Regulatory Framework and Approach

February 2018
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1. Introduction

Purpose of this document
The purpose of this document is to summarise our current framework and approach to the regulation of awarding bodies and the non-degree qualifications they develop and deliver in Wales. We have provided links to other, related documents which provide further detail about specific areas referred to in this document. These are also listed at Annex A – References.

A glossary is included at Annex B which includes definitions of all key terms included in this document.

We welcome feedback on this document. Please send any comments to policy@qualificationswales.org.

Who we are
Qualifications Wales is the regulator of non-degree qualifications for Wales. We were established in August 2015 through the Qualifications Wales Act 2015, and assumed our duties and powers in September of that year.

The Act gives us two Principal Aims, and therefore our mission:

- Ensuring that qualifications, and the Welsh qualification system, are effective for meeting the reasonable needs of learners in Wales; and
- Promoting public confidence in qualifications and in the Welsh qualification system.

In considering what is appropriate to achieve these Principal Aims, we take the following eight matters into account:

- Sustainable growth in the Welsh economy;
- The Welsh language;
- The range and nature of qualifications and their assessment arrangements;
- Employers, Higher Education institutions and other professionals within the education and training sector;
- Knowledge, skills and understanding – currency and best practice;
- How challenging Welsh qualifications are when compared to those in Europe and elsewhere;
- Efficiency and value for money; and
- The roles and responsibilities of people and organisations involved in the qualification system.
What we regulate
We are the regulator of recognised awarding bodies and non-degree qualifications in Wales. We regulate qualifications that are developed and delivered by the awarding bodies that we recognise. When recognised, an awarding body must comply with the rules that we set (see Section 3).

How we regulate
Our regulatory approach is guided by the five principles of good regulation:\(^1\):

Transparency
Our regulation should be simple and user-friendly, and – by being as open as possible about our processes and with our records – we should ensure that people understand the decisions we have made and why.

Accountability
We should be able to justify all of our decisions, and explain them under public scrutiny. Through legislation, we are established as an independent regulator for Wales. We operate at arm’s length from Welsh Government, and each year we are scrutinised on behalf of the public by the National Assembly for Wales’ Committee for Children, Young People and Education.

We also produce an annual report\(^2\) which details how we have fulfilled our functions, and how we plan to carry them out in the future.

Proportionality
We only intervene when necessary. Any remedies that we propose should be appropriate to the risk posed. We should identify any costs resulting from our decisions, and keep these to a minimum. We carry out regulatory impact assessments for any significant regulatory decisions.

Consistency
We make sure that our rules and conditions are joined up and implemented fairly, so that we give stability and certainty to the organisations that we regulate.

Targeting
By making sure that our regulatory activities focus on addressing the problem, and by setting clear, unambiguous targets, we minimise any unintended consequences.

We have open communication channels with other qualifications regulators across the UK and work collaboratively where appropriate to do so. We have Memorandums of Understanding to support effective working arrangements between regulators. These set out at a high level our shared commitment to work together wherever possible to deliver a workable system of regulation. Good working relationships help us to manage potential regulatory burden and avoid unnecessary duplication.

How we work
Our work is focused on four main areas of activity:

Recognition, Approval and Designation
We recognise awarding bodies that meet specified criteria. We approve and designate qualifications that awarding bodies wish to be eligible for funding, for learners under the age of 19 in Wales.

Monitoring and Compliance
We monitor awarding bodies to check that they continue to meet our requirements and we review qualifications to assess their fitness for purpose. We oversee the setting and maintenance of standards for qualifications, working with other qualifications regulators to ensure consistency across the UK.

Development and Commissioning
Where necessary, we oversee the design and development of new qualifications and we commission awarding bodies to develop new qualifications for Wales.

Research
We undertake research into the qualification system and into specific areas of interest and relevance so that we can make evidence-based decisions.

Our work is underpinned by our values:

- **Collaborative** in the way that we work
- **Thoughtful** in the approaches we take
- **Positive** in our outlook
- **Learning** from experience and others

Further information about the structure of the organisation can be found in our Annual Report³.

