



Qualifications and
Curriculum Authority



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

Report on awarding body fees for the revised GCE A levels

March 2008

QCA/08/3591

Contents

Executive summary	3
1. Introduction	5
Purpose of this report.....	5
Why are the regulators reporting on A level fees?	5
About A levels	5
Awarding bodies offering A levels	6
Centre choices	6
The regulators' investigation	7
2. Proposed fees for the revised A levels	8
3. Major determinants of the fees for the revised A levels	9
The costs of providing an A level	9
Other factors that affect the fees for A levels	11
4. Summary of analysis	12
General commentary on fees.....	12
Year-on-year fee changes since 2002/03	13
Subject comparison	14
Comparison of fees for subjects on a structural revision basis	15
Fees by awarding body	16
Future A level fees	17
5. Conclusions	18
Appendix 1. Fees charged for revised A levels for 2008/09.....	19
Appendix 2. The range of additional services that are included in the fee for an A level	22

Executive summary

This report has been prepared by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) and the Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (DCELLS), the regulators of external qualifications in England and Wales respectively. Publication of this report is intended to provide information on A level fees to assist schools and colleges in their decision making.

A levels have recently been revised and the new specifications will be introduced for first teaching in September 2008. The regulators have taken this revision as an opportunity to investigate the fees that awarding bodies are proposing to charge for these revised A levels to ensure that any cost savings due to the changes in A levels are passed onto centres. This report explains the major determinants of the fees for the revised A levels and provides a summary analysis of them.

The analysis in this report clearly shows that on average awarding body fees for A levels have been reduced, in the main due to the revisions in the structure of A levels, and centres will benefit from this saving. The level of this saving varies by awarding body and by subject, with some subjects not seeing a saving. The analysis does highlight some differences in the fees charged by different awarding bodies for the same subjects. On average, centres can expect to see a reduction in expenditure on A levels.

Average fees per unit and average total fees were calculated on a weighted mean basis using A level candidate entry figures for 2005/06 and are shown in Table 1. The weightings reflect the impact of A level fees on centres. Table 1 shows that the weighted mean average A level fee has decreased by 6.3 per cent. Average unit fees have increased as the awarding bodies still need to cover their fixed costs. In addition, not all subjects have had a unit reduction and these factors are reflected in the fees charged.

Table 1: Change in average unit and average A level fees on a weighted average basis (2007/08 to 2008/09)

Awarding body	Weighted average fees per unit (£)			Weighted average total fees (£)		
	2007/08	2008/09	Change (%)	2007/08	2008/09	Change (%)
AQA	12.51	15.57	24.5	75.00	67.20	-10.4
Edexcel	15.66	19.86	26.8	91.14	90.52	-0.7
OCR	13.43	15.81	17.7	79.19	73.08	-7.7
WJEC	13.51	16.97	25.6	78.46	73.51	-6.3
Average	13.78	17.05	23.7	80.95	76.08	-6.3

Analysis of the fees on a subject basis shows that the fee reduction is more pronounced in subjects that have moved from six to four units with an average 8.8 per cent fee reduction compared with a 2.9 per cent fee reduction for structurally unchanged subjects.

Some awarding bodies price their A levels on a subject-by-subject basis while other awarding bodies have adopted a more uniform fee structure. The largest fee differentials between awarding bodies are seen in design and technology, music, and art and design with differences of 121 per cent, 84 per cent and 80 per cent respectively between the highest and lowest fee. The fees charged for an A level range from £67.20 for the lowest to £148.40 for the highest. Awarding bodies differ in the services and specifications they provide for the fee charged and this should be taken into consideration when making comparisons.

Increases in the average A level fee since 2002/03 have been in excess of the level of inflation with an average annual increase of around 4.4 per cent or 1.8 per cent in real terms.

Specification development, exam setting and the costs of markers and assessors are the major determinants of the cost of an A level, comprising 42 per cent of the total cost. About 33 per cent of the cost of an A level is spent on staff, these are members of staff who provide centre support, manage the candidate entry process and help to meet results deadlines. Around 6 per cent of costs are premises costs. Approximately 7 per cent of the cost of an A level is made up of printing and distributing exam papers. Investment in modernising the exams process, involving new IT systems and the development of innovative practices, currently makes up approximately 9 per cent of the cost of an A level. An investigation undertaken on behalf of QCA has shown that A levels are generally loss making, and there are only a few profitable subjects that subsidise the rest of the loss-making subjects.

Although some A level subjects are only offered by one awarding body, for the majority of subjects there are competitive choices that centres can make based on specification, services and fees. Currently centre choice is based primarily on specification and service considerations. Fees, although important, have not in the past been a major determinant in decision making. However, a comparison of fees for the same subjects across awarding bodies reveals considerable differences. Centres should consider these fee differentials as well as the specifications and services when deciding which awarding bodies to use.

1. Introduction

Purpose of this report

This report has been prepared by QCA and DCELLS, the regulators of external qualifications in England and Wales respectively.

