



A NEW ERA

Equitable Reliable Assessment

**Briefing
Pack**





WHAT IS THE INDEPENDENT ASSESSMENT COMMISSION?

The National Education Union (NEU), conscious of the importance of assessment and qualifications to the education system in England, funded the establishment of the Independent Assessment Commission (IAC) to undertake an urgent, independent, future-focused review of assessment.

Bringing together academics, parents and students as well as the NEU, Chartered College of Teaching, the EDGE Foundation and the Confederation of British Industry, the commission is chaired by Louise Hayward, Professor of Educational Assessment and Innovation at University of Glasgow.

You can see the full commission membership at:
www.neweraassessment.org.uk/membership

HOW WILL IT WORK?

The IAC is working collaboratively, with teachers, employers, parents, policymakers, practitioners, researchers, students and professional organisations to develop principles that underpin a new assessment system fit for the 21st Century.

Our commissioners are conducting focus groups and discussions within their respective areas of expertise to inform our work which will produce an interim report during the summer and final report and recommendations by Autumn 2021.

Within this pack are questions to think about either in your role as an individual teacher, lecturer, leader or member of support staff, or collectively with colleagues - we want to hear from you.

The IAC's work is focused on Education between the ages of 14-19 and will identify characteristics of a system of qualifications that will support the realisation of a bright future for every young person, for England as a society and as a leader in the world of business and industry.



WHY THIS MATTERS

Two years of upheaval because of the cancellation of exams in 2020/21 have created huge uncertainty for students and unacceptable additional workloads for teachers.

The Government's failure to adequately plan and prepare a system to give fairness to students, left educators to pick up the pieces with minimal guidance delivered late in the day.

But even before Covid-19 we knew the qualifications system – based mainly on final exams – held back too many of the young people we teach, preventing them from fulfilling their potential.

That's why the commission will be looking at ways in which the system could be reformed to incorporate different assessment methods – including teacher assessment as part of a mixed approach – to make it fairer for students and fit for the needs of our country.

The IAC wants more for young people in England and more for the future of England. The current system fails too many pupils, teachers and schools and does not meet the needs of business.

The IAC wants to fully engage with teachers and educators, but also with young people, parents, and business. We will also be engaging with academics and researchers from around the world.

The IAC is not anti-exams, but we are against an approach that assesses all young people based only on exams – and anti any system that excludes any young person.



GET INVOLVED

Whether it is individually or a collective response from you and some colleagues, we want to hear from educators across the country. Let us know where you believe the assessment system must go now. Contact us via: assessmentcommission@neu.org.uk

QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT

1. To what extent, if at all, do you think the assessment system needs to change?
2. What are the key lessons learned from the pandemic with respect to qualifications taken by 14-19-year-olds?
3. Assessment and qualifications can be used to serve many purposes. Which of the following, if any, do you believe that qualifications taken by 14-19-year-olds should be used for? **(Rank your top 3)**
 - Attempting to signal what a student knows and can do
 - Attempting to signal where a student sits within a national rank order
 - Creating national or regional league tables for schools and colleges
 - Teacher/lecturer appraisal
 - Marking personal development or progress of the student
 - Identifying both the strengths and weaknesses of the student
 - Showing readiness for work/information for employers
 - Comparing students in England to students internationally
 - Showing readiness for further study/information for Further or Higher Education institutions
 - To identify national trends of performance amongst groups of students, for example the performance of students from different socio-economic groups or different regions



QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT

4. Are there any other things that you think qualifications taken by 14-19-year-olds should or should not be used for that are not identified in the previous 2 questions?
5. What are the key strengths of the current system, which you think it would be best to preserve?
6. To what extent, if at all, would you like to see the following aspects of the system change? **(0-10 where 0 is 'stay the same' and 10 is 'completely change')**
 - Assessment at both 16 and 18
 - Assessment mainly through a single mode
 - Assessment mainly through formal written exams
 - Assessment mainly at the end of a course
 - Assessment mainly in large chunks
 - Qualification results being used for league tables
7. How might the assessment and qualifications system in England be adapted to meet the needs of all 14-19-year-olds, or does it do so already (and if so, in what ways does it achieve this)?
8. Are there any other models within the UK or internationally you'd point towards as good examples of assessment or qualifications systems?
9. In 3 words, describe the assessment system you'd like to see in 2030.



WHERE CAN I FIND OUT MORE?

If you haven't seen our launch film yet you can watch and share it from here:

www.bit.ly/IAC_FILM



Read NEU National President Robin Bevan on the importance of the commission here: neweraassessment.org.uk/blog/6/article

Read English teacher Nik Jones' experience from the classroom here: neweraassessment.org.uk/blog/7/article

Read Professor Jo-Anne Baird on why now is the time to re-think assessment here: schoolswk.co.uk/we-need-a-national-conversation-about-assessment/

The IAC is keen to have input from educators you can contact the commission directly via: neweraassessment.org.uk/contact

Follow our work on Twitter at: twitter.com/AssessmentEra or via Facebook via: facebook.com/NewEraAssessment



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