

# Westminster Education Forum Keynote Seminar: The future of the qualifications and assessment system - A-Level reform and university entrance

Date: Morning, 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2010

Venue: Telford Theatre, One Great George Street, Westminster, London SW1P 3AA

Agenda subject to change

- 8.45 - 9.00 Registration
- 9.00 - 9.05 **Chairman's opening remarks**  
**Charlotte Leslie MP**, Member, Education Select Committee
- A-Levels - the next steps**  
*What are the aims and key purposes of A-Levels? Are A-Levels a reliable indicator of a student's knowledge and understanding of a subject? Why has the qualification been held in lower regard in recent years? Are A-Levels currently meeting the needs of universities and employers? What is the current state of confidence amongst students and the wider public in the qualification? Has the adoption of the A\* grade allowed a better distinction between high-achieving candidates? What would be the impact of a move away from AS-Levels and modularisation towards a more traditional structure?*
- 9.05 - 9.20 **A vision for the future of A-Levels**  
**Simon Lebus**, Group Chief Executive, Cambridge Assessment
- 9.20 - 10.10 **Key purposes, the state of public confidence and proposals for reform**  
**Caroline Jordan**, Headmistress, St George's School, Ascot  
**Professor Alice Rogers**, Department of Mathematics, King's College London and Deputy Chairman, ACME  
**Salil Bhate**, Student Representative and Vice Chair, Executive Council, English Secondary Students' Association  
**Dr Mike Nicholson**, Director of Undergraduate Admissions, University of Oxford  
**Louise Woodley**, Education and Skills Manager, Tesco  
Questions and comments from the floor with **Simon Lebus**, Group Chief Executive, Cambridge Assessment
- 10.10 - 10.35 **The view from the exam regulator**  
**Isabel Nisbet**, Chief Executive, Ofqual  
Questions and comments from the floor
- 10.35 - 10.40 **Chairman's closing remarks**  
**Charlotte Leslie MP**, Member, Education Select Committee
- 10.40 - 11.00 Coffee
- 11.00 - 11.05 **Chairman's opening remarks**  
**Kevin Brennan MP**, Shadow Minister for Schools
- 11.05 - 11.35 **The view from UCAS**  
**Mary Curnock Cook**, Chief Executive, UCAS  
Questions and comments from the floor
- 11.35 - 12.25 **University entrance - time for change?**  
*Should universities have a more direct role in deciding the content of the qualification? Should there be greater freedom for awarding bodies in deciding the structure of A-Levels? Is a move towards the development of a standardised university admissions test to supplement A-Levels desirable? If introduced by Government, what should a university admissions test measure? Should there be a deregulation of the current system with universities, awarding bodies and employers encouraged to develop alternatives to A-Levels? If alternatives are introduced, what would be the likely effect on A-Levels? Can an alternative to A-Levels be made to support the needs of both academic and vocational students?*  
**Tim Oates**, Group Director, Assessment Research & Development, Cambridge Assessment  
**Janet Graham**, Director, Supporting Professionalism in Admissions (SPA)  
**John Morgan**, Immediate Past President, Association of School and College Leaders and Executive Headteacher, Conyers School, Stockton-on-Tees  
**Professor Dame Athene Donald**, Professor of Experimental Physics, University of Cambridge and Education Committee Chair, The Royal Society  
Questions and comments from the floor
- 12.25 - 12.55 **The current policy context**  
**Tom Goldman**, Deputy Director, Qualifications Policy Division, Department for Education  
Questions and comments from the floor
- 12.55 - 13.00 **Chairman's and Westminster Education Forum thanks and closing remarks**  
**Kevin Brennan MP**, Shadow Minister for Schools  
**Sean Cudmore**, Senior Producer, Westminster Education Forum

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