



Ein cyf/Our ref KW/06828/20
Janet Finch-Saunders MS
Chair, Petitions Committee

15 December 2020

Dear Janet,

Thank you for your letter regarding petition P-05-1091, which asks to remove compulsory Welsh Bac for students looking to go to University.

There are no statutory requirements for learners to undertake any qualification. Therefore, undertaking the Advanced Skills Challenge Certificate (SCC) (which forms part of the Advanced Welsh Baccalaureate) is not compulsory. However, Welsh Government policy is that we want all learners to benefit from the Welsh Baccalaureate, and achieve the SCC. By adding essential personal development and employability skills to academic study or vocational qualifications, the Welsh Baccalaureate helps young people to be better prepared for further/higher education, employment and life. It provides an opportunity for our learners to develop the wider skills and knowledge that align with, and build upon, the four purposes of the new curriculum.

Our policy is to encourage all schools and colleges to offer the SCC as part of their learning programmes. Welsh Government post-16 funding policy continues to allow learners to take up to four A Levels or equivalent and the SCC. For some learners, undertaking the SCC may not be the right choice, and we therefore need some flexibility. The advice to schools and colleges is that they should be providing opportunities that are in the best interests of their learners. We expect them to use their professional judgement, by giving due consideration to each young person's wellbeing and their ability to reach their full potential, in determining whether an individual learner can be exempt for taking the Welsh Baccalaureate and the SCC. Further information is available on our website <https://gov.wales/welsh-baccalaureate>.

Many universities now include the SCC in offers and the individual project frequently provides good, relevant evidence in supporting statements and interviews even if it isn't accepted as part of the grade offer. The SCC is recognised as comparable in challenge to an A level and receives the same number of UCAS points. Welsh universities, and a

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:
0300 0604400

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1SN

Gohebiaeth.Kirsty.Williams@llyw.cymru
Correspondence.Kirsty.Williams@gov.wales

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

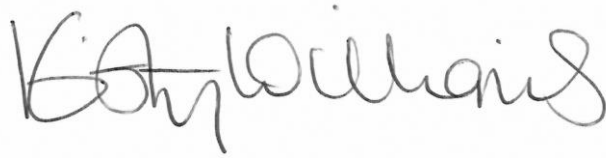
We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

number of Russell Group universities, are clear that they value the Certificate and are taking an increasingly flexible approach to recognising it in their offers.

Within the additional information provided with the petition, the petitioner suggests the development of an AS qualification. Qualifications Wales is responsible for setting high-level requirements for key qualifications, including the Advanced Welsh Baccalaureate, and recently consulted on proposals for a new Advanced SCC. The consultation has now closed, and I hope to receive information on future proposals in the spring.

Welsh Government is working with consortia, WJEC, Qualifications Wales and Colegau Cymru to improve how we communicate the benefits of the Welsh Baccalaureate and how it can support learners to develop their wider skills and confidence, enabling and empowering them to take their place as responsible and active citizens within a diverse society.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kirsty Williams', written in a cursive style.

Kirsty Williams AS/MS
Y Gweinidog Addysg
Minister for Education