

Ms Glenys Stacey
Chief Regulator
Ofqual
Spring Place
Herald Avenue
Coventry
CV5 6UB

By email

13 March 2015

Dear Ms Stacey

GCSE Computer Science Technical Consultation 2015

The Royal Society broadly agrees with the proposals Ofqual is making concerning the regulations and conditions concerning assessment of the new GCSEs in Computer Science. The Society encourages Ofqual to take into account the more detailed advice offered by Computing at School in its response to this consultation.

In particular we welcome Ofqual's decisions to allocate 20% of the total examination marks in Computer Science GCSEs to non-examined assessment (NEA), and to expect students to complete a substantial project to satisfy this requirement. These decisions are consistent with the intrinsically practical nature of this subject, and it is positive that Ofqual have recognised this. However, we share the concern expressed by Computing at School that the requirement for this assignment to 'be completed by each Learner during periods of assessment totalling 20 hours' may be overly restrictive; Ofqual (and awarding organisations) should be mindful of the lessons learned under Controlled Assessment in the GCSE sciences, and avoid being overly prescriptive in the assessment requirements for computing.

We also welcome the freedom schools will have to set their own assessment tasks, though we would recommend that comprehensive guidance is produced to ensure that (i) the range and quality of NEA being undertaken by students is appropriate; and (ii) that a consistently high standard applies to its assessment.

The Society hopes these measures, together with the use of statistical moderation both to monitor marking of NEA across the awarding organisations and enable comparison of NEA with performance in the written examinations, will ensure that confidence and trust in the assessment of Computer Science GCSEs is built quickly. Further, the



President Sir Paul Nurse
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Society would urge that evaluation of this model of assessment will inform the next review of the assessment of practical work in GCSE sciences.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Julia Higgins". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'J'.

Professor Julia Higgins DBE FRS
Chair, Royal Society Education Committee

cc. Dr Bill Mitchell, Director of Education, BCS
cc. Mr Chris Mairs, Chair, UKForCE Steering Group