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1 April 2008

Dear Isabel

Response to QCA Report on Awarding Bodies' Fees for the Revised GCE A Level

Edexcel welcomes the QCA report on GCE A level examination fees. We are aware of the growing cost of examinations and the impact of this on expenditure in schools and colleges. We support the work of the QCA and we understand the need to manage examination costs carefully.

Edexcel looks forward to further work by the QCA on the cost of examinations including a review of important factors such as the continuing rise in the average number of examinations being taken by students, the withdrawal of QCA funding support for examiner fees and the increasing complexity of examination requirements, such as the new fee for Diploma Aggregation that will contribute £12.56 to the cost of each award.

The report points to significant differences in pricing strategy across awarding bodies. In particular, to differences in the approach taken by awarding bodies to recovering the cost of A levels which are, in the main, loss-making, and have been since the introduction of Curriculum 2000. These issues were reflected in the QCA investigations into General Qualification pricing published by PKF in December 2006. The PKF investigation concluded that awarding body fees were 'reasonable'.

The QCA report was based on a simple comparison of fees and the description of services as published on awarding body web sites. Inevitably, the report was unable to effectively compare *value for money*. It is in this area that the Edexcel offer differs substantially from the other awarding bodies.

Uniquely, Edexcel focuses on the learner, with a complete personal analysis of performance in each examination, providing the foundation for true personalised learning. Edexcel's philosophy is aimed at increasing student attainment across all grades. The full student and cohort performance analysis provided by Edexcel in each examination series enables teachers to focus on individual strengths and weaknesses, and to drive up centre performance. Edexcel is preparing research which we are confident will show that the



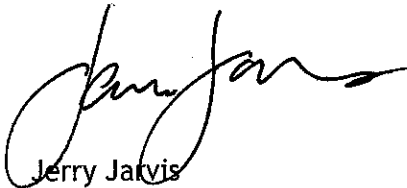
INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

percentage attainment at A* to C, and those attaining grade C, for its subjects is increasing quickly.

Edexcel takes the view that student attainment in GCE A level (and in GCSE) has been static for far too long, and that the solution to improved attainment lies in the strategy outlined by Dr Ken Boston in his evidence to the Commons Select Committee on 17 December 2007. In that evidence Dr Boston said that improved attainment would come from: Personalised learning; Continuous analysis of performance; and professional training of teachers.

We in Edexcel have been investing heavily in the strategy outlined by Dr Boston, and our A level prices reflect our success in delivering it. The cost to Edexcel of digitally capturing virtually all GCE A levels (and GCSEs) and of providing a full, transparent analysis to teachers and to students is very high, with annual capture and presentation costs exceeding £10 million.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jerry Jarvis', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Jerry Jarvis
Managing Director