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Building a better A Level

Mary Brennan
Partnerships Senior Manager

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Background

- Revised external stakeholder engagement strategy
- OCR Higher Education Consultative Forum
- OCR Subject based Consultative Forums

Common themes - Admissions

- Differentiation increasingly difficult
- Distorting effect of AS
- Require results ‘granularity’

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Common themes – A Levels

- Too many young people get bad advice about choices at 14 and post 16

  "This doesn't put students on a level platform"

- The design of the A Level needs a rethink
- The content of A Levels at subject level needs a rethink
- A Levels, or something else, is needed to develop skills

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HE requirements

- Basic skills
- Subject specific knowledge
- ‘spark’
- Motivation
- Preparedness for HEI
- Potential to succeed

HE involvement - interest

"How do you approach subjects such as Law or Psychology which don't actively require the A Level in it?"

"What competencies would allow us to do is to make a much more refined view about admissions – more information is useful and gives us a strong position"

HE involvement – incentives (1)

"*If the result of HE involvement in A Levels is that we could recruit students better able to be retained, that would be a massive incentive for certain types of universities*"

"*Teaching at this sort of level is not seen as important and any recognition of this as being research is sadly lacking*"

HE involvement – incentives (2)

"If you are changing and making a very significant change to A Levels, it really needs a lot of time to be effective and successful"

"Tight timescales mitigate against effective engagement"

HE involvement - fairness

"Consultation with HE on the development of A Levels must be balanced against its deliverability in schools."

"If we make A Levels too rigorous, we might be making access to HE harder for those children who attend lower performing schools"

*"A Levels must work in **every** school"*

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Moving forward

- Cambridge Assessment policy prescription

  http://www.cambridgeassessment.org.uk/ca/Viewpoints/Viewpoint?id=135822
- Test findings with a wider audience
- Design of A Levels road show
- Get in touch - mary.brennan@ocr.org.uk