

Rt Hon. Gillian Keegan MP
Secretary of State
Department for Education in England
Sanctuary Buildings, Great Smith Street
London, SW1P 3BT
Correspondence Team.PO@education.gov.uk

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Dear Secretary of State

Proposals for an Advanced English Standard

I write further to the Academy of Social Sciences' recent response to the DfEE [consultation](#) on the proposed Advanced English Standard (see **Appendix A**). While we have used the formal consultation mechanism to set out our thoughts on matters of detail in the proposals, we also wanted to outline our position on the principle of the policy and to request a meeting with you and your officials to discuss these in more detail.

By way of background, the Academy of Social Sciences exists to promote social sciences in the UK for public benefit. We are a national academy and the UK professional body for academics, practitioners and learned societies in the social sciences. Our work is informed and supported by 1,600 leading social scientist Fellows together with 48 member Learned Societies that cover the main disciplines and sub-disciplines in the social science sector. This gives us a reach of some 90,000 social scientists in the UK.

The social sciences are the study of contemporary societies, economies, people and places. They are distinct from both the humanities and arts sector (which includes English, history, religious studies, and music for example) and from the maths, physical and biological sciences (STEM) sector. The social science disciplines include: business & management, economics, geography, politics & international studies, psychology (social & behavioural), and sociology, all of which currently rank in the top 12 subject choices at A-level (and geography is the anchor social science in the English Baccalaureate). The social sciences also include anthropology, architecture & planning, criminology, development studies, education, law, regional studies, social work and social policy, social aspects of healthcare, and tourism and leisure studies, which by and large do not figure in school curricula.

Our concerns, and those of [our member Learned Societies](#), fall into two categories.

1. **The proposals, in their current form, are unrealistic for logistical reasons** – not least because the resource implications for schools and colleges are impractical.
2. **The proposals do not reflect (a) the contribution the social sciences make to a broad and balanced education, (b) the popularity of the social sciences amongst pupils, or (c) their importance for wider society and employability.**

We believe that the next iteration of proposals needs to reflect more fully a balanced curriculum in which students gain a sound understanding of the contemporary human world in which they live

and work, and that reflects the value placed upon social science knowledge and skills by employers and students. Recognising that STEM, social sciences, and the arts & humanities are three quite different and distinct education sectors each with its own strengths would be a good starting point, as would reassurance that the current social science A levels will be included as 'majors' in the proposals.

The evidence base for our areas of concern is set out below.

1) The proposals, in their current form, are unrealistic for logistical reasons

- To meet the timetabling requirements of the proposed Advanced English Standard, there would need to be a significant improvement on teacher recruitment and retention rates. To enable the increase in guided learning hours (GLH) and to meet the requirements of a broadening curriculum, the UK Government would need to ensure its retention and recruitment strategy is effective over the next 5-10 years to secure the pipeline. It is currently not meeting its targets:
- The pupil to teacher ratio (number of pupils per teacher) in state funded schools has increased from 17.1 in November 2010 to 18.0 in November 2022. The same data indicate that in the 12 months to November 2022, around 44,000 full-time equivalent (FTE) qualified teachers left the state-funded sector, a 'leavers rate' of 9.7%. During the same period, 13% of newly-qualified entrants to the sector were not working in the sector one year after qualifying, and 20% were not working in the sector two years post qualification. The five year out-of-service-rate for 2017 qualifiers was 31% and the ten year out-of-service rate for 2012 qualifiers was 41%. The number of reported teacher vacancies (full-time and part-time) in state funded schools has risen steadily from 452 (0.1% of the workforce) in November 2010 to 2,334 (0.5% of the workforce) in 2022, with maths alone having 430 vacancies (1.3% of the workforce). In academic year 2023/24, the recruitment of teachers in English Baccalaureate (EBacc) subjects as measured by the ITT census was 45% below target.¹

2) The proposals do not reflect (a) the contribution the social sciences make to a broad and balanced education, (b) their importance for wider society and employability, and (c) the popularity of the social sciences amongst pupils and their earnings potentials.

a) The social sciences equip students to understand the contemporary, fast-changing and complex human world in which they live and the challenges and opportunities that face it.