Publication of this report is intended to provide information on fees to assist schools and colleges in their decision making. This report outlines the major determinants for the fees of the revised A levels and provides a summary analysis of them. The report does not review the fees for the old specification A levels, which overlap with the new specifications during 2008/09.

Why are the regulators reporting on A level fees?

In recent years centres have expressed concern about rising expenditure on examinations. A levels have recently been revised with many subjects moving from six to four units, and the new specifications will be introduced for first teaching in September 2008. The regulators have taken this as an opportunity to investigate the fees that awarding bodies are proposing to charge for these revised A levels. It is important that cost savings arising from the changes in A levels are passed onto centres.

About A levels

Changes were made to A levels in 2000 under the Curriculum 2000 reforms. A level subjects were unitised to provide candidates with the opportunity to have a broader level of study in the first year followed by more in-depth study in the second year. The units studied in the first year are known as Advanced Subsidiary (AS) and the units studied in the second year are known as A2.

In September 2008 centres will start teaching new A levels following a major revision. This revision has resulted in a number of changes which include fewer units of study, with many subjects changing from six to four units. There will also be fewer structured questions with more open-ended questions which require extended essay responses, more questions which require a synoptic overview of the subject, the introduction of an extended project and the introduction of a new A* grade which recognises very high achievement. All these changes impact on the costs, and therefore the fees, for an A level.

Awarding bodies offering A levels

A levels are currently offered by five awarding bodies. AQA, Edexcel and OCR (the three unitary awarding bodies) are based in England, WJEC is based in Wales and CCEA is based in Northern Ireland.

AQA is a charity limited by guarantee and came into existence in April 2000 following the merger of AEB and NEAB. It currently has the largest market share in A levels, in 2007 it had 42 per cent of all A level entries. Further information about AQA, its fees and its services can be found at www.aqa.org.uk.

CCEA is a non-departmental public body which reports to the Department of Education in Northern Ireland. It is unique as it is both an awarding body, offering A levels among other qualifications, and also the qualifications regulator in Northern Ireland. CCEA has not taken part in this review to ensure that there would not be a conflict of interest. CCEA seeks to ensure that its fees are in line with those set in England and Wales. The fees set by CCEA require the approval of the Department of Education in Northern Ireland. Further information about CCEA its fees and its services can be found at www.rewardinglearning.org.uk.

Edexcel was formed in 1996 through a merger of BTEC and ULEAC. It is a private limited company owned by Pearson plc and in 2007 it had 24 per cent of A level entries. Further information about Edexcel, its fees and its services can be found at www.edexcel.org.uk.

OCR was formed in 1998 from the University of Cambridge Local Examination Syndicate and RSA. It is a company limited by guarantee and is part of the Cambridge Assessment Group. In 2007 it had 25 per cent of A level entries. Further information about OCR, its fees and its services can be found at www.ocr.org.uk.

WJEC was established in 1948. It is a charity that is also a company limited by guarantee and is owned by the 22 local authorities in Wales. In 2007 it had 6 per cent of A level entries. Further information about WJEC, its fees and its services can be found at www.wjec.co.uk.

Centre choices

Although some A level subjects are only offered by one awarding body, centres can choose which awarding body to use for many subjects. Centre choice is based primarily on

specification and service considerations.¹ Fees, although important, have not been a major determinant in decision making. However, centres are entitled to assume that they are being charged a fair fee that reflects an efficient cost of providing the relevant services and over time there may be more sensitivity to fees at centre level.

The regulators' investigation

In the summer of 2007, QCA and DCELLS asked the awarding bodies to submit their proposed fees for the revised A levels, along with an explanation of the major influences that have determined the level of those fees. The regulators acknowledge the work that the awarding bodies have undertaken in preparing their proposed fees well in advance of their usual publication dates. The awarding bodies have provided AS unit fees alongside notional unit fees for A2. The fees for the revised A2 units are notional as these will only be offered for the second year of the A level, namely from September 2009. These unit fees have been aggregated in this report to provide a notional fee for the full A level for 2008/09.

¹ See PKF's report for QCA, *Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's review of awarding bodies' fees: executive summary*, December 2006.

2. Proposed fees for the revised A levels

Appendix 1 lists A level subjects that have been revised for first teaching in September 2008 along with the fees to be charged by each awarding body. It also includes mathematics subjects, which have not been revised.

It should be reiterated that fees for the full A levels are based on 2008/09 unit fees and are illustrative only as the A2 units will not be available until September 2009. The actual cost of an A level to a centre will depend on candidate entry fees incurred in 2009/10 as well as other factors such as the number of retakes and late and very late entries. The fees provided in Appendix 1 are correct at the time of publication, but awarding bodies have reserved the right to amend their fees at any time, although this usually only occurs in exceptional circumstances.

In general, where subjects have moved from six to four units, the fee has been reduced to reflect lower awarding body costs. Some awarding bodies price their A levels on a subject-by-subject basis while other awarding bodies have adopted a more uniform fee structure.

