



Qualifications Wales Business Plan 2016/17

Table of contents

No.	Section	Page
1.	Qualifications Wales	2
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduction• Our Purpose• Our work• How we are organised	
2.	Strategic Priorities, Objectives and Outcomes	7
3.	2016/17 Operational Priorities	14
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Operations and Reform Programmes• Funding and planned expenditure• Operational Priorities and Headline actions	
4.	Looking Ahead	27

1. Qualifications Wales

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Qualifications Wales was established as the regulator of non-degree qualifications in Wales on 6 August 2015 and we took on our regulatory functions with effect from 21 September 2015.

During our first eight months we have focused on establishing the organisation, completing staff induction, and creating regulatory and corporate policies, processes and systems. At the same time we have overseen the award of the November and January general qualifications, making sure outcomes were fair and reliable.

We have managed the General Qualification Reform programme, approving 14 new qualifications for first teaching from 2016 and have completed a review of vocational qualifications in the health and social care sector.

We have managed the grants for Welsh medium qualifications, Welsh Bacallaureate and Essential Skills Wales that were transferred to us from Welsh Government.

We have sought to engage and communicate effectively with stakeholders including awarding bodies, learners and centres. Finally, we have delivered a successful project to develop and launch 'QiW' - a new qualifications database for Wales.

We have set four long-term Strategic Priorities:

Strategic Priority – 1 - A strategically regulated qualifications system in Wales

Strategic Priority – 2 – Quality-assured supply

Strategic Priority – 3 - Build Qualifications Wales's capability and capacity

Strategic Priority – 4 - Deliver public confidence

We have also set out our **20 Operational Priorities for 2016/17**. These are carried out by either our Regulation function, the GQ and VQ reform programmes, or the policy, research, grants, stakeholder engagement and corporate service functions that support our core business.

Delivering these operational programmes and priorities contributes towards our four Strategic Priorities and thereby to our long-term vision for qualifications in Wales.

This document sets out both our long-term priorities and our 2016/17 Operational business plan. These are prefaced by information about our purpose and work.

1.2 OUR PURPOSE

We are the regulator of non-degree qualifications for Wales. Established in September 2015 as an independent expert body we have 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 qualifications and in the Welsh qualifications system.***

Qualifications Wales Act (2015)

This means that we place the learner at the heart of our activities. It also means that we have responsibilities to look across the qualifications system to make sure it is working in the interest of learners: taking action or advising others to do so when needed. Amongst other things, this means ensuring that our qualifications, within our qualification system, are valued, secure and internationally respected. The Qualifications Wales Act 2015 gives us powers and duties to regulate awarding bodies and to make positive interventions to secure improvements to the qualifications system.

Learners are the end beneficiaries of our work, but we also consider the needs of employers, the higher education sector and the professions. We have a key role in protecting the value of qualifications: ensuring that standards are maintained and grades awarded appropriately; and, that qualifications continue to be developed to meet the needs of learners.

The Qualifications Wales Act 2015 specifies eight matters which we must have regard to in deciding how we go about our work:

“In considering what is appropriate for the purpose of achieving its principal aims, the matters to which Qualifications Wales is to have regard include (among other things):

- (a) the desirability of promoting sustainable growth in the Welsh economy;*
- (b) the desirability of promoting and facilitating the use of the Welsh language, including through the availability of assessment arrangements that provide for assessment through the medium of the Welsh language, and of qualifications that otherwise promote or facilitate the use of the Welsh language;*
- (c) the range and nature of qualifications available, and their assessment arrangements;*
- (d) the reasonable requirements of employers, higher education institutions and the professions regarding education and training (including as to required standards of practical competence);*
- (e) whether the knowledge, skills and understanding required to be demonstrated for the purpose of determining whether a person is to be awarded a qualification reflect current knowledge and best practice;*

- (f) whether qualifications indicate a consistent level of attainment with that indicated by whatever Qualifications Wales considers to be comparable qualifications, whether awarded in Europe or elsewhere;*
- (g) whether qualifications are provided efficiently and so as to secure value for money;*
- (h) the respective roles played by, and responsibilities of, each of the following persons in respect of the Welsh qualification system (including by reference to cooperation between those persons, and their effectiveness in performing their roles)—*
- (i) awarding bodies, learning providers, Qualifications Wales and the Welsh Ministers;*
 - (ii) any other persons exercising functions that Qualifications Wales considers relevant for the purpose of the Welsh qualification system.*

1.3 OUR WORK

On behalf of learners in Wales - our job is to carry out the following activities:

Regulation – recognition, approvals, designations, monitoring and compliance

We **recognise** awarding bodies who apply for recognition and who meet our Criteria for Recognition. Once recognised, awarding bodies must comply with our Standard Conditions of Recognition in respect of all qualifications that they award in Wales (other than for any degrees, or any qualifications that they have exempted or surrendered from recognition). Recognised awarding bodies may also submit qualifications for us to approve or designate as eligible for use on publicly funded programmes of learning.

