LMS Response to the Department for Education Consultation:
A world-class education system: The Advanced British Standard Consultation
December 2023

Details of the consultation can be found at: A world-class education system: The Advanced British Standard consultation - Department for Education - Citizen Space

Background information

This response was prepared in collaboration with the Institute of Mathematics and its Applications.

Questions 1-10 of the consultation ask for details of the responding organisation, in this case the London Mathematical Society. For this reason, these responses are not included here.

Consultation response

Chapter 1

11. We propose several overarching aims and principles that should underpin the introduction and design of the Advanced British Standard. To what extent do you support these proposed aims and principles? If you have further views on this, please share below.

Fully support

Please limit your response to 1500 characters or less.

12: What do you think is the most important thing that the Advanced British Standard could achieve?

Please limit your response to 1500 characters or less.

Our expertise lies in the area of mathematics, so this will be reflected in our response. The ABS has the potential to support a much larger proportion of the cohort than currently to take mathematics beyond Level 2. This must be coupled with ensuring that all young people are enabled to study the mathematics to 18 that they find *relevant* to them and to their futures, equips them with appropriate knowledge and skills and leaves them with a positive attitude towards mathematics. Doing only the 'knowledge and skills' part risks many people, as currently, ending their mathematical education with a negative attitude towards the subject. This reduces ability to apply their learning.

If successful in its aims, the ABS will equip a much larger proportion of the cohort to go on to study STEM subjects, as well as other subjects that require mathematical/statistical knowledge such as social sciences, in higher education. It will also increase the general level of numeracy,

data literacy and mathematics understanding in the population.

13. If you have further views on the aims, principles and purposes of the Advanced British Standard, or anything else covered in Chapter 1, please share below.

Please limit your response to 1500 characters or less.

14. We propose two main programmes at Level 3: Advanced British Standard and Advanced British Standard (occupational). Each will contain a range of separate components to support students. To what extent do you support the proposed design for the Level 3 Advanced British Standard programmes? If you have further views on this, please share below.

Fully support

Please limit your response to 1500 characters or less.

15. We propose two main programmes at Level 2: transition and occupational. Each will contain a range of separate components to support students. To what extent do you support the proposed design for the Level 2 programmes? If you have further views on this, please share below.

Please limit your response to 1500 characters or less.

16. If you have views or evidence on how additional teaching hours at Level 2 could best be used to benefit students, please share below.

Please limit your response to 1500 characters or less.

It is important that any additional teaching hours at Level 2 are delivered by suitably qualified professionals. For those who would benefit, small teaching groups or in-class interventions would be a good use of teaching time. Groups to consider here would be SEND and disadvantaged students.

17. If you have views or evidence on how a transition year could best be structured to support progression to Level 3, please share below. This could include reflections on the existing T Level foundation year.

Please limit your response to 1500 characters or less.

Our expertise lies in the area of mathematics, so this will be reflected in our response. It was not clear to us when students would undertake the transition year, i.e. at sixth form or beforehand. There are obvious resource and financial implications if an extra year is required, but others will be better placed to comment on this. It may be more beneficial for FE colleges than for schools, and an exciting opportunity for students who systemically fail at mathematics GCSE within the current system to have a fresh start with relevant and interesting mathematics, allowing them to move into Level 3 with the capability to succeed in at least the minor in mathematics. The structure of the transition year needs to enable students to encounter mathematics that they feel is relevant to their future direction and be designed to dovetail with Level 3 mathematics options.

18. In branding terms, how do you think the Level 2 programmes should be considered in relation to the Level 3 Advanced British Standard?

Both Level 2 and Level 3 programmes should be framed as the Advanced British Standard, but it should be clear whether a student reached Level 2 or Level 3

19. To what extent do you support the proposal for Level 1 and Entry Level students?

Fully support

20. If you have views or evidence on how students at Level 1 and Entry Level would most benefit from additional teaching hours, please share below.

Please limit your response to 1500 characters or less.

