Robert Halfon MP  
Chair, Education Committee  
House of Commons  
London SW1A 0AA

24 June 2019

Dear Mr Halfon

I would like to update the Education Committee on our work to substantiate that Cambridge IGCSE awarding standards are aligned to reformed GCSE in England. This is in the context of the interest your Committee has taken in social justice and in whether independent schools might have an unfair advantage by taking international qualifications. There are a number of international qualifications available and Cambridge International is responsible for one of them, the Cambridge IGCSE. I am keen to explain to the Committee why the suggestion of unfair advantage is unfounded.

We have continued to examine carefully all of the data we have available, and I remain confident that the awarding standard for Cambridge IGCSE aligns well with England's reformed GCSEs. We have had several discussions with the Department for Education about this, and its officials have – at our invitation – visited our offices to see the methods and data we use, so opening ourselves to independent scrutiny. In the same spirit of transparency, we have also asked UK NARIC, the designated national agency for the recognition and comparison on international qualifications, to revisit its previous work that concluded that Cambridge IGCSE is comparable to GCSE. Also, our most popular Cambridge IGCSE syllabuses in England continue to be regulated by Ofqual and are therefore open to the government exam regulator's scrutiny.

I want to assure the Committee that our awarding standard is fundamental to our work on behalf of the hundreds of thousands of students around the world who take Cambridge IGCSE each year. It would not serve any purpose for them, for us, or for public confidence in qualifications for our exams to be either too hard or too easy. That is why we commit in the Cambridge Code of Practice to align our standard to England's GCSE, so that every student who takes Cambridge IGCSE anywhere in the world or in any type of school (state or independent) can be confident in her or his results.

If Cambridge International can help the Committee with its enquiries, please let me know.

Yours sincerely

Christine Özdén  
Chief Executive