Approved qualifications - Where we have developed approval criteria for qualifications, such as specific requirements about their content or assessment arrangements, we must have approved those qualifications in order for them to be eligible for funding. Approved qualifications are qualifications that are designed specifically to meet the needs of learners in Wales.

Designated qualifications - Where no specific approval criteria exists, recognised awarding bodies can submit qualifications to us to designate them as eligible for use on publicly funded programmes of learning. Designated qualifications must meet a range of criteria, for example, they must be age appropriate, have an identified cohort of learners in Wales, and, where applicable, be supported by sector or professional bodies.

Regulated qualifications - Not every qualification is approved or designated. However, all non-exempted qualifications that are awarded by recognised Awarding Bodies are subject to our regulation through the Standard Conditions of Recognition. This means that we can act to safe-guard the interests of learners if an issue arises.

Our role includes **reviewing** and **monitoring** the activities of awarding bodies including, for example, how they set question papers, award grades, quality-assure centre assessment and set access arrangements and how well they support schools, colleges and other examination centres.

If necessary, we can take a range of ‘enforcement actions’ to require awarding bodies to comply with conditions of recognition or approval.

Policy, research and development and commissioning

We publish policies and requirements to which recognised awarding bodies must adhere.

We consider whether the qualifications provided for a given subject, industry sector, progression path, or age group meet those learners’ needs. This may involve:

- Carrying out research to provide evidence to inform our decisions;
- Working with and listening to a wide range of stakeholders, learners, and subject experts;
- Consulting on major decisions; and
- Working with the Welsh Government and other education partners to understand longer-term policy developments or trends within the economy and the implications for qualifications.

Where we determine that changes are needed we may commission the development of qualifications on behalf of Wales and, where appropriate, we may restrict (for a period of time) certain qualifications to a single version for Wales. Prior to doing so we will use focus groups and/or more formal consultation to understand stakeholder views.

We may provide grants to support learners’ needs, for example to secure the availability of Welsh-medium assessment or to fund specific activities to support the implementation of new qualifications.

We deliver a range of communications activities to share information more widely and improve understanding amongst schools, colleges, universities, employers and other bodies. We provide advice to examination officers in centres across Wales.

As the recognised expert body in qualifications we are required, if requested, to provide Welsh Ministers with advice on specific issues.

Finance and Corporate Services

Our operation is supported by corporate functions including finance, communications, HR, IT, procurement, facilities and corporate governance. We buy-in our legal services, audit, translation and payroll services.

We have a publically appointed Board, supported by four Committees for 'Regulation', 'Remuneration', 'Resources' and 'Audit Risk and Assurance'.

1.4 HOW WE ARE ORGANISED

Our organisational structure has three directorates: Policy & Research, Regulation, and Finance & Corporate Services. We also have two Associate Directors who are responsible for over-seeing our approach to General and to Vocational Qualifications. Teams across these directorates work together as 'one team' to deliver our Principal Aims and staff working in Development and Commissioning, Recognition and Approvals and Monitoring and Compliance teams can be flexibly deployed across these areas.



2. Strategic Priorities, Objectives and Outcomes (2015-2020)

We have four Strategic Priorities, underpinned by strategic objectives.

Strategic Priority – 1 - A strategically regulated qualifications system in Wales

A demand-led qualifications system where there is optimal breadth of opportunity for learners.

Strategic Priority – 2 – Quality-assured supply

Learners in Wales take qualifications that are valid with outcomes that are fair and reliable and are respected widely as a result of rigorous independent regulation.

Strategic Priority – 3 - Build Qualifications Wales's capability and capacity

Qualifications Wales is confident that it is effective and efficient in fulfilling its Principal Aims and is continually evolving to add value to the education system in Wales.

Strategic Priority – 4 - Deliver public confidence

Qualifications Wales is recognised widely as an expert independent body and engenders public and professional confidence.

Strategic Priority – 1

A strategically regulated qualifications system in Wales

A demand-led qualifications system where there is optimal breadth of opportunity for learners.