Social science skills are an essential aspect of a broad and balanced education, preparing young people for their lives ahead. Within the school environment, social sciences contribute significantly to learning by providing insights into human behaviour, societies, economies and places. They also encourage critical thinking and analysis by examining social phenomena and contemporary issues from multiple perspectives – as well as providing a framework for broader civic engagement by equipping students with knowledge about governance, democracy, and economic systems, empowering them to become informed and engaged citizens.

Furthermore, social science insights are required to tackle some of the most complex and pressing problems facing society. This is reinforced by the list of the UK Government's own [Areas of Research Interest](#), which are dominated by the social sciences, and the

¹ All figures from Maisuria, A., Roberts, N., Long, R. & Danechi, S. (2023) [Teacher recruitment and retention in England](#), House of Commons.

Prime Minister's own Five Priorities² which draw heavily on social science disciplines for their measurement and delivery.

Without developing young people's awareness and experience of social science from an early stage, we will not equip them with the skills they need to deliver in the future the real-world impacts currently arising from the UK's social scientists.³

This pipeline of social science talent from school into university is not just important from an academic standpoint, it is central to our nation's ability to respond to emerging technological, economic, social and environmental challenges. Creating the conditions for a strong pathway into social science degrees also helps ensure we have expert teachers of these subjects for the future.

b) The social sciences deliver skills which are in high demand by employers, allowing students to access a wide range of employment sectors and contribute to the economy and society.

The knowledge, skills and ways of thinking that social science subjects confer open up a huge range of career opportunities. Social scientists work across all industries and sectors, deploying a range of skills to the benefit of society. Some social science professions, including law, accountancy and planning, are closely linked to particular subjects and require specialist qualifications. Some other roles relate directly to the knowledge and skills specific to a subject, for example, geospatial analysts trained in geography, operations managers trained in business and management, economists working in the NHS as programme evaluators, political scientists working for polling companies, and psychologists working on organisation behaviours. Many other jobs and careers are open to all social scientists, making use of the wide range of transferable skills gained by studying a social science degree.⁴

Some key data:

- According to the latest LEO data⁵, an average 87% of UK-domiciled first-degree graduates across the social science disciplines were in sustained employment, further study or both five years after graduation. This was slightly lower than the average (89%) for STEM graduates, and higher than the average (84%) for arts and humanities graduates⁶.
- Social science graduates possess transferable skills vital to the prosperity of the UK, and many private sector businesses value social science knowledge and skills. This is reflected in the sector preferences of social science graduates. For example, 17.5% of geography graduates worked in construction, engineering and research and development. A further 17% worked in business and finance. Two-fifths of law graduates worked in the legal and accountancy sector (41.4%). Politics graduates were more likely to enter management consultancy on average than other subjects (5.6%) with a further 16.1% working in business and finance. In general, the top professions for social science graduates were more traditionally linked to the public sector, with legal professionals, primary

² UK Government (2023) [Prime Minister outlines his five key priorities for 2023](#), UK Government website (accessed 14 February 2024).

³ Wagner, S., Rahal, C., Spiers, A. *et al* (2024) [The SHAPE of Research Impact](#), London: British Academy.

⁴ See:

- Greaves, L. (2023) [What do graduates do? Insights and analysis from the UK's largest higher education survey](#), Bristol: Prospects Luminare.
- Academy of Social Sciences, [Careers for Social Scientists](#) briefing note.

⁵ Department for Education in England (2023) [LEO Graduate outcomes provider level data \(tax year 2020/21\)](#), UK Government website (accessed 9 February 2024).

