



# Approval Criteria and Conditions of Approval

August 2019



## **Version control**

This version (3) of Qualifications Wales' Approval criteria and Conditions of Approval was published in August 2019. It replaces version 2 which was published in January 2018.

Feedback from the public on this policy is welcomed in the meantime. Please send your comments to [policy@qualificationswales.org](mailto:policy@qualificationswales.org)

This document is available in [Welsh](#).

## **Contents**

General Principles .....	3
Approval Criteria .....	4
Conditions of Approval.....	5

## General Principles

This policy outlines the criteria that qualification must meet before it can be approved, and the Conditions of Approval placed on an Approved Qualification.

This document is primarily for awarding bodies recognised by Qualifications Wales. The aim of these requirements is to ensure that only qualifications which meet our requirements are approved.

This document should be read in conjunction with:

- [The Priority Qualifications List and Forward Look](#)
- [Rules and procedures for approval](#)
- [Standard Conditions of Recognition](#)

## Approval Criteria

1. The Qualifications Wales Act 2015 requires us to set and publish criteria to be applied by us in deciding whether to approve a form of a qualification. We would only consider a qualification for approval if it is on the List of Priority Qualifications or meets our policy on approval of non-priority qualifications, as set out in our [Priority Qualifications List and Restricted Priority Qualifications Policy](#).
2. The criteria for the approval by Qualifications Wales of revised GCSEs, AS and A levels are as follows:
  - a) the awarding body must be recognised by Qualifications Wales for the award of GCSE / GCE qualifications;
  - b) there must be evidence that the qualification will be compliant with the Standard Conditions of Recognition, Additional Standard Conditions of Recognition and any applicable Approval Criteria;
  - c) the qualification must meet requirements set out in any qualification and subject specific principles document published by (or transitioned under the commencement of the Act to) Qualifications Wales;
  - d) the qualification must have been developed using a process previously agreed with Welsh Government (prior to 21 September 2015) or Qualifications Wales;
  - e) the qualification must be compatible with any relevant Welsh Government policy documents prior to 21 September 2015 such as qualification guidance documents and the recommendations of the Review of Qualifications for 14-19 year olds;
  - f) there is convincing evidence that a qualification has been developed with appropriate stakeholder input;
  - g) the awarding body must have acted upon, and where provided, met instructions from feedback given by Welsh Government (prior to 21 September 2015) and Qualifications Wales during the developmental and approval stages of a qualification;
  - h) where neither Welsh Government nor Qualifications Wales has produced a subject specific expectations document and where an awarding body has received feedback from other regulators for corresponding qualifications in England, an awarding body must demonstrate how it has paid regard to that feedback and identify the extent to which it may apply in Wales
  - i) for AS and A level qualifications, other than in relation to the inclusion of a Welsh perspective, the awarding body must provide a

- rationale for any significant deviation from the content in the AS and A levels in England, and
- j) the subject must be in an established subject, or the awarding body must demonstrate the new subject addresses Welsh Government policy in relation to the curriculum, or the qualification must be covered by the list of qualifications that Qualifications Wales includes in its policy on the approval of qualifications not listed on the priority qualifications list.

## Conditions of Approval

3. The following is a Condition of Approval that we place on awarding bodies in respect of all Approved Qualifications:

**Condition of Approval 1:** An awarding body may not change the specification for a qualification from that which was Approved (or initially accredited by Welsh Government prior to 21 September 2015) unless with prior agreement from Qualifications Wales as to the nature of the change, of the timing of its implementation and of any required actions to support the implementation of the change.