

# Improving GCSE: internal and controlled assessment

## *Recommendations on the nature of controls needed for internal and controlled assessment in future GCSE specifications*

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# 1 Introduction

- 1.1 In 2005, the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) published *A review of GCSE and GCE coursework arrangements*. The report was the outcome of the most extensive review to date of the role of coursework in current GCSE and GCE specifications and how those involved viewed coursework. It recognised the perceived value of coursework but also identified a number of concerns. A series of recommendations initiated significant work by the regulatory authorities and the awarding bodies. The subsequent outcomes of this work have already started to address the concerns raised in the report and strengthen the controls on internal assessment.
- 1.2 In the same year, QCA also received a remit from the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) to carry out a further review of coursework to ensure that coursework should:
- accurately assess what it is trying to assess;
  - test skills and attributes that cannot be tested by a terminal examination;
  - be embedded within the course to reduce the overall burden on teachers and students;
  - be robust, by including examples of work produced in lesson time;
  - be consistent, ensuring that similar subjects have similar coursework.
- 1.3 In the light of this remit, QCA undertook a review of the way coursework arrangements should be developed in future GCSE specifications and presented the outcomes in *A review of GCSE coursework* (2006).
- 1.4 This report set out three principles that should underpin all assessments in future GCSEs.
- The intended learning outcomes in a subject are the critical factor in determining the appropriate form of assessment.
  - The most valid (including reliable) form of assessment for a learning outcome should be determined so that results are fair and robust in any circumstances and maintain public confidence.
  - The assessment process must be manageable.
- 1.5 The report also outlined proposals on the future nature of internal assessment in different subjects:
- a) *In GCSE business studies, classical subjects, economics, English literature, geography, history, modern foreign languages, religious studies and social sciences, there should no longer be coursework that is teacher set and marked. It should be replaced by controlled assessments.*
  - b) *Controlled assessments will be taken under supervised conditions and will either be set by the awarding body and marked by teachers or set by teachers and marked by the awarding body. Controlled assessments may involve different parameters from those used in traditional written examinations. They may, for example, allow access to sources such as the internet but under supervision.*
  - c) *In GCSE art & design, design & technology, home economics, music and physical education, internal assessments should continue with stronger safeguards.*
- (QCA press announcement, 6 October 2006)
- 1.6 In the accompanying letter to the Secretary of State (see Appendix 1), QCA identified the need to develop a set of recommendations on the nature of controls needed to address the following key issues:
- making assessment manageable for students and teachers;
  - ensuring assessment judgements are of the highest quality;
  - discouraging and detecting malpractice in assessment;
  - allowing teachers to confidently authenticate students' work;
  - avoiding assessments that are too formulaic and predictable;
  - supporting good teaching and learning.
- 1.7 Following this advice, the regulatory authorities began a programme of work to develop these controls.

- QCA commissioned external consultants to carry out research on the nature of controls required for controlled assessments in relevant subjects (specified in points a) and b) above), identify learning outcomes that might provide a focus for controlled assessment and provide examples of tasks that could be used in these subjects.
- In November 2006, advanced skills teachers met with the consultants and staff from the regulatory authorities to consider the development of learning outcomes and controlled assessments.
- Staff from awarding bodies and the regulatory authorities met with senior moderators in GCSE subjects such as art and design, design and technology (D&T), music, physical education, information and communication technology (ICT), home economics and leisure and tourism, where coursework focuses on performance skills or practical abilities and has a relatively high weighting. They considered ways in which generic and subject-specific controls could be developed to maximise validity and reliability, and to permit teachers confidently to authenticate students' work.
- QCA, the Department for Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (DELLS) and the Council for the Curriculum Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) consulted informally on the findings and examples from the consultants' research and the conferences. Meetings were held with: teachers from a range of subjects in England, Wales and Northern Ireland; teacher associations; subject and professional associations; and the awarding bodies.

1.8 This report is the product of that development process; its findings and conclusions are based on an analysis and evaluation of the outcomes from these activities. Particular thanks are due to Andrew Ashwin, Sue Bennett, Eleanor Rawling and Bridget Smith for producing the early work on which this report is based.

1.9 The report considers and develops a set of recommendations on the nature of controls to strengthen public confidence in internal assessment across the full range of GCSE subjects. Its aim is to inform the development of the regulations and subject criteria that will shape the next phase of development of GCSE specifications by the awarding bodies. Specifically, it considers:

- the kinds of learning outcomes likely to be addressed by internal assessment and controlled assessments;
- the nature and effectiveness of controls that currently exist;
- how these controls should be developed to strengthen internal assessment and underpin controlled assessment.

These recommendations are complemented by examples of controls and tasks across a range of subjects.

## 2 Learning outcomes

### Clarity of meaning

*The term learning outcome encompasses what it is that a learner can do, what he or she knows or understands, and what personal qualities and attributes he or she might have as a result of a learning process. Learning outcomes can be expressed very broadly and generally, or be extremely specific and detailed ...*

*(A review of GCSE coursework, QCA, 2006)*

- 2.1 The term 'learning outcome' is not one that has been used traditionally in the context of general qualifications. The terms 'aims' and 'assessment objectives' are the current language of criteria. Assessment objectives are currently defined as:
- One of a set of statements in a specification describing the focus of assessment.*  
(2006/7 Code of Practice)
- 2.2 The terms 'assessment objectives' and 'learning outcomes' are currently being used in a variety of ways and sometimes interchangeably. Given the definition of assessment objectives and the new principle that learning outcomes should determine the most valid type of assessment, it is possible to understand why this is happening. However, the terms clearly do not mean the same thing.
- 2.3 The term 'learning outcome' has strong curriculum connotations, as the QCA definition implies, with its recognition that it relates to the outcomes of a process of learning, in this case the learning programmes that underpin the GCSE specifications. Such outcomes often find stronger expression in the aims section of the GCSE criteria and subsequent specifications than in the assessment objectives, which tightly define what aspects of a subject are the focus of assessment. One of the current concerns about GCSE is a growing sense of disillusionment that it does not effectively assess what it aims to achieve. There has often been a mismatch between the aspirations for the learner's achievements from a programme and what the assessment actually recognises of a learner's attainment. The introduction of the term 'learning outcomes' has raised expectations about future GCSE development. If these expectations are to be realised, it will be necessary for the regulatory authorities to be very clear about the distinction between these terms and the role that each (if all continue to be used) will play in future developments.

### Developing learning outcomes

- 2.4 Work is in progress to revise GCSE subject criteria. A key aspect of this work will be to identify learning outcomes and determine the most valid form of assessment for each learning outcome.
- 2.5 The process of developing learning outcomes needs to build on:
- recent developments at key stage 3 to develop for each subject a framework of concepts, skills and understanding that indicate how that subject contributes to the desired learning outcomes expected for key stage 3 as a whole;
  - a clear view of the expected learning outcomes for young people by the age of 16 and how study in each subject contributes to these;
  - contemporary views about the focus, nature and significance of each subject;
  - recent developments in policy, such as: the 2006 Action Plan for Geography; the DfES Languages Review to consider what more can be done to encourage 14–16-year-olds to take up modern foreign languages (MFL); and most recently, *2020 Vision: report of the teaching and learning in 2020 review group*, which outlines a range of desired learning outcomes from education;
  - recent legislation on equal opportunities and disability;
  - efforts to promote progression to other qualifications and current assessment developments, for example A/AS criteria development, moves to promote e-assessment and ongoing work on developing the Diploma.

- 2.6 The development of learning outcomes also needs to be informed by an understanding of the best way to assess each learning outcome. The proposed principles for future GCSE assessment state:

*The intended learning outcomes in a subject are the critical factor in determining the appropriate form of assessment to use. ...*

*The most valid (including reliable) form of assessment for a learning outcome should be determined so that results are fair and robust in any circumstances and maintain public confidence in them.*

(A review of GCSE coursework, QCA 2006)

- 2.7 This is a change from current GCSE practice that has significant implications for the development of both criteria and specifications. Currently, there are only a few subjects (English, music, physical education and science) that have an assessment objective that is solely assessed by internal assessment. In most subjects, each assessment objective is assessed through both the examination and internal assessment. Consequently, development work will be needed across most subjects to redefine assessment objectives and formulate learning outcomes to ensure that a form of assessment appropriate to each particular learning outcome can assess them reliably. This is likely to result in learning outcomes that are 'extremely specific and detailed' rather than broad and general. It also follows that the most appropriate form of assessment for each learning outcome should be specified in the criteria so that it is the same across all specifications in a subject.

### Identifying learning outcomes appropriate for internal assessment

- 2.8 Business studies, classical subjects, economics, English literature, geography, history, MFL, social sciences and religious education (RE) were identified in the 2006 review as subjects primarily focused on the assessment of knowledge and understanding where external examinations or controlled assessments could replace coursework. Teachers and others have contested this view and, at the request of the Secretary of State, further work has taken place with teachers across these subjects to examine ways forward.
- 2.9 In particular, work has been carried out across business studies, classical subjects, economics, English literature, geography, history, MFL and social sciences to identify learning outcomes currently assessed by internal assessment that could provide a focus for future controlled assessments.
- 2.10 Across these subjects, aspects identified as appropriate for internal assessment included the ability to:
- carry out an investigation/research/enquiry and draw conclusions;
  - analyse and evaluate sources of evidence and interpretations in the context of an enquiry;
  - apply knowledge and understanding to produce extended narratives, explanations and analyses, including comparative analyses;
  - apply knowledge and understanding to new contexts and real issues;
  - undertake practical and ICT based tasks;
  - develop knowledge and understanding of the locality and contemporary events or issues.
- 2.11 These aspects are seen as most appropriate for internal/controlled assessments for two reasons. First, current assessment of some of these skills through external examinations can be poor, resulting in formulaic and predictable tasks. The assessment of the evaluation of sources and interpretations in history examinations is a case in point. Secondly, the assessment of these skills and attributes requires extended time or space for research, analysis, comparison and reflection and/or distinctive resources/equipment or specific contexts/localities.
- 2.12 Subjects such as art and design, D&T, drama, music, home economics, ICT, applied art and design, applied ICT, engineering and manufacturing, health and social care, and leisure and tourism were identified in the 2006 review as ones '*where a large proportion of the learning outcomes concern practical abilities or performance skills*'. The most valid assessment for these '*would normally be through internal assessment but not necessarily*

*using traditional coursework arrangements*'. In October 2006, QCA announced that it was looking to develop stronger safeguards for internal assessment in these subjects. Senior moderators analysed aspects assessed by internal assessment in these subjects and considered how current controls could be strengthened.

- 2.13 Appendix 2 contains specific examples across a range of subjects of aspects assessed by internal assessment that could provide a basis for learning outcomes.
- 2.14 Analysis of the aspects most appropriately assessed by internal assessment for these two groups of subjects suggests that it is possible to develop guidelines for the form of assessment that would be most appropriate for particular learning outcomes. For example, across the full range of subjects, some form of internal assessment would be the most valid form of assessment for learning outcomes that:
- relate to skills and their applications, for example, performance skills, practical skills, enquiry/investigative/research skills;
  - require specific contexts and locations, for example, a local site;
  - require real experiences or access to real events and people, for example, work in out-of-school contexts or the workplace;
  - require more time, space and/or access to specialised equipment for demonstration of skills or application of knowledge and understanding than can be made available in an examination context, for example, geographic information systems (GIS) software, manipulation of design software, time for extended writing.
- 2.15 Where there are learning outcomes in a subject that are most appropriately assessed by internal assessment, this should be specified in the criteria. It follows that it will no longer be possible to have optional internal assessment in those subjects. This is currently the case in subjects such as MFL, business studies, classical subjects and RE, where teachers can choose between internally or externally assessed components in some specifications.

