

20 June 2022

Sent by email to ColegauCymru Principals' Forum and Curriculum and Quality Network

Dear Colleagues

Post-16 Vocational Qualification Update – Summer 2022

As you prepare for the end of the college term, I thought it would be helpful to summarise some of our recent and planned activity in relation to post-16 vocational qualifications so that you can share this information with colleagues in colleges.

I know that it has been a busy and challenging year for you, with the complexities of trying to return to the 'new normal' while introducing and delivering several new, very different, qualifications in large programme areas. Mindful of this, we are very grateful for the time that many of you have taken to engage with us to discuss challenges and identify solutions. We will continue our close engagement with you and thank you for your time and constructive feedback.

I outline below some of the key strands of work that are high on your agendas to bring together information that has been shared over recent weeks.

Health and Social Care

You have expressed a number of concerns to us about Health and Social Care qualifications, both in relation to current and future learners. In particular you brought to our attention concerns about the outcomes of the HSC Level 3 examinations (Units 2 and 5) that were taken in January. We have investigated your concerns and raised a number of matters with WJEC. Consequently, several actions have now been taken, in the interests of learners, which include:

- WJEC have discounted a 3-mark question in Unit 2 which was not clearly related to the specification
- a similar question was removed from the June Unit 2 examination
- unit outcomes are being adjusted to provide greater emphasis on the non-examined assessment (NEA) contribution to the overall grade.

We are also grateful to Curriculum and Quality leads and their senior subject leads for engaging with us on our Rapid Review. We have now published our [report](#) and are working with the awarding body consortium to implement the recommendations arising from our findings.

Some of the key actions in relation to the **Level 3 HSC qualification** include:

- WJEC are working with centres to co-construct a **[Level 3 Extended Diploma in HSC](#)**. This will be awarded for the first time in 2024, enabling learners who beginning their two-year course this September to take it. Work is ongoing on the development of this qualification with a view to ensuring that all learners have an appropriately structured learning programme: this may include creating a 540 guided learning hour (GLH) qualification to be taken in one year. WJEC continues to work closely with centres on this important work.
- Alongside the development of the Extended Diploma WJEC will be **reviewing the content** depth and size of the Level 3 HSC certificate (360GLH) and Diploma (720GLH) – again, this will affect learners starting their course this September.
- WJEC will release **stimulus material for units 1 and 4** in September - much earlier than in previous years.
- WJEC have **removed the requirement for direct supervision** for some assessment tasks in units 1, 3 and 6, providing much more flexibility to centres and learners.
- WJEC will now allow learners to **resit an external examination twice**, rather than just once.

There are a number of other recommendations in the report that are being taken forward and we will update you on them accordingly.

Construction and Building Services Engineering

Many of you have just completed the first year of delivering the new made-for-Wales Construction and Building Services Engineering (CBE) qualifications – in particular the Foundation qualification and, in some cases, the Progression qualifications. Some of you have told us that the qualifications have been very well received, others have some concerns. For example, we've been advised that some colleges are

experiencing manageability challenges in relation to the practical tests and that there are some concerns about the accessibility of some of the on-screen tests. We are also aware that some colleges have concerns about progression routes. We'd like to understand exactly how the qualifications are working in each College and to hear about the specific challenges that you are facing so that we can address issues in the coming year.

To that end we will be replicating the interview-style approach of the HSC Rapid Review as we conduct a **health check on the CBE qualifications**. We'll be contacting Curriculum & Quality members to arrange interviews early next term and we look forward to meeting you and your senior subject leaders to hear about your experiences in your college. In the meantime, two events have been/are being held at CAVC to both prepare for the new level 3 apprenticeship qualifications (took place on 16 June) and to hear about examples of good practice and share experiences of the Foundation and Progression qualifications (23 June).