⁶ Subject definitions:

- **Social sciences:** Architecture, Building & Planning; Business & Management; Economics; Education & Teaching; Geography, Earth & Environmental Studies; Law; Politics; Sociology, Social policy & Anthropology.
- **STEM:** Biosciences; Chemistry; Engineering; Mathematics; Medicine & Dentistry; Nursing & Midwifery; Pharmacology, Toxicology & Pharmacy; Physics & Astronomy.
- **Arts & humanities:** Creative Arts & Design; English Studies; History & Archaeology; Languages & Area Studies; Media, Journalism & Communications; Performing Arts; Philosophy & Religious Studies.

education teaching professionals, and welfare and housing associate professionals coming in first, second and third place respectively. ⁷

- Research from the British Academy has shown that UK social science graduates possess a general set of skills, or core skills, that employers find valuable. These include the ability to communicate clearly and work effectively with others, the capabilities to design research, collect and analyse evidence, and make decisions, and useful behavioural and non-cognitive skills in problem-solving, independence, creativity, and adaptability. ⁸
- These same benefits are not just restricted to graduates. Our own analysis has examined how UK private sector businesses value social science insights to run and grow their firms. Most companies consider social science knowledge and skills to be important for leadership cadres, and use social science knowledge and skills from a variety of disciplines including economics, psychology, political science and geography to understand and engage with their markets, clients, staff and consumers. Furthermore, many companies use social science knowledge and skills to analyse and manage risk and long-term strategies. Finally, many companies use social science knowledge and skills, alongside STEM competencies, to innovate and develop new products or new ways of working. ⁹

c) Social sciences are popular and students go on to have good earnings potentials – matching many of those in STEM fields.

Currently, 47% of UK students graduate from university with a social science degree¹⁰ - reflecting not only the popularity of those subjects for their content, but also because students believe they are the key to engaging and rewarding careers. As graduates they have very good employment and earnings potentials. As outlined above, social science disciplines are highly valued by students for both the direct and associated skills they foster. After their undergraduate degrees, they go on to work in a wide range of sectors and occupations, with employment rates and earnings similar to graduates in STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths). ¹¹

Some key data:

- Five social science disciplines are among the top ten disciplines for lifetime graduate earnings: economics, law, politics, business studies and geography. Social science disciplines as a group fare about as well as graduates from STEM disciplines in terms of earnings. ¹²
- Five years after graduating, the median salary for a social science first-degree graduate was **£28,438** (tax year 2020/21). This compares to an equivalent arts and humanities figure of **£23,329** and an equivalent STEM figure of **£31,129**^{13,14} (which rises to **£33,200** with Medicine & Dentistry included).
- As outlined above, not only are social science disciplines extremely popular in

⁷ Greaves, L. (2023) [What do graduates do? Insights and analysis from the UK's largest higher education survey](#), Bristol: Prospects Luminare.

⁸ British Academy (2017) [The Right Skills: celebrating skills in the arts, humanities and social sciences](#), London: British Academy.

⁹ Lenihan, A. & Witherspoon, S. (2020) [Vital Business: the essential role of the social sciences in the UK private sector](#), London: Academy of Social Sciences / Campaign for Social Science.

¹⁰ Higher Education Statistics Agency (2023) [What do HE students study?](#), Cheltenham: HESA.

¹¹ See, for example:

- Academy of Social Sciences, [Careers for Social Scientists](#) briefing note.
- British Academy (2020) [Qualified for the Future: quantifying demand for arts, humanities and social science skills](#), London: British Academy.

¹² Britton, J., Dearden, L., der Erve, L. & Waltmann, B. (2020) [The impact of undergraduate degrees on lifetime earnings](#), London: Institute for Fiscal Studies: pp40-41.

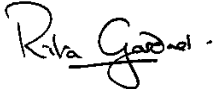
¹³ Department for Education in England (2023), [LEO Graduate and Postgraduate Outcomes \(tax year 2020/21\)](#), UK Government website (accessed 8 February 2024).

¹⁴ Subject categories are the same as for Footnote 6 above.

general (comprising some 47% of undergraduates), but they are particularly important to women, especially in subjects such as Law, Education and Psychology where the proportions of female students are significantly higher than their male counterparts.¹⁵

I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you and/or your officials to discuss these matters in further detail.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rita Gardner". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underlining the name.

Dr Rita Gardner CBE FAcSS
Chief Executive
Academy of Social Sciences
R.Gardner@acss.org.uk

¹⁵ Higher Education Statistics Agency (2023) [What do HE students study?](#), Cheltenham: HESA.