## Ways forward

- 2.16 The focus on learning outcomes provides an opportunity to reform GCSE, rather than simply improve some aspects of the assessment. This has implications for examinations as well as internal assessment. The revision of subject criteria provides an opportunity to:
- identify in some subjects those learning outcomes relating to personal qualities, such as creativity and developing ideas in , that in the past have been seen as important but which have not been recognised through the assessment process;
  - address weaknesses in current criteria/specifications where internal assessment often replicates what is in the examination rather than assessing those aspects, such as enquiry, that cannot easily be assessed through an external examination;
  - identify the most valid form of assessment for each learning outcome and then determine the respective weightings for internal and external assessment on the basis of the relative significance of the various learning outcomes, rather than perpetuating historical decisions on relative weightings dating back to the early 1990s;
  - make improvements to the style and approach of examinations so that they are able to assess effectively learning outcomes that encompass a wider range of knowledge, understanding and skills than is currently the case.
- 2.17 Future work on developing learning outcomes should be informed by:
- QCA making clear the distinction and relationship between aims, assessment objectives and learning outcomes and the roles that each will play (if all three terms are to be used) in future criteria and specification development;
  - a clear programme of work to ensure that the range of factors, set out in paragraph 2.5, that should inform the development of learning outcomes in each subject area are taken into account;

- guidance on how learning outcomes should be framed and presented consistently across the criteria so that they do provide outcomes that can be related to the most appropriate form of valid assessment;
- guidelines along the lines of those suggested in paragraph 2.14 on the considerations that determine whether the most valid form of assessment for each learning outcome is internal assessment or external assessment.



### 3 Current controls on internal assessment

- 3.1 Current controls on internal assessment across all subjects operate at three levels.
- Regulations and guidance from the regulatory authorities in the form of:
    - *The statutory regulation of external qualifications* (Regulations) and *The 2006–7 code of practice for GCSE, GCE, VCE, GNVQ and AEA* (Code of Practice);
    - subject-specific criteria;
    - the forthcoming *Regulatory principles for e-assessment*, which seek to facilitate and encourage the adoption of e-assessment by clarifying the controls and safeguards needed to ensure manageable and reliable assessment.
  - Specifications, guidance and moderation from the awarding bodies, individually and collectively through the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ). Of particular significance is the *Instructions for the conduct of coursework/portfolios, 2006–7* issued by the JCQ to all centres.
  - Practices and procedures within centres.
- 3.2 These current controls seek to provide the public with confidence that internal assessment in centres is rigorous and to ensure that awarding bodies and centres have practices and procedures in place to ensure that it is. The controls on internal assessment govern four distinct but related processes:
- Task setting** – the fitness for purpose, reliability, manageability and suitability of the internal assessment activities.
- Task taking** – the conditions for support and supervision, and the authentication of candidates' work.
- Task marking** – the assessment objectives, mark schemes, guidance on applying assessment criteria, standardisation within centres and external moderation of teachers' marking.
- Training** – the training of, and guidance for, internal assessors in relation to their responsibilities.
- 3.3 *A review of GCE and GCSE coursework arrangements* in 2005 considered the effectiveness of procedures in each of these areas, identified areas of concern and outlined a series of recommendations for action by the regulatory authorities and the awarding bodies to address the issues raised.
- 3.4 This analysis of current controls looks at each of these areas and takes into account the subsequent changes, which the Secretary of State considered had done '*much to provide the level of confidence in GCSE outcomes that we, teachers, parents and students all require*' (Secretary of State to Ken Boston, 24 July 2006).

#### Task setting

- 3.5 The significance of task setting was clearly recognised in the 2005 review.
- 'The setting of appropriate coursework assignments is essential for achieving successful outcomes. Assignments must be designed so that candidates have the opportunity to fulfil all assessment criteria. Assignments must differentiate between candidates on the basis of attainment, allowing less able candidates to access the assessment objectives without capping the more able candidates.'*
- 3.6 The importance of task setting is reflected in the national regulations. The Regulations and Code of Practice (5.6–8) require that awarding bodies:
- set down parameters and guidance for task setting, defining the scale and nature of tasks that are acceptable;
  - publish detailed assessment criteria;
  - ensure that tasks and mark schemes devised by centres are of an appropriate standard and conform to the requirements of the specification.

- 3.7 One feature of the proposal on controlled assessments relates to the setting of the task, either by the awarding body or by the teacher. As the Regulations and Code of Practice make clear, there is no such clear-cut distinction. The awarding bodies:
- include detailed criteria governing task setting in all specifications – teachers setting their own tasks have to conform to these criteria; the 2005 review found that teachers believed that the majority of GCSE specifications were very clear in setting out the criteria and parameters, and teachers were confident in interpreting the specifications and teacher guidance;
  - provide exemplar tasks to help teachers understand the requirements and design their own tasks;
  - provide set tasks, or banks of tasks which are either required or available as an option;
  - require teachers to submit centre-devised tasks for approval;
  - offer coursework consultancy/advisers to help teachers set their own tasks, a service much appreciated by teachers;
  - provide feedback to teachers on their tasks through the moderation process so that teachers can improve the tasks year on year;
  - recognise the significance and difficulty of effective task setting as a means of enabling candidates to demonstrate the full range of attainment.
- 3.8 In a number of the subjects where controlled assessments have been proposed, such as business studies, history and MFL, some awarding bodies already set or approve the tasks. Similarly, in subjects such as applied art and design, art and design, home economics and ICT there are also examples of tasks that are set or approved by the awarding body.
- 3.9 Although task setting is closely controlled, a current perception by teachers and moderators is that the requirements vary from one awarding body to another and one subject to another. One way of strengthening the controls on task setting would be to require as standard the best of existing practice.

### **Task taking: conditions/supervision**

- 3.10 Task taking covers:
- when the task is undertaken;
  - how much time is available for the task;
  - the conditions that apply when undertaking the task;
  - the authentication of each candidate's work.

### **Timing and length of tasks**

- 3.11 The 2005 review pointed out that there are no rules or advice on when coursework should be completed within the course. This can result in student work reflecting attainment at different stages during the course, or to bunching of coursework at the end of the course.
- 3.12 Guidance on the length of a task is more often expressed as a word limit than as an indication of how much time should be spent on it. Where there are word limits, these vary considerably across awarding bodies and within subjects. This contributes to concerns about fairness as the time taken on a task could vary considerably between and within centres. It also contributes significantly to the burden of assessment. This is an area where clear guidance or directions from awarding bodies, particularly on the appropriate indicative amount of time that should be given to a task, could contribute to the reduction of the assessment burden on candidates and teachers.

### **Supervision/authentication**

- 3.13 The 2005 review was clear that: *'The supervision and authentication of candidate work is the key to the integrity and reliability of coursework assessment.'*
- 3.14 The areas of concern are generally well understood and are clearly regulated through the Code of Practice. It requires that the awarding body must:

- specify the conditions under which internally assessed work can be undertaken;
- where centre-based candidates undertake some internally assessed activities outside the school or college, require that sufficient work takes place under direct supervision to allow the internal assessors concerned to authenticate each candidate's work with confidence;
- specify the degree to which candidates are allowed to redraft their work prior to it being marked by the internal assessor;
- require internal assessors to record full details of the nature of all assistance given to individual candidates beyond that of the teaching group as a whole;
- require internal assessors to provide a written declaration for each candidate that confirms that:
  - the candidate's work was done under the conditions laid down by the specification;
  - they have authenticated the candidate's work and are satisfied that the work produced is solely that of the candidate concerned;
- require centres to obtain from each candidate a signed declaration that authenticates the coursework they produce as their own.

(Code of Practice, 5.9–15)

- 3.15 Senior moderators were concerned that in practice the rules and guidance given in specifications vary between subjects and across awarding bodies and are open to interpretation. Further, moderators sometimes provide additional, and sometimes conflicting, guidance.
- 3.16 The key concerns in this area identified in the 2005 review, and repeated recently in meetings with teachers, relate to:
- the nature and amount of support that is appropriate from teachers, for example, whether writing frames, templates and checklists are legitimate forms of support;
  - redrafting – there is a considerable burden on teachers and candidates resulting from the desire to redraft or rework assignments in order to improve the quality of the product before final assessment; this is perceived to be an area where the rules vary, are limited, and are open to interpretation;
  - parental support – there is a lack of clarity about the help and support that parents should provide;
  - difficulties of authentication where the majority of coursework is undertaken as homework completed outside the classroom;
  - plagiarism, Internet abuse and collusion between candidates, particularly where work is completed outside the school.
- 3.17 Steps have been taken since the 2005 review to address some of these concerns. For example, the regulatory authorities have revised the Code of Practice and published two pamphlets: *Authenticating coursework: A teacher's guide* and *Coursework: A guide for parents*. Of particular relevance, however, is the JCQ *Instructions for the conduct of coursework/portfolios, 2006–7*, which has been sent to all centres. This overrides any conflicting guidance in specifications and contains sections providing instructions that address concerns about: authentication; teacher involvement and support in coursework; drafting and redrafting; and internal standardisation. The JCQ has also published pamphlets on authentication for candidates and teachers. These go some way to providing the definitive and consistent guidance that teachers and moderators believe is needed.
- 3.18 Proposals for controlled assessments require that the conditions under which tasks are completed should be controlled. The above analysis indicates that the Regulations, Code of Practice and current guidance/instructions within specifications across all subjects already lay down a range of controls. However, the perceived lack of consistency in the directions across the awarding bodies is still a source of confusion and misunderstanding. Instructions in specifications vary from a reiteration of the general requirements of the Code of Practice, with the teacher left to determine the appropriate form of supervision (see, for example, some AQA specifications where a standard wording is employed), to specific control provisions (see for example MFL specifications by AQA, Edexcel, OCR and WJEC where a minimum of one task must be done under controlled conditions in the

classroom). In the interests of fairness to candidates, there is a strong view among teachers that the requirements and conditions for internal assessment in a subject should be the same across all awarding bodies.

- 3.19 It is also clear that issues re authentication, plagiarism and collusion are less in those subjects where over half the internal assessment is completed under teacher supervision. The JCQ *Instructions for the conduct of coursework/portfolios* requires teachers to ensure that they are familiar with the quality of each student's work and, if they are not, to require that coursework is completed under direct supervision. Meetings with teachers suggest that increasingly this practice is being adopted. Teachers are tending to concentrate more on process and are changing the focus of homework from 'writing up at home' to 'writing up in class and researching at home'. This trend may need reinforcing through greater direction and control on task taking across all subjects.

## Task marking

- 3.20 The Code of Practice (5.16–36) requires awarding bodies to:
- provide training on marking and standardisation;
  - publish detailed assessment criteria for each task which require the appropriate assessment objectives to be fully addressed;
  - require internal assessors to show clearly how credit has been assigned in relation to the criteria defined in the specification;
  - require centres to standardise assessments across different assessors and teaching groups;
  - moderate the marks submitted by each centre against the specimen assessment criteria, and adjust the marks submitted to bring each centre's judgements into line with the required standard.
- 3.21 Areas of concern, identified in the 2005 review and reinforced at the 2007 conferences with senior moderators, were that:
- teachers lack clarity on how and why they should show clearly how marks have been awarded and so regularly fail to provide sufficient guidance to the moderator;
  - not all awarding bodies provide details on proven standardisation techniques, and not all centres acknowledge this examination requirement;
  - there is inconsistency between awarding bodies in terms of identifying whether standardisation has taken place;
  - there is inconsistency between awarding bodies on the purpose and nature of moderator feedback;
  - the training, assessment and reward of moderators varies;
  - the potential use of technology to improve moderator sampling is not being realised.
- 3.22 Recognising and adopting best practice as standard across the awarding bodies would strengthen marking arrangements. The JCQ *Instructions for the conduct of coursework/portfolios* goes some way to addressing this, particularly in terms of internal assessors marking and annotating work and moderator feedback to centres. The *Regulatory principles for e-assessment* may also help to encourage the greater use of e-portfolios and the subsequent benefits that this will have for sampling and marking.
- 3.23 The proposals for controlled assessments suggest that they should be marked either by the teacher or by the awarding body. Currently, the awarding bodies rarely mark internally assessed work in the GCSE examination. There is, however, a significant investment by awarding bodies in the marking process. They:
- set the assessment criteria that teachers are required to use and provide guidance on their use;
  - provide training and guidance on marking and standardisation;
  - moderate teachers' marking through visits or postal sampling and scaling – this includes an element of second marking;
  - provide feedback to teachers through the moderators'/examiners' reports.
- 3.24 The process and the procedures for marking in GCSE are well tried and tested and reflect a working partnership between awarding bodies and teachers. Recent instructions from

JCQ have sought to strengthen these procedures. While in some subjects there are reservations about whether all teachers are able to operate the criteria effectively, this is not a major area of concern. In a number of subjects, moderators' reports indicate that there are few problems with teacher marking and that adjustments to teachers' marking are limited. In SHP history for example, adjustments have fallen from 30% to 5% over the life of the GCSE. Furthermore, as Edexcel's Chief Examiner for geography stated: *'The fact that the marks of relatively few centres need adjusting at moderation suggests that teachers do generally understand Edexcel's assessment criteria and can apply them successfully to their students' work'*.