Travel, Tourism, Hospitality and Catering

We are developing our proposals for possible reform as we prepare to report on our sector review of Travel, Tourism, Hospitality and Catering. We'd like to test our thinking with you and your colleagues so that any proposals have been sense-checked with, and influenced by, colleges – prior to formal consultation. To this end, Lisa Mitchell, the Qualifications Manager leading on the review, will be conducting a further set of **interviews with Curriculum and Quality representatives and the relevant subject leads** to test our thinking. I know that we are placing many demands upon your time, but I do hope that you will think it useful and important to engage in those discussions which will inform the future direction of qualifications in this sector.

Essential Skills

We are conducting a review of Essential Skills (Wales) qualifications, commencing with a technical review of the Communications and Application of Number qualifications at levels 1 and 2. We'll be engaging with you **early in 2023** to gather your views on these qualifications.

Impact of changes to qualification policy ('defunding') in England

You will be aware that, as the UK Government rolls out the T level qualifications in England, they are 'defunding' a number of level 3 qualifications in England. Many of

you have expressed concerns about the impact this will have on the availability of level 3 qualifications in Wales. We wrote to you recently to provide reassurance that we will be working with awarding bodies to provide continuity of the qualifications offer in Wales.

The first list of qualifications to be 'defunded' in England was published last month by the UK Government. There are 43 qualifications on that list which are eligible for public funding in Wales, but only 29 of these have been awarded in Wales in the last two years.

We have conducted an analysis of the status of these qualifications (Annex 1) and have **not identified any significant risk to the offer in Wales**. Our discussions with awarding bodies active in Wales have been overwhelmingly positive and reassuring. For example, City & Guilds are already working with centres to define a future Level 3 qualification for Agriculture. Pearson have provided us with a statement on their future intent for qualifications in Wales and have invited you to attend a briefing session at lunchtime on 29 June to outline those intentions – please do try to attend if you can.

Statement from Pearson

Pearson remains committed to offering Level 3 BTEC National Qualifications in Wales. Over the last few years, we have embarked on an extensive translation programme, ensuring as we review and redevelop qualifications, they are available through the medium of Welsh.

Pearson has recently reviewed and extended our offer in Wales until August 2026. This means that centres can teach with confidence for the academic years 2022, 2023, 2024 and 2025.

Our RQF Level 3 BTEC Nationals were introduced from 2016, which means that the qualifications will enter a period of reform and review in 2026, which is part of our regular qualification lifecycle to ensure that qualifications remain relevant, fit for purpose, and allow learners to progress to their next step of higher education or employment. Pearson always develops and reviews qualifications with teachers and learners, and we encourage your staff to add their voice by registering their interest in [joining our research community](#).

Pearson is running a Level 3 briefing for senior leaders in Colleges and Schools in Wales on the June 29, 12:30 PM-1:30 PM. Please sign up here to join the [event](#).

Phase 2 Sector Reviews

We will shortly be publishing our Review which looked at the availability of qualifications in the Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Care sector. Our Sector Review for **Business, Administration and Retail (including Law and Accountancy)**

is about to commence. If you haven't already done so, we'd be grateful if you could provide us with contacts in your College with whom to discuss these qualifications.

Future engagement – Sector Groups

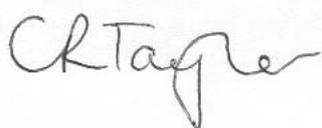
Conscious that there is such a lot going on in the world of vocational qualifications, we have reflected on the way in which we engage with you. While our sector reviews have been enormously helpful in taking an in depth look at a particular sector, we recognise that there is also a need, on an ongoing basis, to be aware of the current and future range of qualifications and to have early sight of any concerns that may be arising.

To this end, we will be establishing **sector groups** to cover each of the main occupational sectors in which FE Colleges and Work-based Learning providers are active.

We propose that these groups will be made up of **subject leads from every provider, together with a nominated Curriculum & Quality representative** and that they will meet twice a year – probably online. We will invite awarding bodies active in the area to present on their offer, and we'll invite members to flag up any actual or potential gaps in the offer, provide case studies of good or innovative practice in delivery of the qualifications, and discuss any other matters of concern. We will be in touch within the next few weeks to ask for nominations for membership of these groups.

