

COMMUNITY LANGUAGES SAVED TO ENSURE DIVERSE CURRICULUM CONTINUES

Government action means GCSEs and A levels in a range of community languages such as Panjabi, Portuguese and Japanese are to continue to ensure young people can carry on studying a diverse range of foreign languages.

The news, announced today by Education Secretary Nicky Morgan, marks a significant step for the government in its efforts to extend opportunity to young people and equip them with the skills they need in what is an increasingly global economy.

It follows a government commitment in 2015 to protect a number of language GCSEs and A Levels after the exam boards announced that from 2017 they would be withdrawing several courses. In May 2015, the Secretary of State for Education wrote to the exam boards during the pre-election period to convey her concern about their decisions to stop offering GCSEs and A levels in certain languages.

Since then the government has worked with Ofqual and the exam boards to secure agreement that these important subjects will not be dropped and that qualifications will continue to be provided in these important subjects. Pearson and AQA will continue to offer the languages they currently offer and will also take on most of the qualifications that are being withdrawn by OCR.

As a result of those discussions the following languages will continue at GCSE and A level; Arabic, Modern Greek, Gujarati, Bengali, Japanese, Modern and Biblical Hebrew, Panjabi, Polish, Portuguese, Turkish and Urdu.

The number of pupils entering for a modern language GCSE has risen by 20 per cent since 2010. Today's announcement will ensure pupils will continue to be able to learn as wide a range of languages as possible in the classroom.

Education Secretary Nicky Morgan said:

“One of Britain's strengths is its rich, multicultural nature and ensuring young people have the opportunity to study a wide range of languages is integral to that.

“I am delighted that these languages will continue at GCSE and A level. Learning a foreign language opens up a whole world of opportunity and ensures our young people will be able to compete on a global scale.

“I also want to thank those exam boards who have worked with us to protect these languages so we will continue to have high quality qualifications available.”

Pearson and AQA will now work to develop new GCSEs and A levels that meet the rigorous standards put in place by government, ready for first teaching in 2018. To help with the transition OCR has agreed to continue offering GCSEs and A levels in those courses until 2018.

Andrew Hall, AQA's Chief Executive, said:

“As an education charity, we've been working really hard to find a way to

continue offering our A-levels in Bengali, Modern Hebrew, Panjabi and Polish. As we've always said, there were significant barriers - but the DfE and Ofqual have helped to remove them. So I'm delighted to say that, subject to agreeing appropriate content, we'll be able not only to continue offering these four languages at both A-level and GCSE, but to safeguard the future of Biblical Hebrew at A-level too."

Rod Bristow, President of Pearson in the UK, said:

"We believe that Awarding Organisations, government and schools should all work together in the interests of the students who want to have access to these qualifications, which are of great importance to communities across the UK and abroad.

"Pearson is working closely with Ofqual and the DfE to secure the future of a range of GCSE and A level language qualifications, subject to finalising the subject content required. Those include A levels we currently offer in Arabic, Modern Greek, Japanese and Urdu. We are also now working to secure the future of A level and GCSE qualifications in Gujarati, Portuguese, Turkish and GCSE Biblical Hebrew, which are being withdrawn by another exam board."

From 2014 to March 2016 the Government provided £1.8 million to train teachers to teach the new languages curriculum in primary and secondary schools. This will help teachers in particular with the more demanding aspects of the new curriculums.

Notes to editors

By introducing the EBacc, we have stopped the decline in modern foreign languages seen in the last decade, where 200,000 fewer GCSE students studied a modern language in 2010 than in 2002. Last year's results showed 20 per cent more pupils are taking languages at GCSE than in 2010 while A level entries in modern languages have increased by nearly five per cent since 2014

It is compulsory for maintained schools to teach a modern foreign language to pupils at key stage 3 (ages 11-14), and schools are free to choose which language to teach. Maintained primary schools have also been required to teach a modern foreign or ancient language at key stage 2 (ages seven to 11) since 2014.

In 2014 the department published [reformed content requirements for modern foreign language GCSEs](#) and [A levels](#).

French, German, and Spanish will be available as reformed GCSEs and A levels for first teaching in September 2016.

At GCSE and A level, Chinese, Italian and Russian will be reformed for first teaching in September 2017.

Pearson have agreed to offer Gujarati, Portuguese, Turkish, at GCSE and A level, and the Biblical Hebrew GCSE. AQA have agreed to offer the Biblical Hebrew A level. The new qualifications will be available for first teaching from September 2018 (first awards in 2020). OCR will continue to offer these existing qualifications until summer 2019 awarding, so there will be no gap in provision.

Pearson and AQA have also agreed to continue all of their existing less-taught language qualifications: Bengali, Modern Hebrew, Panjabi, Polish (all offered by AQA), Arabic, Greek, Japanese and Urdu (all offered by Pearson). These will all

continue at GCSE (first teaching 2017) and A level (2018).

The Government's reforms are designed to make GCSEs more robust and rigorous, to match the best education systems in the world and to keep pace with universities' and employers' demands. For modern foreign languages, this includes:

- Providing £1.8million between 2014 and 2016 to train teachers to teach the new languages curriculum in primary and secondary schools and help with its more demanding aspects.
- more opportunities to speak and write spontaneously in the language
- using languages across a range of contexts, including personal, academic and employment-related use
- a clearer focus on grammar and translation
- We are reforming A levels to equip students for progression to higher education. For modern foreign languages, this includes:
- more opportunities to speak and write spontaneously in the language
- greater engagement with themes directly relevant to the countries where the language is spoken