The table in Appendix 1 shows that the fees charged for an A level range from £67.20 for the lowest to £148.40 for the highest. For some subjects, the fee will depend on the unit or assessment choices made by centres, for example assessment options that involve coursework or the use of awarding bodies' visiting examiners may affect the fee.

Appendix 1 allows comparison of the fees for particular A levels across awarding bodies. It is important to note that awarding bodies provide different specifications and service for the fees charged and this should be taken into consideration when comparing fees. To help make comparisons, Appendix 2 provides a brief outline of the range of additional services offered by the awarding bodies that are included in the fee. For more detailed information about the services offered, centres should contact awarding bodies directly. Awarding bodies also offer a range of additional services, which are not included in the standard fee, and make additional charges, for example for late entries. These services and charges vary between awarding bodies, and centres should contact them directly for further information.

All the awarding bodies provide support to centres, which is included in the fee for an A level, but the nature of this support varies. All the awarding bodies provide seminars free of charge to assist teachers in preparing for the specification changes, and all the awarding bodies provide exam preparation support materials such as past papers.

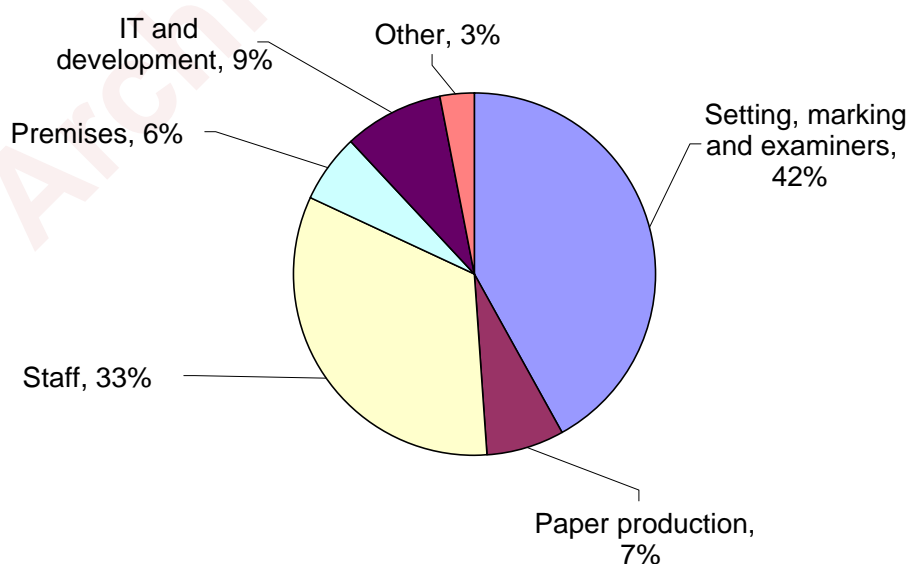
3. Major determinants of the fees for the revised A levels

QCA and DCELLS asked the awarding bodies to provide an explanation of the major influences that determine the fees for the revised A levels. These influences can be broken down by the costs that awarding bodies incur when providing an A level and other determinants that make up the fee that a centre pays. The major influences are described below.

The costs of providing an A level

QCA and DCELLS investigated the current cost breakdown of a typical A level, and this is shown in Chart 1. The costs can be broken down into direct and indirect costs. Direct costs are those that can be directly attributed to the provision of the A level, for example 'Setting, marking and examiners', 'Paper production' and the staff activities related directly to A levels. Indirect costs are overhead costs that cannot be directly attributed to the provision of A levels, for example 'Premises'.

Chart 1: Cost breakdown of an A level²



² Chart 1 is based on the costs of a current A level not on the new revised A levels.

Awarding bodies' submissions and the regulators' own investigation showed that specification development, exam setting, and the costs of markers and assessors are the major determinants of the costs of an A level comprising of around 42 per cent of the total cost. Approximately 7 per cent of the costs of an A level are made up of printing and distributing exam papers.

About 33 per cent of the cost of an A level is spent on staff; these are members of staff who provide centre support, manage the candidate entry process and help meet results deadlines. Around 6 per cent of costs are premises costs.

Investment in modernising the exams process involving new IT systems and the development of innovative practices, together with the phasing out of old outdated procedures, impinges on the costs of offering A levels. This investment currently makes up approximately 9 per cent of the cost of an A level. The amount awarding bodies spend on IT and development is expected to increase as awarding bodies continue to invest in e-assessment and modernise the way examinations are delivered and administered. Awarding bodies stated that meeting the regulators' code of practice and other regulatory requirements also impact on costs.

Future costs

Developing the new specifications for the revised A levels has placed an additional cost on the awarding bodies. This has included incorporating the new A* grade and the changes in regulatory requirements for coursework both of which proportionally increase the burden of external assessment. Awarding bodies have also highlighted the cost burden of providing an overlap between the old specification and new specification A levels.

