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Gareth Pierce  
Chief Executive  
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Dear Sir

At the Wales Association of SACREs (WASACRE) meeting on 25/11/15 members (and teacher members in particular) raised the issue of the current change to GCSE and GCE specifications. WASACRE members welcome the efforts made by your subject officers to retain a unitised approach at GCSE, the retention of a Short Course and the modular approach at AS to A level. However, some real concerns were voiced not only about the proposed changes to the content of the specifications but the pace at which implementation is projected to take place (September 2016).

Their concerns included the following:

1. Schools have been able to access through your website the A Level draft proposals, but these are not available for GCSE. We understand that the proposed specifications will be rolled out in a CPD programme in spring 2016. However, some schools begin the process of teaching GCSE in the summer term and even if the syllabus has been accredited by then it is an unrealistic expectation for teachers to work with this specification at such short notice and with no support materials in place.
2. The current GCSE specifications A and B will be merged and teachers need to see the detail of this so that they can assess the impact of this on teaching and learning and they can make decisions about content and option choices.
3. At AS and A level there will be some major changes also, including the requirement to teach Philosophy and Ethics. For some teachers this will be totally new and they will need CPD, SAMs, assessment criteria and resource material to support them in their planning. This needs to take place in a timely fashion and not be crammed into a short space of time adding additional pressure upon teachers.
4. Each time new specifications are introduced resources and support materials are produced after courses have started to be taught- and Welsh resources follow even later than this. This has huge implications for teacher planning, teaching and assessing, but also disadvantages pupils – especially pupils in Welsh medium, schools.

5. There is concern that teachers will be under pressure to deliver both GCSE and GCE specifications at the same time- with changes that are quite substantial to the current specifications.

The Association request that you consider postponing implementation. We believe there are three possibilities that will help to alleviate the pressure brought about by the change in GCSE and GCE specifications.

1. Both GCSE and GCE specifications are delayed until September 2017 so that teachers can be appropriately prepared and trained and support materials can be produced in both English and Welsh.
2. To delay **one** of the specifications till September 2017 so that teachers are not expected to take on GCSE and GCE simultaneously.
3. That finalised GCSE and GCE specifications- or certain units from them - are put up on the WJEC website so that teachers can begin the planning process.

Finally I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your consideration of our concerns and reassure you that that WASACRE supports WJEC and we are happy to work with you as we have done so through regular dialogue with your Subject Officers who attend NAPfRE and WASACRE meetings. We hope that such professional discussions will continue.

Yours faithfully,



Libby Jones  
**Secretary to WASACRE**