It is important that any additional teaching hours at Level 1 and Entry Level are delivered by suitably qualified professionals. For those who would benefit, small teaching groups or in-class interventions would be a good use of teaching time. Groups to consider here would be SEND and disadvantaged students.

Chapter 2 - Section 2

21. Once rolled out, we anticipate that the Advanced British Standard qualification framework will supersede the varied Level 3 qualification landscape for 16–19 year-olds (including A levels and T Levels etc.). If you have further views on this, please share below.

Please limit your response to 1500 characters or less.

From a higher education perspective we have the capability to deal with the variety of entrance qualifications students present with currently, and so we would expect admissions systems could cope with a period of transition to the new qualification framework. As higher education providers are likely still to have to take in students with a range of qualifications (e.g. international students) this is not a significant concern for us. However, we agree that moving as quickly as possible to the new framework is sensible, enabling simplification of systems.

We note that higher education providers will need to be closely aware of the changes as they will affect higher education curriculum design and support for transition to higher education. Employers will also need to be kept informed. We anticipate that fully adjusting to the change may take employers and wider society many years. We recommend developing a clear extended communication plan to accompany the introduction of the qualification to ensure all stakeholders receive information in a timely way.

22. To what extent do you support the proposal for how subjects will be selected to be included in the Level 3 Advanced British Standard programmes?

Fully support

23. To what extent do you support the proposal for how subjects will be selected to be included in the Level 2 programmes?

Fully support

24. If you have further views on how subjects will be included in these reforms at either Level 2 or Level 3, please share below.

Please limit your response to 1500 characters or less.

Our expertise lies in the area of mathematics, so this will be reflected in our response. We would want to see specialist minors in mathematics included as well as non-specialist minors e.g. a specialist minor in applied mathematics or in further mathematics to sit alongside a major in mathematics may be appropriate for some learners (just as currently students can take A level Mathematics and AS Further Mathematics).

25. To what extent do you support the proposal for increased teaching time relative to self-directed study? We particularly welcome any evidence of how this is balanced currently.

Neither support nor oppose

Please limit your response to 1500 characters or less.

Our expertise lies in the area of mathematics, so this will be reflected in our response. We do not have any evidence on the current balance at Level 3. From a higher education perspective we are keen that students arrive at higher education equipped with some independent study skills, or they may find the transition to higher education challenging. We would want an element of self-directed study to be retained at Level 3. However, we also see that increasing teaching hours taught by motivated, high quality teachers is likely to increase attainment and may better support those from disadvantaged backgrounds than currently. Clearly this is contingent on the recruitment and retention of more mathematics teachers. We note the argument that not all students at Level 3 have access to space and equipment for independent study. Providing better quality space and equipment may also be a solution here. Overall it is the quality of what is done within the extra hours that will make a difference rather than just the amount.

26. If you have views on the appropriate size of subjects, including whether we should standardise associated hours, please share them below. We particularly welcome any evidence of guided learning hours delivered currently.

Please limit your response to 1500 characters or less.

Our expertise lies in the area of mathematics, so this will be reflected in our response. Our understanding of the current proposals is that the difference in content between current A levels and the new majors would be of the order of 10% less. On balance we feel that the trade-off between broadening the curriculum and reducing content slightly will be beneficial to students and is one that higher education providers can adapt to without significant difficulty. Going much beyond a 10% reduction in content would be of concern though.

We are in favour of standardizing the hours for a major/minor within the framework.

27. If you have views or evidence on how time for employability, enrichment and pastoral (EEP) can best be used, please share below. We particularly welcome views and evidence about how to support students with additional challenges, e.g. lower prior attainment or the most disadvantaged.

Please limit your response to 1500 characters or less.

28. If you have views on how we can encourage employers to offer industry placements and what further support education providers will require, please share below.

Please limit your response to 1500 characters or less.

Within higher education providers there is often a central office providing placement support for all subjects, dealing with the legal and pastoral aspects of arranging placements and acting as a hub for opportunities, actively seeking placement opportunities with employers. Schools and Colleges will need to be able to have such support, possibly provided by a centralised service within a given area (e.g. at a city level).

