

## **P-05-938 Make Welsh universities consider the Welsh BaccaLaureate as an A Level, Correspondence – Petitioner to Committee, 16.02.20**

Dear Ms Williams,

Thank you for your reply about the Welsh BaccaLaureate.

Whilst I appreciate that the Welsh BaccaLaureate is being increasingly recognised by universities, including Russell group universities, there is a great deal of difference between how different universities take the Welsh Bacc into account. Using it in addition to a personal statement for example, is very different to it being regarded as an acceptable A-level equivalent.

I started this petition when I realised the disparity between how universities regard the Welsh Bacc. I would ask you to consider how this issue has affected my friend Skye Lewis (see her statement below). Although you quote Cardiff Met's reference to the Welsh Bacc for Speech and Language Therapy, they only consider it IN ADDITION TO 3 other A levels. In contrast, to do the same course at Reading, an English university, they will accept the Welsh Bacc AS AN EQUIVALENT TO a third A level. This seems to be extremely unfair, and effectively means that she is unable to study her chosen course in Wales, since she is only studying 2 A levels whilst also working part time for a charity.

I would like recommendation 3 to go further than just compiling a list of universities that accept the Welsh Bacc and raising awareness of the qualification. I would like Welsh Government to be actively encouraging, lobbying and supporting universities (especially Welsh universities) to recognise Welsh Bacc as an A level equivalent.

Thank you,

Bronwen Clatworthy

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Skye Lewis** [REDACTED]  
Date: Sun, 9 Feb 2020 at 20:30  
Subject: Cardiff Metropolitan University & SLT  
To: [REDACTED]

Hi Bronwen,

Here's an account of how the university situation affected me:

With Cardiff Metropolitan University being the only university in Wales to offer a Speech and Language Therapy degree, I was extremely disheartened to find out that they were ignorant to the fact that the Advanced Welsh BaccaLaureate is advertised as being equivalent to /counting as an A Level. Being a Welsh student and someone who very much enjoys the comfort of studying near their home, finding out that I wouldn't be accepted or even so much as considered to study there made things very scary and created a lot of worries for me and my family. Moving away was never something I had considered both for personal reasons but also for financial reasons, so not being able to study my for my dream career where I had set my hopes to study caused a series of

questions to arise: do I find an alternative career that I'm less passionate about and study in Wales, or do I look at alternative universities and broaden my horizons to a new place? Both of which were very daunting options.

I am very aware that A levels are a crucial part to being equipped to do such a degree and proving your academic capability is vital, however I feel as though everyone should be considered on an individual basis as there may be other factors that will help them just as much. For example, this university wouldn't even look at my application because I would only have obtained two A Levels instead of three. However, whilst working towards those two A levels, both being significantly beneficial to the degree I had chosen, I am also carrying out two years of the Welsh baccalaureate qualification in one and working in a Hospice. Having taken two years out of studying to work at the Hospice and gain vital work experience and knowledge that I most certainly would never have gained from college alone, I felt as though it would be more beneficial to me and to future employers to only work on two A Levels plus the Welsh Baccalaureate and therefore be able to keep my role in the Hospice. This role has given me vital insider information about people with life threatening illnesses and how to interact with patients and the bereaved effectively, and much more. These skills I wouldn't have been able to achieve studying three A levels, yet such skills are equally important for Speech and Language Therapists.

Having spoken to admissions tutors at Cardiff Metropolitan University and discovering that they believed not having three A Levels showed them I wasn't academically strong enough and couldn't balance the workload was deeply disheartening, given the workload I currently maintain. Throughout school I achieved all A\*/A grades and my A Levels were predicted to be A\*A\*A (one being the Welsh baccalaureate), which I feel demonstrates my work ethic and personality better than an additional A Level would, yet none of that information mattered.

Additionally, I was confused to learn that the majority of other universities, including Cardiff University, accepted the Welsh Baccalaureate in lieu of an A Level for courses such as Medicine - this to me doesn't make sense. Shouldn't we be trying to encourage Welsh students to excel in Welsh universities, like Cardiff University do for courses arguably more intense? Other universities I looked into for the Speech and Language Therapy degree also were keen to accept the Welsh Baccalaureate in lieu, despite not being as involved in what the qualification entails. The other universities were extremely impressed with the work experience I have gained and the way in which I demonstrated how these skills could be transferred, and all were very generous to offer me a place and voluntarily give me personal feedback about the quality of my interview. Whilst this is not meant to be boastful of the other outcomes as these were not expected, especially after such a certain rejection from Cardiff Metropolitan, I hope this highlights everyone has different skills that are applicable and not all routes to obtaining those skills have to be the same. Just because someone doesn't have three A Levels as well as the Welsh baccalaureate, doesn't mean they are incapable of being an outstanding student. It was a real knock to my confidence, being someone who doesn't have much to begin with and nearly caused me to change career paths.

In conclusion, I believe the system should be revised if a qualification that is considered compulsory and advertised as the equivalent to an A Level is not enough to be considered in a WELSH University as an A level. If it is a good enough qualification for medical students in Cardiff University and majority of others in the UK, why are Welsh Speech and Language Therapy students being deprived of that same chance at Cardiff Metropolitan University?

Best wishes,

Skye Lewis