What we want to achieve

Our purpose is met when regulated qualifications taken in Wales are trusted and valued by learners, employers and education providers and are recognised throughout the UK and internationally.

We will know when we have achieved our overarching vision, when we have achieved the following outcomes:

- Regulated qualifications and the qualification system are responsive to changing needs and circumstances, particularly in regard to the long-term benefit of Wales and its students;
- Regulated qualifications in Wales are inclusive and promote equality of opportunity for students;
- Regulated qualifications taken by students in Wales are valid, reliable and awarded to an appropriate standard;
- Appropriate governance is in place to ensure accountability and regulatory compliance;
- Information reasonably required to deliver consistent and quality-assured regulated qualifications is available and accessible; and
- Regulation is proportionate, transparent, consistent and targeted, to support a qualification system that is sustainable in the long term.

We have chosen to publish these Regulatory Outcomes in order to show what we want to achieve and how we will be able to illustrate when we have achieved that. We have consulted on them, and they are shared with the awarding bodies that we regulate.

The need to meet these outcomes informs our strategic priorities and operational activity.

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2. The Framework and Approach

The following section outlines the framework and approach we apply to the qualifications that we regulate. It also outlines our general approach to regulation. More detailed information about our regulation of qualifications can be found in our strategic plans for general qualifications and vocational qualifications, and these should be read alongside this document.

The framework consists of the regulatory documentation and the rules that we regulate against.

The approach relates to the methods, tools and styles we adopt in implementing the framework.

The Framework

We currently use a rules-based regulatory framework with the following features:

- Awarding bodies seek recognition by meeting certain criteria set by us;
- An awarding body’s recognition is subject to compliance with our Standard Conditions of Recognition ("Conditions of Recognition")\(^5\). This is our principal regulatory document, and is supported by additional regulatory documents which are outlined in the diagram below;
- We monitor compliance against our Conditions of Recognition; and
- We use our enforcement powers when awarding bodies fail to comply with our Conditions of Recognition.
- Where appropriate, we intervene to ensure that the system meets the needs of learners.

The following documents all have regulatory status and can be found in our published Regulatory Documents List; they have been categorised here for ease of reference, but are in no priority order:

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\(^5\) The term "Standard Conditions of Recognition" may also include special and additional conditions of recognition.
Conditions
- Including: Standard Conditions of Recognition, Additional
  Standard Conditions of Recognition, Special Conditions of
  Recognition, Additional Certificate Requirements, Qualification
  and Component Levels.

Criteria
- Including: Criteria for Recognition, Approval Criteria, Criteria for
designating a qualification, Conditions of approval and further
provisions about designation, GCSE/GCE qualifications principles,
GCSE/GCE subject principles, Welsh Bacc/Essential Skills Design.

Procedures
- Including: Rules about Applications for Awarding Body Recognition,
  Rules about Applications for Approval and Designation of
  Qualifications, Exam Procedures Review Service.

Policies
- Including: Taking Action When Things Go Wrong, Complaints about
  Awarding Bodies, Regulatory Whistleblowing Policy, Fee Capping
  Policy, Monetary Penalties Policy, Recognition Policy, Restriction
  Policy, Regulatory Welsh-medium and Bilingual qualifications Policy.
Regulatory approach
To implement our framework, we use a number of approaches to regulation. These include the following:
3. The Process of Regulating Qualifications in Wales

Recognised awarding bodies
In order to offer regulated qualifications in Wales an awarding body must be ‘recognised’ by us. Before it can be recognised, an awarding body must demonstrate compliance against our recognition criteria, and provide evidence that it has the appropriate resources, systems and arrangements in place to design, deliver and award qualifications in Wales in compliance with our Conditions of Recognition. Our Recognition Policy outlines the way in which we consider whether or not to recognise an awarding body. Once it is recognised, an awarding body must be compliant with our regulatory requirements, including the Conditions of Recognition.