Chapter 2 - Section 3

29. We propose that we develop the English and maths offer within these reforms around certain principles. To what extent do you support these principles?

Somewhat support

30. To what extent do you support using the proposed knowledge and skills identified for maths and English to inform these components of the Advanced British Standard? If you have further views on this, please share below.

Somewhat support

Please limit your response to 1500 characters or less.

Our expertise lies in the area of mathematics, so this will be reflected in our response. We somewhat support the proposed minimum aims. It is important that each student of mathematics transitions smoothly from 11-16 mathematics to study within the ABS. This means that the content should build on and further develop that which was studied to 16. For those students who have not yet achieved their level 2 in mathematics, it is important that the content is relevant to their context and learning needs, without necessarily repeating the GCSE curriculum content. We agree that each student should, at a minimum, have a good understanding of the fundamental mathematics knowledge needed for life and be able to apply that knowledge, e.g. to areas such as personal finance, understanding of risk and understanding of data, that they are likely to encounter in real-life. We also agree that each student should access opportunities to further develop, consolidate and apply the mathematics knowledge and skills needed to thrive in the world of work and to support further study.

31. We propose that there will be a range of English and maths majors and minors at Levels 3. To what extent do you support this proposal?

Fully support

32. How can we best support students who have secured lower Level 2 passes in English and maths at 16 (e.g. grade 4 or 5) to progress onto Level 3 study in these subjects?

Please limit your response to 1500 characters or less.

Our expertise lies in the area of mathematics, so this will be reflected in our response. A Level 2 pass in mathematics at 16 needs to empower students to understand why mathematics is important to their lives and motivate them to progress to Level 3, if appropriate. Skills and knowledge are not sufficient. We believe that students need to develop an understanding that making mistakes is a key part of their learning and helps them to become resilient.

We note that needs for bridging support will be different for those students wanting to progress to a theoretical minor versus an applied minor.

33. If you have views on how English and maths can be delivered for students taking the occupational programme, please share below.

Please limit your response to 1500 characters or less.

Our expertise lies in the area of mathematics, so this will be reflected in our response. For students on the occupational programme, we agree that subject specialists are essential for delivery of mathematics content. We do not take a view on whether embedding mathematics within the occupational content, or separate teaching e.g. through block delivery, is best – either way there are resource issues to be resolved by schools and colleges delivering this.

We note that as currently proposed, students on the occupational route may lack the qualifications to progress to STEM qualifications in higher education should they choose to do so as they are restricted to doing a mathematics minor. At the very least they should have the option to take the more theoretical mathematics minor, but also the option to choose mathematics as a major alongside their double occupational major would be a positive aspect. Some current T level students do aspire to progress to engineering degrees for example. If this route can be preserved it will mean that students are not restricted due to a choice made at 16.

34. If you have views on how existing Level 2 qualifications (GCSEs and Functional Skills qualifications) could provide the basis for two-year Level 2 study for English and maths within the Advanced British Standard, please share below.

Please limit your response to 1500 characters or less.

Our expertise lies in the area of mathematics, so this will be reflected in our response. We would expect to see a seamless transition from 11-16 mathematics study in terms of content, with perhaps the addition of more Functional Skills and fewer 'abstract' topics for those who would relate more readily to this type of curriculum offer. We are neutral on the view of increased teaching time since this will be a challenging resource to provide. We think that

increased independent learning is desirable as a life skill and for future access to higher education but also accept that students who have not been successful at Level 2 or have not yet accessed higher tier material due to following a foundation programme at GCSE are likely to benefit from increased teaching time and exposure to high-quality teaching. The GCSE and Functional Skills qualification content could provide a sound base upon which to build a minor programme of study, but needs to be relevant to students and ensure access and success for all candidates, including those with SEND or coming from a position of disadvantage.

35. If you have further views on what students will study as part of the Advanced British Standard, or anything else covered in Chapter 2, please share below.

Please limit your response to 1500 characters or less.

