

Glenys Stacey
Chief Regulator



9 April 2014

The Rt Hon Michael Gove MP
Secretary of State
Department for Education
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Dear Secretary of State

Thank you for your letter confirming the list of additional GCSEs and A levels for which you will oversee the development of subject content in England.

I can confirm that we will develop and put in place the regulatory requirements for assessment in these subjects. We aim to do so in parallel with your work, so that we can consult at the same time. This should allow qualifications to be developed for first teaching in 2016, provided the development work proceeds as planned.

In setting the regulatory requirements for assessment, we will have a particular focus on the role of non-exam assessment in these subjects given that your list includes a number of subjects with a significant practical element. We have already consulted on a set of principles which will underpin our decisions about where non-exam assessment is needed in GCSEs and A levels, which we will apply on a subject by subject basis. We will also develop new assessment objectives to support effective assessment in these subjects and, for GCSE subjects, apply the principles we have previously consulted on to determine whether assessments in each subject should be tiered.

There are very tight timescales to complete this work. They are achievable if the subject content is ready as planned this summer and exam boards are able to develop high quality specifications in the time provided. This will then allow qualifications in the first group of subjects to be in schools in autumn 2015 and to be ready for first teaching in 2016. However, we will need jointly to keep the timetable under review, and we will advise if we judge that any subjects require further work to allow them to be effectively regulated.

Separately, we will be putting in place a regulatory framework to allow subject content to be developed in those subjects for which Government does not wish to set out subject content expectations. We will set out the regulatory expectations which subjects will need to fulfil if they are to be developed as a future GCSE or A level. We will also develop, with exam boards, a robust process for the development of minimum subject content in these subjects. We will consult on our detailed proposals in this area shortly.

At the same time we will consult on an expectation that all GCSE and A level subjects should be reformed for first teaching in 2017 if they are to continue to be offered.

I am copying my letter to the recipients of yours.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Glenys Stacey'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first part being a large, stylized 'G' and 'S'.

Glenys Stacey