Qualifications for the future
Making changes to qualifications for young people in Wales

Please tell us what you think by 7th February 2020

This document was written by Qualifications Wales. It is an easy read version of their document called: Qualified for the future.

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How to use this document

This is an easy read version. The words are easy to read and understand.

You may need support to read and understand this document. Ask someone you know to help you.

Words in **bold blue writing** may be hard to understand. They have been explained in a box below the word.

If the hard word is used again it is in **normal blue writing**. You can check what all the words in blue mean on page 23.

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This document was made into easy read by **Easy Read Wales** using **Photosymbols**.
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Introduction

We are Qualifications Wales. Our job is to:

- Choose the qualifications that are available to young people in Wales.

You get a qualification when you pass an exam or course. It means you have learned a set of skills and passed a test.

- Check that the people making qualifications are doing it right.

We are looking at the qualifications 16 year olds take in Wales. And thinking about how we can make them better.

This document is about our ideas to make the qualifications better.
We also want to know what you think. So we can get the job done right.

We really want to hear from:

- Learners.
- Parents and carers.
- Schools, colleges and universities.
- Employers.
- Councils.
- The people who make qualifications.

This is an important chance to make education better for young people in Wales.

Please tell us what you think. Please read this document and then fill out the response form by 5pm on Friday 7th February 2020.
The new curriculum for Wales

Welsh Government is changing the **curriculum**.

The *curriculum* is a plan for what schools teach in Wales.

The new *curriculum* for Wales is based on **4 main goals**. The **4 goals** are to help children and young people:

1. Have big dreams and want to learn and do better.

2. Be creative and hardworking.

3. Know why it is important to take part in their community and care for the world.

4. Be healthy and confident.
What qualifications are like now

There are lots of qualifications for 16 year olds to choose from. It can be confusing to know which ones they should take.

This year, schools that are funded by the government can choose from over 16 hundred qualifications for their learners.

Many of these qualifications are:

- Almost the same.
- Not made especially for learners in Wales.
- Not available in Welsh.

Because there are so many qualifications, most of them are not even being taken.
Qualifications in the future

We want 16 year olds in Wales to get qualifications that give them the best chance to have a good future.

We want qualifications to:

- Be known and valued in Wales, in the UK and around the world.

- Give learners the choice to learn in Welsh and English.

- Help learners to have big dreams and to believe in themselves.

- Get learners ready for work and future study.
• Show off what learners can do.

• Make the most of **digital technology**.

**Digital technology** is anything to do with computers. Like the internet, mobile phones, tablets and cameras.
Why should 16 year olds take qualifications?

Some people wonder if 16 year olds should take exams and get qualifications.

We believe it is important to offer qualifications to 16 year olds because:

▪ In Wales you can leave school at 16. This means that some 16 year olds will not carry on studying. And qualifications will help them to get a job.

▪ 16 year olds need to make important decisions about their life. Studying for qualifications can help them to find out what they like. And what they are good at.

▪ Sometimes you need a qualification before you can study at a higher level. We want 16 year olds to have the chance to carry on studying if they want to.

▪ Other parts of the UK offer qualifications to 16 year olds. We do not want young people in Wales to have fewer chances than others.
Our ideas for qualifications

1. Qualifications should support the new curriculum

We want qualifications for 16 year olds to support the new curriculum’s 4 main goals.

Qualifications must:

- Support the 4 main goals of the new curriculum.
- Help teachers and young people have a good experience in the classroom.
- Make good use of digital technology.
2. Qualifications in Welsh and English

We believe all qualifications in Wales should be available in Welsh and English.

This supports Welsh Government’s plan to have 1 million people speaking Welsh by 2050.

Some qualifications are for the whole of the UK. But we still think they should be offered in Welsh.

We give money to the people who make qualifications. To help them make their qualifications in Welsh.
But over half of all qualifications are still not available in Welsh.

We want to make our rules stronger. So that more qualifications will be available in Welsh.

We could still give money to the people who make qualifications to help them do this.

We know that sometimes it will not be right to take a qualification away just because it is not available in Welsh.

But we will try to make it easier for all qualifications to be offered in Welsh.
3. Qualifications should help all young people to do well

We know that everybody is different. Some people learn quickly. And some people need more time or more support.

Everybody should have the chance to do well at school and to get qualifications.

Qualifications at all levels should:

- Help learners be confident and enjoy learning.
- Get learners to try new things and be creative.
- Clearly show what a learner can do.

- Help learners to make decisions about what they want to do next.

We think the people who make qualifications should have to prove that their tests will help all learners do well. They should say:

- What the main aim of the qualification is.

- How the qualification will help learners carry on studying. Or get a job.

- How they will check how well learners do.
4. We should have new GCSE qualifications for 16 year olds in Wales

We think GCSE qualifications should be updated to support the new curriculum.

For example we could look at changing the grades we use now for GCSEs.

The grades we use now may not work for children who learn more slowly. This may leave them feeling less valued.

We also know that some teachers are not happy with some parts of the GCSE qualifications.

We are looking into what the problems are. And how we can make them better.
We have thought about making a whole new set of qualifications for learners in Wales.

But we think we should carry on offering GCSEs to 16 year olds because:

- Colleges, universities and employers around the world know about GCSEs and trust them.
- GCSEs can change. We can change what learners learn. And the way we check how well they are doing.
- GCSEs are already well set up in schools. This will be good for schools when they are busy putting the new curriculum into place.
A problem with keeping GCSEs might be that people will think nothing has changed. And carry on as normal.

We need people to know that GCSEs will be different to meet the goals of the new curriculum.

We will also make sure GCSEs in Wales are still as good as they are in the rest of the UK.
5. We should have a new qualification that helps learners to get wider skills

The new **curriculum** for Wales says it is very important for learners to get **wider skills**.

**Wider skills** are things that will help you in your life at school and outside of school. Like:

- How to solve real life problems.

- How to make plans and be organised.

- How to come up with new ideas.

- How to make the most of your talents.
Right now nearly all 16 year old learners in Wales study for the **Skills Challenge Certificate**.

The **Skills Challenge Certificate** gives learners the chance to learn **wider skills** to help them in life.

Learners and teachers told us they thought the **Skills Challenge Certificate** was useful.

The **Skills Challenge Certificate** gives schools and learners choices about what they study.
There are good things and bad things about having a qualification just for wider skills.

For example it might mean that other subjects do not teach any wider skills. It would be good to teach wider skills in many of the subjects that learners take.

But a qualification for wider skills means that everybody gets the chance to learn these skills. No matter what subjects they take.

We think we should keep the Skills Challenge Certificate and update it to support the new curriculum.
Our next steps

This is the first step to making qualifications better for learners in Wales.

We will think about all the responses to this consultation and use them to make our ideas better.

We will speak to people who are interested in education. And we will look at other people’s research about qualifications.

Then we will look at what we will need to do to make our ideas happen.

Your views are very important to us. Please tell us what you think in the response form.

Thank you.
Curriculum
The curriculum is a plan for what schools teach in Wales.

Digital technology
Digital technology is anything to do with computers. Like the internet, mobile phones, tablets and cameras.

Qualifications
You get a qualification when you pass an exam or course. It means you have learned a set of skills and passed a test.

The Skills Challenge Certificate
The Skills Challenge Certificate is a course. It gives learners the chance to learn skills that will help them in their life outside of school.

Wider Skills
Wider Skills are things that will help you in your life at school and outside of school.