Our expertise lies in the area of mathematics, so this will be reflected in our response. We agree with the proposal that there will be majors for both mathematics and further mathematics and we think that a further major in applied mathematics building on Core Maths, would be desirable. We support the idea of a theoretical minor at Level 3 building on AS Mathematics and an applied minor at Level 3 building on Core Maths qualifications, to ensure a full range of appropriate and relevant study is offered. We support the aspiration that those students with a lower Level 2 pass (e.g. grade 4 or 5 in GCSE) can successfully go on to achieve Level 3 mathematics qualifications. We acknowledge that there is a need for these students to be encouraged and supported to go onto achieve Level 3 wherever possible. However, it is important that we do not lock them into Level 3 study where it is too stretching. For those students who would be better served by consolidating their Level 2 knowledge, the idea of a 'bridging curriculum' in the first stage of post-16 study is important for smooth transition into the ABS.

Although reforming qualification frameworks is not a light undertaking, we would point out that revising the current Level 2 framework for mathematics (or at least the curriculum) could make it a much better fit to the proposed ABS framework and we would strongly recommend this be considered alongside the ABS reforms.

Chapter 3

36. We have proposed assessment principles to underpin the Advanced British Standard. To what extent do you support these assessment principles? If you have further views on this, please share below.

Somewhat support

Please limit your response to 1500 characters or less.

In general, we are supportive of assessment by examination at the end point of the qualification. However, we recognise that some students consistently do not achieve well in examination settings. For example, in the current system, students have options in some subjects to take qualifications, such as BTEC qualifications which can enable them to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and understanding via alternative assessment routes, where there is less of an emphasis on examinations. We are of the view that there should remain a place within the occupational ABS, where there is less of an emphasis on examinations. Alternative assessment

arrangements should also be available to those students with SEND or those experiencing disadvantage to acknowledge their particular needs and barriers regarding written summative examinations.

37. We have proposed principles to underpin the new grading system. To what extent do you support these grading principles? If you have further views on this, please share below.

Fully support

Please limit your response to 1500 characters or less.

Our expertise lies in the area mathematics, so this will be reflected in our response. We are of the view that at both Level 2 and Level 3 the qualifications should allow for performance to accurately reflect the level of knowledge and skills obtained. This offers the opportunity for a more positive experience, particularly at Level 2 in mathematics, where high failure rates in GCSE Mathematics can be demoralising and demotivating for students, particularly for those students who do not achieve a standard pass – Grade 4 or higher - the first time round.

We would welcome an approach which seeks to ensure that there is parity of standards across years and awarding organisations, with ongoing monitoring to prevent drift from these standards.

38. To what extent do you support the proposal that students will receive individual grades/marks for each major and minor (or equivalents) studied within the Advanced British Standard?

Fully support

39. Do you agree that students should receive some type of overall Advanced British Standard award? If yes, what value could an 'ABS award' add on top of individual component grades, particularly for higher education providers and/or employers?

Yes

Please limit your response to 1500 characters or less.

Our expertise lies in the area of mathematics, so this will be reflected in our response. We recognise that it is essential that post-18 education providers and employers are able to assess the true level of a student's achievement through individual grades for each of the majors and minors. In higher education this is particularly important to inform university admissions. Only in this way will universities be able to identify those students best suited for their courses. This is equally important to ensure that the most able students can be identified and offered places, but also that students who do not have the requisite academic background are not allowed to embark on courses for which they are not suited.

If the aspirations of the ABS are to be realised, with all students studying some form of mathematics (and English) post-16 and actively making progress in these subjects, then for those students who find the subjects challenging, there needs to be some form of incentive to help motivate their learning and continued engagement. Having an overall ABS award, which requires these components, can go some way to addressing this need.

40. What minimum attainment conditions, if any, should a student need to achieve to receive a Level 3 Advanced British Standard award?

Pass a set proportion of subjects (e.g. 3 majors and 1 minor or 2 majors and 2 minors)

Please limit your response to 1500 characters or less.

