



Department
for Education



The Advanced British Standard

Our plans to change education for
16 to 19 year old students

January 2024



Consultation guidance

This is the **Easy Read** version of the
[Advanced British Standard consultation](#).

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**BIG
words**

In this booklet, some words are in **bold**. We tell you what these words mean in our list of useful words on **page 26**.

This is the **Easy Read** version of the **Advanced British Standard consultation**.

For the standard version of the consultation, go to the [Advanced British Standard consultation](#) on our website.

Introduction.



We are the Department for Education, part of the UK government.

We make sure **all** children and young people get a good education.



The **Advanced British Standard** is a new type of qualification for students aged 16 to 19 years old.

We call it the **ABS** for short.



Education needs to change as many students do not

- have the maths and English skills they need for life and work
- spend enough time with teachers
- have the chance to choose a range of subjects.



Please tell us what you think about our plans by filling in the Easy Read survey.

We will use what you say to make our plans better.

Chapter 1.

Aims of the ABS



We want to help more young people get the knowledge and skills they need by age 19.

We want the ABS to help **all** young people to do as well as they can.



This is important for young people who have not had a good start in life.

And for **SEND** students.

SEND means students who have special educational needs and disabilities.



We want the ABS to support students to make decisions about their education.

Like what subjects to study.

And where to study.



The ABS will mean that we have the workforce that we need to make the country stronger.

Our 4 principles for the ABS

A **principle** is an important idea or rule.



1. Clearer choices

Students will choose what to study from a simple list of all subjects.



2. More teaching time

Students will get more time with their teachers.



3. Learning about more subjects

Students will be able to study more subjects at the same time.

They will get knowledge and skills about different subjects.



4. Strong maths and English skills

All students will study maths and English until they are 18 years old.

Chapter 2.

How students will study in the ABS



After Year 11, students will take the ABS instead of other **Level 3** courses, like **A Levels**.

Or other **Level 2** courses, like GCSEs.

We will help all students do their best on the ABS, whatever their ability.



All students will choose ABS subjects from a clear list of courses with practical subjects, like healthcare.

And traditional subjects, like history.



Most students will choose **major** and **minor** subjects.

- **Major** subjects are the main subjects that students spend most time on.
- Students spend less time on **minor** subjects.



Students will study English and maths at **Level 2** or **Level 3** and spend more time with their teachers.

All students will get work and personal skills from **Employment, Enrichment and Pastoral** activities. We call this **EEP** for short.

English and maths



Our principles for English and maths

- All students should be able to get the maths and English knowledge they need to get on in further study, life and work.



- Like when making decisions about money.



- Students should be able to choose an English and maths course that is right for them.
- Teachers should help students do the best they can in maths and English.



Our aims for English and maths

- We want all students to build on their knowledge from Level 2.
- If students did not get Level 2, we want teachers to support them to get it.

3

Level 3



- is for students who would usually do **A Levels** or **T Levels** after GCSEs
- usually takes students 2 years
- can help students to study more, do an **apprenticeship**, or get a job.



An **apprenticeship** is when you get training to learn new skills at work and get paid for it.



In Level 3 ABS, there are 2 programmes.

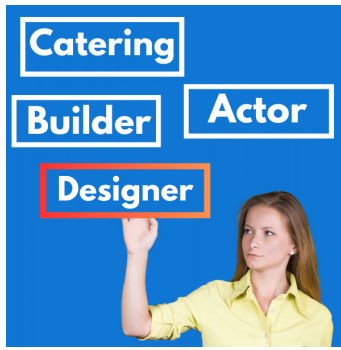
1. The standard **ABS programme** is for students who want to keep their job options open.

Most students will do this programme.



Students will do

- 3 or more major subjects
- 2 or more minor subjects
- Maths and English as major or minor
- EEP activities.



