

Case Study

Ofqual – Changes to GCSE & A Level Consultation Analysis



Challenge

Major changes were made to GCSE, A level and AS qualifications taken by students in England. The exams regulator, Ofqual, carried out consultations into proposals for new GCSEs, AS and A level qualifications for first teaching in 2016 with teachers, students, certification bodies and other stakeholders. Ofqual engaged AlphaPlus to review and analyse the consultation responses.

Our Role

The consultation asked respondents for their views on:

- Structure of GCSEs: proposed tiering arrangements
- Assessment of GCSEs, A levels and AS: proposed assessment arrangements, including proposals on examinations, non-exam assessment (NEA)
- Assessment of GCSEs, A levels and AS: content and weighting of proposed assessment objectives.

AlphaPlus carried out the analysis for all three phases of changes to qualifications. Ofqual wrote and hosted the questionnaire.

The consultation questionnaires included both closed and open-

response questions. Respondents were also encouraged to email in their view in non-structured formats which made data analysis more complex.

We coded 967 responses using nVivo coding software against a code frame agreed with Ofqual.

We worked with the client to define innovative methods of displaying the quantitative information visually. Qualitative analysts were able to trawl large amounts of disparate data and form it into cogent summaries.

We also identified comments that related to content, rather than assessment, and shared these with Ofqual, who then sent them on to DfE (who were responsible for the curriculum and content of the qualifications).

This project was carried out to a very tight timetable, with a client who demanded close supervision of the data. The changes to qualifications were of considerable public interest and the consultation attracted media attention. Our report delivered a clear, plain English analysis of a complex consultation.

The report is published [here](#).



We help make educational assessments better

AlphaPlus is an education service business that specialises in **standards, assessment and certification**. We help our clients design, develop, deploy and evaluate **qualifications** and their **underpinning assessments**.

Our work spans the public and private sectors, schools, colleges, vocational and professional learning.

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Our role

- Review of consultation responses
- Data analysis
- Report writing

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