Appendix A: Advanced English Standard consultation response, AcSS

The answers below were submitted on 18 March by the Academy of Social Sciences to the UK Government’s [consultation](#) on a proposed Advanced English Standard¹⁶. As well as responding to this technical consultation, we also sent a separate letter to the Department for Education in England making our top-line points and seeking a meeting with the relevant team to discuss these proposals in detail.

Commentary in the consultation was restricted to 1,500 characters for each question, with no provision for references / hyperlinks. The deadline for responses was 20 March 2024.

(Qs 1-11 of the webform were standard questions about the responding organisation)

Question	Options (if available)	Response (if required)
Chapter 1		
<p>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. (1500 characters)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fully support • Somewhat support • Neither support nor oppose • Somewhat oppose • Fully oppose • Don't know 	<p>We have no issue with the underlying principles behind the Advanced Standard. However, as we have set out in our letter to the Secretary of State for Education in England (copy available on request), we have misgivings about the proposed model. Firstly, we are concerned that it is unrealistic for logistical reasons – the resource implications would be impractical, as there would need to be significant improvement in teacher recruitment and retention in order to meet the timetabling requirements.</p> <p>Secondly, while we welcome the aim of simplification of the wide array of existing courses, we seek reassurance that the existing breadth of the A level offer that falls within the social sciences sector will continue to be available as majors. These are substantive, knowledge -led disciplines (including business studies, economics, geography, politics, psychology and sociology) many of which contain significant maths and data analytic content and all enhance applied English language skills. These subjects also:</p>

¹⁶ The UK Government referred to an “Advanced British Standard” – but as it would only apply in England, we have described it accurately in our response.

		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Equip students to understand the contemporary, fast-changing and complex human world in which they live and the challenges and opportunities that face it. 2) Deliver skills which are in high-demand by employers, allowing students to access a wide range of employment sectors and contribute to the economy and society. 3) Help students to develop good earnings potentials – matching many of those in STEM fields.
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.		The best outcome would be for the changes to result in students at 16-19 being able to study a wider range of rigorous subjects of their choice, and for that to not be limited by constraints placed by schools on timetabling blocks. Students whose chosen courses are deemed to contain sufficient continuing development in the use and real world application of English and maths should not be required to undertake mandatory half course in those subjects in addition. Enabling this flexibility would facilitate a wider range of potential career trajectories and would offer greater challenge for the more able students in particular.
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.		The success of the aims, principles and purposes will heavily depend on the detail of course selection for inclusion and the implementation at school level. We would advise that the views of learned societies and subject associations are sought to provide expertise in their subject areas, and that the implementation is carefully monitored for unintended consequences in terms of limiting choice, which is clearly not the intended principle.
Chapter 2		
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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fully support • Somewhat support • Neither support nor oppose • Somewhat oppose • Fully oppose • Don't know 	[leave blank]
15. We propose two main programmes at Level 2: transition and occupational. Each will contain a range of separate components to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fully support • Somewhat support • Neither support nor oppose • Somewhat oppose 	[leave blank]

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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fully oppose • Don't know 	
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.		[leave blank]
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.		
18. In branding terms, how do you think the Level 2 programmes should be considered in relation to the Level 3 Advanced British Standard? (NB, no narrative / commentary box for this answer)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both Level 2 and Level 3 programmes should be framed as the Advanced British Standard, with no level-based badge provided to students • 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 • Level 2 programmes should have a different name and framing, separate from the Level 3 Advanced British Standard • Don't know 	n/a
19. To what extent do you support the proposal for Level 1 and Entry Level students? (NB, no narrative / commentary box for this answer)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fully support • Somewhat support • Neither support nor oppose • Somewhat oppose • Fully oppose • Don't know 	n/a
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.		[leave blank]
21. Once rolled out, we anticipate that the Advanced British Standard qualification framework will		The principle of having a broader post-16 curriculum is one we would support, but not in its current form which we feel is unrealistic and impractical. Moreover,

