



## **WJEC's Response to the Report on Fees for the revised GCE A levels**

WJEC is aware through its close contact with teaching departments in schools and colleges of the educational importance of a choice of GCE A Level specifications available at comparable cost to centres. The conclusions of this report are encouraging in showing that this should continue to be the case for the revised A Levels, allowing teaching departments to continue to choose their preferred specification using educational criteria without cost becoming a dominant criterion.

In setting our fees for the revised A Levels, WJEC has passed on to schools and colleges the anticipated expenditure savings that will arise from the reduction of assessment units from six to four in the majority of subjects. In doing so, we have chosen to set our fees by averaging across all subjects the estimated costs of our A Level operation: this avoids presenting the six-unit subjects as "more expensive", and makes centres' total fees independent of their candidates' subject choices and hence more amenable to estimation for budgetary purposes.

Our aim at WJEC is to ensure that our fees are competitively positioned and are inclusive of all the essential "surround" which teaching departments require and expect in support of their delivery of an A Level programme. This includes, at no additional charge, comprehensive teachers' guides for all subjects, specimen assessment materials, past papers, and access to professional development events linked to the introduction of new specifications. For the revised A Levels we shall also be making available to centres, after each examination session, relevant item-level data which profiles their individual candidates' performance. We are also always pleased to consider requests for additional support from centres.

In order to ensure that we continue to provide a high value service, WJEC prioritises expenditure on those elements which contribute most directly to a positive experience for students and their teachers. This includes ensuring that sufficient expertise is available both within our own WJEC staff and our examiner teams to provide a responsive service and to deliver valid assessments and reliable awarding outcomes. Whilst always seeking opportunities to improve our own cost efficiencies, we recognise that our clients are increasingly discerning and rightly demand the highest standards of service and performance. With this in mind, recent trends in our expenditure profile include increases in subject-specific staff to maintain our reputation for accessibility and responsiveness, improved payment rates to examiners (initially through financial support from government, but now borne by ourselves as an organisation), and the development and delivery of additional services to centres through our increasingly popular secure extranet.

In order to continue to work in close partnership with schools and colleges throughout Wales and England, WJEC welcomes feedback on all aspects of our services, including the appropriateness of our fees policy.