



Department
for Education

Consultation Response Form

**Consultation closing date: 8 August 2013
Your comments must reach us by that date**

**Consultation Response from the
Royal Geographical Society (with IBG)**

**National curriculum review: new
programmes of study and attainment
targets from September 2014**

If you would prefer to respond online to this consultation please use the following link: <https://www.education.gov.uk/consultations>

Information provided in response to this consultation, including personal information, may be subject to publication or disclosure in accordance with the access to information regimes, primarily the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 1998.

If you want all, or any part, of your response to be treated as confidential, please explain why you consider it to be confidential.

If a request for disclosure of the information you have provided is received, your explanation about why you consider it to be confidential will be taken into account, but no assurance can be given that confidentiality can be maintained. An automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system will not, of itself, be regarded as binding on the Department.

The Department will process your personal data (name and address and any other identifying material) in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998, and in the majority of circumstances, this will mean that your personal data will not be disclosed to third parties.

Please tick if you want us to keep your response confidential.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reason for confidentiality:	

Name: Dr Rita Gardner CBE	
Please tick if you are responding on behalf of your organisation.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Name of Organisation (if applicable): Royal Geographical Society (with IBG)	
Address: RGS-IBG 1 Kensington Gore London SW7 2AR	

If your enquiry is related to the DfE e-consultation website or the consultation process in general, you can contact the Ministerial and Public Communications Division by e-mail: consultation.unit@education.gsi.gov.uk or by telephone: 0370 000 2288 or via the Department's ['Contact Us'](#) page.

Please mark the box that best describes you as a respondent.

<input type="checkbox"/> Maintained primary school	<input type="checkbox"/> Maintained secondary school	<input type="checkbox"/> Special school
<input type="checkbox"/> Academy/free school	<input type="checkbox"/> Subject association	<input type="checkbox"/> Governing body
<input type="checkbox"/> Parent	<input type="checkbox"/> Young person	<input type="checkbox"/> Higher Education
<input type="checkbox"/> Employer/business sector	<input type="checkbox"/> Local Authority	<input type="checkbox"/> Organisation representing school children
<input type="checkbox"/> Organisation representing school teachers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other	

Please Specify:

The Learned Society and Professional Body for geography and geographers.

The Royal Geographical Society (with IBG) is the learned society and professional body for geography and geographers. The Society maintains a strong overview of the discipline, its position and its practice in schools, higher education, and the workplace, including professional accreditation. We advise on and support its advancement, dissemination and practice in these realms and within wider public engagement and policy. We have 16,000 members and Fellows and our work currently reaches more than three million people per year. Each year the Society works with teachers and pupils from about 50% of English secondary schools and our online educational resources receive 1 million+ 'user sessions' annually.

1 Do you have any general comments on the draft Order?

Yes

No

Comments:

The Society welcomes the position that every state-funded school must offer a curriculum which is balanced and broadly based and which:

- promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society, and
- prepares pupils at the school for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life.

The knowledge, understanding and skills that young people gain through studying geography will make a distinctive and positive contribution to young peoples' school education and also help lay the foundations for further study and successful careers.

The Society recognises the importance of English, mathematics and science in the education of all young people and the Society notes the level, range and depth of detail provided for these three subjects. However, when compared to the more modest programmes of study for foundation subjects, this may reinforce the unhelpful time squeeze on the foundation subjects; which would be the detriment of the provision a broad and balanced curriculum. We hope such unintended consequences will be kept under review to ensure that schools make the most of the very considerable opportunities in advancing knowledge and skills that the new draft orders for Geography enables.

The Society strongly supports the new subject-based rigour in the draft orders and hopes that teachers can now be supported with professional development to ensure high quality delivery of the new curriculum.

The Society is pleased to see recent increases in the number of pupils studying geography at GCSE and hopes that this positive trend will be further enhanced by the new curriculum. In this context, the Society welcomes the continuing requirement for schools provide a Key Stage 4 entitlement which enables students to study the humanities – defined as either geography or history. The Society hopes that this will help address the regrettable situation where 137 secondary schools did not enter any candidates for a GCSE in geography (Ofsted 2011).