Our expertise lies in the area of mathematics, so this will be reflected in our response. We are of the view that there is a need to allow some flexibility in the precise nature of the combinations of majors and minors that students should pass in order to achieve an overall Level 3 Advanced British Standard. However, the number of options should be kept relatively low so that the value of the qualification and how it is understood is not diminished by over complexity.

Requiring all students to have to pass in English and mathematics as a rigid requirement could potentially be setting up large numbers of students to fail unnecessarily, which is neither productive nor desirable. Nevertheless, we consider that there needs to be an incentive to encourage students who are perhaps reluctantly taking mathematics and English, to actively engage in these subjects. A key determining factor in addressing the overall question will be the approach that is taken to setting the threshold for a pass grade. We recommend that care is taken to ensure that this is realistic and achievable for students taking mathematics (and English) as a non-specialist minor.

We recognise that if the end qualification is to have value there need to be some form of thresholds which students must attain. However, given the breadth of the qualification and the compulsory aspects of it, it is important that the qualification does not inadvertently set students up to fail.

41. Which of the Advanced British Standard award options outlined do you prefer and think would add most value? Please include any evidence if available.

Please limit your response to 1500 characters or less.

Our expertise lies in the area of mathematics, so this will be reflected in our response. Our preferred option is Option 1: a certificate or statement of achievement recognising a student has completed their ABS programme and met the minimum attainment conditions to receive an overall award. This would demonstrate to employers and post-18 providers student performance across the full programme. A certificate would note the marks or grade received in individual components, but there would not be an overall aggregate score or grade that sits above these marks.

We think it is very important that the grades that are awarded for individual majors and minors are clearly visible on some form of certificate or statement in a form which is transparent and easy to understand. Where a particular subject has a range of qualification pathways to attaining a major or a minor (whether specialist or non-specialist), this information also needs to be clearly shown. For universities this information is essential in order to be able to make fair and informed admissions decisions about applicants for university courses (see above). We are of the view that an aggregate outcome is not helpful in understanding student attainment either individually or collectively. Reporting which is based on aggregates removes the important detail which is most beneficial in exploring and understanding student attainment.

42. If you have further views on how students will be assessed and graded under these reforms, or anything else covered in Chapter 3, please share below.

Please limit your response to 1500 characters or less.

43. What strengths in the current approach to 16-19 education should we aim to preserve under the Advanced British Standard?

Please limit your response to 1500 characters or less.

Our expertise lies in the area of mathematics, so this will be reflected in our response. We consider the existence of both A-level Further Mathematics and A-level Mathematics as a strength of the current system. A-level Further Mathematics provides the opportunity for further stretch in the subject and we would want to see these subject options retained in the new framework. A-level Further Mathematics can be challenging for some students to complete. So providing an exit point for students who embark upon a major comparable to A-level Further Mathematics and find that it is not for them would be beneficial. This could be achieved by transferring to something like a specialist minor in a Further Mathematics equivalent. This highlights the need for highly specialised, as well as more general, minors.

The A-level study years can provide time for students to specialise and think about their chosen subjects in depth. While the increased teaching time per subject, and the need to study minors in addition to majors, will inevitably decrease the time an individual student can devote to their majors, there is also the need to ensure that sufficient time is retained for students to engage in depth with the content of their majors.

The applied nature of the Core Maths qualification, with its focus on problem solving and use of data and statistics is something that we consider very valuable. We would want to see these areas of activity retained, in some way, within the new framework.

44. What opportunities and challenges do you see for the recruitment, retention and deployment of staff as a result of implementing the Advanced British Standard?

Please limit your response to 1500 characters or less.

Our expertise lies in the area of mathematics, so this will be reflected in our response. It is well known that for many years there has been an acute shortage of well-qualified mathematics teachers. Despite many initiatives, some of which have involved financial incentives, the recruitment and retention of mathematics teachers has remained an issue across the UK. The expansion of mathematics provision post-16 needs to be accompanied by a clear strategy to ensure that the teachers are in place to deliver excellent mathematics teaching in the form of both majors and minors from the point at which the new qualification framework is introduced.