<p>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.</p>		<p>we do not see sufficient evidence of the social sciences being properly reflected in the Advanced Standard model as currently set out. The unstated implication is that the three main sectors (STEM, social sciences, and the humanities), which are each educationally distinctive and important, will all be adequately represented and their disciplines included as majors in the simplified qualifications list, but there is currently no assurance on that in this consultation. We seek that assurance.</p>
<p>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? (NB, no narrative / commentary box for this answer)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fully support • Somewhat support • Neither support nor oppose • Somewhat oppose • Fully oppose • Don't know 	<p>n/a</p>
<p>23. To what extent do you support the proposal for how subjects will be selected to be included in the Level 2 programmes? (NB, no narrative / commentary box for this answer)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fully support • Somewhat support • Neither support nor oppose • Somewhat oppose • Fully oppose • Don't know 	<p>n/a</p>
<p>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.</p>		<p>We feel unable to give a full answer as the level of detail in the consultation document is inadequate. Until and unless further detail is given, there can be no meaningful discussion about this issue. We urge that subject inclusion is done in consultation with the subject communities; and is not influenced by political ideology. The choice should also take account of the popularity of current A Level courses/disciplines.</p>
<p>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.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fully support • Somewhat support • Neither support nor oppose • Somewhat oppose • Fully oppose • Don't know 	<p>We support the principle of having more guided learning hours to deliver the added breadth and depth of teaching. But however laudable this is in principle, there is insufficient resource in the system to teach the extra hours without significant investment into the teacher pipeline, teacher retention and school capacity.</p> <p>To give just one example, there were only 20 trainee Economics teachers studying for a PGCE in 2021/22 – the same as in the previous two years. In the two years prior to that (2017/18 and 2019/20), the number was only 10. The aspirations for more teaching hours are admirable – but without the specialist teachers to deliver them, the ambition will fail.</p>
<p>26. If you have views on the appropriate size of subjects, including whether we should standardise associated hours, please share them below. We</p>		<p>We strongly believe that subjects need to be given equal levels of status and resource for teaching. Differentiating between subjects risks some being made a 'poor relation'. We have no issue with differences between how minor and</p>

<p>particularly welcome any evidence of guided learning hours delivered currently.</p>		<p>major subjects are taught – but within those categorisations, there needs to be equivalence.</p>
<p>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.</p>		<p>EEP programmes need to equip students with vital life and professional skills. These should include: critical thinking; listening; reading and writing; team skills; IT skills; and budgeting and personal financial management, all of which contribute to operating as an individual in society and building a foundation for success in Higher Education and employment. EEP programmes must not, however, dilute nor distract from STEM, social science, and humanities subjects taught as majors and minors. Flexibility for individual schools to set their own objectives and make decisions about the most appropriate EEP offering based on their institution and students' needs must also to be built in.</p>
<p>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.</p>		<p>[leave blank]</p>
<p>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? (NB, no narrative / commentary box for this answer)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fully support • Somewhat support • Neither support nor oppose • Somewhat oppose • Fully oppose • Don't know 	<p>n/a</p>
<p>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.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fully support • Somewhat support • Neither support nor oppose • Somewhat oppose • Fully oppose • Don't know 	<p>We support the principle behind these ideas, but not the proposed delivery mechanism. A broader perspective is required in relation to both the maths and English components.</p> <p>Applied numeracy and data skills are already delivered successfully through many social science subjects. Applying these skills to real-world problems makes learning more meaningful and more engaging than standalone maths modules. Social sciences which strongly embed applied data and numeracy skills (eg, geography, economics, business studies and psychology), all include numeracy and data components at school and university level.</p> <p>A similar argument exists for the applied English-related skills of problem-solving, communication and critical thinking, which are strongly embedded by the social sciences and best developed in the context of real-world problems and communicated on topics that have meaning for the students.</p>

		<p>Rather than a focus on 'pure maths' and 'pure English', we recommend embracing multiple pathways towards developing and embedding such skills. These are necessary for future generations to lead fulfilled and successful lives and build a cohesive, prosperous and sustainable society.</p> <p>It is not by chance that social science graduates already make up a significant proportion of maths teachers in England, emphasising that maths features strongly within the skills for social science. This route equips people to use those skills more broadly than a 'pure maths' route.</p>
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? (NB, no narrative / commentary box for this answer)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fully support • Somewhat support • Neither support nor oppose • Somewhat oppose • Fully oppose • Don't know 	n/a
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?		[leave blank]
33. If you have views on how English and maths can be delivered for students taking the occupational programme, please share below.		[leave blank]
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.		[leave blank]
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.		<p>We take issue with the statement (p43) that "Maths and further maths majors [offer] a depth of study that would enable students who are pursuing some STEM-oriented pathways to develop the more advanced mathematical knowledge they need to progress into HE" – this implies that only students studying STEM-orientated courses require maths, whereas in reality many social science disciplines draw on – and help develop – data and numeracy skills. See our answer to Question 30 for example.</p>

