To: All GCSE, AS and A level Film teachers, examiners and moderators
From: WJEC, Film Studies (Jeremy Points)

GCSE, AS and A level reform process: update, June 2014

1: WJEC’s commitment to developing Film at GCSE, AS and A level
You’ll all be encouraged to know that WJEC is fully committed to developing qualifications in Film Studies at GCSE, AS and A level within the context of Ofqual’s requirements. As part of that process, WJEC is planning to:

- consult teachers, and through them, their students
- be responsible for developing agreed core content and assessment criteria for each subject and at each level with a representative stakeholder group of teachers’ associations, universities and industry
- ensure that equality groups are consulted.

Groups who have been involved in early discussion so far include: the Media Education Association, Goldsmiths and Leeds University, the Media, Communications and Cultural Studies Association (MeCCSA), the British Association for Film Television and Screen Studies (BAFTTS), the Bfi, Into Film and the National Film and Television School. Once subject content and assessment criteria have been established, specifications will be developed and teachers will once again be consulted.

2: What you can do now - responding to the Ofqual consultation
We have been very encouraged by the considerable support you have already shown for GCSE and A level Film so far. We’d like to ask you to respond to Ofqual’s consultation directly as well as write a letter of support for the subject. You’ll see that the questionnaire response can be responded to online or downloaded and sent or emailed. The details of how to respond are on page 5 of Ofqual’s consultation document, Completing GCSE, AS and A level Reform, which can be downloaded from their website: http://ofqual.gov.uk/news/gcse-level-reform-consultation/

Guidance on completing the consultation document
It is likely that you will agree with the majority of questions. There were a few points you might aim to emphasise in your written response:

- **Question 11** invites you to agree or disagree that Ofqual should develop principles to determine in advance which remaining or new subject areas can be developed as GCSE, AS or A level qualifications. It is likely that Ofqual will do this anyway but it clearly depends what principles they are proposing. My suggestion is that you agree but emphasise that educational criteria and the value of the subjects to students should be the overriding principle governing whether subjects are offered.

- **Questions 12 and 13** ask for confirmation that subjects should be easily distinguished. This rather depends on how subjects are distinguished. You can emphasise that you feel Film Studies and Media Studies are examples of subjects which are clearly distinguished by their title.

Writing to Ofqual
You’ll see that there is little opportunity to argue in defence of the subject. We are hoping that you will want to support support the subject strongly by writing to Ofqual. This is your opportunity to argue passionately for the subject on behalf of students in the future! Send your letters to Ofqual at:
Completing GCSE, AS and A level Reform Consultation, Ofqual, Spring Place, Coventry Business Park, Herald Avenue, COVENTRY CV5 6UB
Suggestions of key points you might want to make but do obviously add your own

- Clarify that the consultation document provides no opportunity to argue for the continuance of Film Studies at GCSE, AS and A level and you are thus writing in support of the subject.
- Importance of subject to your students (examples).
- Level of demand at both GCSE and A level in contrast to the popular perceptions of the subject. The range of topics which are studied at GCSE and A level is extending for students.
- The subject involves more than a study of mainstream popular film.
- Film shapes, arguably constructs, the terms of people’s perceptions, the way people think, their attitudes, values and beliefs. Students need to understand the role of film in that process.
- Importance of combining analytical and creative work, ‘theory and practice’.
- Film as a cultural resource and way of gaining access to experiences and cultures, raising issues relevant to society today.
- Demanding nature of assessment already: GCSE involves extended writing which motivates many to improve their linguistic abilities; A level examinations are currently two substantial essay-based examination papers. Both subjects include assessment of research skills.

3: Likely Timescale of the Development Process

Owing to the different arrangements being proposed for this final phase of subject specifications to be developed, the timescale is still to be confirmed. This is a probable timescale.

Stage 1 (by 30 July) Responding to Ofqual consultation
Respond to Ofqual consultation and write to support Film Studies!

Stage 2 (Autumn 2014?): Ofqual to confirm subjects to be develop for GCSE, AS and A level
Ofqual are likely to establish some principles which GCSE, AS and A level qualifications considered for development will need to meet in order to be developed and accredited.

Stage 3 (Jan to June 2015?): Development of subject content and assessment criteria
The subject content (‘core content’) and assessment objectives are likely to be developed, in consultation with stakeholders, from January to May/June 2015 and submitted to DfE and Ofqual in May/June 2015. A clear rationale to justify ‘non-exam assessment’ (i.e., internally assessed work) will need to be submitted at the same time.

Stage 4 (Autumn 2015 to May 2016): Development of specifications
A GCSE, a standalone AS (which does not contribute to an A level) and a two year A level specification will be developed for Film Studies. WJEC will aim to consult with teachers on draft specifications in Autumn 2015. These should be available in centres by Autumn 2016 for first teaching from September 2017.

Stage 5 (September 2017 onwards)
The last assessment of ‘legacy’ GCSE and A2 Film Studies is likely to be Summer 2018. The first assessment of the reformed GCSE (1 year candidates only) and AS is likely to be Summer 2018 and the first assessment of GCSE (2 year candidates) and A level is likely to be Summer 2019.