

Leighton Andrews AC / AM  
Y Gweinidog Addysg a Sgiliau  
Minister for Education and Skills



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref  
Ein cyf/Our ref: SF/JC/0466/13

Nick Ramsay AM  
Chair of the Enterprise and Business Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay

15 March 2013

Dear Nick,

I am writing following the meeting of the Enterprise and Business Committee on 28 February, at which further detailed information was requested regarding the development work carried out on Qualifications Wales, and whether a model consisting of two separate bodies was considered.

As part of the *Review of Qualifications*, Huw Evans OBE, the Chair of the Review visited Scotland and Denmark and looked at the regulatory and awarding functions of the qualifications system there. In addition, desk-based research into the qualifications systems in a number of other nations was conducted. Mr Evans also met with Ofqual and CCEA (the regulators in England and Northern Ireland). It was with the benefit of such visits and of discussions with experts in the field, including those held by the panel for the earlier Review of the Market Structure of Qualifications, that the Board of the Review of Qualifications developed their preferred model for Qualifications Wales.

In recommending this model, the Review Board was also mindful of other recommendations relating to the development of Wales-only qualifications. The preferred model, combining regulatory, quality assurance and awarding functions in one organisation, was subsequently accepted by Ministers. The current Due Diligence and Organisational Design exercise will inform a Business Case to be presented to Cabinet in the summer. While focusing on the model already proposed, the Business Case will give due consideration to the relative risks and benefits of combining functions within one organisation.

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In order to steer the early delivery of Qualifications Wales, Mr Evans has agreed to chair a task and finish group. He has met on a regular basis with the Head of Qualifications and Regulation Division, and with the Head of Qualifications Wales Transition Branch, to oversee the work in hand. In addition, Mr Evans has attended a number of stakeholder engagement events to promote the recommendations of the Review. He has met, together with Welsh Government officials, with the Chief Executive of WJEC and two of his directors and he has also had a positive meeting with the Chief Executive of Ofqual.

It is proposed that the task and finish group be named the 'Qualifications Wales Advisory Board'. I have approved proposed membership and terms of reference for this group, whose members are currently being appointed. It is planned that the first Board meeting will be held in Cardiff on 2 May 2013.

We have appointed, following a competitive tender procurement exercise, PwC and Morgan Cole to conduct the Due Diligence, Organisational Design and Legal reviews, respectively, in relation to the establishment of Qualifications Wales and the proposed incorporation of WJEC's functions, properties and services into the new organisation.

Initial meetings have been held with Legal Services, the DfES Legislation Branch and the Legislative Programme Unit to commence the legislative programme to establish Qualifications Wales. It is anticipated that a Bill will be introduced in December 2014.

*Yours sincerely*  
*Leighton Adams*

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