



Advisory
Committee on
Mathematics
Education



Rt. Hon Michael Gove MP
Secretary of State
Department of Education
Sanctuary Buildings
Great Smith Street
London SW1P 3BT

2 June 2010

Dear Secretary of State,

We are writing upon your appointment as Secretary of State in the Department for Education on an issue which has jointly concerned us for some time, and which we believe is damaging the experience of learners across the science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) curriculum.

We are of the view that the current process of curriculum development and revision is not fit for purpose. It is not delivering the curriculum that learners deserve. Our view is shaped by our own challenging experiences in a number of recent instances, including the science GCSEs and the linked pair of mathematics GCSEs. It is a view that is in part shared by Sir Richard Sykes in his report, and also in the Science and Learning Expert Group report, led by Sir Mark Walport.

Currently, the system is too centralised; it lacks flexibility; it has no clear leadership; the responsibilities of the regulator, awarding bodies and officials are muddled – nor is outside expertise (employers, higher education, subject associations, and learned societies) valued as greatly as we believe it ought to be. In fact, you outlined yourself this issue in your speech to the ACME Conference on 2 March in which you talked of the need for a greater role for stakeholders – in particular, universities – in the design of the A-Level curriculum.

That is why ACME, E4E and SCORE have begun working on some early-stage ideas for an alternative model which will develop the role of the subject communities, learned societies, employers and HE, and will clearly define their relationship to the awarding bodies, the department and other agencies involved in the process. We are working together across our organisations and seeking input from other key experts. The reason for writing to you at what is no doubt a busy time is that we wanted to inform you about this work, but also to make it clear that we see the output of this project helping inform your thinking about how government can better ensure the construction of high quality curricula, particularly given your announcement on 27th May regarding the decision to close QCDA.

We are faced with the best opportunity in a generation to ensure we have structures in place which draw on the best expertise and knowledge in the country when new curricula are being developed. We would be happy to meet with you to discuss this in more detail as the project progresses and would value the opportunity of engaging with your officials as their thinking develops.

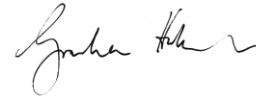
Yours sincerely



**Professor Dame Julia
Higgins FRS FREng**
Chair, Advisory Committee
on Mathematics Education
(ACME)



Mr Dick Olver FREng
Chair, Education for
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