Awarding bodies reported that due to the reduction in the number of units in some A level subjects, on average the cost to them of delivering a revised A level has fallen. Because of the differences in awarding body business practices, systems and the subjects offered, this cost saving is variable. The effect of the reduction in units on fees is discussed in more detail in Section 4.

Since April 2004 the National Assessment Agency and DCELLS have provided funding to awarding bodies to help assist in the recruitment and retention of high-quality assessors. This funding has now been scaled back and in due course will be withdrawn. Awarding bodies have had to meet the shortfall of this through the fees charged and by making efficiency savings.

Other factors that affect the fees for A levels

The following outlines the non-cost factors that affect the fees for A levels, for instance awarding body fee-setting strategy or subsidisation from other qualifications.

Cross-subsidisation

The costs of an A level are influenced by the number of candidate entries. The fewer the number of entries, the more expensive the qualification is to offer for the awarding bodies. In general awarding bodies cross-subsidise A level subjects so that less popular subjects are not prohibitively expensive to centres and candidates are not disadvantaged. Subjects such as design and technology and music, which are important facets of the curriculum, would be prohibitively expensive without cross-subsidisation by more popular subjects such as English. A levels are generally loss making and there are only a few profitable subjects that subsidise the rest of the loss-making subjects. The extent that awarding bodies cross-subsidise is variable.

External influences

Awarding bodies incur costs when participating in major policy initiatives such as the Qualifications and Credit Framework³ and Lord Leitch's review of skills⁴ and these costs will inevitably impact on the costs of providing all the qualifications offered by the awarding bodies.

Awarding bodies pointed out that they compete with other providers to win business and this influences their fee-setting policy.

The awarding bodies have also taken into account the impact of inflation on their costs and the fees for the revised A levels incorporate their estimate for inflation.

Other influences

Awarding bodies reported that the development of new qualifications (such as the Diploma) and implementing IT interfaces to support these qualifications will influence fees. Pension costs were also identified as impacting on the fees. Awarding bodies stated in their submissions to the regulators that they have a range of measures in place for achieving efficiency and these are reflected in the fees charged.

3 For information on the Qualifications and Credit Framework, go to www.qca.org.uk/framework.

4 For information on Lord Leitch's review of skills, go to www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/leitch.

4. Summary of analysis

General commentary on fees

As a result of the structural changes to many A level subjects, average unit fees have increased but the average fee charged for an A level has fallen. While the change from six to four units has reduced the cost of provision, the awarding bodies still need to cover their fixed costs. In addition, not all subjects have had a unit reduction. These factors are reflected in the fees charged. Table 2⁵ shows that the average unit fee increase ranges from 15.1 per cent for OCR to 30 per cent for Edexcel. It also shows that the proposed mean total fee for an A level charged by the awarding bodies ranges from £67.20 to £92.08, a difference of 37 per cent. Compared with fees for 2007/08 this is an average fee decrease of 6.5 per cent. The decrease by awarding body ranges from 1.3 per cent for Edexcel to 10.4 per cent for AQA.

Table 2: Change in average unit and average A level fees (2007/08 to 2008/09)

Awarding body	Average fees per unit (£)			Average total fees (£)		
	2007/08	2008/09	Change (%)	2007/08	2008/09	Change (%)
AQA	13.15	15.83	20.4	75.00	67.20	-10.4
Edexcel	17.08	22.20	30.0	93.33	92.08	-1.3
OCR	14.47	16.65	15.1	79.18	74.32	-6.1
WJEC	14.16	16.70	17.9	83.43	76.73	-8.0
Average	14.72	17.85	20.85	82.74	77.58	-6.5

Average fees per unit and average total fees were also calculated on a weighted mean basis using A level candidate entry figures for 2005/06.⁶ The results are shown in Table 1 in the executive summary of this report. Calculating the weighted mean reduces the impact of subjects with relatively high fees but low entries and reflects the impact of A level fees on centres. A comparison of Table 1 with Table 2 shows that average fees calculated using a weighted mean are comparable to the average fees calculated using an arithmetic mean. In general the weighted mean fees show a higher increase in unit fees between 2007/08 and 2008/09 and a lower average total fee decrease compared to the arithmetic mean.

⁵ The average figures provided throughout this report, unless otherwise stated, are for the full list of A levels, including mathematics and are calculated using the arithmetic mean. The figures were calculated using more detailed information than that reproduce in Appendix 1.

⁶ At the time of preparing this report, the latest figures available for candidate entries by awarding body were for 2005/06.

Year-on-year fee changes since 2002/03

Increases in the average A level fees since 2002/03 have been in excess of the level of inflation as measured by the Retail Prices Index (RPI). Section 3 of this report describes the major cost drivers behind these fee increases over time. Table 3 shows that over the 2002/03 to 2007/08 period, total and unit A level fees on average increased by 6.7 per cent per annum over the period, compared with an average increase of 2.6 per cent per annum in the RPI.