Where an awarding body does not fully meet the recognition criteria we may still exceptionally decide to recognise that awarding body where there is an appropriate basis for doing so. For example, where all of the recognition criteria may not be relevant. Unsuccessful applicants will be provided with the reasons for refusal of recognition.

Recognised awarding bodies⁶ may surrender part of their recognition by informing us of qualifications, or descriptions of qualifications, that they would like to offer as unregulated qualifications. In such cases, the unregulated qualifications cannot carry our logo on certificates issued to learners.

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⁶ From this point in the document references to “awarding bodies” will be to recognised awarding bodies
Regulated qualifications

The regulatory system in Wales operates on an opt-out basis. All qualifications offered by an awarding body are regulated unless:

- they have been exempted from regulation when we were established;
- recognition for a qualification or qualification type has subsequently been surrendered by the awarding body; or
- we have published Criteria for Recognition for particular descriptions of qualifications and the awarding body has not applied for this recognition.

In practice, this means that all qualifications are regulated and therefore subject to our Conditions of Recognition unless Qualifications Wales has been informed by awarding bodies that specific qualifications should be excluded. This is referred to in more detail in our Recognition Policy.
There are additional requirements for certain types of qualifications e.g. Additional Standard Conditions of Recognition, contractual requirements and special conditions of recognition.

The awarding body must ensure ongoing compliance with our Conditions of Recognition. Regulation of these qualifications provides protection to learners.

**Regulated Qualifications** are defined as: All non-degree qualifications (whether approved, designated or other regulated) that are offered for award by an awarding body recognised by Qualifications Wales (unless either an awarding body has surrendered its recognition in respect of that qualification, or if an awarding body had excluded that qualification from the scope of its recognition by notifying Welsh Government prior to 21 September 2015)

Regulated Qualifications are categorised as approved, designated or other regulated.

**Approved Qualifications** are defined as: Regulated qualifications eligible for use on publicly funded programmes of learning that are approved under Part 4 of the Qualifications Wales Act 2015, awarded in Wales and that have met approval criteria. Approved qualifications will have been allocated an identified approval number.

**Designated Qualifications** are defined as: Regulated qualifications that are designated as eligible for use on publicly funded programmes of learning for learners under the age of 19, as defined under section 29 of the Qualifications Wales Act 2015.

**Other regulated qualifications** are those qualifications awarded in Wales by recognised awarding bodies, which have not been designated or approved by Qualifications Wales, and which awarding bodies have not surrendered from the scope of their recognition.

Our regulatory activity may differ depending on the category of qualification.

**All** regulated qualifications:
- must comply with our Conditions of Recognition and other regulatory requirements as outlined in our Regulatory Documents List;
- may be included in vocational qualifications sectoral reviews and our annual qualifications monitoring programme (see pages 14 and 15 for further details);
- may be subject to monitoring activity as a result of event notifications or complaints received; and
- are treated with our Principal Aims in mind (as outlined on page 3); to ensure that they are effective for meeting the reasonable needs of learners in Wales.
and to promote public confidence in those qualifications and the Welsh qualification system.

Additionally, Designated qualifications:

- must meet requirements that determine:
  - whether there is evidence of substantiated demand for the qualification from an identified cohort of candidates in Wales;
  - whether there is evidence that the qualification is relevant, where applicable, in a Welsh context;
  - whether there is evidence that the qualification is appropriate for the age ranges selected; and
  - whether there is evidence of support from relevant professional bodies, subject representatives or industry representatives for the qualification to be designated in Wales.

Designated qualifications may be regulated alongside other UK qualifications regulators, though we may place additional regulatory requirements when they are offered in Wales.

These additional criteria must be met because designated qualifications are likely to be publicly funded. The data gathered as part of these checks is used by us to inform a decision whether to designate a qualification or not. In setting our requirements for designation we will be mindful of relevant Welsh Government funding policies. Welsh Government and other public funders use our decision to determine whether the qualification will receive public funding.

We do not designate qualifications that are the same or similar to approved qualifications.