I realise that this has become quite a long letter, but I hope it has been useful. I'd like, finally, to thank you again for all the feedback you have given to us and the ongoing dialogue and support which you have with us as we work together to ensure that qualifications in Wales are manageable for centres, engaging for learners, reliable and valid.

With all best wishes



Cassy Taylor

Director of Qualifications Policy and Reform



Annex 1: Provisional list of qualifications that overlap with waves 1 and 2 of T-levels

This document lists the qualifications included on the UK Government's Department for Education's list of level 3 qualifications that overlap with waves 1 and 2 of T Levels and will be defunded in England from August 2024.

There is an appeals process for awarding bodies if there are any qualifications that they believe do not overlap with T Levels before the final list is published in September 2022.

There are 43 level 3 qualifications on the list that are eligible for public funding in Wales which represents less than 5% of vocational qualifications available at this level in Wales.

14 of these qualifications have not been awarded for the last two years or more and 4 construction qualifications will be retired in summer 2022 in response to the reform of construction and the built environment qualifications.

The total number of certificates awarded for the qualifications on this list (1,180) accounts for less than 2% of all vocational qualification certificates (66,445) awarded in Wales in 2021.

Qualifications on this list are separated by sector and the typical final start dates (the typical date when a learner can be registered to start the qualification) are shown. We also outline the action that we've taken, or intend to take, to secure the availability of the affected qualifications.

SSA 1: Health, public services and care

QUAN /QiW	Qualification Title	Typical final start date	Certificates awarded 19/20 20/21	Actions Taken
603/7221/7 C00/4351/6	City & Guilds Level 3 Diploma in Dental Nursing	31/07/2025	No data as start date for qualification was 01/04/2021	No action currently needed as the typical final start date for this qualification is 2025 and a new, alternative qualification is available (offered by Agored Cymru) which has a typical final start date of December 2026.

SSA 4: Engineering and manufacturing technologies

QUAN /QiW	Qualification Title	Typical final start date	Certificates awarded 19/20 20/21	Actions Taken
601/5802/5 C00/0717/9	EAL Level 3 Extended Diploma in Engineering Technologies	31/12/2023	80 100	We have met regularly with EAL to discuss what impact the changes in England may have on their operations in Wales and have been reassured by their commitment to continue offering qualifications in Wales.

603/0564/2 C00/1171/3	EAL Level 3 Technical Extended Diploma in Engineering Technologies	31/12/2023	0	0	EAL have indicated that they will bring forward their review of these qualifications to 2022 before extending the typical final start dates of these qualifications. Alternative qualifications are also available.
601/7591/6 C00/0775/6	Pearson BTEC Level 3 National Foundation Diploma in Engineering	31/08/2026	0	110	11 of the 12 BTEC qualifications have been extended to August 2026. One qualification (601/7588/6) has not yet been extended. We have met regularly with Pearson, and they have indicated that the omission of this qualification from the list of extensions was an oversight, and they intend to extend the typical final start date to 2026. We will continue to engage with Pearson to discuss the options for 2026 and beyond which could include extending the end dates of qualifications, adapting qualifications to meet the needs of Wales, adopting qualifications used elsewhere, or
601/7580/1 C00/0783/2	Pearson BTEC Level 3 National Diploma in Engineering	31/08/2026	5	0	
601/7588/6 C00/0783/7	Pearson BTEC Level 3 National Extended Diploma in Engineering	31/08/2026	0	0	
601/7582/5 C00/0783/3	Pearson BTEC Level 3 National Diploma in Manufacturing Engineering	31/08/2026	0	15	
601/7589/8 C00/0783/8	Pearson BTEC Level 3 National Extended Diploma in Manufacturing Engineering	31/08/2026	0	0	
601/7583/7 C00/0783/4	Pearson BTEC Level 3 National Diploma in Mechanical Engineering	31/08/2026	0	0	
601/7590/4 C00/0783/9	Pearson BTEC Level 3 National Extended Diploma in Mechanical Engineering	31/08/2026	0	0	
603/5840/3 C00/4095/2	Pearson BTEC Level 3 Foundation Award in Advanced Manufacturing Engineering (Development Technical Knowledge)	31/08/2026	0	5	
601/9053/X C00/2955/5	Pearson BTEC Level 3 Award in Advanced Manufacturing Engineering (Development Technical Knowledge)	31/08/2026	0	65	