## Training

- 3.25 The Regulations and Code of Practice set out clear expectations about how awarding bodies must prepare teachers for their role as internal assessors, irrespective of the percentage weighting of internal assessment in their subject.

*The awarding body must provide clear and comprehensive instructions and guidance to internal assessors. Centres and internal assessors must be given comprehensive information and feedback to ensure that they understand and can meet their responsibilities in relation to the requirement of the specification. The awarding body must provide training for internal assessors and teachers in task setting, marking and internal standardisation ... and will monitor the effectiveness of the training provided.*

(Code of Practice, 5.4)

- 3.26 Teachers involved in the 2005 review responded very positively to the training provided by awarding bodies, but concerns were raised about the timing and frequency of the training. Senior moderators were concerned that teachers new to a specification may not have received training and that attendance at training meetings was not compulsory. They feared that the people who most needed it did not attend.
- 3.27 Guidelines on internal standardisation and administration of internal assessment vary across awarding bodies and not all provide examples of proven standardisation practices. Consequently, practices and procedures within centres vary considerably, and in some centres no official time is given to standardisation. Teachers and moderators would like to see greater recognition for the work involved by teachers as an integral part of the internal assessment process, and a greater emphasis and acknowledgement of the role and responsibilities of the centre in the assessment process.

## 'Controlled assessment'

- 3.28 This analysis of the various processes involved in setting, carrying out and marking tasks demonstrates that a significant amount of control already applies to internal assessment across all subjects and that much of the assessment process is controlled. Coursework as originally envisaged – as teachers setting and marking the work of the course – hardly exists in current practice. The 2006 review recognised this when it pointed out that:

*in broad terms there has been a move away from a selection of work to illustrate the student's achievements during their course to a more specific, piece of work that has been set by the awarding body.*

(A review of GCSE coursework, 2006, 5.5)

- 3.29 This shift is reflected in the Regulations and Code of Practice, neither of which refers to coursework; instead they refer consistently to internal assessment, which is defined as: *assessments where tasks are set and marked against criteria provided by the awarding body and subject to external moderation.*

(Code of Practice, glossary)

- 3.30 This is not far removed from the description of controlled assessment. There is a strong case for recognising that all internal assessment is, in fact, controlled assessment. The proposal on controlled assessments across a particular range of subjects opens up the prospect of creating an unhelpful distinction between subjects. This distinction, between those with controlled assessment and those without, might be misinterpreted as meaning

that in some subjects (and these are usually those with a greater percentage of internal assessment) there is internal assessment that is not controlled.

- 3.31 Although 'coursework' as a term is much used, particularly by teachers, to describe any internal assessment, it is in fact a meaningless term, as it no longer accurately reflects what is happening. It is also an unhelpful term because it has more negative than positive connotations for many, particularly those outside education. The term 'controlled assessment' or possibly 'internal controlled assessment' should be adopted to describe all forms of internal assessment irrespective of subject type as it:
- accurately conveys what happens;
  - recognises and publicly acknowledges that all internal assessment operates under a range of controls on task setting, taking and marking;
  - will command public confidence;
  - will avoid unnecessary differences between subjects that could become divisive or a source of confusion to the public and within schools.

### **Current controls – ways forward**

- 3.32 Future work on controls starts from a position of considerable strength. The regulatory authorities should now consolidate and strengthen the controls by:
- working with the JCQ and awarding bodies to ensure that the measures taken in response to the 2005 review are given a higher profile and brought to the attention of teachers in schools;
  - requiring greater consistency across awarding bodies based on adoption and application of current best practice – the JCQ *Instructions for the conduct of coursework/portfolios* is a significant step in this direction;
  - monitoring the effectiveness of the JCQ *Instructions for the conduct of coursework/portfolios* in ensuring greater consistency across the awarding bodies and affecting practice in schools;
  - in due course, ensuring that the improvements developed and implemented in response to the 2005 review are built into the Code of Practice and awarding body practice as appropriate;
  - ensuring greater consistency across specifications within a subject area by specifying common requirements on the number and nature of tasks to be used and the controls that should apply;
  - requiring that the conditions relating to task taking are specified in future GCSE specifications in a similar level of detail as the nature of the task and the assessment criteria;
  - recognising and publicly acknowledging that the Regulations and Code of Practice already specify significant controls, which apply to most aspects of internal assessment – one very public way of doing this would be by replacing the terms 'coursework' and 'internal assessment' by the term 'internal controlled assessment' as the basis for future GCSE development across all subjects.

## 4 Developing the controls on internal assessment

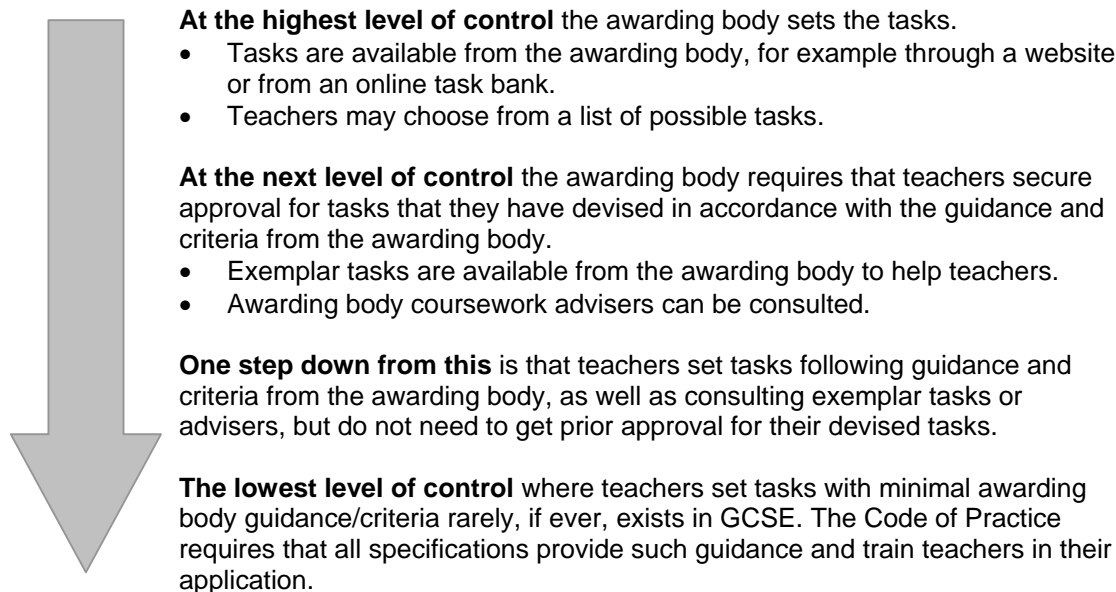
- 4.1 In its October advice to the Secretary of State (attached as Appendix 1), QCA identified the need to develop a set of recommendations on the nature of controls needed to address a number of key issues that relate directly to the four main areas of control.

Areas of control	Key issues to address
<b>Task setting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• avoiding assessments that are too formulaic and predictable</li> <li>• making the various forms of assessment valid and reliable</li> <li>• supporting good teaching and learning</li> <li>• making assessment manageable for students and teachers</li> </ul>
<b>Task taking Conditions/supervision</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• discouraging and detecting malpractice in assessment</li> <li>• allowing teachers confidently to authenticate students' work</li> <li>• making assessment manageable for students and teachers</li> </ul>
<b>Task marking</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ensuring assessment judgements are of the highest quality</li> </ul>
<b>Training</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the need for guidance and training to enhance the accuracy and reliability of teacher judgement, to enable teachers to prevent plagiarism and to reduce the extent of teacher help in writing assignments</li> </ul>

- 4.2 This section considers possible ways of developing existing or new controls in each of these areas and evaluates their effectiveness in addressing the relevant issues. It draws on the outcomes of the development work outlined in the Introduction, and an analysis of existing controls and controlled assessments in GCSE and GCE, and in other qualifications, such as the BTEC, IGCSE, the International Baccalaureate and the National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) in New Zealand.

### Task setting

- 4.3 Analysis of current controls on task setting points to a continuum of approaches which moves from a high to a low level of control.



- 4.4 In terms of the proposals relating to controlled assessments, the two highest levels of control might be seen as constituting 'awarding body set', and the third as representing 'teacher set'.

4.5 The following analysis considers the pros and cons of these various approaches in addressing the issues of:

- avoiding assessments that are too formulaic and predictable;
- making the various forms of assessment valid and reliable;
- supporting good teaching and learning;
- making assessment manageable for students and teachers.

### Awarding body sets tasks

<b>Pros</b>
<p>Validity and reliability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The assessment is designed by experienced assessors, who are usually effective teachers, to match the specified assessment objectives and enable students to achieve to the best of their potential (which is assured through the associated marking criteria). As an assessment instrument it has a high level of reliability and it has construct validity. Used year on year it also supports comparability.</li> </ul> <p>Teaching and learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This approach reduces the assessment burden on teachers by providing ready-made tasks.</li> <li>• Well-designed tasks, supported by differentiated materials, could have a positive impact on teaching and learning by encouraging teachers to undertake activities that they may not otherwise have done.</li> </ul> <p>Manageability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where awarding bodies already set tasks, this is cost neutral, but there would be implications if it were extended to new subjects.</li> </ul>
<b>Cons</b>
<p>Malpractice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The move towards awarding body set tasks, which are publicly available, has been linked to Internet abuse and plagiarism through the growth of websites providing set answers.</li> <li>• Set tasks provided year on year have led to concerns about assessments that are formulaic and predictable with a consequent negative impact on teaching and learning.</li> <li>• Repetition of the same tasks year on year also increases the likelihood of plagiarism and collusion between students in different year groups in a school.</li> </ul> <p>Fairness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers are concerned about fairness in that awarding body set tasks may not motivate their students and may not differentiate effectively across the range of ability. There are particular concerns about accessibility for the less able.</li> <li>• Teachers worry that while the production of awarding body tasks is a move towards greater standardisation, it is a move away from personalisation and the development of tasks that motivate, address the needs of their students, and make best use of their interests, the local opportunities and resources etc.</li> </ul>



## Awarding body approves tasks

<b>Pros</b>
<p>Validity and reliability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Board approval ensures that the task matches the specified learning outcomes and enables students to achieve to the best of their potential.</li> <li>• Reliability and validity are among the factors required to obtain approval, as is comparability with tasks year on year.</li> </ul> <p>Teaching and learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers are able to develop a task that is likely to motivate their students, make best use of local resources and differentiate effectively across the full range of ability represented in their school/class while conforming to awarding body guidelines.</li> <li>• The task is likely to have a positive impact on teaching and learning because of teacher involvement and the opportunity for teachers to focus it on the needs and interests of their students.</li> </ul> <p>Avoiding Malpractice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Because the task has been customised it is less susceptible to Internet abuse and plagiarism and is unlikely to be perceived as formulaic and predictable (unless of course the teacher uses it year after year).</li> </ul>
<b>Cons</b>
<p>Manageability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The approval of tasks is time consuming and costly for awarding bodies, although it is a service they currently provide freely because they appreciate the difficulty teachers face in setting effective tasks and the importance of good tasks for students.</li> <li>• Modifying tasks or developing a task adds to the burden on teachers, although many regard task setting as part of their teaching responsibilities.</li> </ul> <p>Malpractice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approved tasks used year on year run the same risks as set tasks in terms of collusion and plagiarism. Having received approval, a teacher may well feel inclined to go on using the task.</li> </ul>