Table 3: Annual change in average unit and average A level fees (2002/03 to 2007/08)

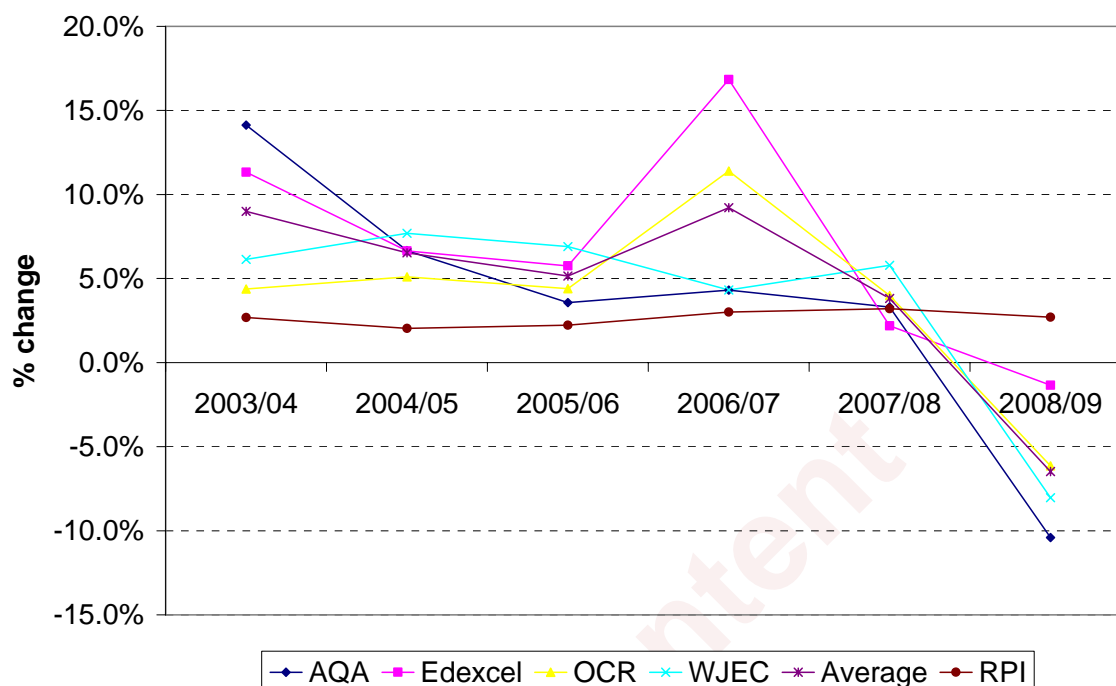
Awarding body	Average annual (%) increase (2002/03 to 2007/08)	
	unit fees	total fees
AQA	6.3	6.3
Edexcel	8.3	8.4
OCR	6.0	5.8
WJEC	6.2	6.2
Average	6.7	6.7

Table 4 includes the fees for 2008/09 where the impact of the reduced fees for the revised A levels has skewed the averages. The table shows that since 2002/03, average total fees have risen by around 4.4 per cent per annum or 1.8 per cent per annum in real terms. This varies by awarding body, ranging from an average annual increase of 3.3 per cent for AQA to an average annual increase of 6.7 per cent for Edexcel.

Table 4: Annual change in average unit and average A level fees (2002/03 to 2008/09)

Awarding body	Average annual (%) increase (2002/03 to 2008/09):	
	unit fees	total fees
AQA	8.5	3.3
Edexcel	11.7	6.7
OCR	7.5	3.7
WJEC	8.0	3.7
Average	8.9	4.4

Chart 2 shows the average year-on-year A level fee changes on an awarding body basis and shows that AQA, OCR and WJEC have fairly consistent rises in fees year on year with the exception of larger increases in 2003/04 for AQA and a larger increase in 2006/07 for OCR. Edexcel's increases in fees are less consistent year on year, with larger increases in 2003/04 and 2006/07. All awarding bodies show an average fee decrease in 2008/09.

Chart 2: Annual change in average A level fees (2003/04 to 2008/09)

Subject comparison

Some awarding bodies price their A levels on a subject-by-subject basis, while other awarding bodies have adopted a more uniform fee structure. This means that for some subjects there are disparities in the fees between awarding bodies. Appendix 1 shows that the largest fee differentials are in design and technology, music, and art and design with differences of 121 per cent, 84 per cent and 80 per cent respectively between the highest and lowest fee. These subjects are less likely to be uniformly structured than some subjects, say English for example, and as such there is more scope for fee differentiation.

The awarding bodies also have differing fee-setting strategies where external examiners and oral examiners are involved and these are reflected in the fees for French, German and Spanish with differentials of around 41 per cent. The sciences, namely biology, chemistry and physics, also have significant fee differentials of around 45 per cent between awarding bodies.

The fees can also vary because subjects are not homogeneous products and there are differing levels of services (with different value-added services offered), specifications and support functions. It is important that these factors are taken into consideration when making direct comparisons.

