9.50 – 10.15
Collaboratively working to tackle the GCSE assessment changes

Gareth Pierce, Chief Executive, WJEC

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Collaboratively working to tackle the GCSE assessment changes

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Chief Executive, WJEC

Education Show : 20/iii/14
the transition landscape

• **new** qualifications – how new?
• implementation issues – we’re all in it together
  – for **awarding bodies** right now
  – for **schools and colleges** immediately thereafter
• over a **three year** period
  – implications of the phasing

• **discussion**
new qualifications
GCSEs - what’s new?

• **content**
  – updated and aligned with new KS4 curriculum, e.g. Maths and Science

• **assessment objectives** clarified

• **assessment methods** shift towards exam only

• **standards**
  – recalibrated, with some alignment, e.g. “4” = “C”
  – new grade “5” to emerge as strengthened “pass”
  – more grades > C [ 9,8,7,6,5 cf A*,A,B ]
pedagogy issues arising from assessment change - I

• English Literature (GCSEs from 2015)
  – linear, untiered, no internal assessments
  – all texts assessed at end of course
  – pedagogy and time management related to this

• History (GCSEs from 2016)
  – linear, untiered, no internal assessments
  – move away from stimulus material, towards
  – 70% recall and application of knowledge, 30% skills
  – “span” theme, pre-1750 emphasis
  – curriculum continuity / overlap with KS3
Pedagogy issues arising from assessment change - II

• Geography (GCSEs from 2016)
  – linear, loses tiering, no internal assessment
  – fieldwork assessed indirectly within examination
  – more prescription of content, some shift towards physical geography
  – quantitative skills identified and strengthened
  – hopefully scope still for the different pedagogical emphases provide by a “Spec A” / “Spec B” approach?
pedagogy issues arising from assessment change - III

• Sciences (GCSEs from 2016)
  – single science no longer available
  – 20% curriculum time, with tiered approach
  – considerable additional content, with higher proportion prescribed
  – quantitative skills identified and strengthened
  – indirect assessment of practical work within examination, with possibility of endorsement approach as for A level?
pedagogy issues arising from assessment change - IV

• Languages (MFL GCSEs from 2016)
  – speaking, listening, reading, writing
  – key issue of whether all four / none should be tiered
  – and whether mixed tier entries are permitted
  – possible strengthening via:
    • specific mark weighting for knowledge and accuracy of grammar
    • introduction of translation (into the assessed language) within the writing element
    • leads to strongest case for tiering being in the currently untiered writing?
new qualifications
GCEs - what’s new?

• content
  – updated, strongly influenced by HE, e.g.
  – Economics: labour market and financial sector
  – Computer Sci: stronger emphasis on programming
  – Art & Design: new emphasis on drawing skills

• assessment objectives clarified

• assessment methods reviewed, especially position of non-exam assessment

• standards carried forward
implementation issues support events / guidance

• **GCSEs**
  – general absence of tiering
  – larger GCSE Mathematics (more time / KS3?)
  – reduced use of non-examination assessments

• **GCEs**
  – co-teachability of AS, but decoupled
  – synoptic, integrated, linear assessment
  – greater, defined emphasis on quantitative skills in some subjects
over a 3-year period

• GCSEs
  – 2015: English and Mathematics
  – 2016: other E-Bac subjects and a few others
  – 2017: those other subjects which remain as GCSEs (to be confirmed – avoid “planning blight”)

• GCEs (A level and decoupled AS)
  – 2016: Maths, MFL, Geography (ALCAB) + a few others
  – 2017: those other subjects which remain as GCEs (to be confirmed - avoid “planning blight”)
awarding body deliverables

• regulatory requirements
  – specifications
  – specimen assessment materials
  – “assessment strategies” – corporate and by subject

• WJEC bundle
  – guidance material for teachers
  – teaching and learning resources, esp. digital
  – initial support events
  – item-level data, with on-line exam review diagnostics
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