

Westminster Education Forum Keynote Seminar: Next steps for AS and A-levels

Timing: Morning, Tuesday, 15th October 2013

Venue: Banqueting Hall, Glaziers Hall, 9 Montague Close, London SE1 9DD

Agenda subject to change



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- 8.30 - 9.00 Registration and coffee
- 9.00 - 9.05 **Chairman's opening remarks**
Lord Lucas of Crudwell and Dingwall, Member, All-Party Parliamentary Group for Education
- 9.05 - 9.15 **The content of A-levels**
Professor Mark E. Smith, Vice-Chancellor, Lancaster University and Chair, A-level Reform Review Process, Ofqual
- 9.15 - 9.40 **Introducing the A-level reforms**
Anna Paige, Deputy Director, Qualifications and Assessment Division, Department for Education
Questions and comments from the floor with **Professor Mark E. Smith**, Vice-Chancellor, Lancaster University and Chair, A-level Reform Review Process, Ofqual
- 9.40 - 10.30 **A-levels - the 'gold standard'?**
What will be the relevance of AS-levels following their separation from A-levels? Will increasing the difficulty of the examinations at 18 raise educational standards and England's international competitiveness as intended by Government? Is uptake of A-levels by schools currently offering the International Baccalaureate likely to increase following the reforms? How well will the reformed A-levels succeed in preparing pupils for Further or Higher Education, in terms of both knowledge and skills? What will be the impact of the reintroduction of 'linear' A-levels, with exams at the end of 2 years, upon pupil engagement, welfare and performance? Will the increased emphasis on synoptic assessment be effective in encouraging greater depth and breadth of understanding in pupils? Would the linear model be appropriate for all subjects currently available at A-level? Should the range of subjects available at A-level be reduced to a core set of 'facilitating subjects'?
Caroline Jordan, Headmistress, Headington School, Oxford and Chair, Girls' Schools Association Education Committee
Mike Griffiths, Headmaster, Northampton School for Boys and Immediate Past President, ASCL
Gareth Pierce, Chief Executive, WJEC
Questions and comments from the floor with **Professor Mark E. Smith**, Vice-Chancellor, Lancaster University and Chair, A-level Reform Review Process, Ofqual and **Anna Paige**, Deputy Director, Qualifications and Assessment Division, Department for Education
- 10.30 - 11.15 **The new AS and A-levels - challenges for implementation**
Does the timescale for introducing the reformed A-level and AS Level courses allow sufficient time for awarding bodies, publishers, schools and colleges, and pupils to adapt? What are the teacher training and pedagogical implications of the removal of modular A-levels? How far will the new AS-level courses be suitable for teaching alongside the first half of the linear A-level courses? Should there be scope for students to progress from or 'top-up' their AS-level course to an A-level course? How will the separation of AS and A-levels affect university admissions processes; will it lead to more universities setting entrance exams to determine the ability of prospective students? What impact, if any, will the introduction of per-pupil funding have upon the provision of resource-intensive subjects, such as the sciences? What is the expected impact of the reforms upon the relative uptake of reformed and old-style A-levels; will there be an effect on uptake of highly-regarded subjects such as Modern Foreign Languages which are yet to be reformed?
Mike Nicholson, Director, Undergraduate Admissions and Outreach, University of Oxford
Gordon Clubb, Headteacher, Raine's Foundation School, London
Dr Tessa Stone, Chief Executive, Brightside Trust
Geoff Coombe, Director, General Qualification Development, AQA
Questions and comments from the floor
- 11.15 - 11.20 **Chairman's closing remarks**
Lord Lucas of Crudwell and Dingwall, Member, All-Party Parliamentary Group for Education
- 11.20 - 11.45 Coffee
- 11.45 - 11.50 **Chairman's opening remarks**
Meg Hillier MP, Vice-Chair, All-Party Parliamentary Group on Social Mobility
- 11.50 - 12.30 **A-levels and the 16-19 Study Programme**
What impact will the introduction of 16-19 Study Programmes have upon the delivery of Key Stage 5? How are sixth forms and colleges implementing the Programmes for academically-inclined students studying A-levels only? Should all A-level students have to complete an 'Extended Project' or 'Extended Essay', similar to that required for the Technical Baccalaureate Measure or the International Baccalaureate Diploma? Is there a role for local or regional bodies to support employers and post-16 settings in the co-ordination of 'meaningful work experience' placements for pupils? Will per-pupil funding and the inspection framework be sufficient to encourage schools and colleges to offer a range of non-assessed activities that will not impact upon institutions' position in league tables?
Joy Mercer, Director of Policy (Education), Association of Colleges
Sara Higham, Policy Advisor, Education, Skills and Business Support, Federation of Small Businesses
Tracey Paul, Policy Manager, NCS Trust
Questions and comments from the floor
- 12.30 - 12.55 **Reforming 16-19 qualifications: the regulator's role**
Cath Jadhav, Head of Standards, Ofqual
Questions and comments from the floor
- 12.55 - 13.00 **Chairman's and Westminster Education Forum closing remarks**
Meg Hillier MP, Vice-Chair, All-Party Parliamentary Group on Social Mobility
Sean Cudmore, Deputy Editor, Westminster Education Forum

Seminar supported by WJEC

