



Your ref P-06-1540
Our ref LN/00096/26

Carolyn Thomas MS
Chair - Petitions committee
petitions@senedd.wales

23 February 2026

Dear Carolyn,

Thank you for your letter of 27 January, regarding an update on Petition P-06-1540:
Remove The Manipulative Funding System Forcing Students To Do Welsh BaccaLaureate.

I am sorry loan was dissatisfied with the previous response on this matter and am happy to address the points he raises.

In my initial response I confirmed that schools and colleges receive the same level of funding for learners studying 3 A levels and the Advanced Skills BaccaLaureate Wales (AdvSBW), as they do for a learner studying 4 A levels. This does not constitute a 'financial incentive' to offer the qualification; rather, it reflects fair funding for the additional costs involved in delivering further qualifications to learners.

In his response, loan asked whether Medr and/or the Welsh Government could provide a transparent example showing the funding difference for:

- 3 A-levels only
- 3 A-levels + AdvSBW
- and 4 A-levels without AdvSBW

For clarity, this information is set out below:

3 A Levels	3 A Levels + AdvSBW	4 A Levels
£3,951	£5,063	£5,063

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

To illustrate that the Advanced Skills Baccalaureate Wales is not made mandatory through its funding arrangements, it may be helpful to share data on the programmes of learning followed by learners in schools and colleges. Based on the most recent, available data:

- In school sixth forms, 70% of learners on a Level 3 (L3) programme were entered in AdvSBW in 2024/25
- In colleges, 60% of all L3 learners were entered in AdvSBW in 2023/24
- In colleges, 90% of L3 learners doing A level programmes were entered in AdvSBW in 2023/24, with uptake ranging between 97% and 37% by college.

While this data counters the argument that AdvSBW is 'effectively mandatory', it also demonstrates that schools and colleges retain autonomy over the curricula and qualifications they offer to their 16 to 18 learners, including how they deliver the AdvSBW alongside other level 3 courses.

Ioan has also asked about any assessments the Welsh Government has considered or conducted in respect of the qualification being 'effectively mandatory'. For the reasons outlined above, the qualification is not mandatory, and therefore no such impact assessments have been undertaken. However, Welsh Government has previously carried out and published an [impact assessment](#) of the policy of 'universal adoption' of the Advanced Skills Challenge Certificate, the predecessor qualification of the AdvSBW. This was carried out in response to a report by the National Assembly's Children, Young People and Education (CYPE) Committee in April 2019.

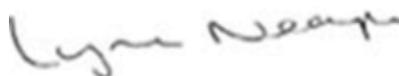
I can assure Ioan that I remain committed to ensuring that mental health and wellbeing of post-16 learners continues to be high on the Government's agenda. The Tertiary Education and Research Act (Wales) 2022 requires Medr to develop a new registration and funding condition, which I expect to create a common framework for mental health support across tertiary education. This will make it clear to students the baseline of support that they can expect from their providers.

I should also mention here that I have recently launched a consultation on draft 16 to 18 local curricula guidance for Medr. This guidance includes a section setting out our expectations for how the AdvSBW should be used within 16 to 18 curricula. I have provided an extract and links to the consultation below and would encourage Ioan to engage with the consultation process:

The AdvSBW should be available and offered to all learners aged 16 to 18 on a 2-year, level 3 course. It will normally be taken alongside other Level 3 qualifications, such as a combination of A levels and (or) vocational qualifications. All eligible learners should be encouraged to undertake the AdvSBW, although schools and FEIs should take into account the individual needs and circumstances of learners, as they would for any qualification.

[16 to 18 local curricula guidance | GOV.WALES](#)
[Canllawiau ar gwricwla lleol 16 i 18 | LLYW.CYMRU](#)

Yours sincerely,



Lynne Neagle AS/MS

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Addysg
Cabinet Secretary for Education