## Teachers set tasks against awarding body criteria

<b>Pros</b>
<p>Teaching and learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers are able to develop a task that is likely to motivate their students, make best use of local resources and differentiate effectively across the full range of ability represented in their school/class.</li> <li>• The task is likely to have a positive impact on teaching and learning because of teacher involvement and the opportunity for teachers to focus it on the needs and interests of their students.</li> </ul> <p>Avoiding Malpractice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Because the task has been locally developed it is less susceptible to Internet abuse and plagiarism and is unlikely to be perceived as formulaic and predictable (unless of course the teacher uses it year after year).</li> </ul> <p>Validity and reliability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The use of common assessment criteria etc. provides assurance re validity, reliability and comparability, but the reliability and validity of the task depend on the teacher's ability to make best use of the criteria, guidance etc.</li> <li>• Access to awarding body coursework advisers/consultants gives teachers confidence that they have interpreted the assessment criteria accurately.</li> </ul>
<b>Cons</b>
<p>Validity and reliability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OFSTED and the awarding bodies consider that many teachers find that task setting against assessment criteria is difficult to get right.</li> <li>• The reliability and validity of the task depend on the teacher's ability to make best use of the criteria, guidance etc. If the teacher has misunderstood the criteria, the task may not adequately differentiate and this could adversely affect students' ability to show what they know, understand and can do.</li> </ul> <p>Fairness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moderator comment on the task arrives too late for the first generation of candidates.</li> </ul> <p>Manageability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing a task adds to the burden on teachers, although many regard it as part of their teaching responsibilities.</li> </ul>

**Malpractice**

- Tasks used year on year run the same risks as set or approved tasks in terms of collusion and plagiarism. Having developed and received moderator feedback on a task, a teacher may well feel inclined to go on using the task, particularly if it proves effective.

**Task setting – ways forward**

- 4.6 Many of the existing controls, outlined in the Regulations and Code of Practice, already provide a strong basis to ensure that task setting:
- avoids assessments that are too formulaic and predictable;
  - makes the various forms of assessment valid and reliable;
  - supports good teaching and learning;
  - makes assessment manageable for students and teachers.
- 4.7 This analysis of the pros and cons of the different approaches suggests further steps that should be taken to secure these ends, by strengthening the controls and addressing some of the potential weaknesses.
- It is important to recognise that there is a continuum of controls in task setting. Decisions on which level of control is the most appropriate within a subject should be made consciously and consistently across specifications. For example, the criteria should specify that within a particular subject where there are more than two tasks, at least one should be an awarding body set or approved task.
  - Where feasible, there should be a range or bank of awarding body set tasks. This would enable teachers to select tasks that match their students' needs/circumstances and would reduce the assessment burden on teachers.
  - Awarding body set tasks should be designed to promote good teaching and learning and to differentiate so that they are accessible to a wide range of students.
  - Awarding bodies should provide clear guidance on the degree to which set tasks can be customised without requiring approval for the changes.
  - Awarding body set tasks and tasks approved by awarding bodies should be changed regularly, annually if feasible, to avoid tasks becoming formulaic and predictable and to reduce opportunities for plagiarism and collusion. Teachers who set their own tasks should also be required to change them regularly.
  - Awarding bodies should consider the feasibility of accrediting teachers as assessors on the basis of the teachers demonstrating their competence to set tasks that meet awarding body criteria. Currently, such accreditation of teachers is confined to marking. This would avoid the need for year on year approval of tasks, would reinforce the role of teachers as assessors and could contribute to the development of chartered assessor status proposed by the Institute of Educational Assessors.
  - OFSTED and the awarding bodies recognise that teachers find it difficult to set tasks against assessment criteria. The awarding bodies (with the regulatory authorities) should provide training and guidance materials on developing tasks, and all awarding bodies should support task setting by providing access to internal assessment advisers/consultants.

**Task taking**

- 4.8 The main concerns in this area are to develop controls with a view to:
- discouraging and detecting malpractice in assessment;
  - allowing teachers confidently to authenticate students' work;
  - making assessment manageable for students and teachers.
- 4.9 Malpractice and authentication were among the main areas of concern in the 2005 review, and subsequently a number of steps have been taken through materials from the regulators and JCQ to address these concerns. These include:
- steps to clarify issues relating to drafting/redrafting and the amount and nature of support permissible from teachers and parents;
  - guidance to teachers and students on issues of authentication and malpractice.

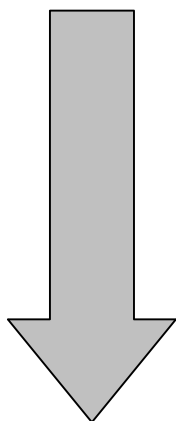
- 4.10 It is too early to evaluate the impact of these measures. The conferences held with teachers suggest that they have not yet appreciated that there is common guidance from JCQ as they, and senior moderators, continue to look for greater consistency from the awarding bodies on such issues. There is a clear need to ensure that the measures taken in response to the 2005 review are given a higher profile.

### Timing and length of assessments

- 4.11 One area where there is little guidance relates to the timing and length of assessments. Both are significant in terms of the manageability of coursework for candidates, teachers and centres. Where practice is poor:
- coursework is left to the end of the course, so creating a panic as there is a rush for completion – where this has happened across several subjects, it also results in a log jam which leads to high levels of stress for teachers and students;
  - candidates spend an inordinate amount of time on internal assessment that is not commensurate with the level of reward accorded to the task across the scheme of assessment.
- 4.12 Many schools have policies that coordinate the various demands of coursework across the subjects over the two years of the course. They appreciate the flexibility provided by awarding bodies on when coursework should be completed. Any moves to tighten up on when assignments should be done risk limiting this flexibility and reducing manageability. However, there is a need to provide guidance to schools on the management of internal assessment as a whole school issue to make sure that current best practice is disseminated.
- 4.13 The issue of the amount of time that should be spent on a task is another matter. While recognising teachers' concerns that there needs to be some flexibility to accommodate the range of abilities and circumstances, it remains the case that an essential part of task setting is judgement about the amount of time that should be given to its various components and the conditions that should govern the way in which it is completed. This is already the case in a number of practical subjects, but this practice should be extended to all internally assessed activities.
- 4.14 It is clear that teachers believe that the amount of time and the conditions in which tasks are carried out are the key variables from one school to another. They are looking for greater consistency in the interests of fairness and natural justice to candidates. Providing guidelines on the amount of time that should be spent on tasks, or particular aspects of a task, would be a significant step towards improving manageability for students and teachers.

### Supervision

- 4.15 The area of supervision is the one area where there is least guidance or control. This explains why it was such a focus of concern in the 2005 review and why, more generally, it is often the focus of public concern. Strengthening the controls in this area is a priority. Analysis of current controls on supervision points to a continuum of approaches, which moves from a high to a low level of control.



At the highest level, teachers **directly supervise** tasks, with all students in the same place working independently with limited access to resources.

Closely related to this, teachers **closely supervise** tasks, with students working individually or in groups often in the same area with controlled access to resources.

One step down from this, teachers and others **loosely supervise** tasks by setting out conditions that students observe, while working in different places and accessing a range of resources.

At the lowest level of control, there is **no supervision**. Tasks are unsupervised with students carrying out the task at home or elsewhere.

- 4.16 The 2005 review of coursework was clear that many of the problems relating to authenticity, plagiarism, collusion and malpractice occur when the student's work is not supervised. In practical subjects, where work is carried out in a set place, such as an art studio or workshop, fewer of these problems occur.
- 4.17 In considering ways forward, it is helpful to develop this continuum of supervision as a set of controls that could be applied as appropriate to different elements of a task.

#### Direct supervision

- This is the kind of supervision that teachers regularly employ when they want students to work independently and produce work that is undeniably their own. It is appropriate for producing the final work that will be submitted for marking and moderation. The task might be done in one lesson or over a period of lessons. In some practical subjects this can be over a period of weeks.
- It is unhelpful, and mistaken, to refer to this as 'exam conditions' because:
  - it implies that the venue may be other than where students normally work with the teacher;
  - it suggests that what is done is a mini-exam;
  - it begs questions about invigilation, which is not part of teachers' terms and conditions;
  - it raises issues about absentees that can be more easily accommodated if it is seen as part of lessons.
- There is evidence that in a number of centres direct supervision is increasingly being employed in non-practical subjects as a way of addressing concerns about authentication. Some teachers also see it as improving manageability for themselves because it cuts down time spent on drafting and feedback, and manageable for students in that it helps them to bring the work to a conclusion.

#### Close supervision

- This is the kind of supervision that operates for much of the time in classrooms. It is appropriate for work at the outset or during a task where students are developing their understanding of what is required of them or planning and preparing their approach to the task. In some practical subjects this may also include carrying out the task. Teachers are in the same room/area as their students, for example, a classroom, computer suite, laboratory, art room, or site.
- Students may be working individually or in groups on a range of activities related to the task. They may be using a range of resources, including the Internet.
- The teacher is both supervising and guiding the work. The level of supervision gives the teacher a clear understanding of the particular needs of their students. This is manageable for teachers and students and helps teachers to develop an understanding of students' capabilities, so enabling them better to cope with issues of plagiarism and collusion.

#### Loose supervision

- This form of supervision operates in situations where the teacher and/or other adults are not necessarily in the same room/area as the students but where the teacher is managing the work that is taking place. Teachers establish parameters in which the work will take place, and students are required to work within these parameters
- This is appropriate where students are carrying out research or an investigation to gather data/information that will be used later in the task. Students may be in different areas/places, for example, carrying out a high street survey or fieldwork investigation, or be in different parts of the school. They may be accessing a range of resources, including the Internet, or gathering information through interviews.
- In some cases this form of loosely supervised work is recorded by students in the form of a log or report on the process of carrying out the task. Teachers are able to verify the log in conversation with students or other adults, such as people within a workplace where the student worked. Work on logs has been cut back in some specifications as a way of avoiding unnecessary bureaucracy. Senior moderators were of the view that more work is needed on developing and disseminating effective ways of recording the process that would enhance teaching and learning.

<b>Unsupervised</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This situation occurs when students are given a task and a deadline and are expected to complete the work in their own time, often at home or in a location other than school. There is little or no teacher supervision. It is not clear how extensive this approach still is, as increasingly teachers are moving towards a more managed and supervised approach to internal assessment.</li> <li>• Where it does take place it invites a range of malpractice, including unacceptable intervention by parents and carers, collusion, plagiarism and Internet abuse. It is also often difficult for teachers to authenticate the work. In terms of manageability, it places a significant assessment burden on students and creates management problems for teachers</li> <li>• While recognising these concerns, there does remain a case for an element of unsupervised work, particularly as a key anticipated outcome of secondary education is that students should become independent and autonomous learners.</li> <li>• The main role of unsupervised work should be as part of the process, rather than creation of the product, and issues relating to recording process raised under loose supervision apply here. The key point is that unsupervised work should not be assumed to be a fallback position or the equivalent of homework. If it is appropriate as part of a task, then the task should say so.</li> </ul>

## Defining controls

- 4.18 Setting out guidance on the conditions that should apply to the different aspects involved in completing a task is a feature of some specifications. In some pilot GCSE examinations, such as history, conditions exist for supervised research and production of a report under timed controlled conditions. A pilot in (e-scape) has also indicated the value of an extended task recorded electronically and carried out in a fixed amount of time. There are similarities here to the National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) in New Zealand where there are controlled assessments, set externally but marked internally. The New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) sets the tasks. The tasks not only outline what is to be done, but also provide instructions to teachers and students on how different parts of a task should be managed and supervised. For example, in an economics task about price competition, students are given a week to collect data from a range of retail outlets and then use the data to complete an analysis in class under supervised conditions in 75 minutes.
- 4.19 In GCSE, while some subjects define the levels of supervision and types of activity, and specify time constraints as part of task setting, many do not. The pros and cons of defining controls as part of the task setting are considered below.

