

Kirsty Williams AS/MS
Y Gweinidog Addysg
Minister for Education



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-1055
Ein cyf/Our ref KW/06017/20

Janet Finch-Saunders MS
Chair, Petitions Committee

27 October 2020

Dear Janet,

Thank you for your letter of 19 October regarding Petition P-05-1055 - Cancel GCSE and A level examinations which you have received.

I recognise that the continuing disruption caused by COVID-19, in particular national and local lockdowns and self-isolation following positive cases in schools and colleges, is increasing anxiety about arrangements for this summer's exams. In light of this I have asked Qualifications Wales to provide me with further advice on the options available, with a clear focus on deliverability and equality in any approach. I have requested this advice before the end of October so that I can consider it alongside the interim findings of the independent review which are due to be published at the end of this month.

As you will be aware, the independent review chaired by Louise Casella, is looking at key issues that have emerged from the arrangements which were put in place for this summer's exams, and the challenges resulting from the 2020 experience, in order to provide recommendations for approaches to qualifications in 2021.

Whilst I had originally made a commitment to announcing the approach that would be taken towards qualifications in 2021, in light of the fire-break announcement I have taken a decision to postpone this announcement until 10 November when learners are back in school and college and will have support from their teachers.

This work is in addition, to [the adaptations](#) that have already been made by WJEC to take into account the disruption to teaching and learning, details of which are available on WJEC's website. Teachers from across Wales were engaged in the development of these adaptations. They have been made to allow schools the flexibility to priorities learning in these difficult times whilst ensuring that the validity of qualifications is maintained for all learners.

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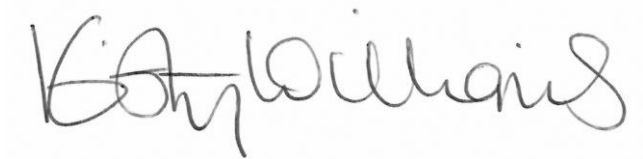
Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

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.

My overriding priority for learners in exam cohorts is to ensure that they have the knowledge, skills and confidence to progress into further or higher education or into employment. To further support learners, the Welsh Government is investing £50 million in a package of support, this includes the [Recruit, Recover and Raise Standards programme](#), and investment in the A-level revision plan. This will mean a new mentoring and revision support programme for all learners in Years 10, 11, and 12, and 13 in schools and colleges will be available. Alongside this, we will be providing a further £1.2 million to support the development of new high-quality revision resources for GCSE students.

Alongside the work to consider the best approach to qualifications in 2021, given the continued disruption, these measures provide a broad package of support to enable learners in exam years to develop the knowledge and experience they need to progress confidently in their next steps.

Yours sincerely

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

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