601/9049/8 C00/2955/3	Pearson BTEC Level 3 Certificate in Advanced Manufacturing Engineering (Development Technical Knowledge)	31/08/2026	0	50	developing new qualifications for Wales.
601/9054/1 C00/2955/6	Pearson BTEC Level 3 Diploma in Advanced Manufacturing Engineering (Development Technical Knowledge)	31/08/2026	0	0	
601/9060/7 C00/2955/8	Pearson BTEC Level 3 Extended Diploma in Advanced Manufacturing Engineering (Development Technical Knowledge)	31/08/2026	0	0	

SSA 5: Construction, planning and the built environment

QUAN /QiW	Qualification Title	Typical final start date	Certificates awarded 19/20 20/21		Actions Taken
603/1217/8 C00/1185/0	Pearson BTEC Level 3 National Diploma in Civil Engineering	31/08/2026	5	20	Pearson have extended the typical final start dates for these qualifications until 2026.
603/1216/6 C00/1184/9	Pearson BTEC Level 3 National Extended Diploma in Civil Engineering	31/08/2026	0	0	
603/0862/X C00/1228/7	Pearson BTEC Level 3 National Extended Certificate in Construction and the Built Environment	31/08/2026	30	50	We will continue to engage with Pearson to discuss the options for 2026 and beyond which could include extending the end dates of qualifications, adapting qualifications to meet the needs of Wales, adopting qualifications used elsewhere, or
603/0864/3 C00/1228/8	Pearson BTEC Level 3 National Diploma in Construction and the Built Environment	31/08/2026	20	45	
603/0861/8 C00/1228/5	Pearson BTEC Level 3 National Extended Diploma in Construction and the Built Environment	31/08/2026	5	30	

603/1218/X C00/1182/6	Pearson BTEC Level 3 National Diploma in Building Services Engineering	31/08/2026	0	0	developing new qualifications for Wales.
603/1219/1 C00/1182/5	Pearson BTEC Level 3 National Extended Diploma in Building Services Engineering	31/08/2026	0	0	
601/2500/7 C00/0619/1	Pearson Level 3 NVQ Diploma in Construction Contracting Operations	31/12/2023	10	30	We have met with Pearson, and they have indicated that they intend to extend the typical final start date for this qualification.
601/7236/8 C00/0739/2	City & Guilds Level 3 Advanced Technical Diploma in Bricklaying (450)	30/06/2022	0	0	City & Guilds have made the decision to withdraw these qualifications in Wales as there has been no take-up over the past two years and the new construction qualifications will cover these subjects. This decision has not been made as a result of the changes to qualifications policy in England.
601/7417/1 C00/0740/9	City & Guilds Level 3 Advanced Technical Diploma in Plastering (450)	31/08/2022	0	0	
601/7418/3 C00/0740/6	City & Guilds Level 3 Advanced Technical Diploma in Site Carpentry (450)	31/08/2022	0	0	
601/7419/5 C00/0740/7	City & Guilds Level 3 Advanced Technical Diploma in Architectural Joinery (450)	31/08/2022	0	0	