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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fully support • Somewhat support • Neither support nor oppose • Somewhat oppose • Fully oppose • Don't know 	[leave blank]
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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fully support • Somewhat support • Neither support nor oppose • Somewhat oppose • Fully oppose • Don't know 	[leave blank]
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? (NB, no narrative / commentary box for this answer)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fully support • Somewhat support • Neither support nor oppose • Somewhat oppose • Fully oppose • Don't know 	n/a
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?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No • Don't know 	[leave blank]
40. What minimum attainment conditions, if any, should a student need to achieve to receive a Level 3 Advanced British Standard award?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pass all subjects at Level 3, except for English and maths (Level 2 pass accepted) • Pass all subjects at Level 3, including English and maths; • Pass a set proportion of subjects (e.g. 3 majors and 1 minor or 2 majors and 2 minors) • Meet a minimum aggregate Advanced British Standard score • No minimum attainment conditions • Don't know 	[leave blank]

<p>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.</p>		<p>We broadly support Lead Option 1. Our main priority would be that scores for individual component subjects need to be part of any final award so that employers, universities and other stakeholders are able to gauge students' performance in individual subjects.</p>
<p>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.</p>		<p>The assessment principles seek assessment by examination for the most part but do allow for other types of assessment when circumstances require it. One area of social science that does require an alternative aspect of assessment is that of fieldwork in geography. Currently that is an allowed form of assessment at A Level and it must continue to be so.</p>
<h2>Chapter 4</h2>		
<p>43. What strengths in the current approach to 16-19 education should we aim to preserve under the Advanced British Standard?</p>		<p>The new system also needs to reflect students' desire to choose distinct social sciences options. 47% of UK students graduate from university with a social science degree, and any new system needs to ensure that students can continue to follow the subject pathway that most appeals to them. Key to this is retaining the current parity of esteem across subjects and disciplines.</p> <p>Despite some shortcomings, the existing A-Level system (as an academic pathway) broadly offers academic rigour, helps develop critical thinking skills, and provides an ability to focus on subjects that meet the needs and strengths of individual students and those of HE and employers.</p> <p>Level 3 apprenticeships offer a paid option which for students from disadvantaged backgrounds is the only way of progressing post-16. The Advanced English Standard is not offering a paid route for the occupational pathway.</p>
<p>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?</p>		<p>To enable the increase in guided learning hours and to meet the requirements of a broadening curriculum, the UK Government would need to ensure its retention and recruitment strategy is effective over the next 5-10 years to secure the pipeline. At present, the data indicate that the reverse is the case:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The pupil to teacher ratio in state funded schools has increased from 17.1 in November 2010 to 18.0 in November 2022. • Data for the 12 months to November 2022 indicate that around 44,000 full-time equivalent (FTE) qualified teachers left the state-funded sector, a 'leavers rate' of 9.7%. During the same period, 13% of newly-qualified entrants to the sector were not working in the sector one year

