

CIOL ABS consultation questions and answers:

Q1: We propose several overarching aims and principles that should underpin the introduction and design of the Advanced British Standard. These are:

- a clear, high-quality menu of subjects that young people can choose from
- increase the amount of time young people spend with a teacher in 16-19 education.
- encourage young people to gain knowledge and skills across a broader range of subjects while maintaining sufficient depth of understanding.
- ensure all young people study maths and English up to age 18, as part of a strong core underpinning all study programmes

To what extent do you support these proposed aims and principles?

The Chartered Institute of Linguists was founded, and given its Royal Charter, to contribute towards international goodwill by encouraging the effective study and practice of languages.

We are positive about the overarching aims and principles underpinning the introduction and design of the Advanced British Standard. In particular, we think that studying a broader range of subjects is likely to be highly desirable, and we would like to see languages feature prominently in this mix.

From the Chartered Institute of Linguists perspective, the five fundamental questions or 'tests' of the ABS for languages and linguists are:

1. *How will wider take-up and attainment in languages be better supported by the ABS?*
2. *How will Home, Heritage and Community language be recognised, valued, and supported by the ABS?*
3. *How will the wider vocational value of languages be supported by the ABS - which above all means promoting, teaching, and assessing communicative skills (notably speaking, listening and conversation) which are of the most practical value to young people and employers?*
4. *How will the ABS support the pipeline of linguists who can go on university and then into teaching to sustain school-level languages and into university teaching and research to sustain university language provision?*
5. *How will the ABS support the pipeline of highly skilled linguists who can go on to interpret, translate and operate at the language levels needed to meet the needs of the UK economy, international relations, and our national security in a globally interconnected world?*

We would be in favour of students being able to start a new language at 16, as evidence from a recent YouGov survey demonstrates that people often regret giving up the study of a modern language at 14. CIOL would support universities being flexible and creative in accepting students who maybe have only one or two years of a language studied post 16. There also need to be different types of courses suited

to those who choose more academic vs more vocational pathways. These might include special courses for those interested in business or tourism, for instance.

We would also suggest that the notion of literacy be broadened to include multiliteracy. Research evidence collected by the University Council for Languages (UCFL) shows that multiliteracy has benefits for motivation and attainment across the curriculum.

'Language awareness' training would have additional benefits as a potential pathway for recruitment of ab initio (i.e. from scratch) students in modern languages at university and also into vocational language qualifications and tests which CIOL offers to assess and certify language levels for the world of work.

Q2: What do you think is the most important thing that the Advanced British Standard could achieve?

There is an opportunity here to broaden the curriculum, to move away from the narrow focus that young people have had to follow hitherto. The Advanced British Standard is an opportunity to ensure that value is placed on a fully rounded education, in place of narrow specialism, and that language learning is at the heart of that rounded education, recognising that young people are part of a multicultural and multilingual society and economy and a multilingual world.

CIOL is concerned by the lack of reference to the study of languages in the subject list of the ABS proposals. Languages are key facilitating subjects that not only enhance students' literacy and speaking skills but also contribute to their overall personal and intellectual growth. They hold significant academic and vocational importance, which needs to be spelled out in the next phases of this proposal.

Perhaps the most important thing the Advanced British Standard could achieve for the advancement of languages and linguists in the UK would be to enable greater recognition and a greater value to be placed on communicative skills in languages (speaking, listening, reading and writing) as described by the CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference) so young people's language attainment and skills - at whatever level - are encouraged, assessed and certified so they can become an asset to those young people, employers and the economy.

Languages have observed a decline in study, and this is concerning for the UK's already low recognition of our very significant linguistic capacity within our four nations and diverse communities. The decline in take-up has also had a disproportionately large effect on socio-economically and regionally disadvantaged groups. We therefore recommend that students are encouraged to include a language in their subject combinations, at major or minor level, with the option to study language ab initio (i.e. from scratch) in the minor route.

Q3: 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?

The basic idea is sound but the focus on only two subjects as minors for those not taking Maths and English at Advanced level is very restrictive. We would be in favour of consideration of expanding the offer to six or seven subjects, comparable to what is now currently available in the International Baccalaureate and ensuring a range of languages form part of the offer.

Q4: We propose two main programmes at Level 2: transition and occupational. Each will contain a range of separate components to support students. To what extent do you support the proposed design for the Level 2 programmes?

We support this. Here too there should be opportunities for language learning appropriate to the vocational or occupational path chosen. Languages equip students with practical skills for their chosen careers but also prepare them to thrive in interconnected and multicultural UK and international working environments.

Q5: To what extent do you support the proposal for increased teaching time relative to self-directed study?

Perhaps 'teaching time' should change to 'contact time', to give a broader sense of what might be pedagogically useful. Self-directed study of languages - including the use of Apps and digital resources - should not be seen as automatically less useful educationally; there are also differences between subjects and languages. We know that languages students can require more contact time than others because of the nature of language learning. Evidence provided by UCFL from the Department for Education's Mandarin Excellence programme has shown the benefits of increasing both classroom time and self-directed study time.

Q6: We propose that we develop the English and maths offer within these reforms around the overarching principles on content, breadth, number of options and aspiration. To what extent to you support these principles?

Support would depend upon the 'breadth' of the offer. This new qualification could represent an invaluable opportunity to think creatively about the school curriculum and draw on the best examples from countries which offer a broader curriculum than we currently do in the UK to include greater exposure to languages for all.