

Consultation on the proposed Condition VCR8 assessment opportunity in the autumn 2021.

Response of the Association of School and College Leaders

A. Introduction

The Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL) represents over 21,000 education system leaders, heads, principals, deputies, vice-principals, assistant heads, business managers and other senior staff of state-funded and independent schools and colleges throughout the UK. ASCL members are responsible for the education of more than four million young people in more than 90 per cent of the secondary and tertiary phases, and in an increasing proportion of the primary and further education and skills phases. This places the association in a strong position to consider this issue from the viewpoint of the leaders of schools and colleges of all types.

ASCL welcomes the opportunity to contribute to this consultation and the proposal to allow awarding organisations to make decisions in the autumn 2021 to enable learners to improve on their teacher assessed grade.

Please note that ASCL has also responded to the co-current consultation on an autumn series for general qualifications. In that consultation, we have strongly disagreed with a decision to run an autumn series. This is not the case for our response on VTQs. As detailed below, VTQs often rely on practical learning and assessment, unlike most general qualifications. There is also a strong precedence for offering VTQ exams and assessments between September and January, but there isn't for reformed general qualifications; with the exception of English and maths GCSEs which we think should be offered as normal.

B. Key points

Q1. Do you have any comments on the draft wording of condition VCR8?

YES.

We agree with the proposal for all awarding bodies to provide an opportunity for learners to retake VTQ assessments in the autumn 2021. These are exceptional times and many learners have lost practical and face to face learning time. It is only right and fair that assessment opportunities should be available for those taking VTQs. This is a one-off situation.

AOs which would normally offer an assessment window between September and January should make every effort to do so and those which normally do not should make an exception this year and provide that window.

Q2. Are there any potential positive or negative equality impact arising from the proposed condition VCR8 apart from those we have explored?

YES.

Learners taking a number of additional qualifications or parts of qualifications may find some overlap with times and dates of scheduled assessments and retakes. This situation should be accommodated with as much flexibility as possible.

Awarding organisations may find there are only a few registrations.

Providers will be busy with their new intakes and resources may be stretched in the autumn.

Q3. Are there any other regulatory impact costs or benefits associated with implementation of our proposals that have not already been identified?

YES.

There may be some additional costs to awarding organisations for setting and quality assuring the assessments.

There will also be some costs to centres for collecting evidence and assessing. There may also be some costs for additional equipment.

There may be a case for a regional or national approach to an autumn assessment series where an AO is unable to deal with small numbers of registrations.

C.Conclusion

Our response, as mentioned above relies heavily on feedback from our members and others in the sector.

We hope that this response is of value to your consultation. ASCL is willing to be further consulted and to assist in any way that it can.

