

# News story: Consultation on revised arrangements for GCSE computer science

Ofqual has today (27 November 2017) launched a consultation that proposes changes to non-exam assessment in GCSE computer science given evidence of widespread rule breaches.

Non-exam assessment in computer science is intended to test students' programming skills and is worth 20% of the overall 9 to 1 grade. However, there is evidence that some of this year's tasks have been posted to online forums and collaborative programming sites, contrary to exam board rules. Detailed solutions have been provided in many cases, and some of these posts have been viewed thousands of times.

The apparent extent of malpractice in this qualification leads us to believe that it is no longer possible for exam boards to ensure that grades awarded next summer will fairly reflect the ability of all students unless changes are made to the assessment arrangements.

We are asking for views on alternative assessment arrangements that would apply to students sitting exams in 2018 and 2019. Our preferred option is to retain the need for the non-exam assessment task to be completed by students, but for it not to contribute to their overall 9 to 1 grade. We continue to believe that there is significant value in students completing programming tasks and they will be required to do so. It is our expectation that teachers will want to provide feedback to students on their completed task as preparation for their exams, which include the assessment of computational thinking and programming, though they will not be required to formally provide marks for each student to their exam board.

Julie Swan, Executive Director for General Qualifications, said:

It is with great reluctance that we are proposing to change a qualification for which students are already studying. However, we must take immediate action to address these issues and the potential impact on public confidence in relation to this qualification. Subject to the consultation responses, we believe our preferred solution will deliver fairer and more reliable results than would otherwise be the case. It will also allow us to be confident, that standards will be set appropriately.

[The consultation](#) will run until 22 December 2017. It includes a discussion of the need to consult in due course on a longer-term solution for non-exam assessment as part of this qualification. Responses will be reviewed over Christmas and a decision announced in the week beginning 8 January 2018.