



**CURRICULUM
FOR COHESION**
BRINGING HUMANITIES TO LIFE

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Friday, 19th April 2013

Dear esteemed Academic Advisors, Patrons and Key Donors,

UPDATE on National Curriculum Review for History -
Curriculum for Cohesion's activity during the
Department for Education's Public Consultation Period,
7th February-20th April 2013

Peace be with you.

Now that the Government's Public Consultation Period for the National Curriculum Review for History is over, I thought you might appreciate a report of what Curriculum for Cohesion has done during this critical period. This is additional to the regular reporting on our website: <http://curriculumforcohesion.org/>

The Government published their Draft National Curriculum for History on 7th February 2013. This was part of a larger 221-page consultation document covering 12 subjects. For your convenience, we have extracted the History part of the consultation and attach this.

At Curriculum for Cohesion, we decided on a two-part strategy:

1. Prepare a high quality formal Response document, with the best possible academic input.
2. Submit our formal Response early so that we could use it for public awareness raising and gathering further support.

On 20th March, Curriculum for Cohesion submitted their Response to this Draft. This can be found on our website: <http://curriculumforcohesion.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/CfC-Response-to-DfE-Draft-History-Specification-20-3-2013.pdf>



That same day, we held a media roundtable at London University's Institute of Education. Details of our panel and the journalists attending can be seen here, along with a video of the event: <http://curriculumforcohesion.org/watch/media-presentation-at-institute-of-education/>

The media event led to my appearance on BBC Radio 4's Moral Maze and articles about our proposals in *The Guardian*, *BBC Online*: <http://m.bbc.co.uk/news/education-22072703> and others.

Mohammed Amin, one of our Patrons, was interviewed about our proposals for the BBC Asian Network and the Huffington Post. See the Huffington Post article at: http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2013/04/12/muslim-history_n_3070107.html

I have also presented our Response in formal meetings with:

1. The Senior Civil Servant at the Department for Education, Ms. Pam Raven, who is National Curriculum Review Subject Leader for History.
2. The Deputy Prime Minister's Private Secretary for Education, Mr. Matt Sanders.

We also helped draft for the Muslim Council of Britain a Press Release which became the focus of an article in *The Guardian*: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2013/apr/14/muslim-council-attacks-school-history-proposals>

The Muslim Council of Britain and the Federation of Muslim Organisations have now submitted their own Responses to the Department for Education, informed by the details of our Response. We are also aware of at least one academic who was submitting his own Response, and expect that other individuals have also submitted Responses.

The Government and the media are fully aware of our three key proposed inclusions:



1. The contribution of British Imperial Muslim, Hindu and Sikh soldiers to the military effort in both World Wars.
2. The preservation and enhancement of ancient Greek and Roman learning by classical Muslim civilisation. In particular, we have asked that Ibn Al-Haytham as the founder of Optics be included as “a significant individual” in Key Stage 1.
3. Britain’s long history of trade, diplomatic and other relations with Muslim majority regions. In particular, we have asked for the teaching of the diplomatic connection between England and the Ottoman Empire in the Early Modern Period (1485-1707).

Many other organisations involved in the teaching of History have submitted consultation Responses and made public statements criticising the Department for Education’s 7th February Draft of the National Curriculum for History. Perhaps as a result, the Government have now repeatedly assured everyone involved that the attached document is their opening Draft Specification and that it is liable to extensive revision before it becomes statutory later this year.

While the period when the Department for Education was open to receiving Responses has now closed (16th April), the other aspect of our influencing the decision making process will continue. The significance of the History Curriculum is such that Government Ministers will be personally involved in the decisions regarding the final content. Accordingly, we will continue to lobby them, primarily indirectly and privately through politicians.

Almost half of the schools in England (private schools, academies and the new “free schools”) do not have to follow the National Curriculum. Accordingly, we will also continue to influence the wider intellectual understanding of school History in a number of ways such as:



- academic papers;
- taking part in the training of teachers on PGCE courses;
- collaboration with text book publishers;
- the creation of curricular materials.

We will be able to assess the results of our formal lobbying efforts when the Department for Education publishes its final History Curriculum in a few months' time.

Even if our recommendations are not part of the short-list of *statutory* requirements on the final curriculum, we have already been assured by Mr. Tim Oates, Chair of the Expert Panel of the National Curriculum Review, that they will at the very least be complementary with the statutory curriculum so that teachers will be able to teach them even in schools subject to the National Curriculum. As explained above, schools outside the National Curriculum will of course also be free to teach them.

While we put significant effort into getting our proposals into the statutory curriculum (and await the results), the success of our programme ultimately depends on spreading the wider understanding of key historical facts amongst those who teach school History, and that does not depend upon their statutory inclusion.

If you would like to discuss anything with me, please feel free to contact me.

With all best wishes,

Dr. Matthew Wilkinson
Director and Principal Researcher

Attachment: Department for Education's *Draft Specification for the National Curriculum Review for History*, 7th February 2013