



Eich cyf/Your ref
Ein cyf/Our ref MA.KW.1500.21

Geraint Rees
Chair
Design and Delivery Advisory Group for Wales

24 March 2021

Dear Geraint

Thank you for your letter as Chair of the Design and Delivery Advisory Group for qualifications 2021. As previously I am very grateful for the effort, time and commitment the Group has put in to develop thinking and policy proposals which support learner wellbeing and public confidence for summer 2021, working with Qualifications Wales and WJEC. I note that the Group are brought together from a range of schools and colleges, with regional distribution, rural and urban, differences in size, and importantly including both Welsh medium and English medium. I value the ability of the Group to come to a consensus whilst recognising a range of views and opinions.

As Minister for Education, I have seen the significant impact of the Covid pandemic on our learners, their wellbeing and their progression. The work of the Design and Delivery Advisory Group has, at all stages, sought to respond to these challenges and I appreciate the agility that you have demonstrated over the last five months. The Centre Determined Grade approach has the opportunity to demonstrate best practice in teacher-based assessment. For example, it provides flexibility for schools and colleges to use a variety of forms of assessment evidence undertaken over the course of the qualification to support the grade determination, and promotes centre-to-centre discussions through various existing and new networks to help schools and colleges develop thinking within a self-improving system. It also embeds key points from the independent review of the delivery of qualifications in 2020, including providing the opportunity for professional dialogue around grade outcomes, putting learners and their needs at the centre, embedding equalities issues and ensuring meaningful rights of appeal.

I was pleased to see the clear leadership of the teaching profession in the sub group work that you described, and am grateful to the headteachers and college principals for taking on these important roles. The sub groups seem to have taken on significant responsibility in key areas and I anticipate that they, and the DDAG more widely, will have an important ongoing role in ensuring that the approach continues to respond to the needs of learners and wider engagement with and support for the profession.

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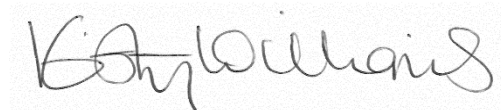
Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

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.

An area which will continue to be relevant is helping to manage the workload for schools and colleges, particularly in the context of the wider effort the profession is putting in to bring learners back in. Creating as much time as possible to promote learner wellbeing and teaching and learning has remained a priority for me, and I appreciate the Group's work to provide support and flexibility for teachers and lecturers, and the ongoing commitment of the profession to deliver this. I am pleased to have been able to provide funding to schools and colleges to support the Centre Determined Grade process, and encourage the use of the national professional learning INSET day in the summer to help teachers and lecturers develop their professional learning in relation to Centre Determined Grades.

Finally, I recognise the impact that decisions made in other jurisdictions may have on the approach to qualifications in Wales. The work of the Design and Delivery Advisory Group, with Qualifications Wales and WJEC, has illustrated how the system can work together collaboratively to support learners and I hope that we will be able to provide some best practice examples for a future government to build on.

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