

The Rt Hon Ms Justine Greening MP
Secretary of State for Education
Department for Education
Sanctuary Buildings
20 Great Smith Street
London
SW1P 3BT

21 October 2016

Dear Ms Greening

Availability of A level Statistics in England

With the announcement last week from the awarding authority AQA that it was not continuing with the development of A levels in Statistics, no awarding organisation is currently working with Ofqual to offer the new A level Statistics qualification. We are writing to express our concern about this situation, and to ask the Department to intervene to ensure that students in England have the opportunity to take a qualification in A level Statistics, as is intended.

A level Statistics offers a rounded, rigorous qualification to help students to make sense of data and solve statistical problems in a variety of contexts. The programme of qualification reform has ensured that A level Statistics is fit for the future, developing students' analytical and data skills that feature in an ever-increasing range of jobs.

A level Statistics provides excellent preparation towards further studies in a wide variety of social science subjects, psychology, biology, finance, and more. We have seen a welcome focus on quantitative skills in higher education, particularly in the social sciences, through the Q Step programme and related endeavours. A level Statistics supports and extends these developments.

We welcomed your department's acknowledgement that "an AS/A level in statistics does offer another important pathway, especially for those students planning to go on to study social science degrees or statistics at undergraduate level." An A level in Statistics sits well alongside Core Maths and the statistics component of the reformed A level Mathematics as one of three complementary options for students to ensure that they build their quantitative skills to meet with current and future needs. We have heard from teachers that A level Statistics is of interest to them and their students.

The fact that there will be, from September 2017, no A level in Statistics is a clear case of market failure. We would like the Department to work to correct this anomaly, either with AQA or with another awarding organisation.

Yours sincerely



Peter Diggle
President, Royal Statistical Society



Copied to: Nick Gibb MP, Minister of State for School Standards, Department for Education