to implement the new National Curriculum successfully from September 2014?

Comments:

The proposed timetable will be challenging for schools, especially given the number of parallel changes and reviews currently being conducted.

Effective and comprehensive communications from DfE, beginning at an early stage, will be crucial to the success of any reforms.

We are also concerned that the combined impact of all DfE's current or proposed reforms will lead schools to focus on changes in 'core' subjects at the expense of others. We do not disagree with the importance of English, Mathematics and Science. But (as we argued under Question 1, above) a narrow concentration of efforts in schools would have severe implications for the future supply of talent in some key economic and cultural sectors. These implications of this may be irreversible, and may have a greater impact on the availability of educational opportunities in the Arts or Music for pupils in more disadvantaged areas.

It is difficult to agree that centralised training programmes will not be useful, until the impact has been assessed more widely through an analysis of responses to this consultation.

12 Who is best placed to support schools and/or develop resources that schools will need to teach the new National Curriculum?

Comments:

No response.

13 Do you agree that we should amend the legislation to disapply the National Curriculum programmes of study, attainment targets and statutory assessment arrangements, as set out in section 12 of the consultation document?

Agree

Disagree

Not sure

Comments:

Amendments to legislation may be necessary in order to bring about certain changes. We would, however, urge that DfE takes great care when considering the timetable for reform. We agree that the schedule should reflect the timing of parallel changes to GCSEs, but there is a real risk of increasing complexity, burden and confusion if implementation is not conducted sensitively. This would affect pupils themselves, and their parents, as well as schools and staff, and would decrease public and international confidence in our school system.

14 Do you have any other comments you would like to make about the proposals in this consultation?

Comments:

No response.

15 Please let us have your views on responding to this consultation (e.g. the number and type of questions, whether it was easy to find, understand, complete etc.)

Comments:

No response.

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

E-mail address for acknowledgement: _____

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?

X
Yes

No

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 16 April 2013

Send by post to:

Consultation Unit,
Area 1c,
Castle View House,
East Lane,
Runcorn,
Cheshire,
WA7 2GJ.

Send by e-mail to: NationalCurriculum.CONULTATION@education.gsi.gov.uk