		<p>after qualifying, and 20% were not working in the sector two years post qualification. The five year out-of-service-rate for 2017 qualifiers was 31% and the ten year out-of-service rate for 2012 qualifiers was 41%.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of reported teacher vacancies (full-time and part-time) in state funded schools has risen steadily from 452 (0.1% of the workforce) in November 2010 to 2,334 (0.5% of the workforce) in 2022, with maths alone having 430 vacancies (1.3% of the workforce). • In academic year 2023/24, the recruitment of teachers in English Baccalaureate (EBacc) subjects as measured by the ITT census was 45% below target.
45. What staff training do you think may be required to implement the Advanced British Standard successfully?		Initial Teacher Training providers will need to ensure that maths and English are taught to enable those new to the profession to meet the inevitable shortfall of specialist maths and English teachers should the Advanced English Standard come into effect. EEP training will also be required – depending on what this looks like once more details are established. Existing staff will need to retrain in EEP and potentially maths and English to meet shortfalls in specialist teachers.
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 (1500 characters' of commentary allowed for each):	Buildings/estates	[leave blank]
	Technology	[leave blank]
	Provider landscape	[leave blank]
	Accountability arrangements	[leave blank]
	Admissions	[leave blank]
	Transportation	[leave blank]
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.		Under the current proposals, the issue of teacher retention and recruitment is not fully addressed. If 16-19 providers are going to be able to deliver these proposals, then the pipeline into the teaching profession needs to be addressed. A high proportion (around 13%) of social science graduates go into the teaching profession. By improving access to and widening participation

		rates in social sciences subjects, we could see increased ITT numbers, which in the future would help address the retention issues.
Chapter 5		
48. What changes to pre-16 education do you think will be needed to create effective pathways into the Advanced British Standard?		[leave blank]
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.		<p>A 2021 UCAS report (“Where Next? What influences the choices school leavers make?) explored subject choice at university, identifying potential barriers. It found that one in five students could not study a degree subject that interested them because they did not have the right subjects to progress. This is most apparent for some social science degree courses, some of which require a specific set of pre-requisite qualifications. For example, almost all applicants accepted to economics holding either Maths or Economics A level, with 60% holding both A Levels.</p> <p>The point that students start thinking about their choice of degree subject varies, with 58% of Medicine students having thought about their preferred degree subject before starting their GCSEs, compared to only 20% of Economics students. This mismatch may mean that some students are blocked from studying social sciences at university due to an absence of appropriate guidance.</p> <p>We do not want a system where students can unknowingly close the door on their career aspirations, not least on social science subjects which can lead to highly successful careers financially, with flexibility in the labour market and with great societal need.</p> <p>All young people should have an equal access to high-quality, personalised, timely support to navigate their career journey. At each stage, students should be aware of the impact of their choices, and how it may influence their future pathway.</p>
50. If you have views or evidence on the additional support that may be needed to enable students with		[leave blank]

SEND to access the Advanced British Standard, please share below.		
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.		We have a concern here about a broad implication for equality, diversity and inclusion. The proposals may result in providers specialising out of necessity towards one area of provision (STEM, creative arts, maybe even social sciences). In turn, this could lead to students in some areas, likely in more disadvantaged communities, finding that they have more limited subject options available, restricting career trajectories in later life. That would defeat the purpose of the proposed qualification in addition to limiting students' prospects.
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.		If subjects are not taught by experienced and skilled teachers, and with academic rigour, at Advanced English Standard level, the pathway into post-18 education leads to underperformance at university level. Universities already spend considerable time in the first year of undergraduate programmes bringing students up to the same level, and this would be exacerbated if inequalities in provision at 16-18 were increased.
53. If you have views on how to ensure the Advanced British Standard reforms meet the needs of employers, please share below.		The knowledge, skills and ways of thinking that a social science degree confers open up a huge range of career opportunities. Social scientists work across all industries and sectors, deploying a range of skills to the benefit of society. Some social science professions, including law, accountancy and planning, are closely linked to particular subjects and require specialist qualifications. Many other roles relate directly to the knowledge and skills specific to a subject, for example, geospatial analysts trained in geography, operations managers trained in business and management, economists working in the NHS as programme evaluators, political scientists working for polling companies, and psychologists working on organisation behaviours. Many other jobs and careers are open to all social scientists, making use of the transferable skills gained by studying a social science degree.
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.		[leave blank]
55. If you have views on the impacts (positive or negative) of the		[leave blank]

Advanced British Standard reforms on any group with a protected characteristic, please share below.		
56. If you have views on the impacts (positive or negative) of the Advanced British Standard reforms on the environment, please share below.		[leave blank]
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.		[leave blank]
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.		During the development of the proposals for this consultation, has the future of AI in education been considered? The role of social sciences in informing the use, ethics and regulation of AI needs to be considered and reflected.