

Kirsty Williams AC/AM
Y Gweinidog Addysg
Minister for Education



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref
Ein cyf/Our ref
David Jones OBE, DL
Chair of Qualifications Wales
&
Philip Blaker,
Chief Executive Officer, Qualifications Wales
Q2 Building, Pencarn Lane,
Newport
NP10 8UH

6 April 2020

Dear Philip and David

As you are well aware, we are currently facing unprecedented challenges in responding to the impact of the coronavirus pandemic. My priorities during this time are protecting the health and well-being of our learners, and the education workforce, whilst minimising the disruption to their educational progress.

I am grateful for all the support and advice that you and your officials have provided to me so far and I recognise the additional pressure that the events of the last few weeks is likely to have created for you.

Earlier in March I made the difficult decision to close schools, colleges and early years settings to everyone except the children of critical workers and vulnerable children. Related to this, and following detailed discussions with you and the WJEC, I took the decision to cancel the summer exam series and for GCSE, AS and A-level students to be issued with grades based on the range of evidence available to enable their future progress into employment and education.

The purpose of this letter is to issue you with the enclosed Direction under Section 53 of the Qualifications Wales Act 2015 to have regard to the Welsh Ministers' policy regarding the cancellation of exams and the subsequent determination of grades. I will also be writing to you separately about the arrangements that will need to be made for vocational qualifications.

I am confident that by continuing to work closely together we can maintain the robustness and credibility of our qualifications system, whilst delivering the fairest approach for our learners ensuring that they are not disadvantaged by circumstances outside of their control.

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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.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Kirsty Williams". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "K".

Kirsty Williams AC/AM
Y Gweinidog Addysg
Minister for Education

DIRECTION UNDER SECTION 53 OF QUALIFICATIONS (WALES) ACT 2015

Under section 53 of the Qualifications Wales Act 2015, Qualifications Wales must have regard to such aspects of government policy as the Welsh Ministers may direct.

The Minister for Education, one of the Welsh Ministers, directs Qualifications Wales to have regard to:

- the Welsh Government policy that the summer 2020 cohort of GCSE, AS, A-level and Welsh Baccalaureate Skills Challenge Certificate learners should be issued with results this summer.

A policy statement regarding the cancellation of the summer examinations 2020 and issuing of estimated grades for learners who were due to take GCSE and A-level exams to support their future progression into work or further education, dated 18 March 2020, was published by the Welsh Ministers on the Welsh Government website and can be found by following this link; <https://gov.wales/written-statement-written-statement-summer-examinations-2020>.

- the Welsh Government policy that the summer 2020 cohort of GCSE, AS, A-level and Welsh Baccalaureate Skills Challenge Certificate learners should be issued with results based on their exam centres' judgements of their attainment in the relevant subjects, supplemented by a range of other evidence.
- the Welsh Government policy that a fair and robust approach to issuing grades to the summer 2020 cohort of GCSE, AS, A-level and Welsh Baccalaureate Skills Challenge Certificate learners is adopted, which includes determining the approach centres must follow in arriving at judgements of their learners' attainment standardisation of centres' judgements and ensuring an avenue of recourse is available for those learners who do not believe that the process has been followed correctly in issuing their grades.
- the Welsh Government policy that a fair and robust approach to issuing grades to the summer 2021 cohort of GCSE and A level learners, who have been affected by the cancellation of the summer 2020 exams, is adopted.