Approved qualifications:

- are not regulated by other qualifications regulators;
- are subject to approval criteria;
- are designed to meet the specific needs of learners in Wales;
- are available in both English and Welsh. The only exception is where the assessment is testing the learner’s skills in a specific language such as GCSE Welsh Language or GCSE English Language;
- are specifically targeted as part of an annual qualifications monitoring programme. Through this monitoring activity we make sure that they are awarded at the right standard to give learners, and others, confidence in the outcomes; and

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7 Our [Priority Qualifications List policy](#) explains how the Priority Qualifications List is used in considering qualifications for approval.
may be restricted to avoid inconsistencies between different forms of the same qualification and to enable us to make a choice between different awarding bodies or between different forms of qualification. These are called Restricted Priority Qualifications.

Given the significance of approved qualifications in Wales and the fact that we are the only regulator of these qualifications, we scrutinise them closely and are proactive in the identification of risks for these qualifications. Our resources and regulatory activity are normally more focused on approved qualifications.

**Monitoring and compliance**

Awarding bodies are responsible for the quality of their qualifications and delivery activities with ourselves, as the regulator, holding them to account. We monitor awarding bodies’ compliance with our *Conditions of Recognition* as well as any special conditions of recognition that may also apply to specific awarding bodies and/or qualifications.

We are committed to monitoring in a transparent, consistent and proportionate way. We use a range of monitoring tools to ensure that awarding bodies are compliant with our *Conditions of Recognition*. Our monitoring activities are targeted and focused principally but not exclusively on risk. We consider a range of risk factors in our monitoring planning to identify awarding bodies, regulated qualifications or areas of the qualification system which pose the greatest risk to the secure delivery and award of qualifications to learners in Wales and may undermine public confidence in qualifications.

Monitoring and compliance of awarding bodies and qualifications covers a wide range of activities. These include:

- **Compliance activities**: these are to ensure that awarding bodies remain compliant with our *Conditions of Recognition*. An example of this is that all awarding bodies are required to submit a statement of compliance to us on an annual basis. We use the information and evidence collected from the statements of compliance, alongside other information and evidence, to monitor awarding bodies’ compliance with our *Conditions of Recognition*;
- **Monitoring**: each year we agree and carry out a programme of monitoring activities of regulated qualifications. Where shortcomings are identified during our monitoring activities we will act to ensure that the awarding body takes appropriate steps to implement the necessary improvements;
- **Maintenance of standards**: we work closely with awarding bodies and, where relevant, other qualifications regulators to ensure that appropriate standards are set and maintained for qualifications. We monitor GCSEs, AS and A levels.
and the Welsh Baccalaureate particularly closely given that they are designed specifically for learners in Wales; and

- **Investigation of complaints and/or whistleblowing:** we receive and act on complaints and/or whistleblowing about awarding bodies or about qualifications offered by an awarding body. Our [Complaints About Awarding Bodies](#) and [Regulatory Whistleblowing](#) policies details the types of complaints and/or whistleblowing that we consider, who can make such complaints and/or whistleblowing and the process for doing so.

- **Managing incidents reported by awarding bodies:** We require awarding bodies to notify us of any events which may have an adverse effect on qualifications and/or the Welsh qualification system (see [Regulatory Incident Management Policy](#)).

We also exercise our functions in relation to qualifications and the qualification system by carrying out the following types of reviews:

- **Sector reviews:** we undertake reviews which investigate the range and quality of the qualifications within a specific sector. A programme of vocational qualification monitoring sits alongside the programme of sector reviews. These focus on qualifications and qualification groups that are not targeted by the sector reviews. This is outlined in further detail in our [strategic plan for vocational qualifications](#);

- **Thematic reviews:** we undertake reviews of cross-cutting issues of interest to us and/or brought to our attention by stakeholders which may result in recommended action such as changes to a particular qualification’s structure and/or assessment arrangements, or can inform future monitoring activities in particular areas. This is outlined in further detail in our [Policy Statement on Conducting Reviews of Qualifications and the Qualification system](#);

**Enforcement**

Where appropriate we will use our enforcement powers in order to prevent a reoccurrence of a problem and put matters right. Enforcement powers available to us are:

- to agree an action plan proposed by an awarding body;
- to accept a formal undertaking from the awarding body;
- to communicate an issue publicly;
- to direct the awarding body to take a particular action or to achieve a particular outcome;
- to impose additional requirements, as special conditions of recognition, on an awarding body; and
- to remove the awarding body’s recognition.
As outlined in our *Taking Action When Things Go Wrong* policy we will aim to use our enforcement powers in a proportionate, transparent and targeted way to achieve compliance by an awarding body where problems have occurred and to encourage compliance by other bodies.
4. Engagement, Communication and Collaboration

We are outward-looking, so engage, communicate and collaborate to strengthen our ability to promote public confidence in the Welsh qualification system, and to meet the needs of learners in Wales.

We are committed to ensuring that we:

- invite, listen and respond to the views of learners. Learners are the end beneficiaries of our work and so, where possible, we will seek their views to help shape our work;
- listen and respond to stakeholder feedback, views and concerns appropriately.
- make regulatory decisions and consult with stakeholders in a way which is proportionate to the potential impact of the regulatory action;
- conduct consultations in a transparent and meaningful manner;
- take a collaborative approach to our role as a regulator and will draw on the knowledge and expertise of relevant stakeholders as appropriate;
- seek to establish and maintain effective relationships with key stakeholders;
- produce clear, informative, targeted and timely communications; we review the impact of our communications and seek to find ways to improve our approach;
- work with other regulators wherever possible, being mindful of the impact on awarding bodies that are regulated by more than one regulator;
- carry out regulatory impact assessments as appropriate to assess the costs, benefits and risks associated with a policy or a course of action;
5. How we support the qualification system

Our regulatory responsibilities give us oversight of the Welsh qualification system. The Qualifications Wales Bill Explanatory Memorandum states:

Qualifications Wales should develop a new approach to regulation, which should be supportive and collaborative, aiming for continuous improvement of quality. Key partners should be involved in the development of qualifications, working together towards common aims, and avoiding mechanistic processes that do not add value. This would allow Wales to pursue its own direction in terms of the types of qualifications that are delivered to learners in Wales and to ensure that all qualifications are consistently and fairly delivered and awarded across Wales.

We have put a number of tools in place to support the system. For example, we:

- Have a regionally based Centre Support Team which maintains close relationships with centre staff. Centres are responsible for ensuring that assessments and examinations are planned and timetabled, for entering candidates, and for arranging the logistics to make sure that examinations take place smoothly and securely. Through the Centre Support Team, we can provide clear information and practical face-to-face advice;
- Provide grants, as resources allow, where a positive intervention is required to support qualifications and/or the Welsh qualification system. For example, we may issue grants to support the introduction of new qualifications or to support the production of Welsh-medium assessments for learners;
- Commission and undertake research activities into a range of relevant areas;
- Periodically review the data contained within QiW to ensure it remains current and accurate; and
- Use a variety of communication channels to involve stakeholders in our work. For example, we regularly publish a newsletter for awarding bodies which provides a round-up of news and useful information to keep awarding bodies up to date with our activities.
Annex A - References

Hyperlinks to all the documents referred to within this document can be found below.

Qualifications Wales Act 2015:

Qualifications Wales Explanatory Memorandum:

Qualifications Wales Annual Report 2017:

Regulatory Documents List:
http://qualificationswales.org/english/publications/regulatory-document-list

Standard Conditions of Recognition:

Additional Standard Conditions of Recognition for GCSE / GCE qualifications:

Approval criteria and Conditions of Approval

General Qualifications Strategic Plan:

Vocational Qualifications Strategy:
http://qualificationswales.org/english/publications/040117-vq-strategy/

Priority Qualifications List and Forward Look:
http://qualificationswales.org/english/publications/pql-list-forward-look/

Policies published to date:
Complaints About Awarding Bodies:
http://qualificationswales.org/english/publications/complaints-about-awarding-bodies/

Consultation Policy:

Designation Policy:

Fee Capping Policy:

Interim Joint Working Statement:

Interim Provision of Services Statement:

Interim Regulatory Whistleblowing Policy:

Interim Revisions and Corrections Policy for Statistical Releases:

Interim Statistical Outputs Policy:

Policy Statement on Conducting Reviews of Qualifications and the Qualification System:

Priority Qualifications List Policy:
http://qualificationswales.org/english/publications/pql-policy-8-jan-16/

Recognition Policy:

Regulatory Appeals Policy:
Annex B – Glossary of Terms
Qualifications are technical by nature. To make it a little clearer, here’s a guide to the most commonly used terms.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term / Phrase</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A level</td>
<td>General Certificate of Education Advanced Level, also known as a GCE A level. Qualifications available in a range of subjects, usually taken at age 16-18 by learners who typically follow a two-year course of study. They are used as a basis for admissions to higher education, further training or entry into employment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced Subsidiary (AS)</td>
<td>A qualification that forms the first part of an A level qualification. It may be taken as a free-standing qualification. In Wales and Northern Ireland it contributes to the A level result. In England, AS qualifications cannot contribute to A levels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adverse effect</td>
<td>Our conditions require awarding bodies to notify us of any act, omission, event, incident, or circumstance that has an adverse effect which: (a) gives rise to prejudice to learners or potential learners, or (b) adversely affects: (i) the ability of the awarding body to undertake the development, delivery or award of qualifications in accordance with its Conditions of Recognition (ii) the standards of qualifications which the awarding body makes available or proposes to make available, or (iii) public confidence in qualifications.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approval</td>
<td>The process by which qualifications are approved by Qualifications Wales.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approval criteria</td>
<td>The Criteria which qualifications are required to have met in order to be approved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approved qualifications</td>
<td>Qualifications that are approved by Qualifications Wales and awarded in Wales. Approved qualifications are allocated an identified approval number. Approved qualifications are not regulated by other qualifications regulators and are normally designed to meet the specific needs of learners in Wales.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assessment</strong></td>
<td>A method of evaluating, testing, measuring and documenting the acquisition of specific areas of knowledge, skills and/or understanding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Awarding Body Recognition</strong></td>
<td>In order to offer regulated qualifications in Wales an awarding body must be recognised by Qualifications Wales. Awarding bodies need to comply with our recognition criteria and apply for recognition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Centre</strong></td>
<td>An organisation undertaking the delivery of an assessment (and potentially other activities) to learners on behalf of an awarding body. Centres normally enter candidates for qualifications. Centres will often be schools, colleges or work-based learning providers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Compliance</strong></td>
<td>To be compliant an awarding body must meet the Conditions of Recognition and other regulatory requirements set by Qualifications Wales.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conditions of Approval</strong></td>
<td>Any specific requirements that Qualifications Wales applies to an approved qualification.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conditions of Recognition</strong></td>
<td>All conditions that Qualifications Wales applies to an awarding body’s recognition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Consultation</strong></td>
<td>Consultations are a part of the process of engagement with stakeholders and sometimes the general public. They can be formal or informal and will typically relate to proposed policies and decisions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Designated Qualifications</strong></td>
<td>Regulated qualifications that are designated by Qualifications Wales as eligible for use on publicly funded programmes of learning for learners under the age of 19. Designated qualifications must meet specific requirements They may also be regulated by other UK qualifications regulators.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GCSE</strong></td>
<td>General Certificates of Secondary Education are available in a wide range of subjects. GCSEs are the main Level 1 and Level 2 qualifications taken at age 14-16 in Wales.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>General Qualification (GQ)</strong></td>
<td>Describes qualifications that are taken typically by learners in school or college as part of their statutory or further education. This includes GCSEs, AS and A levels and the Welsh Baccalaureate and other similar qualifications.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Qualifications that share some of the features common to GCSEs and A levels. WJEC is the main provider of these qualifications in Wales.

**Maintenance of Standards**
Qualifications Wales oversees the process by which awarding bodies set and maintain appropriate standards in GCSEs, A levels and the Welsh Baccalaureate from one awarding series to the next. For qualifications that are regulated alongside other UK qualifications regulators, we work closely with them to agree common standards.

