

# e-Newsletter

SUMMER 2014, ISSUE 1

## Advocacy Group



*Keeping you regularly up to date*

## New A Levels – what's happening and when.

Economics and business new specifications are still on track to be introduced in September 2015. The awarding bodies will submit their proposals during June to Ofqual and then be asked to make presentations to expert subject panels at Ofqual during the summer.

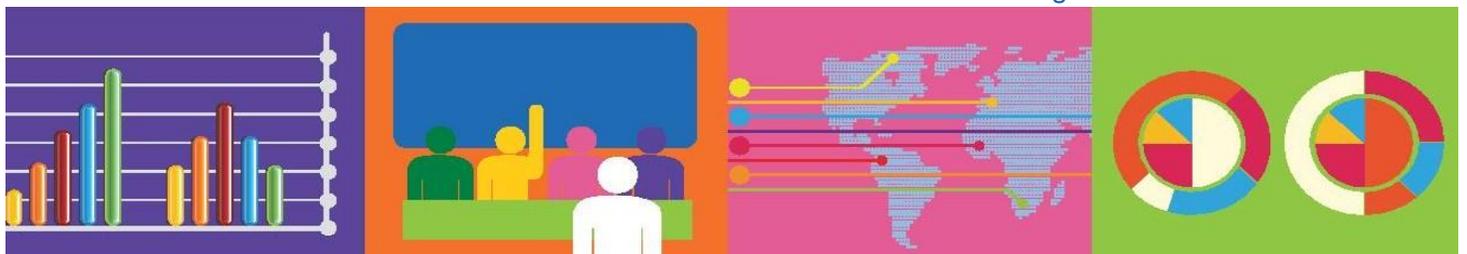
Membership of the panels has not yet been made public. Submissions will either be approved or rejected by the beginning of September 2014.

Awarding bodies may be asked to make minor amendments to their specifications but they will only get 'one shot' at being approved and there are unlikely to be any major re-submissions.

At this stage, draft proposals are being kept confidential by the awarding bodies although EBEA members have been involved in providing advice and helping with

their formulation. It appears that the main awarding bodies are all putting forward specifications for both economics and business. Edexcel/Pearson will also be submitting proposals for its economics and business course. Applied business courses will cease to be available to new candidates from September 2015. Ofqual requires a minimum of six hours of assessment for each A2 course and three hours for each AS. It is likely that awarding bodies will go for the minimum and that A2 will be assessed through three papers of two hours each. They are also likely to include a range of different types of assessment and have a greater emphasis on questions requiring extended written answers. Numerical / quantitative skills are likely to be embedded in questions and not tested separately.

An issue that is currently emerging and giving rise to considerable concern is that of funding. It appears that institutions in the state sector will receive less funding for students registered on AS courses than A2. The obvious solution to this would be to register all students for A2 and to take AS at the end of year 1 and A2 at the end of year 2. However, it is likely that not all students will continue to A2. Those students not continuing to A2 will be deemed as having failed A2 in terms of the performance tables and funding will be withdrawn. Thus there may well be an incentive for schools and colleges not to run AS. Further clarification on this issue is currently being sought but it would be good to hear from members who may have information on this issue or who are prepared to share the stance their own institutions are taking.



# THE REFORM PLAN FOR VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) has now published a reform plan to outline the priorities in vocational qualifications. The plan pulls together all of the reforms already in planning and is a useful summary of the government's policies for vocational qualifications. It reinforces the trends of employer-directed qualifications and 'high quality' secured by external assessment and grading.

*'If this country is to have a vibrant and growing economy, it is vital that our education and skills system helps and encourages people to acquire new competences and abilities and to develop further those they have. Vocational qualifications play an important part in this.'*

The main priorities are:

- Fund only the highest quality qualifications valued by employers
- Align the different parts of the vocational education system
- Ensure that qualifications and

Apprenticeships are relevant, rigorous and recognised as having value by business and learners

- Ensure that innovation and new technology are encouraged and supported
- Identify those qualifications in Maths and English which best enable adult learners to progress to GCSE standard
- Develop a clear rationale for which qualifications are supported through public funds
- Move towards more graded qualifications.

And over the longer term:

- Ofqual are to undertake reforms to the current regulated vocational qualifications system.
- Consideration to be given as to how to support learning that does not lead to formal qualifications, and whether funding of qualification achievements is the best way of funding training in all circumstances and for all learners.

The reform plan can be found [here](#).



## STOP PRESS

### BANK OF ENGLAND CONFERENCE, 1<sup>st</sup> July 2014

**EBEA will include a workshop on the changes to A-level at the Bank of England conference** – a great opportunity to discuss with peers the implications to your teaching.

After generous support from the Bank of England we are able to offer reduced conference rates. **The conference is now £50 for members and £115 for non-members** (including part year membership).

The keynotes will provide perspectives on the nature of current economic problems, the policy responses available and the implications for the teaching of Economics and Business Studies.

We have input from the Monetary Policy Committee, Department of Business Innovation and Skills, London School of Economics as well as interactive workshops.

**You can't afford to miss it!**



## Enterprise Education Update

The Prime Minister asked Lord Young to carry out a review of enterprise education with the aim of reporting this summer. EBEA has been part of the schools' team providing advice to the review. While we have strongly supported the need to develop enterprise and employability skills, we have also emphasised the need for all students to develop some basic economic and business understanding to function effectively as consumers, producers and citizens. We have argued that economics and business teachers have a key role to play in the promotion of enterprise education and that, if it is to be successfully embedded in schools and colleges, it needs to be part of the statutory curriculum and the Ofsted framework for inspection. The Pearsons Think Tank have also published a report into enterprise and entrepreneurship education which makes useful reading. The link can be found [here](#).

# Are you using the EBEA blog?

## Get registered and use the FREE resource!



EBEA re-launched the blog in the spring term and it can be found by clicking on the [blog](#) link from any page on the website.

The Development Group have committed to providing regular updates direct from their classroom experiences. The group consists of enthusiastic, innovative and experienced practitioners who will share their ups and downs, interesting websites plus hints and tips with you.



The value in a blog comes from the community that use it – asking questions, offering advice and different suggestions that have worked for you.

Anyone can contribute to the blog by registering on the page. If you are interested in joining the Development Group or blogging yourself, please get in touch!

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## WARNING ACT NOW

Ofqual are currently consulting with awarding bodies as to which GCSE courses they wish to review and put up for submission. It is by no means certain that *all* awarding bodies will support the case for GCSE economics and business.

We, therefore, urge members with an interest in this area to contact their awarding body and argue the case for the continuance of business studies and/or economics.