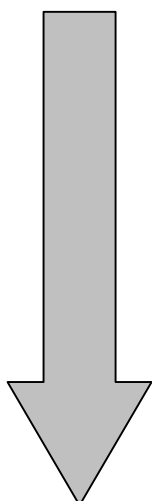
<b>Pros</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It would lead to greater consistency of practice across centres.</li> <li>• It would make explicit what kind of controls and levels of supervision applied to internal assessments.</li> <li>• It would assure teachers that what they were doing was what was expected.</li> <li>• It would reduce the assessment burden on teachers because of the increased clarity, particularly if it made clear the amount, if any, of comment or redrafting that was expected.</li> <li>• It would reduce the assessment burden on candidates by indicating time for the task and forms of supervision.</li> <li>• It enables the definition of different forms of forms of supervision appropriate to the activities involved.</li> </ul>
<b>Cons</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There would be an increased workload for awarding bodies initially (although this may in time be offset by savings in moderation).</li> <li>• It is likely to be perceived by some as restricting teachers' ability to develop a task in ways that meet their students' needs.</li> <li>• It is unlikely to differentiate effectively across the full range of ability and specific circumstances, unless this is made a priority.</li> <li>• While designed to support teachers, some will see it as undermining their professionalism.</li> </ul>

## Task taking – ways forward

- 4.20 Significant steps have already been taken as a result of the 2005 review, to:
- discourage and detect malpractice in assessment;
  - allow teachers confidently to authenticate students' work;
  - make assessment manageable for students and teachers.
- 4.21 Nevertheless, task taking remains the area where controls are least well developed and most difficult to enforce, and where most effort needs to be applied. The following steps would strengthen and reinforce this area.
- The regulatory authorities should provide guidance to centres on the management of internal assessment as a whole school/college issue to disseminate best practice on the timing of internal assessment across subjects over the course of key stage 4.
  - The awarding bodies should consider the continuum of supervision outlined in this report as the basis for developing a set of controls appropriate to particular activities.
  - In future, all internal assessment should contain, as an integral part of task setting, guidance on:
    - the total amount of time that a task should take;
    - the amount of time specific activities within a task should take;
    - the form of supervision expected for particular activities within a task.
 Decisions on the timing and nature of supervision will be both task- and subject-specific.
  - The awarding bodies, working with the regulatory authorities, should develop more effective ways of assessing process.

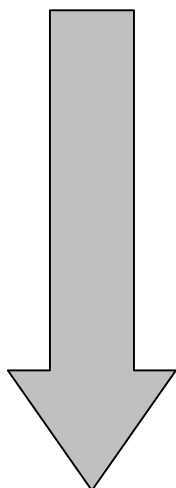
## Marking tasks

- 4.22 There are already extensive controls designed to ensure assessment judgements are of the highest quality. The JCQ *Instructions for the conduct of coursework/portfolios* is the most recent attempt to ensure greater consistency across the awarding bodies. It also addresses concerns raised by senior moderators about: the level of detail expected of teachers on the award of marks on students' work; models of effective standardisation within centres; and feedback to centres. The impact of this guidance on teachers and centres needs to be monitored.
- 4.23 As in other areas, an analysis of current approaches on marking points to a continuum which moves from a high to a low level of control.



At the highest level, **the awarding body marks the task**. Work is sent off to the awarding body for marking. This is rare at GCSE but not uncommon at GCE and in other qualifications.

The next step down is where **teachers mark tasks and the awarding body moderates** their marking. Teachers mark the work using mark schemes or marking criteria/guidelines provided by the awarding body. There may be training for teachers or some form of external standardisation when a specification is introduced to help teachers understand the national standard. The awarding body then externally moderates the teacher marking. An external moderator either visits the centre to review teacher judgements or reviews a sample of work sent by the centre. On the basis of an analysis of this sample, the moderator may make scaled adjustments to all candidates' work.



One step down from this is that **teachers/centres are trained and accredited by the awarding body to mark the tasks** and consequently the awarding body does not externally moderate the work. This approach is currently being trialled in Applied GCE, and the awarding bodies have published guidance on the steps needed for teachers to be accredited. In some GCSE pilots this approach has been used where the task is innovative. It also applies in a number of vocational qualifications where marking by teachers is not allowed until they have been accredited through, for example, passing a module or attending training. Internal verifiers then have a responsibility for the quality of marking within the centre. There may be light monitoring of the teachers' marking as part of the awarding body's general quality assurance procedures.

At the lowest level of control, **teachers mark/make a judgement against guidelines/standards with no external moderation**. There may be guidance and training on the standards expected. While this is the case with national curriculum assessment, it rarely applies in public examinations. A few of the GCSE pilots are notable exceptions.

- 4.24 The different approaches to marking have a number of pros and cons that need to be considered when determining how best to move forward.

### Awarding body marked

Pros
<p>Quality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is assumed that this will result in the highest quality of marking, and certainly the most standardised. This may well be the case for tasks set by the awarding bodies, but some question how effective it would be on tasks that were teacher set.</li> </ul> <p>Manageability for teachers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some teachers see this as an attractive proposition because it reduces their workload by taking the marking out of their hands.</li> </ul>
Cons
<p>Impact on teaching and learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A number of teachers believe that this would have a negative impact on teaching and learning because it would prevent formative feedback to students on their work. They see teacher marking as an integral part of the teaching and learning process, a point recently reinforced by the current government consultation on how best to provide effective feedback to students.</li> <li>External marking further separates teachers from the assessment process with the danger that they see themselves more as encouragers rather than assessors.</li> </ul> <p>Costs and manageability for awarding bodies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The process would be costly for awarding bodies. Where in the past awarding bodies have marked coursework, as in mathematics for example, the costs have been passed on to the centres. Awarding bodies consider it would be prohibitively expensive, except in small-entry subjects.</li> <li>It is unlikely to be manageable for awarding bodies as this could involve a significant increase in the number of markers needed. Existing moderators would not be sufficient to meet the demand and it would accentuate the already acute crisis in finding markers.</li> <li>External marking of internally assessed work by the awarding body will raise issues about whether teachers should be marking internally assessed work for no pay as part of their conditions of service.</li> </ul>

## Teacher marked with external moderation

<b>Pros</b>
<p>Manageability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This is a well established and understood system, which generally operates effectively. It is perceived by many as a system that needs fine-tuning rather than overhauling.</li> </ul> <p>Teaching and learning and assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It allows teachers to mark students work against externally provided criteria and so provide formative feedback to their students.</li> <li>Over time, effective moderator feedback can help to improve teacher marking.</li> <li>Effective training by awarding bodies improves teachers' abilities to operate as assessors.</li> <li>Many teachers and moderators would like to see greater use of consortia or regional moderation systems that, in the past, provided both training and an understanding of standards, whilst emphasising the teacher's role in the assessment process.</li> </ul>
<b>Cons</b>
<p>Teaching and learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some see externally provided assessment criteria as constraining teaching and causing teachers to teach to the performance criteria.</li> </ul> <p>Quality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some teachers have difficulty applying the mark schemes. Senior moderators particularly identify non-specialist teachers or those who have not been trained.</li> <li>Moderators complain that teachers do not provide sufficient information for effective moderation to take place.</li> <li>Training is by no means standard, and those who need it most often don't attend.</li> </ul> <p>Manageability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The requirements of preparing work for moderation are seen as burdensome by some teachers.</li> <li>Consortia or regional moderation systems are difficult to set up and maintain and are costly to the awarding bodies.</li> </ul>

## Accrediting teachers as assessors

<b>Pros</b>
<p>Teachers as assessors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The process of accreditation recognises the significance of the teacher's role in assessing their students as part of a public examining process.</li> <li>Accreditation can also be part of teachers' career progression and rewarded through revised performance management and CPD arrangements.</li> <li>It improves the quality and standardisation of marking and over time may reduce costs for awarding bodies.</li> <li>It has the potential to inspire public confidence in internal assessment.</li> <li>It would create parity with other qualifications that require teacher accreditation.</li> </ul>
<b>Cons</b>
<p>Manageability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There are a number of logistical arrangements that need sorting out. Many of these would apply in the early years of implementation where some centres had accredited teachers and others had none. Some of these issues, such as the frequency of re-accreditation are already being addressed in the Applied GCE pilot.</li> <li>Initial costs in establishing the scheme and providing accreditation could be high, but would be offset by savings on external moderation.</li> <li>Some teachers, and teacher unions, might regard this as divisive and see the accreditation of some as demeaning others. However, this move to accreditation of higher skill levels is now becoming a more accepted part of teaching.</li> <li>Even with accreditation, awarding bodies would need to operate some form of quality assurance monitoring.</li> </ul>



## Teacher judgement

Pros
<p>Teachers as assessors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This recognises the role of the teacher as the individual best placed to make judgements on the performance of their students against a set of national standards.</li> <li>• It builds on the experience of making teacher judgements at key stage 3.</li> <li>• It assumes/requires a clear understanding of national standards through exemplification and/or training.</li> </ul> <p>Manageability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It operates best on broad judgements as opposed to fine judgements, for example against best-fit statements.</li> <li>• Costs for awarding bodies shift from moderation to training and support, but training on a larger scale than currently.</li> </ul>
Cons
<p>Quality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is little evidence that teachers do have a common understanding of standards (even national curriculum standards).</li> <li>• Teachers and the public would have limited confidence in unmoderated teacher judgements in the current situation.</li> </ul> <p>Manageability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The burden on teachers might be marginally greater than preparation for external moderation.</li> <li>• It would be necessary to consider moving to broader assessment instruments and judgement rather than marking, for example as in New Zealand where teachers make judgements in relation to three broad bands of achievement on the tasks.</li> </ul>

## Marking tasks – ways forward

- 4.25 There are already extensive controls designed to ensure assessment judgements are of the highest quality. Any further controls must complement existing systems.
- Work with awarding bodies is needed to identify those tasks where it might be most appropriate for the awarding body to directly mark the work and in doing so address the concerns and costs that such a move would entail
  - Further steps should be taken to improve the external moderation of teacher marking. Senior moderators were particularly concerned to see better attendance at training meetings. Some believed that attendance should be compulsory and that any schools that failed to attend should be subjected to closer scrutiny.
  - The NAA, IEA, TDA and the awarding bodies should explore the feasibility and costs of accrediting teachers as assessors for public examinations when evidence is available from pilot GCSEs and the Applied GCEs.

## Training

- 4.26 The 2006 advice recognised the need for guidance and training to enhance the accuracy and reliability of teacher judgement, to enable teachers to prevent plagiarism, and to reduce the extent of teacher help in writing assignments.
- 4.27 There is some scepticism about the impact of published guidance (particularly published guidance on the Internet) that is not supported and consolidated through training. Teachers considered that the introduction of new GCSEs would need to be accompanied by a programme of guidance and training for all teachers likely to teach the revised specifications, particularly as the focus of the assessment on learning outcomes could be a significant change. They also recognised the need for ongoing training for new, and not so new, teachers coming into teaching of public examination courses.
- 4.28 The situation has never been more opportune to embrace a more coordinated approach to training.
- The new performance management and continuing professional development (CPD) arrangements that apply from September 2007 create new opportunities for

promoting, recognising and rewarding training as a significant part of teachers' professional development.

- IEA's recently published framework to standardise assessment processes and specify the skills required to deliver every stage of assessment provides a sound basis for targeting training and developing accreditation across all the processes involved in internal assessment. It is designed to supplement the Code of Practice and is supported by an online programme of professional development for its members. It is specifically designed '*to slim down the burden of assessment for schools and colleges by reducing the need for bureaucratic external quality assurance and will create a focus for effective continuing professional development in assessment*' (Graham Herbert, project manager for IEA). IEA sees this as the first step towards the chartered assessor.

