



Dear colleague

Confirmation of our plans for A-level Polish under Government reform

As you will be aware, government changes to the exam system and qualifications mean that only new qualifications accredited by Ofqual can be offered by awarding bodies in the future.

As you entered students for the A-level Polish qualification in 2014, I am writing to let you know that we have decided not to develop this as a new qualification for first teaching in 2017. This means 2018 will be the last time students can sit the exams for the current A-level and 2019 will be the last re-sit opportunity to receive an award. For AS levels, this means 2017 will be the last time students can sit the current exams and 2018 will be the last re-sit opportunity to receive an award.

I appreciate that this is disappointing news and wanted to explain the reasons behind this difficult decision.

We have carefully considered a number of factors when deciding whether or not to develop new qualifications, for example:

- decisions by Ofqual and the Department for Education about the future of subjects and structure of qualifications
- we may have better alternative qualifications
- low entry levels
- there are insufficient experienced examiners to set and mark papers.

Also, as an education charity, we have to make decisions about how we most effectively use our resources, for example balancing our desire to maintain a wide portfolio of subjects with investing in subjects that meet the needs of many students.

In terms of A-level Polish, the regulatory requirement to change the assessment to include speaking and listening, means we will be faced with a number of challenges. We know it will become increasingly difficult to recruit sufficient experienced senior examiners with assessment expertise to set and mark all four skills. We also realise that it will be difficult for schools to access suitably qualified teacher-examiners to conduct the externally set speaking assessments.

Furthermore, in 2014, only 2502 students were entered for the exam. The low entries coupled with varying student ability year-on-year, also present real challenges to making valid awards. These challenges create a serious risk to our ability to deliver the high quality and reliable qualifications that you and your students have a right to expect.

So while we do our best to respond to the needs of you and your students by adapting our qualifications and creating new ones where we can, this also means not continuing with others when they no longer meet the need of students. Unfortunately we feel there is insufficient interest to justify the resources needed to continue with Polish when the new

qualifications are introduced.

I am very sorry that in this instance we are unable to offer you a directly comparable alternative. We will continue to offer other languages which may be of interest to your students. I am pleased to confirm that we are planning to develop a new GCSE in Polish for first teaching in September 2017 and further information on this will be provided in due course. However, Ofqual's development and design requirements for small entry Modern Foreign Languages currently present very significant awarding and resourcing challenges. We will be discussing these issues with Ofqual to see whether they can be overcome and will give you more information as soon as we can.

We wanted to give you as much notice as possible so that you have enough time to accommodate these changes in your plans. We will of course continue to provide you with any support you need in order for your students to complete this qualification while it is still available.

You may also receive confirmation about other qualifications which are currently offered by your school or college. To ensure that messages are received, we have sent a separate message for each. We apologise if this causes you any inconvenience.

Thank you for choosing AQA in the past. If you have any questions or would like further support, please contact me or a member of the Languages team on 01423 534381 or by email mfl@aqa.org.uk.

Yours faithfully

Stephanie Black
Qualifications Developer
AQA Languages team