

Kirsty Williams AC/AM
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Addysg
Cabinet Secretary for Education

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Garem Jackson, Head of Education
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Dear Mr Jackson

Thank you for your letter dated 21 November stating concerns regarding the lack of Welsh medium resources for the new Religious Studies GCSE.

Textbooks to support WJEC qualifications are published in English by publishers in England as a commercial enterprise. Neither the Welsh Government nor the WJEC have any influence over the publication date of these textbooks. Welsh medium versions of the textbooks are organised by the WJEC with sponsorship from the Welsh Government, however, the accessibility of the Welsh versions is dependent on the time schedules to produce the English versions.

In this case the specification for the subject was not accredited finally until October 2016. Following this the authors Hodder had four months to adapt the contents of the textbooks they had developed for Edquas. It takes approximately eight months for the publisher to publish a book once the manuscript has been received from the authors. Therefore the book was not published in English for the WJEC qualification until August 2017.

In order to improve the time schedules we have asked WJEC to look again at the different stages of the publication process. WJEC has increased its editorial capacity together with developing its translation memory process and typesetting to speed up the process and reduce the gap between publishing the textbooks in both languages. Usually, it is necessary to wait for the final proofs in English before the translation or adapting into Welsh can begin to ensure that there are no further changes. In this case the work was started earlier than the third English proofs. By doing this a number of amendments had to be incorporated into the Welsh version as a result of receiving further changes to the fourth version in English.

The WJEC hope to publish the draft version of the Welsh book on its safe website early in January. In order to ensure that support is available to teachers and pupils, WJEC has provided free digital resources for the subject on their website.

<http://adnoddau.cbac.co.uk/Pages/ResourceByArgs.aspx?subld=26&lvlld=2>

I agree that this situation is not acceptable. The delay between publishing the Welsh and English versions of textbooks to support qualifications in Wales is a matter of concern for me and I want to ensure a better provision. I will meet with Gareth Pierce, Chief Executive of WJEC later on in the month to discuss this matter further.

Yours sincerely

Kirsty Williams AC/AM

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