2 Do you have any comments on the revised draft programmes of study or attainment targets for English?

Yes

No

Comments:

3 Do you have any comments on the revised draft programmes of study or attainment targets for mathematics?

Yes

No

Comments:

4 Do you have any comments on the revised draft programmes of study or attainment targets for science?

Yes

No

Comments:

1. The Society welcomes the link that has been identified, within the notes and non-statutory guidance materials, that highlights the following connection between science and geography:

Year 3. Rocks “linked with work in geography, pupils should explore different kinds of rocks and soils, including those in the local environment.”

2. The Society would welcome additional notes and non-statutory guidance materials that referenced the links between geography and the sciences in the following two places:

Key Stage 1

Year 1: “Seasonal changes”

To link with Key Stage 1 geography: “Identify seasonal and daily weather patterns in the United Kingdom.”

Key Stage 3

Chemistry: Earth and Atmosphere: the composition and structure of the Earth, the rock cycle and formation of igneous, sedimentary and metamorphic rocks; Earth as a source of limited resources; the carbon cycle; composition of atmosphere; production of carbon dioxide by human activity and impact on the climate

To link with Key Stage 3 geography: “Key processes in physical geography relating to: geological timescales and plate tectonics; rock; weathering and soils; weather and climate, including the change in the climate from the Ice Age to the present; and glaciation, hydrology and coasts.”

3. Within science (biology) the Society would also welcome reference to fungi, in addition to the references to plants and animals.

5 Do you have any comments on the revised draft programmes of study or attainment targets for art and design?

Yes

No

Comments:

6 Do you have any comments on the revised draft programmes of study or attainment targets for citizenship?

Yes

No

Comments:

The Society welcomes the focus that has been provided for the new programme of study in citizenship, which prioritises the following:

- How the UK is governed
- How its laws are made
- Preparing pupils to take their place in society as a responsible citizen
- And providing them with the skills and knowledge to be able to manage their money well and make sound financial decisions

This is, in our view, and appropriate refocusing for citizenship studies.

7 Do you have any comments on the revised draft programmes of study or attainment targets for computing?

Yes

No

Comments:

The Society welcomes the computing National Curriculum and its purpose in helping pupils to “understand and change the world.”

When c80% of all the information that is collected is geo-referenced to a location, geographical perspectives provide an important, necessary and relevant application for computing. A more developed connection between computing and geography will help ensure that data can be placed and analysed in a real world and meaningful context.

The geography National Curriculum requires specific use of the following:

- Digital/computer mapping within the geography classroom and during fieldwork
- The use of Geographical Information Systems to view, analyse and interpret places and data

The Society believes that there is an unrealised opportunity to highlight the evident and meaningful connections between computing and geography. This could be achieved with the following minor amends to the computing National Curriculum:

1. The Purpose of Study statement should be amended to read:

“including by making links with mathematics, science, geography and design and technology.”

2. At Key Stage 2. Computing’s links with geographical fieldwork should be included as a non-statutory example in the following way:

“Select, use and combine a variety of software (including internet services) on a range of digital devices to accomplish given goals, including collecting, analysing, evaluating and presenting data and information (e.g through geographical fieldwork).

3. At Key Stage 3. The Society proposes that a reference is also included in the computing National Curriculum which identifies that the use of Geographical Information Systems is a specific requirement within Key Stage 3 Geography.

8 Do you have any comments on the revised draft programmes of study or attainment targets for design and technology?

Yes

No

Comments:

9 Do you have any comments on the revised draft programmes of study or attainment targets for geography?

Yes

No

Comments:

1. The Society is pleased to have been able to provide advice to the Department for Education in the drafting of the National Curriculum for Geography.
2. The Society believes that the new National Curriculum addresses many of the Society's aspirations for geography, which we welcome. The new curriculum:
 - Provides greater demand in relation to young peoples' acquisition of geographical knowledge, understanding and skills
 - Reduces the repetition of geographical content across Key Stages
 - Achieves a rebalancing of human and physical geography, addressing the erosion of the latter which had occurred over recent years
 - Supports progression in geography through the development of geographical content and concepts across the Key Stages in the following way:
 - at Key Stage 1 the correct use of geographical vocabulary;
 - at Key Stage 2 the description of and understanding of key aspects of physical and human geography; and

- at Key Stage 3 the understanding of the key processes in human and physical geography.