Given the shortage of specialist mathematics teachers and the increasing demands to teach the subject, we have concerns that the best teachers will become concentrated in those schools able to offer incentives. This could mean that young people in disadvantaged areas can be further disadvantaged by not being able to access the best teaching, thereby limiting their future opportunities for achievement and access to a wide range of rewarding careers.

45. What staff training do you think may be required to implement the Advanced British Standard successfully?

Please limit your response to 1500 characters or less.

Our expertise lies in the area of mathematics, so this will be reflected in our response. We envisage the need for substantial upskilling of the workforce, in particular to meet the requirements of a large increase in the number of students studying mathematics post-16. Ideally, we would like to see substantial and sustained growth in the recruitment and retention of mathematics teachers who are subject specialists. We have a concern, that within the new ABS landscape the workload demands on these subject specialists could increase enormously, with consequent health related issues and teachers leaving the profession.

Within the new ABS framework we see opportunities for changing the narrative accompanying mathematical study. If the new qualification framework is to work, leaders in business, industry, politics and the media, collectively must be willing to support it and communicate why mathematical study post-16 has such enormous value. These messages also need to be shared and understood by all those teaching the subject, irrespective of whether or not they are subject specialists.

In order to ensure equal access for all to mathematics, either as a major or a minor subject, we believe that appropriate training should be available for those teaching students with SEND. It is important that these teachers have a broad repertoire of pedagogical skills to provide for the specific needs of these students.

46. We are interested in the changes that may need to be made to deliver the Advanced British Standard for all students, regardless of where they live. What changes do you think may be required in the following areas:

a. Buildings/estates?
b. Technology?
c. Provider landscape?
d. Accountability arrangements?
e. Admissions
f. Transportation?

Please limit your response to 1500 characters or less.

Please limit your response to 1500 characters or less.

Please limit your response to 1500 characters or less.

Please limit your response to 1500 characters or less.

Please limit your response to 1500 characters or less.

Please limit your response to 1500 characters or less.

47. If you have further views on how the Advanced British Standard could impact 16-19 providers, or anything else covered in Chapter 4, please share below.

Please limit your response to 1500 characters or less.

Our expertise lies in the area of mathematics, so this will be reflected in our response. Given the range of potential pathways through the qualification, we envisage challenges for providers in offering all but a limited range of options of majors and minors. We think it would be essential to ensure that the full qualification options are available to all students, within close proximity to their home address. This would require some form of local coordination or cooperation between providers, and/or some high quality online provision.

If providers intend to offer the full range of qualifications on their existing site, it may be that they need to either locate extra classroom accommodation or extend their timetabled day. This has implications for the wellbeing of teachers and students.

48. What changes to pre-16 education do you think will be needed to create effective pathways into the Advanced British Standard?

Please limit your response to 1500 characters or less.

Our expertise lies in the area of mathematics, so this will be reflected in our response. We recognise the current pivotal role played by GCSE Mathematics in preparing students for post-16 study in the subject. We think that a focus on enabling more students to pass the qualification first time would be highly advantageous. There is scope for a review of the current qualification, in the short term, to better reflect the needs of young people in modern society.

Multiple challenges are currently faced by students with SEND, those students who have low attainment, those who come from disadvantaged backgrounds and those who struggle with attendance for whatever reason. In particular the EBacc does not work well for these students. We would actively encourage this area to be given further consideration.

49. If you have views on how students can be supported to make informed choices for their Advanced British Standard programme or apprenticeship – linking to their prior attainment, abilities, interests and future ambitions – please share below.

Please limit your response to 1500 characters or less.

With the complexity of the choices through the qualification that will accompany the introduction of the Advanced British Standard, we envisage the need to provide teachers who are trained in the range of options available and who have the necessary expertise to assist students in navigating their individual customised pathways through the qualification. Such teachers should be able to link these choices to potential careers, so that students can make more informed choices, as and when they need to.