Comparison of fees for subjects on a structural revision basis

Chart 3 shows the average fee for the subjects where there has been a change in unit structure from six units to four units. It shows that unit fees have increased by between 34.4 per cent for AQA and WJEC, and 43.4 per cent for Edexcel, while the overall fees for these subjects have fallen between 10.4 per cent and 4.4 per cent. The reduction in the A level fee for these subjects is an indication of the volume cost savings the awarding bodies are expecting from the change in structure.

Chart 3: Change (%) in average unit and A level fee for subjects which have changed from six units to four units

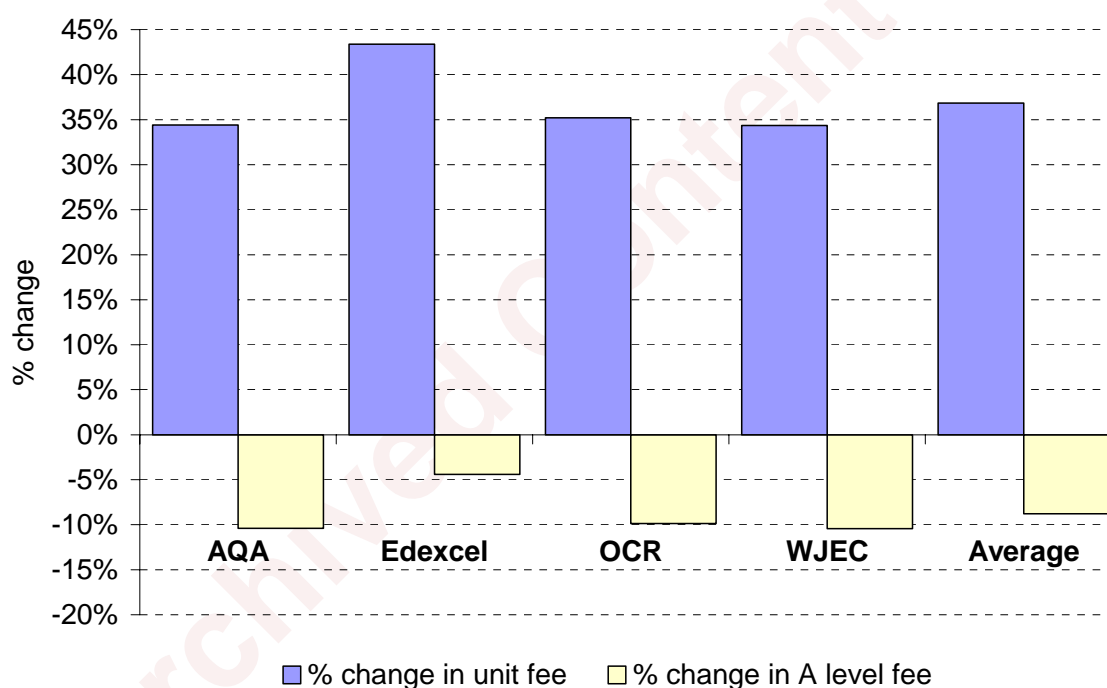


Table 5 compares the fees for the subjects where there has been no revision to the structure of the subject to those fees where there has been a reduction in the number of units. It shows that the total fees for the structurally unchanged A levels vary between a 10.4 per cent decrease for AQA and a 4.1 per cent increase for Edexcel. This reflects individual awarding body fee-setting policy where some apply a more uniform fee structure that is subsidised by other subjects, while others price their A levels on a subject-by-subject basis. AQA, OCR and WJEC, on average, have reduced the fees for an A level for subjects that have not had a reduction in the number of units, whereas Edexcel have increased these fees with an allowance for inflation. On average the fees for an A level with unit reduction have decreased more than the fees for an A level where there has been no unit reduction.

Table 5: Change (%) in average unit and average A level fees

Awarding body	Unit fee		Total fee	
	Six to four units	No change to structure	Six to four units	No change to structure
AQA	34.4	-10.4	-10.4	-10.4
Edexcel	43.4	0.1	-4.4	4.1
OCR	35.2	-4.4	-9.9	-2.0
WJEC	34.4	-1.1	-10.4	-3.1
Average	36.9	-4.0	-8.8	-2.9

Fees by awarding body

The following are observations on the fees charged by each awarding body as shown in Appendix 1. In making a comparison of fees, centres should consider what the fee buys for each awarding body as the services and specifications vary across providers.

AQA

AQA clearly cross-subsidises its A levels so that a centre pays the same fee for each A level subject. AQA has reduced the fee for all of its A levels by around 10.4 per cent compared with the fee for the previous year. It offers the most A level subjects, and 74 per cent of these subjects have moved from six to four units, compared with 55 per cent of subjects under other awarding bodies. While AQA's unit fees have increased by 20.4 per cent, in line with the average, its A level fees have fallen the greatest amount. This is because AQA has reduced the fees for all its A levels not just those subjects moving from six to four units.