4.29 The development of accredited teachers or chartered assessors specifically in the area of internal assessment has a number of advantages, some of which have been considered in the sections on task setting and marking. Accrediting teachers as internal assessors – individuals capable of meeting all the requirements of the professional framework on preparing for assessment, conducting assessment, feeding back on assessment, performing effectively and managing and working with others – would:

- boost public confidence and provide public recognition of the demands of internal assessment and the qualities expected of internal assessors;
- provide much greater coherence and direction to training and provide a mechanism for quality assuring and evaluating the training;
- enable awarding bodies and teachers to develop a stronger partnership in the assessment process, with awarding bodies recognising those teachers that had secured accreditation and supporting others to achieve accreditation – this could lead to, as IEA anticipates, a reduction in the assessment burden and awarding bodies making savings in the long run in the areas of task setting and external moderation.

4.30 But it is also necessary to consider more than the accreditation of individual teachers as assessors. For training to be effective, there must be policies in place in each centre to identify need, recognise the range of teachers' responsibilities, and provide them with leadership and support. The 2005 review drew attention to a number of centres where teachers complained that they were given insufficient time or support to carry out their assessment responsibilities and where there was inadequate recognition of the demands created by internal assessment. Standardisation was a particular area where teachers and moderators had doubts about how far it was in fact being carried out. Similarly, teachers and moderators pointed to teachers who were teaching and assessing courses without the necessary training or expertise. Awarding bodies recognise that they have little control over what happens in the centre and, in many cases, are entirely dependent on centres and teachers providing written assurances that procedures and processes have been followed. Annually, senior moderators and examiners' reports point to the very small number of cases where clearly procedures have not been followed. Remedial action can then be taken but it is too late for a cohort of candidates.

4.31 The 2006 review raised deeper, more systemic concerns. It pointed out that internal assessment in the 21st century operates in quite different circumstances to those pertaining in 1988. This becomes an issue when teachers and centres do not conform to traditional requirements and expectations, and where encouraging and helping their students to achieve higher grades takes precedence over their responsibilities as assessors. The 2006 review reflects the concerns of a number of teachers when it suggests that the scale of this problem may increase because of pressures on teachers arising from league tables and the link between performance management and pay. There is, however, very little evidence to suggest that this is happening.

4.32 In other qualifications in the UK and in other systems, the role of the centre and teachers in internal assessment is recognised and controlled through a system of centre accreditation. In New Zealand, for example, schools need to:

- demonstrate they have the procedures in place to operate school-based assessment against the standards set out in the Quality Assurance Standards for accrediting secondary schools;
- be accredited by the New Zealand Qualifications Authority;
- submit to external checks on the school's assessment systems at least once every three years to ensure assessment is valid, fair, consistent and accurate – these checks are particularly focused on the ability of senior and middle managers to have quality assurance systems in place within the school relating to training, implementation and marking of tasks, standardisation and authentication.

- 4.33 Current procedures for the inspection of schools in England put the emphasis on a school's self-evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses. As a first step towards centre accreditation, discussions should be held with OFSTED and other inspection agencies in Northern Ireland and Wales to establish how far current inspection evidence has identified concerns about schools' capabilities to manage public examinations, and particularly the expectations related to internal assessment, and whether current inspection procedures would address such concerns.
- 4.34 The Regulations and Code of Practice already contain details on accrediting centres, and this obtains in other qualifications. On the basis of its experience with BTEC, for example, Edexcel considers that centre accreditation recognises the professionalism of teachers and can be cost effective after the initial set-up costs. Given the systemic concerns raised by QCA, the question has to be asked whether it is still appropriate to exempt schools and colleges from accreditation as centres for GCE and GCSE. At the very least, there is a need to work with OFSTED, awarding bodies, NAA and the Institute of Educational Assessors to consider effective ways of quality assuring that all schools conform to the expectations and regulations concerning internal assessment. At the same time, thought should be given to the feasibility of developing a system of accreditation of centres as a further means of restoring public confidence in the ability of schools and colleges to fairly assess their students as part of a public examination.

### **Training – ways forward**

- 4.35 Future work on training needs to build on the range of publications that have been produced in response to the 2005 review, and take advantage of current initiatives such as the new framework for assessment from IEA and the developments in performance management and continuing professional development. Clearly published guidance will continue to have a role to play, but experience of significant changes to assessment systems in the past has indicated that it produces only a shallow understanding if there is no effective training to reinforce the key messages. If the training for new GCSEs is to have a significant impact in moving teachers forward, then it will be necessary to move beyond training on specific specifications by awarding bodies.
- The NAA, IEA, awarding bodies and the Teacher Development Agency (TDA) should develop a programme of work to explore the feasibility and costs of accrediting teachers as assessors for public examinations and/or developing chartered assessors as part of the IEA programme and TDA's CPD initiative to coincide with the introduction of new GCSEs.
  - The regulatory authorities working with OFSTED and other inspection agencies in Wales and Northern Ireland should establish whether centres' approach to their professional responsibilities with regard to internal assessment is changing in response to current developments as many predict it is.
  - The regulatory authorities, NAA and the awarding bodies should investigate ways of improving the quality assurance of the procedures and practices in centres to support internal assessment, including the feasibility and costs of accrediting centres.

## 5 Quality assuring internal and controlled assessment

- 5.1 This report has outlined how current controls can be strengthened and indicated a range of further controls that should be employed across all subjects to assure that tasks are manageable, valid and reliable, lead to assessment judgements of the highest quality, promote good teaching and learning, and enable teachers to confidently authenticate students' work and detect malpractice. This section of the report considers what this will mean in practice by considering sample tasks and the steps that need to be taken to develop consistent and effective controls.
- 5.2 The proposal that controlled assessments should be either awarding body set and teacher marked or teacher set and awarding body marked was based on a premise that there should be a combination of high (awarding body) and low (teacher) controls. Analysis has shown that in the three key areas of task setting, task taking and task marking, there is a range of approaches that operate along a continuum that moves from high to low levels of control. This diversity of levels of control provides a much richer environment in which to combine appropriate levels of control in task setting, taking and marking across all subjects. The aim must be to develop internal assessment activities that balance the need for standardisation with the need to promote good teaching and learning. This can be done across all subjects by developing tasks that:
- maximise quality assurance;
  - ensure that students are motivated and stimulated by the challenge of the work;
  - enable teachers to feel supported in managing assessment rather than being overwhelmed and deskilled by excessive controls.

### Examples of internal assessment activities

- 5.3 The following examples illustrate how, across the three areas of task setting, taking and marking:
- there can be a combination of different levels of control;
  - greater direction can be provided about task taking;
  - e-assessment can be employed.
- 5.4 All of these tasks build on what is currently available and yet are internal controlled assessments broadly along the lines that QCA proposed. The tasks relate to current assessment objectives that may be indicative of possible learning outcomes, although this is not intended to pre-empt decisions that have yet to be made. The timings in task taking cover all the stages of completing the task, from the briefing, through research and preparation to the final production. The times are indicative, as teachers will need flexibility to accommodate timetabling constraints. The sections on impact on teaching and learning, and the commentary, indicate how the various levels of control address current concerns.

MFL: Writing task 1	Commentary
<p><b>Task setting:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The awarding body sets out guidelines and criteria for the task, indicating which learning outcome/assessment objective it will assess. For example, research and produce, in the target language, a report, article, interview, text for an information leaflet, brochure or web pages relating to a local event, tourist attraction, celebrity or business etc. The target readers are speakers of the target language who may need the information or find the subject of interest. The task relates to current assessment objective 4: communicating in writing in the target language.</li> <li>➤ The teacher designs task against awarding body criteria and guidelines, adapting to local circumstances and the interests of the students. Students have some choice in terms of the context.</li> <li>➤ The teacher is able to seek advice from the awarding body on the suitability of the task design but is not required to get approval.</li> </ul> <p><b>Task taking:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The teacher briefs the students on the task. (Close supervision, c.30 min)</li> <li>➤ The students carry out research, conducting an interview, fieldwork. The research will depend on the tasks. (Loose supervision, c.1–2 hours)</li> <li>➤ The students analyse data and information collected and plan the report etc. (Close supervision c.3–4hours)</li> <li>➤ Students produce the report in class, working individually. (Direct supervision, c.1–2 hours)</li> </ul> <p><b>Marking:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The awarding body provides marking guidelines.</li> <li>➤ The teacher marks using awarding body guidelines and so is able to take into account the specific contexts and circumstances etc.</li> <li>➤ The awarding body externally moderates the marking.</li> </ul>	<p><i>The awarding body input into defining the areas of enquiry gives this a <b>high level of reliability</b> while providing a number of options and routes that teachers can pursue.</i></p> <p><i>The teacher input enables the task to</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>be tailored to the circumstances and experiences of the students,</i></li> <li>– <i>take advantage of local opportunities,</i></li> </ul> <p><i>so <b>avoiding formulaic and predictable tasks and promoting good teaching and learning.</b></i></p> <p><i>Awarding body guidance to the teacher on task setting ensures that the teacher set task is within the parameters set by the awarding body.</i></p> <p><i>This uses a range of supervision appropriate to the different parts of the activity. The increase of supervision across the task enables the teacher to be <b>confident that the work is authentic</b> and that there has been no malpractice.</i></p> <p><i>The allocation of indicative timings for the parts of the task <b>reduces the assessment burden on students</b> by providing clear steps and deadlines. It also <b>reduces the burden on teachers</b> as they are clear about the amount of time to allocate for the task.</i></p> <p><i>Defining the level of supervision and providing indicative timings results in <b>greater consistency</b> across schools.</i></p> <p><i>The use of awarding body marking guidelines and the external moderation of teachers' marking <b>quality assures the marking.</b></i></p> <p><i>The teacher marking enables feedback to the students and so <b>promotes learning.</b></i></p>
<p><b>Impact on teaching and learning:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ This promotes good teaching and learning by enabling students to relate languages to other areas of the curriculum and/or local contexts. The task allows for some choice by students, more independence and creativity, and enables students to use their language for real, meaningful purposes, which are more adult than many of the current GCSE tasks. Students also need to consider their target audience, which encourages focus on readability, style and accuracy. The task can be approached at different levels.</li> </ul>	

MFL: Writing task 2	Commentary
<p><b>Task setting:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The awarding body sets out guidelines and criteria for the task, indicating which learning outcome/assessment objective it will assess. For example, produce writing in the target language in a particular format on a specific topic. The task relates to current assessment objective 4: communicating in writing in the target language.</li> <li>➤ The teacher sets the task against awarding body criteria and guidelines in the context of the students' programme. For example, using a trip to the First World War battlefields in conjunction with the history department as a basis for students' writing in the target language, students write about the daily routine, the life and friends of the soldiers in the form of a diary or journal, imagining they are the soldiers.</li> <li>➤ The awarding body approves the task.</li> </ul> <p><b>Task taking:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The teacher briefs the students on the task. (Close supervision, c.30 min)</li> <li>➤ After the school trip, the students carry out research on conditions in the trenches, including use of computers by individuals in the school IT suite. (Loose supervision, c.1–2 hours)</li> <li>➤ The students analyse data and information collected and plan the diary/journal. (Close supervision c.3–4hours)</li> <li>➤ The students produce the diary in class, working individually. (Direct supervision, c.1–2 hours)</li> </ul> <p><b>Marking:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The awarding body provides marking guidelines.</li> <li>➤ The teacher marks, taking into account the specific circumstances of the task.</li> <li>➤ The awarding body externally moderates the teacher's marking.</li> </ul>	<p><i>The awarding body input into defining the task gives this a <b>high level of reliability</b>.</i></p> <p><i>Awarding body approval for the task ensures that the teacher set task is within the parameters set by the awarding body.</i></p> <p><i>The teacher input enables the task to be tailored to the circumstances and experiences of the students, so <b>avoiding formulaic and predictable tasks and promoting good teaching and learning</b>.</i></p> <p><i>This uses a range of supervision appropriate to the different parts of the activity. The increase of supervision across the task enables the teacher to be <b>confident that the work is authentic</b> and that there has been no malpractice.</i></p> <p><i>The allocation of indicative timings for parts of the task <b>reduces the assessment burden on students</b> by providing clear steps and deadlines. It also <b>reduces the burden on teachers</b> as they are clear about the amount of time to allocate for the task.</i></p> <p><i>Defining the level of supervision and providing indicative timings results in <b>greater consistency</b> across schools.</i></p> <p><i>The use of awarding body marking guidelines and the external moderation of teachers' marking <b>quality assures the marking</b>.</i></p> <p><i>The teacher marking enables feedback to the students and so <b>promotes learning</b>.</i></p> <p><i>This work could equally be marked by the awarding body in minority languages, but costs would otherwise be prohibitive.</i></p>
<p><b>Impact on teaching and learning:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Students are able to relate languages to other areas of the curriculum, contextualising their use of the target language. The task allows for some choice by students and encourages creativity. This is an imaginative response but based on factual material, rooted in a topic related to the target language context (historical in this instance).</li> </ul>	

