

## Info - for - SoS

From: PAIGE, Anna  
Sent: 26 August 2012 13:39  
To: 'Jeremy.Benson@Ofqual.Gov.Uk'; DEZOETE, Henry  
Cc: BEGOL, Hardip; MEEK, Stephen; FREEDMAN, Sam; MILLAND, Gabriel; [REDACTED]; [REDACTED]; 'Dennis.Opposs@Ofqual.Gov.Uk'; 'Fiona.Pethick@ofqual.gov.uk'; 'Adrian.Long@ofqual.gov.uk'; 'Glenys.Stacey@ofqual.gov.uk'; [REDACTED]  
Subject: Re: Info for SoS

Many thanks Jeremy

There was a note to SoS last year (July/August) about GCSE awarding, although it was primarily a press office handling note and said very little about comparable outcomes. [REDACTED] was going to pull that out together with an earlier one, but she won't be able to do that until Tuesday now.

Anna

----- Original Message -----

From: Jeremy Benson (mailto:Jeremy.Benson@Ofqual.Gov.Uk)  
Sent: Sunday, August 26, 2012 01:20 PM  
To: PAIGE, Anna; [REDACTED] (Ofqual official)  
Cc: BEGOL, Hardip; MEEK, Stephen; FREEDMAN, Sam; MILLAND, Gabriel; [REDACTED] Dennis Opposs <Dennis.Opposs@Ofqual.Gov.Uk>; Fiona Pethick <Fiona.Pethick@Ofqual.Gov.Uk>; Adrian Long <[REDACTED]>; Glenys Stacey <Glenys.Stacey@ofqual.gov.uk>  
Subject: RE: Info for SoS (Ofqual official)

Anna, Henry

We're not able to answer the first bullet completely yet. We've started considering the Terms of Reference and will be working this up over the next day or so so that when we start discussing in earnest with exam boards and stakeholders on Tuesday we will have decided the scope of the investigation. On timing, we want to be in a position to say something by Friday, even if that's only a holding position, given that schools will be returning from summer breaks shortly, and if there are to be changes to any grades those need to be confirmed asap. The immediate priorities are to identify the data we'll be looking for from exam boards, and to make sure we know which particular units teachers have concerns about, and we're setting in hand today actions related to those things. We haven't discussed how we report but we will need to issue a written report in some form, and I'd be surprised if the select committee don't want to discuss our findings with us.

We have implicit powers in the statute to investigate exam boards (we couldn't do our job if we couldn't do that) - if necessary we can fall back on our power to 'do anything we consider necessary or appropriate for the purposes of, or in connection with, our functions'. Our powers over exam boards are strong - in particular, we can set conditions they must meet if they want to remain recognised - so eg we could require them to set standards at unit level in a particular way. If we found the exam boards had done something out of line with the conditions (but obviously it's too early to assume that) we could issue a direction (enforceable in the courts), fine them (as you know) or ultimately withdraw their recognition.

Attached is the timeline which Cathy sent over on Friday and which we tweaked a bit and sent back. There's an outstanding question mark here about when a report went to Ministers on GCSE awarding last year, but it's complete from our point of view.

Jeremy

Jeremy Benson

Deputy Director, Policy, Ofqual

Direct: [REDACTED] . Office: 0300 303 3344 . Mobile: [REDACTED] . 1410 Spring Place, Herald Avenue,  
Coventry Business Park . Coventry . West Midlands . CV5 6UB

[www.ofqual.gov.uk](http://www.ofqual.gov.uk) . [twitter.com/ofqual](https://twitter.com/ofqual) . [www.facebook.com/ofqual](https://www.facebook.com/ofqual) Please consider the environment - do you really need to print this email?

This message may contain confidential information. If you have received this message by mistake, please inform the sender by sending an e-mail reply. At the same time please delete the message and any attachments from your system without making, distributing or retaining any copies. Although all of our e-mail messages, and any attachments are automatically virus scanned, we assume no responsibility for any loss or damage arising from the receipt and/or use.