**Monitoring**
Activities that Qualifications Wales carries out to review the quality of an awarding body’s systems, processes and/or qualifications.

**National Assembly for Wales (NAfW)**
The National Assembly for Wales is the democratically elected body that represents the interests of Wales and its people, makes laws for Wales, agrees Welsh taxes and holds the Welsh Government to account.

Qualifications Wales is a Welsh Government Sponsored Body, independent of government, and is accountable to the National Assembly for Wales.

**Other regulated qualifications**
Those qualifications awarded in Wales by recognised awarding bodies, which have not been designated or approved by Qualifications Wales, and which awarding bodies have not surrendered or exempted from the scope of their recognition.

**Principal Aims**
The Qualifications Wales Act gives us two Principal Aims:
- Ensuring that qualifications, and the Welsh qualification system, are effective for meeting the reasonable needs of learners in Wales; and
- promoting public confidence in qualification and the Welsh qualification system.

**Priority Qualifications List**
A list of qualifications jointly prepared by Qualifications Wales and Welsh Ministers to indicate those qualifications which are of particular significance or importance to Wales. In practice, this is likely to be qualifications for which Qualifications Wales has published, or intends to publish, approval criteria.

**Qualifications in Wales (QiW)**
A publicly available database which provides a source of information on approved and designated qualifications awarded in Wales.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Qualifications Regulator</strong></th>
<th>An organisation which oversees qualifications. Other UK qualifications regulators are Ofqual in England, SQA in Scotland and CCEA in Northern Ireland.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Qualifications Wales Act 2015</strong></td>
<td>The Qualifications Wales Act 2015 was passed by the National Assembly for Wales and as a consequence Qualifications Wales was established. The Act defines, amongst other things, our principal aims, responsibilities and powers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Recognised Awarding Body** | A body that is recognised by Qualifications Wales and awards regulated qualifications in Wales.  
Where “awarding body” (AB) is used, it normally refers to recognised awarding bodies. |
<p>| <strong>Recognition</strong> | Awarding bodies may apply for general recognition as a body awarding qualifications in Wales. |
| <strong>Recognition Criteria</strong> | The criteria awarding bodies should meet in order to become recognised by Qualifications Wales. |
| <strong>Regulated Qualifications</strong> | All non-degree qualifications (whether approved, designated or other regulated) that are offered for award by an awarding body recognised by Qualifications Wales (unless either an awarding body has surrendered its recognition in respect of that qualification, or if an awarding body has excluded that qualification from the scope of its recognition. |
| <strong>Regulatory document</strong> | A document, setting out regulatory requirements, which is published by Qualifications Wales and listed on its ‘Regulatory Document List’. |
| <strong>Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIAs)</strong> | RIAs are tools to help inform policy decisions. They assess the impact of policies in terms of the costs, benefits and risks of a proposal. |
| <strong>Responsible Officer</strong> | The person named by a recognised awarding body as being accountable to Qualifications Wales for its regulated activities. |
| <strong>Restricted Priority Qualification</strong> | A qualification for which Qualifications Wales has specified that it will only approve a specified number of forms (which may be one). |
| <strong>Restriction</strong> | A limit on the number of forms of a qualification that Qualifications Wales has determined it will approve. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Sector Reviews</strong></th>
<th>A review to investigate the effectiveness of qualifications, and the qualification system, within a specific employment sector.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Statement of Compliance (SoC)</strong></td>
<td>An annual statement that all recognised awarding bodies are required to submit to Qualifications Wales about their level of compliance with the Standard Conditions of Recognition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vocational Qualification (VQ)</strong></td>
<td>Qualifications that are awarded and certificated by an awarding body, taken by learners from the age of 14 upwards, and which assess knowledge, understanding and/or skills that relate explicitly to the world of work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Welsh Baccalaureate (Welsh Bacc)</strong></td>
<td>A composite award that incorporates the Skills Challenge Certificate together with a number of other qualifications according to the level at which it is taken.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>