History: Historical enquiry	Commentary
<p><b>Task setting:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The awarding body sets out criteria, outlines a range of exemplar topics, and provides marking guidelines. For example, a historical enquiry into an aspect of history, eg the role of an individual/important event or development. Enquiries should be based on a collection of sources or interpretations and target students' ability to carry out an enquiry and communicate their findings.</li> <li>➤ The teacher selects a common enquiry topic for all students from a selection provided by the awarding body, possibly with individuals/groups investigating particular aspects.</li> <li>➤ The teacher discusses the proposed areas of enquiry with an awarding body coursework adviser.</li> <li>➤ The awarding body approves the proposed enquiry topic.</li> </ul> <p><b>Task taking:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The students undertake research work related to the topic, such as Internet research, use of ICT, visits to sites or museums, group discussion. Students keep a record of the sources they have consulted and the value of the sources to their enquiry. (Loose supervision, c.8–10 hours)</li> <li>➤ Initial preparation, planning and analysis in class, with common access to ICT and resources. (Close supervision, c.2–4 hours)</li> <li>➤ Final production of the product/report is done individually in a set time with students having access to their notes. (Direct supervision, c.2–4hours)</li> </ul> <p><b>Marking:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The awarding body provides marking guidelines.</li> <li>➤ The teacher marks using awarding body guidelines.</li> <li>➤ The awarding body externally moderates a sample of reports.</li> </ul>	<p><i>The awarding body input into defining the areas of enquiry gives this a <b>high level of reliability</b>.</i></p> <p><i>Awarding body approval for the task ensures that the proposed areas of enquiry are within the parameters set by the awarding body.</i></p> <p><i>The teacher input enables the task to be tailored to the circumstances and experiences of the students and to particular resources, so <b>avoiding formulaic and predictable tasks and promoting good teaching and learning</b>.</i></p> <p><i>Access to the coursework adviser enables the teacher to have confidence that the proposed lines of enquiry are appropriate.</i></p> <p><i>This uses a range of supervision appropriate to the different parts of the activity. The increase of supervision across the task enables the teacher to be <b>confident that the work is authentic</b> and that there has been no malpractice.</i></p> <p><i>The use of a process log enables the teacher to review the steps that the student took in carrying out the enquiry.</i></p> <p><i>Defining the level of supervision and providing indicative timings results in <b>greater consistency</b> across schools.</i></p> <p><i>The allocation of indicative timings to parts of the task <b>reduces the assessment burden on students</b> by providing clear steps and deadlines. It also <b>reduces the burden on teachers</b> as they are clear about the amount of time to allocate for the task.</i></p> <p><i>The use of awarding body marking guidelines and the external moderation of teachers' marking <b>quality assures the marking</b>.</i></p> <p><i>The teacher marking enables feedback to the students and so <b>promotes learning</b>.</i></p>
<p><b>Impact on teaching and learning:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ This enables the student to develop the skills of investigation and enquiry, in particular the process of historical enquiry, and use a wide range of sources. Students have a limited choice of topics that could prove motivating. The enquiry provides an opportunity to engage with different interest and community groups such as archaeologists, museum staff, the heritage sector etc. Students can be given the opportunity to present their findings to their peers in a variety of ways.</li> </ul>	

History: Analysis of current event or site investigation	Commentary
<p><b>Task setting:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The awarding body sets out criteria, outlines a range of exemplar tasks, and provides marking guidelines. For example, analysing and understanding a current event in its historical context, or an investigation of a local site and its historical significance.</li> <li>➤ The teacher sets the task, adapting materials provided by the awarding body to fit a specific current event or a local site.</li> </ul> <p><b>Task taking:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Students undertake research work related to the topic, such as Internet research, use of ICT, visits to the site, group discussion. (Close supervision, c.8–10 hours)</li> <li>➤ Students produce their analysis/investigation individually with access to their notes. (Direct supervision, c.2–4hours)</li> </ul> <p><b>Marking:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The awarding body provides marking guidelines.</li> <li>➤ The teacher marks using awarding body guidelines in light of specialist/local knowledge of the event/site.</li> <li>➤ The awarding body externally moderates the teacher's marking.</li> <li>➤ Alternatively: teachers are accredited to carry out and assess this activity. Marking is not moderated.</li> </ul>	<p><i>The awarding body input into defining the areas of enquiry gives this a <b>high level of reliability</b>. There are tight guidelines re the way in which the current event should be analysed in its historical context or the site should be investigated.</i></p> <p><i>The teacher input enables the task to be tailored to the circumstances and experiences of the students, and take advantage of local sites so <b>avoiding formulaic and predictable tasks</b>.</i></p> <p><i>This uses supervision appropriate to the different parts of the activity. The level of supervision across the task enables the teacher to be <b>confident that the work is authentic</b> and that there has been no malpractice.</i></p> <p><i>The allocation of indicative timings to parts of the task <b>reduces the assessment burden on students</b> by providing clear steps and deadlines. It also <b>reduces the burden on teachers</b> as they are clear about the amount of time to allocate for the task.</i></p> <p><i>Defining the level of supervision and providing indicative timings results in <b>greater consistency</b> across schools.</i></p> <p><i>The use of awarding body marking guidelines and the external moderation of teachers' marking <b>quality assures the marking</b>.</i></p> <p><i>The teacher marking enables feedback to the students and so <b>promotes learning</b>.</i></p>
<p><b>Impact on teaching and learning:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ This task enables students to study current events in their historical context or learn about their locality. It develops skills of enquiry and provides opportunities to consider historical interpretations and make judgements about significance. The choice of site or event can help to motivate students by considering the relevance of events or sites.</li> </ul>	



D&T: Designing and making task	Commentary
<p><b>Task setting:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The awarding body sets out criteria for an extended designing and making activity task, using digital technology both to capture the student's work and for marking purposes.</li> <li>➤ This is based on the e-scape pilot D&amp;T activity. The task is resourced by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– a booklet with associated images;</li> <li>– a handling collection of idea objects;</li> <li>– client or user cards profiling requirements;</li> <li>– a central inspiration collection;</li> <li>– a central modelling kit.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Task taking:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The activity is managed through an administrator 'script' and e-scape applications on PDAs supplied to each candidate. Students create their own prototype solutions to a design and make task using the PDA to record the various steps in the process by drawing, taking photos, recording voice memos and note writing. The activity is broken down into a series of steps relating to 22 linked screens each of which present: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– the instructions for each sub-task;</li> <li>– the time remaining;</li> <li>– direct links to the specific tools required, eg text and audio recording.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;">(Close supervision, c.6 hours)</p> </li> </ul> <p><b>Marking:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The data is uploaded from the local server and displayed in a secure web space. The digitally captured evidence constitutes a web-based portfolio, which is marked externally by the awarding body against agreed criteria.</li> </ul>	<p><i>The awarding body sets task and provides materials, so ensuring <b>reliability and validity</b>.</i></p> <p><i>The tasks have the potential of being modified by the centre after approval by the awarding body.</i></p> <p><i>PDAs have Bluetooth and wi-fi capability enabling a class set to be linked into a local area network run from a laptop managed by the activity administrator.</i></p> <p><i>The controlled nature of the assessment activity enables teachers to <b>confidently authenticate</b> the work and ensure that there is no malpractice.</i></p> <p><i>The indicative timing <b>reduces the assessment burden on students and teachers</b>.</i></p> <p><i>External marking of the portfolio <b>assures high quality</b>. The electronic nature of the evidence makes this <b>more manageable</b>.</i></p>
<p><b>Impact on teaching and learning:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ This approach brings the technology directly into D&amp;T processes in a manageable way. It enables students to combine practical and technological skills with creative thinking as they design and make products and systems to meet human needs, recording their thinking while at the same time capturing evidence for assessment purposes.</li> </ul>	

## Ways forward in implementing improved controls

- 5.5 While the types of control may well vary from one task to another depending on the nature and demands of the task, the types of tasks and levels of control should be consistent across all specifications within a subject area. To ensure that this is the case, the following steps need to be taken as part of criteria development.
1. The essential first step relates to the definition of learning outcomes, the identification of which learning outcome(s) are most validly assessed by internal assessment, and the subsequent determination of the weighting of these learning outcomes.
  2. Once the learning outcomes have been identified it will be possible to consider and determine the range of activities that would be appropriate in that subject area to assess the relevant learning outcomes. This provides an opportunity to address current concerns that activities replicate aspects of the examination or that they are formulaic and predictable. It should result in the identification of a suite of activities that complement each other. For example, in geography, current concerns are that coursework is exclusively a fieldwork activity and that this does not allow other forms of investigation, particularly ones related to geographical information systems (GIS) software. In future the geography criteria could stipulate, for example, that there should be two internally assessed activities, one based round fieldwork and one based round GIS software. Including the number and nature of the activities to be internally assessed in the criteria will result in greater consistency across specifications and enable a better judgement to be made on the overall burden of assessment across subjects. However, awarding bodies are likely to find this restrictive and see it as an intrusion on their responsibility to determine assessment approaches.
  3. Having identified the number and types of task for each subject, the next step will be to consider the types of control that would be appropriate. The exact combination of controls is likely to vary from subject to subject and will be task dependent. Determination of these controls should, however, be made consciously and consistently and included in the criteria. The following suggestions provide a possible starting point.

Within the context of the controls outlined and recommended in this report:

**Task setting:** At least one task should be either set or approved by the awarding body. Ideally, awarding bodies should provide a range of set tasks for teachers to choose from (as they already do in some subjects). For example, if in MFL it was decided that the learning objective on writing in the target language was best assessed internally by two tasks, each exploring a different style/form of writing (as in the examples above), one could be either awarding body set or approved, while the other would be produced against tight criteria, as in the examples.

**Task taking:** All tasks should be explicit about the types of supervision required at different stages, and all tasks should be produced under direct or close supervision, unless there are good reasons for doing otherwise. They should also set out indicative timings (recognising that teachers will need to adjust these to reflect timetabling constraints). The examples demonstrate how this could be done.

**Task marking:** All tasks should be marked using awarding body mark schemes and should be externally moderated by the awarding body unless teachers have been accredited or it is considered feasible and appropriate for a particular task to be marked externally.

The criteria would set out the rules that applied to the number and nature of tasks in that subject. These in turn would shape the activities developed by the awarding bodies and included in the specifications.

## 6 Summary of recommendations

- 6.1 This report focuses on the current controls relating to internal assessment in GCSE and how they should be developed and supplemented to promote greater public confidence across all subjects that internal controlled assessment is valid, reliable and manageable. There is potential for this work to build on, and extend to, initiatives in other areas.
- 6.2 Specifically, this report makes the following recommendations on the steps needed to develop new criteria, strengthen current controls and develop new controls for internal and controlled assessment in future GCSEs across all subjects.