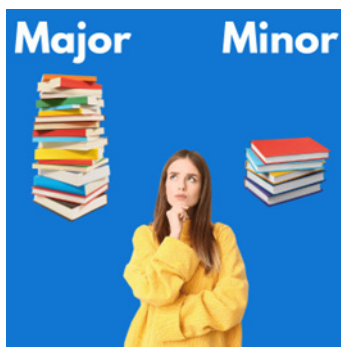
2. The **ABS Occupational programme** is for students who know what job they want to do.



It will help students to get ready to start work.



Occupational students will do



- 1 major main subject
- 1 double major in a similar subject



- Maths and English as minor subjects
- EEP activities.

2

Level 2

- subjects are useful for careers
- subjects can also lead to more study
- can take 1 or 2 years
- has extra support for EEP activities.



Teachers and students can decide together how to use extra teaching hours at Level 2.

They might focus on English and maths. Or they might focus more on skills for work.



Level 2 subjects will **not** be split into majors and minors.

In Level 2 ABS, there are 2 programmes.



1. Level 2 Occupational Programme

This helps students into work or work-based training like **apprenticeships**.

Students also do maths, English, EEP, and some work experience.



2. 1 Year Transition Programme

This course will help students get ready for a Level 3 ABS.

Students also do maths, English and EEP.

This programme takes 1 year.

1

Level 1, Entry Level, and Apprenticeships



The ABS is **not** for students doing

- Level 1 courses
- Entry Level courses
- Apprenticeships.

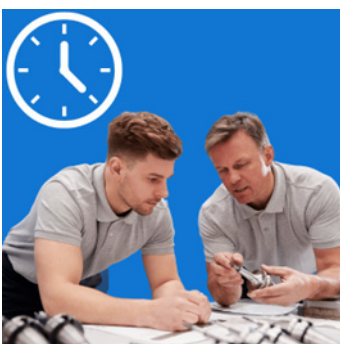


But we will give these students more support for their English and maths.

This will help with their life and work skills.



We want to know how these students can get the best from extra learning time with a teacher.



And how to make sure apprentices also get more teaching hours.

Chapter 3.

How we will assess and grade ABS students



Our education system **assesses** and **grades** students fairly.

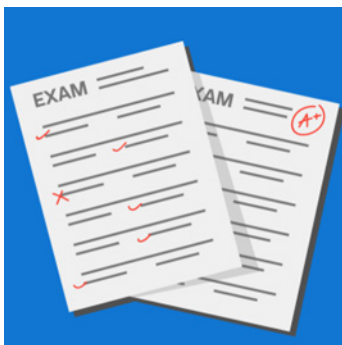
Assess means test.

Grades means the marks that teachers give students to say how well they have done in their studying.



But we want to work with other organisations to make things better.

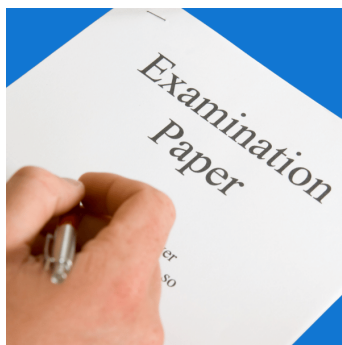
We can make sure the ABS gives students what they need to do well in life.



For Level 3 courses, the ABS will assess students on all courses in the same way.



For Level 2 courses, we will work with other organisations to decide how we should assess students in their subjects.



Assessment aims and principles

Our assessment aims and principles are our important ideas for how we want to assess Level 3 students on the ABS.

- The government will decide what students learn in each subject.
- Students will get the subject knowledge they need for future jobs or study.
- Assessments will usually be exams. But some subjects will need other types of tests.
- Assessments will usually be at the end of the course so students can focus on learning.
- We will spend more time on learning and less time on assessing.
We think this will be good for students' health.

