

AQA Response to the QCA Report on awarding bodies' fees for the revised GCE A levels

AQA welcomes the publication of this report by our regulators. We believe that greater transparency in the fees charged by all the awarding bodies will help schools and colleges to make the right decision about which awarding body best meets their needs and the needs of their students.

However, we know that entry fees are not usually the factor to which teachers give most weight when choosing an Awarding Body. High quality specifications and assessment materials, service and support are the primary considerations.

The A level entry fees charged by AQA are the same for all the subjects that we offer. This is because we believe in offering centres a fair choice in the subjects that they provide, based on the needs of their students and not the cost involved in providing examinations. That is why we are reducing our fees for those new A levels which will continue to have 6 units to make them the same as for the new 4 unit A levels.

AQA's A level fees are lower than those charged by the other awarding bodies and we are committed to continuing to offer the best value to schools and colleges. This commitment reflects our status as an educational charity focused on the needs of the learner. All our income goes towards operating and improving the quality of our specifications, examinations and support services.

That is why we work in partnership with teachers and learners to develop the specifications that best meet their needs. Our qualifications:

- ✓ enable students to realise their full potential
- ✓ are manageable for schools and colleges
- ✓ deliver accurate results, on time
- ✓ are affordable and value for money.

The provision of high quality support is an essential part of the value of our offering and we continue to provide teachers with more personalised support than other awarding bodies, including:

- ✓ direct contact with the subject departments
- ✓ face to face support from senior examiners at Teacher Support meetings
- ✓ personalised support from coursework advisers for every subject
- ✓ free coursework standardising meetings when teachers need them
- ✓ free launch meetings for teachers when preparing to teach new specifications
- ✓ 24 hour support through our website and online Ask AQA
- ✓ comprehensive printed and electronic resources for teachers and students
- ✓ past question papers and mark schemes
- ✓ ongoing development of support materials
- ✓ Continuing Professional Development courses
- ✓ regional support for exams officers.

AQA's commitment to value is supported by meaningful and ongoing dialogue with teachers and centres. That's why we talk to over 75,000 teachers and examiners every year. We listen to teachers and we understand their concerns.

AQA is also dedicated to value for money through the development of better methods for delivering assessment. But we put the needs of schools, teachers and students first, not technological innovation. So where technology has been thoroughly tested and shown to improve the efficiency and accuracy of the examination process, we use it – but we won't ever put the quality or delivery of our qualifications at risk in order to be at the forefront of technological change.

Teachers, parents and students can be assured that AQA understands their concerns, offers the best value exam fees, the most relevant and engaging specifications, top quality exams and the highest levels of support and guidance to enable students to realise their potential.

AQA
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