-----Original Message-----

From: Anna.PAIGE@education.gsi.gov.uk [mailto:Anna.PAIGE@education.gsi.gov.uk]

Sent: 26 August 2012 12:12

To: Dennis Opposs; Jeremy Benson; Fiona Pethick; [REDACTED] lenys.stacy@ofqual.gov.uk

Cc: Hardip.BEGOL@education.gsi.gov.uk; Stephen.Meek@education.gsi.gov.uk;

Sam.FREEDMAN@education.gsi.gov.uk; Gabriel.MILLAND@education.gsi.gov.uk;

[REDACTED]  
Subject: Info for SoS

Hello,

The SoS has asked for some information today that I think you can probably help us with:

- the terms of reference for the investigation you're doing, the powers under which you're doing it, the powers you would be able to use to take action if appropriate once the investigation is complete, when it will report and in what form?
- he has also asked for the timelines we produced for him on Friday about the English GCSE introduction and the decisions re: comparable outcomes. As I've only got blackberry access today I don't have this to hand, but I think we sent both across to you to check. If you have them, could you send them across to those copied into this email?

Henry (copied in) is pulling things together for SoS so anything you can get to him by this afternoon would be great.

Thanks so much

Anna

The original of this email was scanned for viruses by the Government Secure Intranet virus scanning service supplied by Cable&Wireless Worldwide in partnership with MessageLabs. (CCTM Certificate Number 2009/09/0052.) On leaving the GSI this email was certified virus free.

Communications via the GSI may be automatically logged, monitored and/or recorded for legal purposes.

---

This email has been scanned by the Symantec Email Security.cloud service.  
For more information please visit <http://www.symanteccloud.com>

---

---

This email has been scanned by the Symantec Email Security.cloud service.



## **Timeline – Comparable outcomes**

### 2002

A level Boards would have been using the principles of comparable outcomes – generating predictions - since "Curriculum 2000" (for which first teaching was in 2000, and first awards 2002) in making their inter-awarding body decisions. No information available immediately from before that date.

### Sept 2008

New A levels introduced in most subjects, including the A\* grade (first awarded 2010).

### Mar 2009

Open letter to schools and colleges about approach to standards in new A levels.

### Sept 2009

New modular GCSEs including controlled assessment were introduced for first teaching in most GCSE subjects except English, maths, and ICT (and science, which had new GCSEs introduced for first teaching in 2006 and were later replaced by tougher GCSEs from 2011).

### Feb 2010

Ofqual open letter to schools about the approach to awarding the new A\*.

### May 2010

Ofqual events for media and stakeholders A level awarding, including the A\* grade.

### May 2010

DfE report to Ministers on Ofqual's approach to awarding of the first A levels. Did not cover the approach to awarding in detail – the focus was more on communications.

### Dec 2010

Ofqual Board agrees to adopt comparable outcomes for the first awards of the new modular GCSEs in 2011 (and A levels) and subsequent years. The Board members were: Sandra Burslem (Acting Chair), Tim Balcon, Ray Coughlin, Tanvi Davda, Gillian Easson, Philip Fletcher, Maggie Galliers, Denise Holt, Isabel Nisbet, Fay Scott, John Townsley (not present for this item) and Neil Watts.

### May 2011

Document published on Ofqual website about the use of comparable outcomes in the first awards of the new GCSEs, which was subsequently updated in May 2012 for 2012 awarding.

### ?checking

Report to Ministers on new GCSE awarding.

### Summer 2011

Ofqual uses the comparable outcomes approach to first awarding of new 2009 GCSEs (except English, maths, ICT and science).

### Mar 2012

New Standards Advisory Group of the Ofqual Board endorses use of comparable outcomes for summer 2012 and beyond.

| Subject                       | Criteria adopted by regulator        | Specifications accredited                  | First teaching | Decision on use of comparable outcomes | First awards                                   |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|----------------|--|--|
| Old science suite             | n/a                                  | n/a  | 2006           | n/a                                    | 2008   |
| New GCSEs in most subjects    | n/a                                  | n/a  | 2009           | 6 Dec 2010                             | 2011   |
| New English suite, maths, ICT | 2007/2008                            | Nov 2009 (by QCA (Ofqual in interim form)) | Sep 2010       | Same time as above                     | 2012   |
| New science suite             | (Summer/Autumn 2009 (??) Winter 2009 | Up to Feb 2011                             | Sep 2011       | Same time as above                     | 2012 (core science only), 2013 (rest of suite) |