

Kirsty Williams AS/MS
Y Gweinidog Addysg
Minister for Education



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-1044
Ein cyf/Our ref KW/05799/20

Janet Finch-Saunders MS
Chair, Petitions Committee

21 October 2020

Dear Janet,

Thank you for your letter of 9 October regarding Petition P-05-1044 - Set up a Natural History GCSE to help prepare future generations to tackle the threats facing nature which you have received.

As you might be aware, at the beginning of the year, the English awarding body, OCR, put forward a proposal to the Department for Education for a new Natural History GCSE qualification. In June, they launched a public consultation and a summary of the consultation findings can be seen here: <https://teach.ocr.org.uk/en/summary-of-findings>. OCR has also produced a [timeline](#) which shows how they are planning to take this work forward. As you can see from this, the work is still at early stages and OCR will need to gain approval from the Department of Education before proceeding any further, it will also require approval from Ofqual.

As you know, Qualifications Wales is the independent regulator of awarding bodies offering qualifications in Wales, including GCSEs, A levels and vocational qualifications. One of their functions is to decide which qualifications can be made eligible for public funding. So if this OCR qualification is approved it may then be available to learners in Wales.

You will also be aware that the Welsh Government has published guidance on the new Curriculum for Wales, which is planned to be introduced into schools from September 2022. The guidance provides a clear statement of what is important in delivering a broad and balanced education. The [four purposes](#) are the shared vision and aspiration for every child and young person. In fulfilling these, we set high expectations for all, promote individual and national well-being, tackle ignorance and misinformation, and encourage critical and civic engagement.

Alongside our work to implement the new curriculum, Qualifications Wales is looking to review and refine qualifications available to 14-16 year old to align with the new curriculum.

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:
0300 0604400

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1SN

Gohebiaeth.Kirsty.Williams@llyw.cymru
Correspondence.Kirsty.Williams@gov.wales

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.

Qualifications Wales is currently preparing the second part of their [Qualified for the Future](#) consultation. This will help decided the main qualifications that should be available for 16-year-olds to study from 2025. This is a public consultation and is an opportunity for anyone with an interest in education to have their say and put forward their thoughts. I would encourage Mr Curtis to check the Qualifications Wales website regularly for updates about when the when the consultation will open.

I hope this information will be helpful.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kirsty Williams', written in a cursive style.

Kirsty Williams AS/MS

Y Gweinidog Addysg
Minister for Education