

## TRANSLATION

Letter from: Kirsty Williams AM, Cabinet Secretary for Education

To: Dylan Rees, Chairman, SACRE

25 May 2018

Dear Dylan Rees

Thank you for your letter dated 2 May regarding the WJEC's GCSE and Advanced Level qualifications in Religious Education.

In response to your concerns that the content of the GCSE course is too onerous, the course was approved by Qualifications Wales and therefore it is likely that the problem is associated with the fact that some schools do not devote the required 120 hours of teaching over 2 years to the course. Although this is a cause for concern, WJEC have endeavoured to find a way of combining the content of the subject in order to overcome this problem. For example, on the WJEC's Digital Resources site, there is a spiral learning document which shows how content which is similar across the specification could be combined.

<http://resources.wjec.co.uk/Pages/ResourceSingle.aspx?rId=2694&langChange=cy-GB>

I realise how much frustration the delay with regard to the publication of textbooks is causing for pupils and teachers. I am committed to doing everything I can in order to ensure that the appropriate resources are available for our teachers and pupils in Welsh and English at the same time. That is why I have established a stakeholder group to consider the possible solutions to the problems we have faced regarding resources during the latest series of amendments to qualifications.

The WJEC itself does not publish textbooks and is not responsible for the delay. Educational textbooks are produced by commercial publishers, Illuminate Publishing in this case, and they decide which titles to commission and they also control the publication timetable. Neither Welsh Government nor WJEC have any power over these decisions. However, although Welsh Government has no control over the commercial decisions made by these companies, officers continue to negotiate with the publishing houses in order to consider options for the future.

However, the WJEC has published a series of digital resources which are available free of charge to download from their website in order to assist teachers who are responsible for the Advanced Level qualification in Religious Education. The resources are available at:

<http://resources.wjec.co.uk/Pages/ResourceByArgs.aspx?subId=26&lvlId=1>

The document Guidelines for Teaching which was published at the same time as the specification for the Advanced Level qualification lists resources which could be useful for teachers too and is available at:

<http://cbac.co.uk/qualifications/religious-studies/r-religious-studies-qce-asa-from-2016-WJEC%20GCE%20Religious%20Studies%20Guidance%20for%20Teaching.pdf?language> id=2

I hope this information will be useful.

Yours sincerely

Kirsty Williams AM