

**P-05-1025 Ensure fairness for students taking exams in 2021, Correspondence –
Petitioner to Committee, 07.12.20**

Janet Finch-Saunders MS
Chair
Petitions Committee
Welsh Parliament
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1SN

7th December 2020

Dear Ms Finch-Saunders,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the response you have received from the WJEC (dated 16th November).

We can understand WJEC don't want to reduce content across the board, and believe they are acting in line with QW. And yet we have young people who are not going to be in school or college for considerable periods, self-isolating because they, or a contact, has contracted Covid-19. Whatever we do must be fair for these young people. Perhaps then, it is Qualifications Wales which need to rethink their approach, especially in mind of the changes which appear to be coming to the English system, to ensure parity of esteem for all our learners.

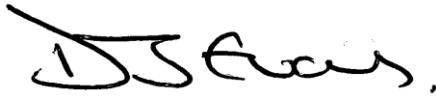
We welcome the planned use of optionality. We believe we need maximum optionality across all subjects in order that students can be assured of a fair grade next summer. Optionality would go some significant way towards accounting for the unequal impacts of Covid-19 around the country. It would restore fairness by ensuring that students have the chance of a grade in their assessments that actually reflects the things they know and can do, rather than topics which could not be accessed due to home circumstances.

It is becoming clearer to us that the centre-managed assessments will feed into an overall centre-assessed grade. But we are still unclear on how these processes will work for everyone in the system. We are working with Welsh Government, as part of their Learning, Qualifications, and Progression - External Stakeholder Reference

Group. We hope that everyone in the exams and regulatory system is able to show maximum flexibility, in order to ensure that young people receive a fair grade, and so that our members have the opportunity to adjust to the changes in the system.

This is not a normal year. Many young people are inevitably going to miss out on some exam content. Expectations must now be managed, so that everyone involved knows how the system will work. We particularly believe that time is of the essence.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Evans', with a stylized flourish at the end.

David Evans
Wales Secretary
National Education Union Cymru