### Learning outcomes and criteria development

- 6.3 QCA, with the other regulatory authorities, should:
- clarify the distinction and relationship between aims, assessment objectives and learning outcomes and the roles that each will play (if all three terms are to be used) in future criteria and specification development;
  - ensure that the development of learning outcomes in each subject area takes into account the range of factors specified in 2.5;
  - develop guidance on how learning outcomes should be framed and presented consistently across the criteria so that they do provide outcomes that can be related to the most appropriate form of valid assessment;
  - produce criteria along the lines of those suggested in 2.14 on the factors that determine whether the most valid form of assessment for each learning outcome is internal assessment or external assessment.
- 6.4 The regulatory authorities should produce GCSE subject criteria that:
- identify the learning outcomes to be assessed through internal assessment, and determine the appropriate weighting;
  - promote greater consistency across specifications in the future by specifying in the criteria the range, nature and number of internally assessed activities that are appropriate in that subject area to assess the relevant learning outcomes;
  - specify the types of control that would be appropriate for each task, in terms of task setting, task taking and task marking, recognising that in each area there is a continuum of controls and that the exact combination of controls is likely to vary from subject to subject and will be task dependent – decisions on which level of control is the most appropriate within a subject should be made consciously and consistently across specifications.

### Consolidating and strengthening current controls

- 6.5 The regulatory authorities, JCQ and awarding bodies should ensure that the measures taken in response to the 2005 review are given a higher profile and brought to the attention of teachers in schools.
- 6.6 The regulatory authorities should require greater consistency across awarding bodies based on adoption and application of current best practice. The JCQ *Instructions for the conduct of coursework/portfolios* is a significant step in this direction.
- 6.7 The regulatory authorities and JCQ should monitor the effectiveness of the JCQ *Instructions for the conduct of coursework/portfolios* in ensuring greater consistency across the awarding bodies and affecting practice in schools.
- 6.8 The regulatory authorities should, in due course, ensure that the improvements developed and implemented in response to the 2005 review are built into the Code of Practice and awarding body practice as appropriate.
- 6.9 The regulatory authorities should consolidate the existing controls by recognising and publicly acknowledging that the Regulations and Code of Practice already specify

significant controls, which apply to most aspects of internal assessment. One very public way of doing this would be by replacing the terms 'coursework' and 'internal assessment' by the term 'internal controlled assessment' as the basis for future GCSE development across all subjects.

### **Developing controls on task setting**

- 6.10 Awarding bodies should develop a range or bank of awarding body set tasks, where this is feasible, which:
- are designed to promote good teaching and learning and to differentiate so that they are accessible to a wide range of students;
  - provide clear guidance on the degree to which set tasks can be customised without requiring approval for the changes;
  - enable teachers to select tasks that match their students' needs/circumstances, reducing the assessment burden on teachers.
- 6.11 Awarding body set tasks and tasks approved by awarding bodies should be changed regularly, annually if feasible, to avoid tasks becoming formulaic and predictable and to reduce opportunities for plagiarism and collusion. Teachers who set their own tasks should also be required to change them regularly.
- 6.12 The awarding bodies, with the regulatory authorities, should provide training and guidance materials on developing tasks and all awarding bodies should support task setting by providing access to internal assessment advisers/consultants.

### **Developing controls on task taking**

- 6.13 The regulatory authorities should provide guidance to centres on the management of internal assessment as a whole school/college issue to disseminate best practice on the timing of internal assessment across subjects over the course of key stage 4.
- 6.14 The awarding bodies should consider the continuum of supervision outlined in this report as the basis for developing a set of controls appropriate to particular activities.
- 6.15 The regulatory authorities should ensure that the conditions relating to task taking are set out in future GCSE specifications in a level of detail similar to that of the nature of the task and the assessment criteria. All internal assessment should contain, as an integral part of task setting, guidance on:
- the total amount of time that a task should take;
  - the amount of time specific activities within a task should take;
  - the form of supervision expected for particular activities within a task.
- Decisions on the timing and nature of supervision will be both task and subject specific.
- 6.16 The awarding bodies, working with the regulatory authorities, should develop more effective ways of assessing process.

### **Developing controls on task marking**

- 6.17 The regulatory authorities should work with awarding bodies to identify those tasks where it might be most appropriate for the awarding body to directly mark the work, and in doing so address the concerns and costs that such a move would entail.
- 6.18 The awarding bodies should continue to improve the external moderation of teacher marking.

### **Developing controls on training**

- 6.19 The NAA, IEA, awarding bodies, and the Teacher Development Agency (TDA) should develop a programme of work to explore the feasibility and costs of accrediting teachers as assessors for public examinations and/or developing chartered assessors, as part of the IEA programme and TDA's CPD initiative, to coincide with the introduction of new

GCSEs. This accreditation should cover the range of assessment responsibilities set out in IEA's framework for assessment, build on developments in performance management and continuing professional development, and draw on experience from other qualifications and evidence from pilot GCSEs and the Applied GCEs as it becomes available.

- 6.20 The regulatory authorities working with OFSTED and other inspection agencies in Wales and Northern Ireland should establish whether centres' approach to their professional responsibilities with regard to internal assessment is changing in response to current developments as many predict it is.
- 6.21 The regulatory authorities, NAA and the awarding bodies should investigate ways of improving the quality assurance of the procedures and practices in centres to support internal assessment, including the feasibility and costs of accrediting centres.

## **Conclusion**

- 6.22 The development of learning outcomes and the identification through criteria of the most valid form of assessing particular learning objectives, the means by which this should be done and the controls that should apply, will ensure that assessment is more tightly focused and avoids repetition.
- 6.23 The proposals on task setting are designed to improve the validity and reliability of activities, avoid formulaic and predictable tasks, and, at the same time, ensure that the tasks promote good teaching and learning and motivate students.
- 6.24 The proposals on task taking are designed to promote greater consistency and fairness, and reduce the overall burden on teachers and students.
- 6.25 The proposals on task marking are designed to enhance the high quality of marking that currently exists, while ensuring a system that is manageable for awarding bodies and teachers.
- 6.26 The proposals on training suggest a way forward which could improve manageability for both awarding bodies and teachers. They also provide a long-term solution to improving and recognising teachers' expertise in assessment and their central role as assessors in public examinations.

# Appendix 1

## Advice to the Secretary of State on GCSE Coursework

Dr Ken Boston AO  
Chief Executive



14 September, 2006

Rt Hon Alan Johnson MP  
Secretary of State for Education and Skills  
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### GCSE COURSEWORK

In your letter of 24 July you confirmed that the recommendations we had made in our report of 20 June would do much to provide the required level of confidence in GCSE outcomes. You stated that if coursework is to remain, the method of assessment must be able to command public confidence. To make assessments properly valid and reliable we need to set controls which address the following key issues:

- making assessment manageable for students and teachers
- ensuring assessment judgements are of the highest quality
- discouraging and detecting malpractice in assessment
- allowing teachers confidently to authenticate students' work
- avoiding assessments that are too formulaic and predictable
- supporting good teaching and learning.

You expressed particular interest in a detailed assessment of the views of practitioners. Over the last three years we have sought advice from teachers, headteachers, subject associations, subject experts, learned bodies, teacher associations and awarding bodies on how they thought assessment could be improved. Over the summer we have had further discussions which focused on the relationships between learning outcomes, teaching approaches and assessment methods. We were grateful for the way in which they engaged keenly and expertly with the issues and provided us with high quality advice.

Three strands of thinking emerged from the recent discussions. The first concerned the need for clearer definitions of tasks, avoiding predictability to reduce malpractice and varying the types of tasks to include different forms of communication. There was also support for varying the types of controls in controlled assessments. The



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second strand emphasized the need to encourage up to date teaching based on recent events or information and using ICT-based assessments which draw on achievements during learning as well as at the end of the course. The third strand concerned the need for guidance and training to enhance the accuracy and reliability of teacher judgements, to enable teachers to prevent plagiarism, and to reduce the extent of teacher help in writing assignments. A report of the discussions with practitioners on GCSE coursework assessment is attached.

In the light of this thinking, together with our earlier work, it is clear that there is support for the use of 'controlled assessments' - described in my letter and report of 20 June - as a robust way to address the issues. We will develop a set of recommendations on the nature of controls needed to make various forms of assessment valid and reliable and support good teaching and learning. These recommendations will be complemented by examples of tasks and controls from a range of subjects. They will be designed to support the best, imaginative teaching which challenges students and raises performance standards. We will continue our discussions with teaching professionals about the implications for assessment, learning and teaching in particular subjects while these recommendations are developed.

The recommendations will be available in time for the development of new GCSE specifications for teaching from September 2009. We will ask each awarding body to develop specifications that meet these recommendations and so command public confidence.

We will also put in place a longer-term programme to ensure that assessment systems for the 21st century are developed. We will look for new approaches to assessment that complement classroom teaching and learning. This will take account of methods of improving teacher assessment currently used at other key stages. We will learn from current GCSE pilots and continue to develop the role of e-assessment. The Institute of Educational Assessors will also have a key role here through its proposed chartered assessors.

We would plan to announce these changes on 6 October 2006. I should be happy to discuss this with you further when we next meet.

Our fellow regulators in Wales and Northern Ireland support the general direction we are intending to take. I am copying this letter to John Valentine Williams at DELLS and to Gavin Boyd at CCEA.

*Yours sincerely*  
*Alan Parker*

## Appendix 2

### Examples of aspects (outcomes) appropriately assessed by internal assessment across a range of subjects

Teachers, senior moderators and researchers identified the following aspects as potential outcomes that would be most appropriately assessed by internal assessment.

#### Business studies/Economics/Social sciences

- Develops investigative skills, including effective use of sources
- Able to apply knowledge, understanding and skills to new contexts/real situations/cases to address problems/issues
- Able to analyse, synthesise and evaluate
- Able to communicate clearly using presentation skills and showing creativity

#### Classical subjects

- Able to carry out independent study/research in the civilisation or literature aspects using primary source material to study a wider range of literature

#### English literature

- Able to relate texts to their social and cultural contexts
- Able to compare and explore the relationships between texts

#### Geography

- Competent in a range of skills and abilities that characterise being a geographer
- Able to apply geographical knowledge, understanding, skills and abilities to new situations and a variety of real contexts
- Able to apply geographical learning appropriately and creatively to their own lives and circumstances

#### History

- Able to engage in the process of historical enquiry and reach substantiated conclusions
- Able to analyse and evaluate historical sources and interpretations of history in the context of an enquiry
- Able to produce extended narratives, explanations and analyses
- Able to investigate and understand local history and current events/issues

#### MFL

- Able to communicate in writing in a foreign language at length on topics that interest them

#### Art and design

- Able to:
  - Record observations, experiences and ideas in forms that are appropriate to intentions
  - Analyse and evaluate images, objects and artefacts showing understanding of context
  - Develop and explore ideas using media, processes and resources, reviewing, modifying and refining work as it progresses
  - Present a personal response, realising intentions and making informed connections with the work of others

#### Design and technology

- Develop D&T capability through acquiring and applying knowledge, understanding and skills of materials, components, processes, techniques and industrial practices:
  - when designing and making quality products
  - when evaluating processes and products and examining the wider effects of on society

#### Home economics

- Able to recall and apply the knowledge and understanding specified in the specification



- Able to plan and carry out investigations and tasks, using ICT where appropriate, in which they:
  - identify issues and questions, assemble relevant information, examine evidence and hypothesise
  - select and use a range of appropriate home economics skills competently
  - gather, record, collate, analyse viewpoints, interpret and evaluate evidence
  - arrive at a personal viewpoint, make decisions, take action and evaluate investigations and tasks

### **Music**

- Develop and demonstrate aural perception, musical knowledge and understanding, and communication through:
  - singing or playing an individual part – performing skills
  - creating and developing musical ideas in relation to a given or chosen brief – composing skills

### **PE**

- Able to perform effectively under applied conditions in their selected activities
  - using tactics or compositional language
  - observing the rules and conventions of their activity
- Able to analyse performance
  - to determine its strengths and weaknesses
  - to improve its quality and effectiveness