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# **Learning for/with Nature**

## **The pedagogy and practice of teaching Natural History in England**

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# Aims of this presentation

- To promote dialogue about *how* we may teach Natural History
- To invite your thoughts on this proposed new GCSE
- To consider what may mean for you and your work
- To encourage you to join in with this debate...

# Why study Natural History?

Extract from OCR's proposed statement on the purpose of studying Natural History:

- Study of science, geography, history and the arts at key stages 3 and 4 provides a variety of complementary skills and knowledge which support the study of Natural history.
- This subject supports the development of unique skills and knowledge which give a sharper focus and depth to the complexities of the natural world.

# Proposed definition of 'natural history' is...

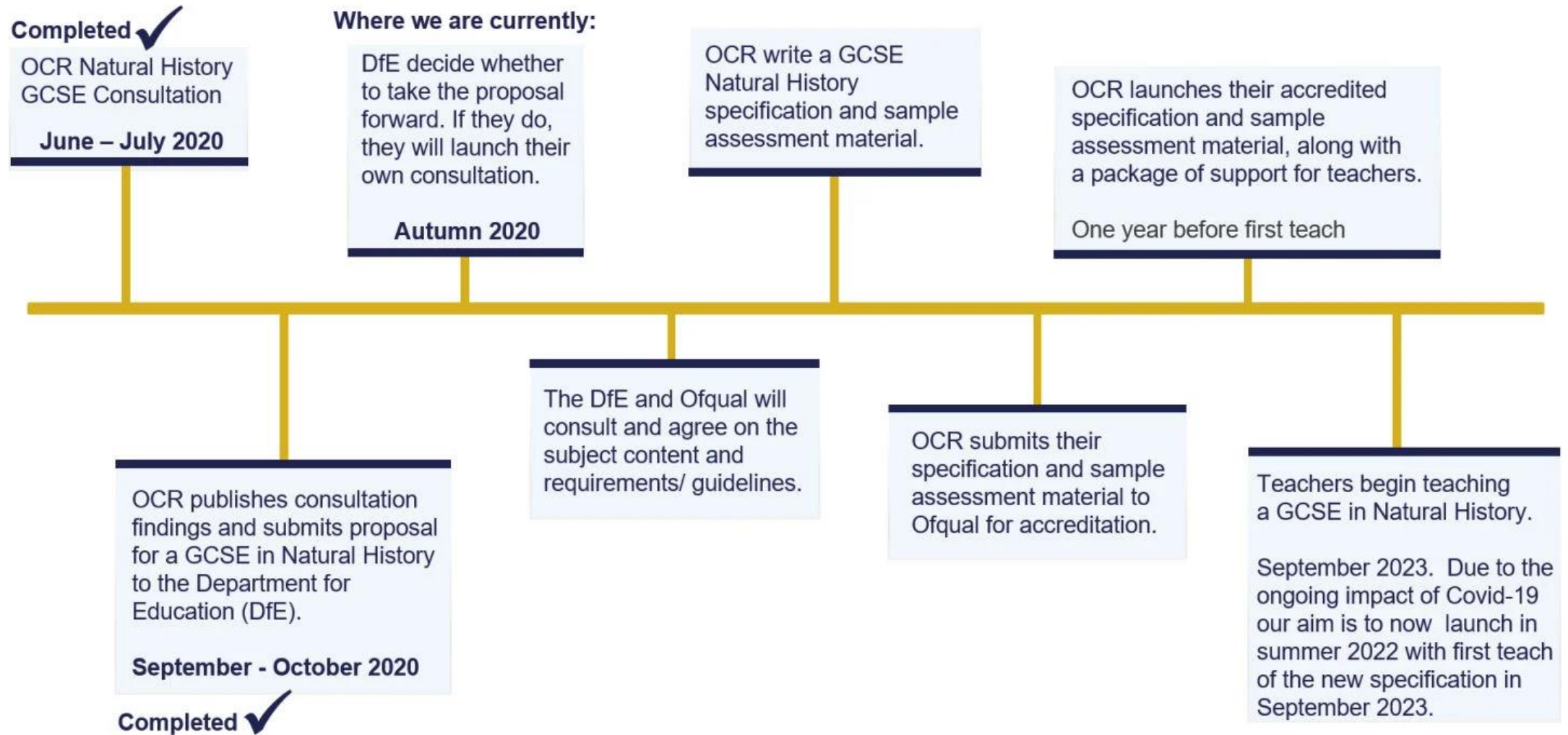
“Natural History focuses on understanding the rich and diverse natural world. Through **observational study** (generating systematic records of direct and indirect observations, often made over long periods of time) and **investigation**, natural history seeks to understand the diversity, complexities, and interconnectedness, of life on earth in contrasting habitats. Natural history explores how our natural world has been shaped, and how it continues to change, both by natural processes and through human intervention”.

# My interest in this

- PhD in Transdisciplinary Research in Outdoor Studies, Cert in Education for Sustainability, BSc Natural Sciences
- Practical experiences in conservation/environmental education
- [BERA sig convenor](#) in *Nature, Outdoor Learning and Play* – supporter of / advocate for this proposal



# Progress so far



# Summary of consultation findings

## DEFINITION

90%

of respondents  
*agreed or strongly agreed* with  
our definition of Natural History



## OUTDOOR STUDY

96%

of respondents  
*agreed or strongly agreed* outdoor  
study should be an important  
part of a GCSE in Natural History



93%

of young people *expected* some  
time *studying outdoors*



## MOST POPULAR CONTENT THEMES

1



FLORA AND FAUNA

2



HUMAN IMPACT ON THE WORLD

3



THE NATURAL SHAPING  
OF THE WORLD

4



LIFE IN THE EARLY WORLD

5



OUR CHANGING VIEW  
OF THE WORLD

## PURPOSE

91%

of responders  
*agreed or strongly agreed*  
with the proposed  
purpose of a GCSE  
in Natural History



## INTEREST FROM YOUNG PEOPLE

94%

of young people *would like*  
or *would have liked*  
the option to study  
such a qualification





# Key supporters



# My stance...

- This is long overdue and very much needed BUT
- It needs careful implementation and considered approach to pedagogy and practice
- Who is going to teach it?
- What support is needed – and for whom?



**Over to you...**

# References and more information...

Colwell, M. (2019). *Campaign to introduce a GCSE in natural History*. Available at <http://www.curlewmedia.com/gcse-natural-history> Accessed: 9/12/2019

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OCR (2021). *Developing a GCSE in Natural History*. Available at <https://teach.ocr.org.uk/naturalhistory> [you can sign up for email updates]