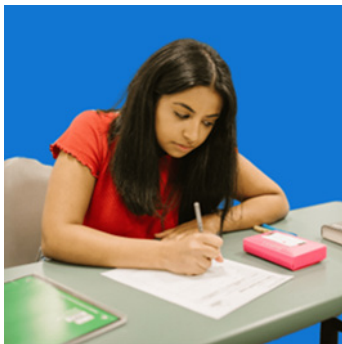


Grading principles

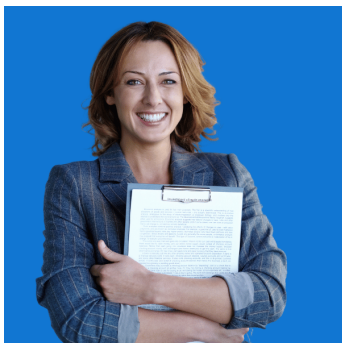
These are our important ideas for how to grade students in the ABS.



- Be fair to all students.
- Make grading easy to understand. And make grading the same for all subjects.



- Make sure we are testing the right knowledge and skills.



- Make sure employers and **education providers** are happy with the ABS qualification.

Education providers are schools, colleges and other places where students learn.



- Make sure we can check how students are doing.



Grades for majors and minors

We think students should get grades for each major and minor that they do at Level 2 and Level 3.



This makes sure that students, employers and education providers all understand what students have learnt on the course.



The ABS Award

All students will get grades for each subject they study.



But we think an ABS Award will help students work harder and show everyone they finished their ABS studies.



We need to decide what grades students need before they can get the ABS Award.



We need to choose 1 of the 3 ideas below for how to do this.



Idea 1

Students get a certificate saying they have passed the right number of courses to get the ABS Award.



Idea 2

All students get the certificate if they finish an ABS programme.

They do not have to pass a fixed number of courses to get it.



Idea 3

Each student gets a score for all the courses they passed.

If it is high enough, they get the ABS Award certificate.



We like Idea 1 the most.

But we want to know what you think.

Chapter 4.

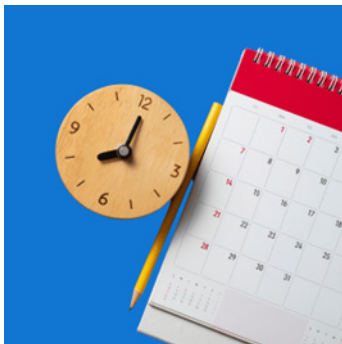
What the ABS will mean for schools and colleges



We want to give education providers the support they need to teach well.

All ABS courses will

- have a clear goal
- be good quality
- help students get on in life.



It will take 10 years to make all the changes for the ABS.

This will not change

- how young people study now
- what we are doing now to make education better.



The new ABS will keep the **T Level** subjects that students can study now.

Education providers who offer T Level courses will be able to easily change over to ABS courses.



Our education has lots of good things about it. We will keep these good parts but work to make education even better.



How we will help schools and colleges get the right teachers for the ABS

We need to make sure teachers have the rights skills and support to teach the ABS.



We know there are not enough teachers right now.

Especially in science subjects.

As a start, we have decided to spend an extra £600 million to support.



We know that the extra teachers we need for the ABS will mean big changes for education providers.



We will carry on helping the teaching workforce. We will

- support new teachers
- spend more money to get more teachers



- make training and support for teachers better
- help teachers with their workload and staying healthy.



Schools and colleges might need to make other changes so they can offer the ABS.

Like changes to



- the subjects they offer
- the buildings they have
- technology and computers
- reporting how well they are doing
- how students can sign up to courses
- transport to and from school.



An important part of the ABS is that students will be able to choose more new subjects to study.



We know this might be hard for some education providers.

We want to make sure all young people can choose any of the ABS subjects without having to travel far.



We know that travel is harder in some places, like the countryside.

We will keep working with schools and colleges to make sure students can choose the subjects they want to.

Chapter 5.

What the ABS will mean for everyone

We are working towards the ABS by making education better for students under age 16.



