



Ms Lynne Neagle AM
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

By post and email: lynne.neagle@assembly.wales

17 July 2018

Dear Lynne

We note the consultation that the Children, Young People and Education Committee has launched on the status of the Welsh Baccalaureate (Welsh Bacc). We would like to take the opportunity to draw the committee's attention to the work that we have recently conducted, as well as the work that we are planning, in relation to the Welsh Bacc.

New versions of the Welsh Bacc at Foundation, National and Advanced levels were introduced for first teaching in September 2015 following recommendations made in the Review of Qualifications. The design of the Welsh Bacc is now considerably different from its predecessor and has required significant change in practice within schools and colleges.

We conducted an initial review of its introduction in autumn 2015 and published a first report in early 2016¹. When conducting the first review we decided to take a closer look at the design of the Skills Challenge Certificate (SCC)² and how it is working in practice once the first assessments were complete. So, in February 2017, we commissioned Wavehill Ltd, in partnership with the Institute of Education at University College London to conduct a review of the design of the SCC and its place within the Welsh Bacc. The research drew on a detailed analysis of the design of the SCC and evidence gathered from students, teachers and lecturers about their experience of studying and teaching the qualification. We published the report and our response to its findings and recommendations in April 2018³. We accepted all eight of the recommendations made in the report. Some of these are about supporting the current delivery of the SCC while others suggest possible future

¹ <http://www.qualificationswales.org/media/1631/qw-review-of-new-welsh-bacc-230316.pdf>

² The Welsh Bacc is made up of the SCC and some supporting qualifications. The SCC can be awarded as a qualification even if a student does not achieve the necessary supporting qualifications to be awarded the Welsh Bacc. An explanation of the SCC and its place within the Welsh Bacc can be found on our website, [here](#)

³ <http://www.qualificationswales.org/english/news/welsh-bacc-report-2018/>



changes to its design. In response to the recommendations, we are in the process of establishing a design group to develop proposals for how the structure, assessment and manageability of the SCC could be improved. The design group, comprising qualifications and assessment experts and representatives from Welsh Government, WJEC, Estyn and regional education consortia, will meet for the first time early autumn. We will use a wider group of stakeholders, including students, teachers, employers and universities to refine and validate these proposals, including plans for how and when they could be implemented.

The review identified the need to build greater understanding. This is not unexpected as the revised qualifications are new and innovative, and it takes time to build widespread awareness. In recognition of this, we are collaborating with WJEC and Welsh Government to raise awareness, and to improve the availability and clarity of information. Extensive and long-term communications will help build a clearer understanding, which will help build confidence and a greater understanding of the value of the SCC as evidence of the skills that have been developed; skills that employers regularly report as those that they are seeking in young people. We are also working with WJEC on a programme of training and events to support those delivering the SCC.

We have recently appointed a dedicated Higher Education Engagement Officer to our team to help explain the Welsh qualifications system, including the Welsh Bacc to Higher Education Institutions admissions officers and others. As well as improving understanding across universities, this new role will help us gather intelligence and feedback from the sector for us to share with others in the system in Wales. Alongside this, we also plan to focus on building understanding among the business community, so that employers can clearly see the purpose and value of the Welsh Bacc.

When considering the responses that you receive to the consultation we consider it important for you and the committee to be aware that the revised Welsh Bacc is still very new, so awareness levels are likely to be lower than desired. Equally there will be some schools that will find the delivery of something new and highly innovative very different to what they are used to. This is only to be expected and awareness and perceptions will change over time.

We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you individually or with your committee to discuss the work that we have conducted and are planning in more detail.

Yours sincerely



Ann Evans
Chair



Philip Blaker
Chief Executive

cc to members of the Children, Young people and Education Committee