



European Association of Social Anthropologists  
Association Européenne des Anthropologues Sociaux

**To:**

Mr Andrew Hall  
Chief Executive Officer  
AQA  
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UNITED KINGDOM

**From:**

**President**

Prof. Dr. Noel B. Salazar  
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**Subject: Prospective termination of the A-level  
qualification in Anthropology**

15/02/2015

Dear Mr Hall

I am writing in my capacity as President of the European Association of Social Anthropologists (EASA) and on behalf of the current Executive Committee and the Executive Committee elect. EASA has 1900 members across 35 countries, and represents Anthropology in and across Europe. We are dismayed at the prospective termination by the AQA examination board of the recently established A-level qualification in Anthropology. The qualification has been seen, across Europe, as a flagship programme of education and its progress is being watched keenly, not only by professional associations such as the EASA, but within those member countries where there is also an interest in introducing Anthropology to the secondary school curriculum. The decision of the AQA comes at a time when there is an increasing recognition of the transformative potential of Anthropology and an awareness of its growing importance across Europe in the face of new forms of xenophobia, intolerance and inequality.

Anthropology is unique among current A-level offerings. The subject offers an understanding both of shared human origins and the rich global diversity of contemporary cultures. It is a challenging, engaging and profoundly empowering subject for young people to study, and one that is increasingly being recognised as central to understanding contemporary multicultural, religiously diverse, and globally connected societies. At a time when the skills necessary for diverse groups to live together with cultural, linguistic and religious difference are more than ever crucial, we believe that the loss of the Anthropology A-level in the UK is ill judged. We will lose a pioneering model that can be emulated in other European countries and we respectfully urge the AQA to re-consider its decision to eliminate the programme. We suggest that AQA look at the success and growth that the anthropology subject of the International Baccalaureate has enjoyed for decades in schools around the world as a clear indication of the appeal of the subject to young people and schools.

While we recognise competing claims on finite resources and the difficult decisions that the AQA inevitably has to make, the decision to stop the teaching of anthropology at A level in the UK is premature. The qualification has only been offered since 2010 and, like any new A-level subject, needs time to grow and become known among students and teachers alike. We implore the AQA to give it a chance to grow. The problem may be that it is not yet offered in enough schools and colleges, but this can and will change with continuing support from the anthropological profession. It is clear that, where it is offered, it is a popular subject achieving high enrolments and in some cases full capacity. The petition that has been generated and signed by teachers of anthropology and their students is testament to the enthusiasm of those with direct experience of the A level. We seriously hope that the AQA can continue to be instrumental in leading the way and helping Anthropology to flourish not only in the UK, but also across Europe, at a time when it is sorely needed.

Yours sincerely,



Noel B. Salazar  
President, EASA

**Signatories** (current executive committee and executive committee elect)

Jeanette Edwards, University of Manchester, UK (Vice-president)

Alberto Corsin Jimenez, Spanish National Research Council, Spain (Secretary)

Rachael Gooberman-Hill, University of Bristol, UK (Treasurer)

Abdullahi El-Tom, National University of Ireland, Ireland

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This letter was Cc'ed to:

Mr. Dale Bassett, Director of Public Policy, AQA