We do this by

- giving teachers the training they need to teach well



- making sure that what schools teach is the best it can be
- supporting schools to help students come to school and behave well



- giving extra help to children who are finding things hard.

Like smaller classes to catch up on work

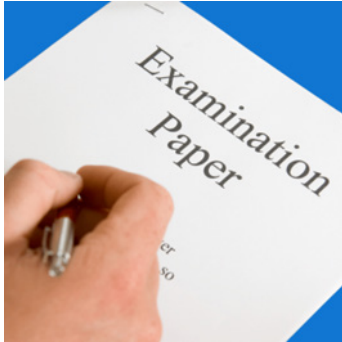


- supporting schools to work together and make sure everyone knows what they need to do to make education better.



Things that will stay the same

For students **under 16** there are important parts of education that will stay the same.



We will keep exams, at the end of Year 11, like GCSE exams.

This will help young people understand how they are doing and help them make good choices about what to do next.



It will also help schools understand what they are doing well and what they can do better.

We know that exams take up time that could be used for teaching.



We will think about how students can spend less time on exams.

But still get a good education.



We want to hear any ideas you have for making education better for students under 16 so they can get ready for the ABS.



Making decisions about education and work for 16 to 19 year olds

Students should understand how different courses can help them to get different jobs or do more studying.



Students doing the ABS should be able to carry on with their education or get a good job after they are 18 years old.



We need to make sure young people get the right information and advice to make good decisions about their careers.



This is even more important for young people who do not have much support outside of school or college.



We work with advice organisations like the National Careers Service to help students decide about future work and study.



More support for students who need it

We know that some students need extra support to do their best at school or college.

Like

- young people with SEND
- people whose families have less money than others
- people who have to spend time caring for others.



It is also very important to make sure young people have good mental health.



And that they can get support if they are having problems.



We know the ABS might mean changes for other students not doing the ABS.

Like students in other countries doing A Levels.

We want to hear about these.



Treating people fairly

We follow UK equality laws to make sure everyone is treated fairly.

For example, extra teaching hours can help students who need more support.



We have thought about what the ABS might mean for people with **protected characteristics**.

A **protected characteristic** is something that makes you who you are.

There are 9 protected characteristics.



- age
- disability
- changing gender
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation.



Looking after the environment

We work hard to care for the environment.



We always check how our work might damage the environment.

And look for ways to avoid this.

Please tell us what you think.



We would like to know what you think about these plans for the Advanced British Standard.



Please fill in the Easy Read ABS survey on our website

<https://consult.education.gov.uk/advanced-british-standards-directorate/the-advanced-british-standard/>

Or you can fill in the [standard ABS survey online](#). This is not in Easy Read.



If you want to speak to someone about this consultation, email your phone number to

ABS.consultation@education.gov.uk.



Department
for Education

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Useful words.

A Levels are Level 3 qualifications that students do after **GCSEs**. Students usually do 3 or more A Levels in 2 years. After A Levels, students can go to university, do more study, or work.

Apprenticeships are when students get paid to train and learn new skills at work.

Assess means test.

A **double major** is when students study 2 main subjects.

Education providers are schools, colleges and other learning places.

Employment, Enrichment and Pastoral activities help students get skills for work and their personal life. We call this **EEP** for short.

GCSEs are qualifications that students do in Years 10 and 11 of school. Students must study maths, English, science and other subjects. After GCSEs, students do more study like A Levels and T Levels. Or training like apprenticeships or jobs with training.

Grades means the marks teachers give students to say how well they have done in their studying.

Level 2 and Level 3

Students can do different level qualifications.

- **GCSEs** are Level 1 or 2. It depends what grade students get.
- **A Levels** and **T Levels** are Level 3.

Occupational means to do with your job.

A **principle** is an important idea or rule.

Protected characteristics are what make you who you are. There are 9 protected characteristics.

SEND means students who have special educational needs and disabilities.

T Levels are like **A Levels** but with T Levels students learn things that will help them in the workplace.