It is upon this progression that GCSE geography then builds with its focus on a deeper understanding of geographical process, the impact of change and complex people-environment interactions

- Provides good coverage of geographical skills, requiring the use of globes, maps (including Ordnance Survey maps) and use of GIS
- Identifies an explicit requirement for fieldwork across Key Stage 1, 2 and 3.

3. The introduction of the following sub-headings is a helpful addition to the geography curriculum: Location^a Knowledge, Place Knowledge, Human and Physical Geography, and Geographical Skills and Fieldwork.

4. The Society welcomes the inclusion in Key Stage Three of the study of 'change in the climate from the Ice Age to the present'. We believe that, building on pupils' understanding of weather and climate gained earlier in their studies, this is the right stage for pupils to start to learn about the complex area of climate change.

In addition, the Society also welcomes the inclusion of the following statement in Key Stage Three – 'how human activity relies on effective functioning of natural systems'.

Finally, there are four specific areas where the Society believes modest, but necessary, changes to the curriculum wording would strengthen key aspects of geography, provide greater demand and also help with the readability of the document.

a. Geographical Context. At the heart of the Society's advice to the Department about the curriculum has been the need for pupils to be provided with a geographical context for their studies, connecting places and geographical processes. Without this, the subject runs the risk of becoming an unconnected string of case studies, sprinkled around the world; which may be seen in isolation from both each other and also the geographical processes which are influencing them.

The Society believes that it is only through a pupils' developing understanding of the geographical context, which underpins their study of locational knowledge *and* geographical processes, that they can better understand both the 'what is where' and the 'how and why' of geography.

The Society feels that between February and June the drafting changes have inadvertently reduced the earlier coverage of the geographical context. The Society believes that the amended wording we suggest below would strengthen this aspect of geography. Alongside this, the Society also feels the removal of the term 'globally significant' unfortunately serves to weaken the level of demand in geography. The

selection, identification and exploration of what geographers mean by 'globally significant' is an important element of geography's disciplinary approach.

The Society would recommend that the existing wording is amended on the following lines:

Existing wording: "Develop contextual knowledge of the location of places, seas and oceans, including their defining physical and human characteristics"

Suggested wording: "Develop ~~contextual~~ knowledge of the location of globally significant places, seas and oceans, including their defining physical and human characteristics, and how these provide a geographical context for the understanding of processes."

b. Key Stage 2 fieldwork

Currently the requirement for fieldwork at Key Stage 2 requires the use of fieldwork to, 'observe, measure and record'. An (overly) literal reading of this requirement could lead a non-specialist teacher to the conclusion that there is no need to 'do' anything with the data. In order to overcome any misinterpretation the Society suggests the following amendment:

Existing wording: "Use fieldwork to observe, measure and record the human and physical features in the local area using a range of methods, including sketch maps, plans and graphs, and digital technologies."

Suggested wording: "Use fieldwork to observe, measure ~~and,~~ record and present the human and physical features in the local area using a range of methods, including sketch maps, plans and graphs, and digital technologies."

c. Numerical and quantitative skills in geography

The Society welcomes the requirement for the collection, analysis and communication of data in the aims for geography and also that the requirement for KS3 fieldwork references the use of 'geographical data'.

However, the current geography National Curriculum does *not* explicitly reference the need for pupils to draw on, and have reinforced, their numerical and quantitative skills in geography. (We note, and welcome, that the need to 'write at length' has been included in the geography curriculum.)

The Society feels that the role and contribution of numerical and quantitative skills in geography should be included within the curriculum and suggests the following amendment:

Existing wording: "Communicate geographical information in a variety of ways, including

through maps and writing at length.”

