

SHA PRESS RELEASE

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SECONDARY HEADS CALL FOR NEW SYSTEM OF IN-COURSE ASSESSMENT TO REDUCE HUGE COST OF EXTERNAL EXAMINATIONS

The Secondary Heads Association has today published a [report on assessment and examinations](#), calling for a system of Chartered Examiners to oversee in-course assessment in schools and colleges as a way of reducing the current burden of external examinations.

The main points in the report are:

1. The present external examinations system is overloaded.
2. The cost of GCSE, AS and A level, and vocational qualifications in schools and sixth form colleges is £380 million per year.
3. A change in the balance between external and in-course assessment must take place in a way that maintains public confidence in the qualifications system.
4. A new Chartered Examiner status should be introduced for experienced teachers, who would be accredited to carry out in-course assessment to external standards.
5. This can be introduced in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, as well as England, where it would be overseen by the National Assessment Agency.
6. Chartered Examiners will take part in rigorous training and testing to achieve a high standard of consistency in assessment work.
7. The process of accreditation and the operation of the system are outlined in the attached paper.
8. The proposed Chartered Examiner system will not increase the workload of teachers.
9. A pilot of the Chartered Examiner system should be held in AS history and chemistry in 2005-06.

The new SHA President, Tim Andrew, Head of Chesham High School, Bucks, said:

The present examinations and testing regime in schools is out of control. The government should put more faith in the professional judgement of teachers by using in-course assessment as a major component of external examination grades. The SHA proposals for Chartered Examiners represent a realistic and practical way forward.

The SHA General Secretary, Dr John Dunford, said:

SHA recognises that increasing reliance on in-course assessment must take place in a way that maintains public confidence in students' qualifications. The proposals for Chartered Examiners, which met with favourable comment in the interim Tomlinson report on 14 to 19 qualifications, will improve the reliability of examination grades, raise the status of teachers and contribute to the raising of standards in schools and colleges. Most importantly, these proposals offer the best way to reduce the massive load of examinations for young people.

£380 million per year is damning evidence of the bloated examinations system. Secondary schools and colleges have never received a penny extra to reflect the steep increase in examination costs in recent years. The transfer of invigilation from teachers to support staff under the workforce agreement, while welcome, adds to the already excessive cost of fees and administration. This bill must be reduced and the Chartered Examiner system represents the best way to do this.