Edexcel

Edexcel's fees vary by subject unlike some other awarding bodies that charge similar fees for each subject. For instance, subjects that have more external moderation tend to be more expensive to deliver and have a higher fee. On average, for new structure A levels, Edexcel's fees have been cut by around 4.4 per cent, fees for structurally unchanged A levels have increased by around 4.1 per cent to account for inflation. Edexcel has had the largest percentage increase in average unit fee, the lowest percentage decrease in total fees and the highest mean fee. However, they claim a higher level of investment.

OCR

OCR offers some cross-subsidisation in its fees so that some low-entry and high-cost subjects are not prohibitively expensive. Fees for groups of similar qualifications tend to be aligned. For new structure A levels, OCR has reduced its fees by around 9.9 per cent, fees for structurally

unchanged A levels have decreased by around 2.0 per cent. OCR has the smallest average unit fee increase at 15.1 per cent.

WJEC

WJEC includes some cross-subsidisation in its fees so that some low-entry and high-cost subjects are not prohibitively expensive. In general WJEC has decreased the fee of an A level with structural revisions by around 10.4 per cent compared to the fees for 2007/08. Its fees for subjects without structural revisions have decreased by 3.1 per cent. WJEC also has additional costs of providing a full Welsh-medium service in terms of the availability of specifications (in all subjects) and question papers (in all subjects where required). These additional costs are funded through DCELLS.

Future A level fees

All the awarding bodies provided early notification to centres about their indicative fees for A levels in 2008/09 and Edexcel have published their fees in a full price list. AQA, OCR and WJEC have also provided notional indications of their proposed fees for 2009/10, details of which can be found on their websites. AQA's indicative fee for 2009/10 is £69 per A level, WJEC has indicated that the fee for an A level in 2009/10 will be £71. OCR has indicated that the fee for its four unit A levels in 2009/10 will be £69.20, but as yet it has not indicated the fees for its other A levels. Edexcel has not yet indicated their 2009/10 fees.

QCA and DCELLS welcome these early publications that allow centres to budget more accurately and to help make informed decisions about which specifications to offer. QCA and DCELLS have asked the awarding bodies, starting in 2009/10, to publish A level fees one year in advance of them coming into effect, and this will further help centres to reduce their budget variance on fees. Awarding bodies have noted that, exceptionally, unexpected adverse changes in the inflation rate may mean that these fees would have to be revised.

5. Conclusions

When making choices, centres should consider the specifications, fees and service provided by the awarding bodies. The regulators will continue to work with awarding bodies to ensure that the fees charged for qualifications are transparent, fair and published in a timely manner.

The regulators acknowledge the work that the awarding bodies have undertaken in preparing their proposed fees well in advance of their usual publication dates. This early publication should assist centres in budgeting for future expenditure on examinations.

The analysis clearly shows that awarding body fees for an A level have been reduced, in the main due to the revisions in the structure of A levels and centres will benefit from this saving. The level of this saving varies by awarding body and by subject, with some subjects not seeing a saving. The analysis does highlight some differences in the fees charged by different awarding bodies for the same subjects. However, on average, centres can expect to see a reduction in expenditure on A levels.

For the majority of subjects there are competitive choices that centres can make based on specification, services and fees. Centres should take these factors into account when making their choices. A comparison of fees for the same subjects across awarding bodies reveals considerable differences. By publishing this report, the regulators' intention is to provide centres with information that will assist them when making decisions on which specifications to offer. No one awarding body is recommended, or not recommended, in this report.

As part of their ongoing work, the regulators of external qualifications will continue to monitor qualifications fees including those for A levels. Where there is a substantial cause for concern the regulators will undertake a more detailed investigation. In certain circumstances, the Education Act 1997 gives QCA and DCELLS the power to place a limit on the amount of the fee that can be charged for a qualification. By working to ensure transparency of pricing and an efficient qualifications market, the regulators should only need to exercise this power in exceptional circumstances.

Appendix 1. Fees charged for revised A levels for 2008/09⁷

Fees for the full A levels are indicative only as the A2 units will not be available until September 2009. The actual cost of an A level to a centre will depend on candidate entry fees incurred in 2009/10 as well as other factors such as the number of retakes and late and very late entries.

The fees provided in Appendix 1 are correct at the time of publication, but awarding bodies have reserved the right to amend their fees at any time, although this usually only occurs in exceptional circumstances.

For ease of comparison some subjects and specifications have been grouped together, for example, mathematics and further mathematics are shown in 'mathematics'. Where awarding bodies do not offer the subject the cell has been left blank. The table also includes mathematics subjects that have not been revised for 2008/09. Where several fees are shown the actual fee will depend on centres' unit or assessment choice.

