



Keeping Policy Statements Under Review

July 2021



Version Control and Review

This first version of Qualifications Wales' **Keeping Policy Statements Under Review** was approved on 1 July 2021 and subsequently published on 14 July 2021.

We keep our policies under review and any feedback on this policy statement is welcomed at any time. Please send any comments to policy@qualificationswales.org

This policy statement is also available in [Welsh](#).

Introduction

1. We will keep our regulatory policy statements required by the Qualifications Wales Act 2015 (“the Act”) under review. **Section 47 (4) and (5)** of the Act states that Qualifications Wales must:
 - (4) keep the statements prepared under this section under review, and if it considers it appropriate in consequence of a review, prepare revised statements; and
 - (5) publish any statement or revised statement prepared under this section (47).

Policy scope

2. The Act requires us to prepare statements of our policy on specific topics and to keep these statements under review. This document is about how we keep the following policy statements under review:
 - Recognition Policy
 - Consultation Policy
 - Priority Qualifications List and Restricted Priority Qualifications Policy
 - Designation Policy
 - Taking Action When Things go Wrong Policy
 - Provision of Services Policy
 - Conducting reviews into qualifications and the qualification system
 - Monetary Penalty Policy
 - Fee-capping Policy
 - Transfer Conditions Policy
3. In addition to our remit to keep policy statements under review as covered by the Act, we will also work with relevant workstreams to keep other policy statements under review, including those contained within our Regulatory Documents List.

Purpose of policy reviews

3. By reviewing regulatory **policies**¹ we aim to ensure that they remain up to date, relevant, useful, and fit for purpose.

¹ When we say ‘policies’, we mean this to cover reviews of all regulatory documents – policies, procedures, conditions and criteria included in the Regulatory Documents List as well as other regulatory documents.

Principles of conducting reviews

4. When conducting reviews of regulatory policies, we will do so in accordance with the principal aims set out in the Qualifications Wales Act 2015, which are:
 - (a) ensuring that qualifications, and the Welsh qualification system, are effective for meeting the reasonable needs of learners in Wales; and
 - (b) promoting public confidence in qualifications and in the Welsh qualification system.
5. We will also have due regard to the eight matters in the Act.
6. When reviewing regulatory policies, we will also consider the national policy context in which we are operating and relevant legislation such as the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011, Equalities law, Data Protection laws and the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.
7. When reviewing a policy, we will normally consider the following:
 - (a) recent changes or developments including relevant strategies, approaches and legislative updates;
 - (b) the policy's currency and to what extent it remains relevant and up to date;
 - (c) how the policy has been implemented since last published and any lessons learned;
 - (d) the effectiveness of the policy in meeting its intended aims;
 - (e) ensure that the policy continues to meet our principal aims, regulatory outcomes and principles of good regulation e.g. transparent, accountable, proportionate, consistent and targeted; and
 - (f) the impact of regulatory policies on awarding bodies, learners and other stakeholders.
9. There will also usually be policy-specific considerations to review which will depend on the nature and context of the document being reviewed.

10. When reviewing a policy, we might seek feedback from users of the policy. These could be internal or external. Examples include the following, but are not intended to be exhaustive:

- (a) the clarity, accuracy and completeness of the policy;
- (b) stakeholders' awareness and understanding of the policy; and
- (c) any changes that users of the policy believe would add value to the policy.

Types of amendments

11. There are many different reasons why a policy may need to be amended. Here are examples:

- (a) **Scheduled** - amendments may stem from a scheduled and planned review of a policy and this may involve relatively straight forward updates and changes including presentational changes required to maintain the currency and effectiveness of the policy. In some instances, a review may conclude that no significant or any changes are made.
- (b) **Non-scheduled** – there may be instances that trigger the need to review a policy that was not scheduled or foreseen. As a result, the nature and scale of the amendments required will depend on the given circumstances.
- (c) **Consequential** – Making amendments to one regulatory document can have implications for other related documents and therefore as a consequence of carrying out a review of one policy, we can make consequential amendments to other regulatory policy documents.
- (d) **Project-based** – Based upon changes to qualifications or the qualification system that arise due to consultations, or qualification reforms, or evolving regulatory approaches, we need to make amendments to regulatory policies to ensure qualifications and the Welsh qualification system continue to be effective in meeting the reasonable needs of learners.

12. Other circumstances that we foresee may trigger a policy review include but are not limited to the following:

- (a) feedback from users of the policy e.g., business need, identification of gaps;
- (b) intelligence, research or monitoring information;

- (c) outcomes of a consultation;
- (d) changes/updates to legislation; and
- (e) introduction of extraordinary or temporary regulatory arrangements.

Policy review cycle

13. We keep our policies under review and welcome feedback on them at any time. We encourage feedback within the documents themselves and include a Version History section to signal to users of the policies when they were created and reviewed.
14. We maintain an administrative tool to track when policies were published and when they are next due for review.
15. We prepare a plan each year to identify the policies we wish to review within that cycle. Our planning takes into account the nature of the document, the landscape in which we are operating and the resources available to us.
16. The way we review each policy and the time it will take, will depend on the nature of that particular regulatory document and what is required to maintain its effectiveness. The following provides an indication of our approach to scheduling policies for review:

Policy type	Review period	Rationale for review
New policy documents	One year after its effective date	Version 1 of the policy is checked if fit for purpose
Regulatory Policies	Every 3 – 5 years	Based on risk, priority and consequential amendments.
Conditions	Every 5 years or as and when required	Conditions set out the main requirements on an awarding body and therefore need to be kept under review as well as have time to embed to promote confidence in the system. As part of the review, we may take the view that no changes are needed.
Procedures	Every 3 years normally (but more frequently where required e.g., specific procedures are in place re summer 2021)	Three years allows time for procedures to be operationalised and to embed.

17. This is indicative only and it may be necessary to revise regulatory policies as circumstances arise. Changes between policy review periods will be dependent on the timings of reviews, available resources and the significance of the changes. There may also be circumstances where policies are withdrawn or come to the end of their shelf life prior to their scheduled review period.

Methods for reviewing policies

18. We employ a range of methods when reviewing a policy, and our approach will depend on a range of factors e.g., the circumstances for undertaking the review, the type of policy, the time frame and budget available. Possible methods for reviewing policies include, but are not limited to the following:

- (a) literature reviews or documentary analysis;
- (b) survey or questionnaire;
- (c) conference, seminars, webinars and workshops;
- (d) interviews, meetings, discussions with individuals or a group or in a board/committee;
- (e) Task and Finish or working groups;
- (f) commissioning subject experts or consultants;
- (g) best practice or other comparison or benchmarking work; and/or
- (h) Consultation.

Internal approval

19. Where significant enough changes are made to regulatory policy documents following review, they are presented to the appropriate Qualifications Wales Board / committee (if required) for approval, prior to publication in line with our Scheme of Delegation.

Regulatory Impact Assessment

20. When we propose substantive changes to our regulatory framework or rules, or changes to regulatory policies that are likely to shape future provision or are likely to have significant financial impacts on awarding bodies then we will complete a regulatory impact assessment in line with our guidance.