



Mr M Hedges AC/AM  
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By Email to: [SeneddPetitions@Assembly.Wales](mailto:SeneddPetitions@Assembly.Wales)

23 September 2016

Dear Mr Hedges

### **Petition P-05-704 Bring Back January Exams for AS/A level students**

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to offer our views on the petition to bring back examinations in January for AS/A level students.

Welsh Government made the decision that January examinations would no longer be available to learners starting AS and A levels from September 2013. This followed an earlier decision made by the Department for Education in England that was based, in part, on Ofqual's research into the perception of A levels.

*"This showed that the qualifications are considered to be largely fit for purpose, but that there were some structural changes that could be made to improve them. There were also concerns expressed by teachers, employers and universities over what they term a resit culture. Teachers in particular said A-level students approach examinations with the expectation that they will always get a second chance."*

In the Review of Qualifications conducted by Welsh Government, which reported in 2013, stakeholders were keen to stress the importance of portability and the need for Welsh learners to have qualifications that are regarded as credible and robust in the eyes of universities and employers. To ensure this we need to have regard to the nature of AS/A levels in England and Northern Ireland, where these qualifications are also taken. Whilst there are differences in qualifications policies between countries the degree of divergence between countries needs to be actively managed and we believe that the reintroduction of January examinations would weaken public confidence in qualifications taken by Welsh learners and threaten portability.

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It is our regulatory opinion that the course of action taken by Welsh Government continues to be in the best interests of learners in Wales. Removing January assessments frees up time for additional teaching so that learners can develop greater knowledge and understanding of their subjects. Time which would be dominated by assessment, and preparation for assessment, if January exams were reintroduced.

Yours sincerely



Philip Blaker