Ensuring that the full range of options is available within local areas is also important, to ensure that no student is disadvantaged because of limitations of the provision they can access.

50. If you have views or evidence on the additional support that may be needed to enable students with SEND to access the Advanced British Standard, please share below.

Please limit your response to 1500 characters or less.

We think there is a need to better support these students and in particular that there should be a greater emphasis on the relevant pedagogies which are known to be most effective.

In order to fully access the ABS, students with SEND will need to be taught by trained subject specialists with further expertise relating to the particular needs of each student. This may include alternative, but equivalent, learning environments and assessment arrangements, greater access to online provision where attendance is an issue, or particular resources that support learning preferences or needs. For example, neurodivergent students may benefit from smaller classes, 1:1 sessions or a more visual, diagrammatic approach.

51. If you have views or evidence on the additional support that may be needed to enable other groups of students to access the Advanced British Standard, please share them below. Examples of these groups include disadvantaged students and students with caring responsibilities.

Please limit your response to 1500 characters or less.

For the many students who have to deal with individual challenges which inhibit their educational attainment, such as for example, caring responsibilities, maths anxiety, social deprivation, high levels of absenteeism (avoidable or otherwise) or behaviour issues, we envisage that options which enable them to engage in a more flexible way with the ABS could be beneficial. For example, these could involve slower pace options, or opportunities for catching up through online delivery or a greater emphasis on teaching in more relaxed settings, and/or specialist teachers who are trained with the relevant expertise in supporting these students, and have the accompanying subject expertise.

52. If you have views on how to ensure the Advanced British Standard provides effective pathways into post-18 education or study, please share below.

Please limit your response to 1500 characters or less.

Our expertise lies in the area of mathematics, so this will be reflected in our response. Given the scale of what is proposed within the ABS, we think a major awareness raising exercise is needed with post-18 providers. If buy-in is to be secured from post-18 providers, the new framework must seek to retain, albeit in alternative formats, the areas which are valued most highly by these providers. For university Mathematical Sciences departments, of particular importance is the need to retain a qualification which provides the stretch currently offered by an A level in Further Mathematics.

Many higher education institutions retain a requirement for a GCSE pass in Mathematics as a standard requirement. With the potential for new level 2 mathematical routes, it will be important to ensure that these are well understood and valued by higher education. We recommend that this is informed by detailed consultation about this area, followed by a comprehensive communication initiative.

53. If you have views on how to ensure the Advanced British Standard reforms meet the needs of employers, please share below.

Please limit your response to 1500 characters or less.

54. If you have views on the impacts of the Advanced British Standard reforms on other groups of students who take post-16 qualifications, please share them below. Examples of these groups could include adults in further and community education providers, students in custodial settings, and students in devolved administrations, Crown Dependencies or overseas.

Please limit your response to 1500 characters or less.

From an equality and diversity perspective, we think it is very important that students in these settings have the opportunity to engage and be successful in the qualification, irrespective of their setting. In particular, we think it is important that students can study majors and minors at their own pace, for example as single units which can then be accumulated towards the overall ABS. We think there is a major piece of work to be done in the transition phase, to make sure that students who have embarked on other qualifications over a long-term period are either able to complete these qualifications or to gain some form of credit for their learning and achievement when the new framework is rolled out.

55. If you have views on the impacts (positive or negative) of the Advanced British Standard reforms on any group with a protected characteristic, please share below.

Please limit your response to 1500 characters or less.

We believe the ABS reforms may have a positive impact on the number of women in STEM careers, through postponing the point at which mathematics is given up.

56. If you have views on the impacts (positive or negative) of the Advanced British Standard reforms on the environment, please share below.

Please limit your response to 1500 characters or less.

57. If you have further views on the wider implications of the Advanced British Standard, or anything else covered in Chapter 5, please share below.

Please limit your response to 1500 characters or less.

58. If you have further views on anything else associated with the Advanced British Standard not covered in the questions throughout the consultation, please share below.

Please limit your response to 1500 characters or less.