Table 7: Fees charged (£) by awarding bodies

	AQA	Edexcel	OCR	WJEC
Accounting	67.20		67.20	
Arabic		82.20		
Archaeology	67.20			
Art and design	67.20	82.40	67.20	121
Bengali	67.20			
Biblical Hebrew			67.20	
Biology	67.20	97.20	77.40	69
Business studies	67.20	80.40	67.20	69
Chemistry	67.20	97.20	77.40	69
Chinese		94.80		
Citizenship studies	67.20			
Classical civilisation	67.20			
Classics			67.20	
Communication and	67.20			

⁷ CCEA did not taken part in this review to ensure that there would not be a conflict of interest.

culture				
Computing	67.20		67.20	69
Critical thinking	67.20		67.20	
Cymraeg ail iaith				95
Cymraeg iaith gyntaf				95
Dance	67.20			
Design and technology	67.20	148.40	67.20	95
Drama and theatre studies	67.20	107.20		82
Dutch			67.20	
Economics	67.20	80.40	67.20	69
Economics and business		80.40		
Electronics	67.20		77.40	69
English language	67.20	76	67.20	69
English language and literature	67.20	76	67.20	69
English literature	67.20	76	67.20	69
Environmental studies	67.20			
Film studies				69
French	67.20	94.80	92.80	82, 95
General studies	67.20	80.40	67.20	
Geography	67.20	94.80	67.20	69
Geology			77.40	69
German	67.20	94.80	92.80	82, 95
Government and politics	67.20	80.40	67.20	69 ⁸
Greek		82.20		
Gujarati			67.20	
History	67.20	78.80	67.20	69
History of art	67.20			
Home economics			67.20	

⁸ Subject to accreditation by the regulators.

Human Biology	67.20		77.40	69
Information and communication technology	67.20		67.20	69
Italian		94.80		
Japanese		82.20		
Law	67.20		67.20	69
Mathematics	67.20	82.20	77.40	69
Mathematics (MEI)			77.40, 82.10, 86.80	
Media studies	67.20		67.20	69
Modern Hebrew	67.20			
Music	67.20	123.60	106.40	95
Music technology		130		
Panjabi	67.20			
Performance studies			80	
Persian			67.20	
Philosophy	67.20			
Physical education	67.20	107.20	92.80	69
Physics	67.20	97.20	77.40	69
Polish	67.20			
Portuguese			67.20	
Psychology	67.20	84.80	67.20	69
Religious studies	67.20	82.40	67.20	69
Russian		94.80		
Science (AS only)			38.70	
Science in society	67.20			
Sociology	67.20		67.20	69
Spanish	67.20	94.80	92.80	82, 95
Statistics	67.20			
Turkish			67.20	
Urdu		94.80		
World development				69

Appendix 2. The range of additional services that are included in the fee for an A level

Appendix 2 provides a simple indication of the services offered by the awarding bodies. The information provided does not show the extent or quality of the service offered. Centres should contact awarding bodies directly for more detailed information.

Teacher support

AQA	Edexcel	OCR	WJEC
Contact with subject experts	Contact with subject experts	Contact with subject experts	Contact with subject experts
INSET events for new specifications	INSET events for new specifications	INSET events for new specifications	INSET events for new specifications
Teacher support via field-based team	Teacher support via field-based team	Teacher support via field-based team	Teacher support on request
Regional training forums	Regional training forums		
Support materials	Support materials	Support materials	Support materials
Schemes of work	Schemes of work	Schemes of work	Teacher guides
Learning materials	Learning materials		Learning materials
Sample lessons plans	Sample lessons plans	Sample lessons plans	

Exam preparation support

AQA	Edexcel	OCR	WJEC
Past papers	Past papers	Past papers	Past papers
Specifications	Specifications	Specifications	Specifications
Mark schemes	Mark schemes	Mark schemes	Mark schemes
Exemplar candidate work	Exemplar candidate work	Exemplar candidate work	Exemplar candidate work
Specimen assessment materials	Specimen assessment materials	Specimen assessment materials	Specimen assessment materials
Virtual communities	Virtual communities	Virtual communities	
Comparative analysis of student performance	Comparative analysis of student, teacher and subject team performance		Item level data feedback
	Provision of performance information direct to students		

Exams officer support

AQA	Edexcel	OCR	WJEC
Exams officer support via field-based team	Exams officer support via field-based team	Exams officer support via field-based team	Exams officer support via office based team

The regulators wish to make their publications widely accessible. Please contact us if you have any specific accessibility requirements.

First published in 2008.

© Crown copyright 2008

© Qualifications and Curriculum Authority 2008

Reproduction, storage or translation, in any form or by any means, of this publication is prohibited without prior written permission of the published, unless within the terms of the Copyright Licensing Agency. Excerpts may be reproduced for the purpose of research, private study, criticism or review, or by educational institutions solely for education purposes, without permission, provided full acknowledgement is given.

Printed in Great Britain.

The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority is an exempt charity under Schedule 2 of the Charities Act 1993.

Qualifications and Curriculum Authority

83 Piccadilly

London

W1J 8QA

www.qca.org.uk