

Government steps in to ensure community languages continue to be studied in school.



The government has stepped in to secure the future of GCSEs and A levels in community languages such as Panjabi and Turkish - Schools Minister Nick Gibb announced today (22 July 2015).

Exam boards have said that there are a number of community languages which may not be continued at GCSE or A level but the government is today announcing that it is taking action to work with the boards and Ofqual to make sure as wide a range of language subjects as possible continue to be taught in the classroom.

School Reform Minister Nick Gibb said:

All pupils should have the opportunity to study foreign languages as part of a core academic curriculum that prepares them for life in modern Britain. This should extend to community languages.

There are some community languages which exam boards have said they need to discontinue at GCSE or A level, which is why we are now taking action and working with them and Ofqual to determine how these qualifications can continue.

In an outward-facing country such as Britain, it is important that we have high-quality qualifications not just in French, German and Spanish but also in languages such as Polish, Urdu, Arabic, Bengali, Gujarati and Turkish.

To avoid any gap in provision in certain languages we will, where necessary, extend the timetable for awarding organisations to continue with existing qualifications until September 2018.

Further announcements about the proposed approach will be made later in the year.

There are considerable benefits to learning a second language and the government is keen to preserve a wide range of languages being taught at GCSE and A level including Polish, Gujarati, Panjabi, Bengali and Turkish.

Interest in studying languages remains high with the number of pupils entering for a modern language GCSE rising by 20% since 2010.

As well as speaking to exam boards, the government has been meeting representatives from embassies and communities, including supplementary schools, to hear their concerns and discuss ways to resolve the issue.

Notes to editors

1. The number of pupils studying for a modern language GCSE has increased by 20% since 2010 due to the introduction of the English Baccalaureate. This will feed through into A levels over time.
2. In 2014 the department published [reformed content requirements for modern foreign language GCSEs](#) and [A levels](#).

New qualifications for French, German and Spanish will be first taught in September 2016. In other languages, the new qualifications will be first taught in September 2017.

In May 2015, the Secretary of State for Education wrote to the awarding organisations during the pre-election period to convey her concern about their decisions to stop offering GCSEs and A levels in certain languages.

1. 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:
 - 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
2. 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
3. The government is providing £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.

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