

5<sup>th</sup> November 2014

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Dear Julia

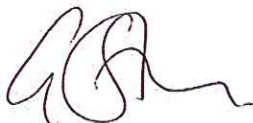
Thank you for your recent letter referring to our work on Modern Foreign languages A levels, and suggesting we do similar work in the sciences.

First, let me correct a misconception. We did not find that harsh grading was the issue in languages. Instead there are technical design flaws in all exam board specifications that mean the assessments don't discriminate well enough at the upper end of the ability range. A subtle difference, but an important one. We are now requiring exam boards to make improvements. They are not necessarily enthusiastic about that, but we are!

Moving on to the sciences now, as we have said in our corporate plan (<http://ofqual.gov.uk/documents/corporate-plan/>), we are looking at the comparability of subjects (including the sciences) and evaluating a wealth of relevant research. The work is well underway, and of course your own research is included.

I look forward to talking to you about it. We have more to do, but perhaps we can meet in the New Year? By then we will want to talk with you and others about next steps. I don't imagine that deciding how best to respond to what we find will be as straightforward as it has been in the languages, and I'd appreciate talking with you about it.

Yours sincerely



**Glenys Stacey**  
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