SSA 6: Information and communication technology

QUAN /QiW	Qualification Title	Typical final start date	Certificates awarded		Actions Taken
			19/20	20/21	
500/9150/5 C00/0252/8	Pearson BTEC Level 3 Diploma in IT (QCF)	31/08/2023	25	20	These are the legacy QCF qualifications, and we have met regularly with Pearson who have told us that these qualifications have been directly replaced with the new BTEC Level 3 in IT qualifications which are more current and appropriate for learners in Wales.
500/9149/9 C00/0252/9	Pearson BTEC Level 3 Extended Diploma in IT (QCF)	31/08/2023	270	160	
501/1436/0 C00/0259/2	Pearson BTEC Level 3 Certificate in ICT Systems and Principles	31/12/2024	55	40	Pearson have extended these qualifications until 2024 and when we met with them, they told us that qualifications currently used on apprenticeship frameworks will continue to be offered in Wales. We will continue to work with them to ensure that these qualifications, or suitable alternatives, continue to be available in Wales.
501/1435/9 C00/0259/3	Pearson BTEC Level 3 Diploma in ICT Systems and Principles	31/12/2024	<4	10	
501/1291/0 C00/0263/3	Pearson BTEC Level 3 Diploma in Professional Competence for IT and Telecoms Professionals	31/12/2024	60	50	
500/3476/5 C00/0106/4	City & Guilds Level 3 Certificate in ICT Systems and Principles	31/08/2026	5	25	City & Guilds have extended most Level 3 qualification to 2026.

501/0277/1 C00/0221/7	City & Guilds Level 3 Diploma in ICT Systems and Principles for IT Professionals	31/08/2026	5	5	Alternative qualifications are also available, and the apprenticeship framework is covered by the Pearson qualifications listed above.
501/1585/6 C00/0286/4	City & Guilds Level 3 Diploma in ICT Systems Support	31/08/2026	5	10	
501/1788/9 C00/0295/8	City & Guilds Level 3 Diploma in ICT Professional Competence	31/12/2023	10	30	
500/6688/2 C00/0106/8	City & Guilds Level 3 Diploma for IT Users (ITQ)	31/12/2023	25	25	
601/7099/2 C00/0787/2	OCR Level 3 Cambridge Technical Introductory Diploma in IT	31/12/2023	10	10	<p>We have met with OCR and they will be providing advice on alternatives to this qualification. OCR currently have a direct replacement Level 3 Cambridge Technical Introductory Diploma in IT (QCF) designated in Wales.</p> <p>Alternative qualifications are also offered by other awarding bodies.</p>

SSA 13: Education and training

QUAN /QiW	Qualification Title	Typical final start date	Certificates awarded 19/20 20/21		Actions Taken
501/1394/X C00/0288/5	City & Guilds Level 3 Diploma in Specialist Support for Teaching and Learning in Schools	31/08/2022	110	105	We have requested that City & Guilds extend the typical final start date of this qualification and they have started this process. They are currently gathering letters of support from centres in order to extend this qualification. We expect this qualification to be extended over the summer.
501/1208/9 C00/0355/3	Pearson Level 3 Diploma in Specialist Support for Teaching and Learning in Schools	31/12/2023	80	75	<p>We have met with Pearson, and they have indicated that they will be extending the typical final start date of this qualification.</p> <p>We will continue to engage with Pearson to discuss the options for 2026 and beyond which could include extending the end dates of qualifications, adapting qualifications to meet the needs of Wales, adopting qualifications used elsewhere, or developing new qualifications for Wales.</p>

603/2495/8 C00/1215/5	NCFE CACHE Level 3 Award in Supporting Teaching and Learning	31/12/2022	<4	30	We have met with NCFE, and they have indicated that they will be extending the typical final start date of these qualifications. NCFE are currently gathering support letters from centres and will be extending in July 2022.
603/2498/3 C00/1215/6	NCFE CACHE Level 3 Certificate in Supporting Teaching and Learning	31/12/2022	75	60	
603/2496/X C00/1215/7	NCFE CACHE Level 3 Diploma in Supporting Teaching and Learning	31/12/2022	15	5	