Dear Sir/Madam

GCSE Computer Science

You may be aware that following a consultation at the end of 2017, Ofqual implemented a significant change to the reformed GCSE (9-1) Computer Science qualifications accredited for delivery in England for teaching from September 2016.

During the autumn term 2017, Ofqual and the exam boards offering GCSE (9-1) Computer Science qualifications saw evidence that the rules for non-exam assessment (NEA) in this subject were being broken. Ofqual therefore decided that, in England, NEA tasks will not count towards the grades of GCSE (9-1) Computer Science qualifications awarded from 2018.

In England, learners still need to complete the task(s) issued by exam boards, and schools must provide 20 hours within the timetable for this activity. However, this work will not contribute to a learner’s overall grade.

The reformed GCSE Computer Science qualification for Wales was approved by Qualifications Wales for teaching from September 2017, with the first award in summer 2019.

WJEC and Qualifications Wales recognise the importance of practical programming within GCSE Computer Science. We wish to retain the 20 per cent weighting of NEA within this reformed GCSE Computer Science qualification because we believe that practical programming skills are central to the subject. We have therefore discussed in detail what can be done to help ensure the integrity of NEA in GCSE Computer Science in Wales.

WJEC has agreed to put in place additional safeguards, with an increased focus on detecting and dealing with malpractice within GCSE Computer Science NEA. These include:

- instructing moderators to look for and report evidence of suspected malpractice
- actively monitoring websites and social media platforms for any signs that the integrity of the qualification may be at risk due to the sharing of solutions or any other information in relation to the NEA
- analysing outcomes of candidates’ NEA and written examinations in this qualification to determine whether there is any statistical evidence of atypical performance which might require further investigation.
At present, Qualifications Wales has agreed that NEA in GCSE Computer Science should continue to contribute to the overall grade. However, Qualification Wales is clear, and WJEC supports this stance, that the situation must be kept under review. If there is evidence of doubt about the integrity of outcomes, which might affect public confidence, we will have to reconsider our approach to retaining the contribution of NEA to the overall grade for this qualification.

We ask centres to support us by carefully considering the delivery of GCSE Computer Science NEA, and closely monitoring learners' NEA work to help deter malpractice.

We will provide further details and guidance to support teachers during our CPD sessions (details [here](#)), which will be held in the autumn term. Materials will be available on the secure website, for all teachers of WJEC GCSE Computer Science to access.

Yours faithfully

ELAINE CARLILE

Director of Assessment Delivery