Suggested wording: “Communicate geographical information in a variety of ways, including through maps, numerical and quantitative skills and writing at length.”

d. Clarity issue: use of the term ‘geographical tools’

It is the Society’s consistent view, which is confirmed by feedback from teachers’ review of the draft National Curriculum, that the term ‘geographical tools’ is unclear, unhelpful and should be amended.

This term is currently included in the Purpose of Study section, introductory sections to Key Stage 2 and 3 and fieldwork at Key Stage 3.

This term is imprecise and has left non-specialist, particularly primary, colleagues struggling to understand its meaning. Typical responses have included, “does this mean we should be using a compass or a thermometer?”

The Society believes the following four textual amends could address this unhelpful confusion.

Aims

Existing wording: “Geographical knowledge provides the tools and approaches that explain how the Earth’s features at difference scales are shaped, interconnected and change over time.”

Suggested wording: “Geographical knowledge, understanding and skills provides ~~the tools- frameworks~~ and approaches that explain how the Earth’s features at difference scales are shaped, interconnected and change over time.”

Key Stage 2 Introduction

Existing wording: “They should develop their use of geographical tools and skills to enhance their locational and place knowledge.”

Suggested wording: “They should develop their use of geographical tools geographical knowledge, understanding and skills to enhance their locational and place knowledge.”

Key Stage 3 Introduction

Existing wording: “They should develop greater competence in using geographical tools, such as models and theories and geographical skills in analysing and interpreting different data sources.”

Suggested wording: “They should develop greater competence in using geographical tools knowledge, concepts and approaches, such as models and theories, and geographical skills in analysing and interpreting different data sources.”

Key Stage 3 fieldwork

Existing wording: “Build on their knowledge of globes, maps and atlases and use these geographical tools routinely in the classroom and in the field.”

Suggested wording: “Build on their knowledge of globes, maps and atlases and ~~use these geographical tools~~ apply and develop this knowledge routinely in the classroom and in the field.”

10 Do you have any comments on the revised draft programmes of study or attainment targets for history?

Yes

No

Comments:

11 Do you have any comments on the revised draft programmes of study or attainment targets for languages?

Yes

No

Comments:

12 Do you have any comments on the revised draft programmes of study or attainment targets for music?

Yes

No

Comments:

13 Do you have any comments on the revised draft programmes of study or attainment targets for physical education?

Yes

No

Comments:

14 Please let us have your views on responding to this consultation (e.g. the number and type of questions, whether it was easy to find, understand, complete etc.).

Comments:

Very straightforward to answer – thank you.

Thank you for taking the time to let us have your views. We do not intend to acknowledge individual responses unless you place an 'X' in the box below.

Please acknowledge this reply.

X

E-mail address for acknowledgement: director@rgs.org

Here at the Department for Education we carry out our research on many different topics and consultations. As your views are valuable to us, please confirm below if you would be willing to be contacted again from time to time either for research or to send through consultation documents?

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
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All DfE public consultations are required to meet the Cabinet Office [Principles on Consultation](#)

The key consultation principles are:

- departments will follow a range of timescales rather than defaulting to a 12-week period, particularly where extensive engagement has occurred before
- departments will need to give more thought to how they engage with and consult with those who are affected
- consultation should be 'digital by default', but other forms should be used where these are needed to reach the groups affected by a policy; and
- the principles of the Compact between government and the voluntary and community sector will continue to be respected.

Responses should be completed on-line or emailed to the relevant consultation email box. However, if you have any comments on how DfE consultations are conducted, please contact Carole Edge, DfE Consultation Coordinator, tel: 0370 000 2288 / email: carole.edge@education.gsi.gov.uk

Thank you for taking time to respond to this consultation.

Completed responses should be sent to the address shown below by 8 August 2013

Send by post to: Carole Edge, Department for Education, Area 1C Castle View House, East Lane, Runcorn, Cheshire WA7 2 GJ

Send by e-mail to: NCRlegislative.CONULTATION@education.gsi.gov.uk