Strategic Objectives

1. To promote and facilitate the development of a range of high-quality qualifications aligned to the needs of learners and the reasonable requirements of employers, higher education institutions and the professions regarding education and training (including as to required standards of practical competence). To align qualifications with Education policy in Wales and the Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales (CQFW).
2. To develop an appropriate set of qualifications and regulatory policies that enable the qualifications system to operate effectively, paying particular regard to the eight matters within the Qualifications Wales Act (2015), thereby meeting the needs of learners in Wales.
3. To undertake insightful research, and make use of research by others, that informs evidence-based policy and opinion, guides continuous improvement and drives corporate decision making.
4. To establish, formalise and maintain suitable policy relationships with other regulators.

Outcomes

- The range of qualifications available is well understood by learners, providers and employers and it is clear to learners which qualifications lead to the outcomes they desire.
- Normally, earners are able to take approved qualifications through the medium of Welsh.
- The qualifications system is able to anticipate, and respond to, the needs of learners and economic drivers.

- Learners in Wales are able to gain qualifications that are respected internationally.
- We use our powers, with confidence, to work with others to shape the future direction of the qualifications system in Wales.
- We take decisions and give advice using the best available evidence, including international best practice and a deep understanding of assessment.
- We have regulatory approach that is demonstrably consistent with the five principles of better regulation and recognised as good practice.
- We are seen as a strong partner by other regulators.
- The impact of our policies on awarding bodies and other regulators is well understood.

Strategic Priority - 2

Quality-assured supply of qualifications

Learners in Wales take qualifications that are valid with outcomes that are fair and reliable and are respected widely as a result of rigorous independent regulation.

Strategic Objectives

1. To assure the quality of regulated qualifications throughout the delivery lifecycle, identifying areas of regulatory interest and activity based on actual, perceived or potential threats to learners' interests.
2. To secure validity and reliability throughout the qualifications system and, where appropriate, take enforcement action to protect learners' needs.
3. To monitor Awarding Body standard setting in first awards of qualifications and ensure standards are maintained through the lifecycle of qualifications in order to produce fair and reliable outcomes.

4. To promote innovation where this adds to the validity and reliability of the qualification or improves the efficiency of an assessment model.
5. To implement an appropriate, fair and proportionate regulatory framework that encourages transparency and makes recognised awarding bodies' accountability clear.
6. To develop effective and appropriate regulatory relationships with Awarding Bodies.

Outcomes

- We identify and assess risks in the qualifications system and intervene appropriately to protect learners' interests.
- Learners are confident that qualifications are high quality and prepare them for the next stage of education or the world of work.
- Employers have confidence in the qualifications achieved by learners.
- We are innovative, and collaborate with our partners for the benefit of learners.
- Stakeholders in the qualifications system know, understand and respect each other's role.
- We have good professional relationships with awarding bodies, where our role as regulator is respected.
- We maintain an appropriate degree of separation from those we regulate.

Strategic Priority – 3

Build Qualifications Wales's capability and capacity

Qualifications Wales is confident that it is effective and efficient in fulfilling its Principal Aims and is continually evolving to add value to the education system in Wales.

Strategic Objectives

1. To build capability and resilience within Qualifications Wales.
2. To develop appropriate corporate and internal control systems that are compliant with good practice in the public sector.
3. To develop a meaningful and visible professional culture, centred on the needs of learners, which embodies a coherent and congruent set of values and behaviours.
4. To have effective operating practices and processes that meet corporate and stakeholders' needs.
5. To look ahead and review our role on an on-going basis, giving consideration to potential developments or changes that deliver benefit to learners.

Outcomes

- We work intelligently by maximising the skills, knowledge and understanding of our staff.
- We continue to develop our skills, keeping pace with developments in our fields of expertise.
- Our resources are focused on delivering benefits to learners in Wales.
- We draw upon a wide range of engaged experts to supplement our own capabilities.
- We are cohesive as a body with high levels of personal and professional satisfaction.

- Internal processes and system-based transactions are user-friendly and not seen as a burden.
- Our culture is professional and nurturing: we stand by our values.
- People enjoy working for Qualifications Wales and we are able to attract and retain highly talented individuals.
- We are risk aware, but not risk averse.
- We are self-aware and reflective in our practice.

Strategic Priority – 4

Deliver public confidence

Qualifications Wales is recognised widely as an expert independent body and engenders public and professional confidence.

Strategic Objectives

1. To actively raise public understanding of the role and activities of Qualifications Wales and the qualifications system in Wales.
2. To avert issues or potential failures within the qualifications system.
3. To develop effective communications with engaged stakeholders.
4. To be transparent in our accountability to the National Assembly for Wales in the fulfilment of our functions and to the Welsh Government in the use of public money: demonstrating good value to both.
5. To develop a collaborative relationship with the Welsh Government where there is a high level of trust and connectivity, whilst retaining the independence of Qualifications Wales.

Outcomes

- We are an integral part of the education system in Wales and able to influence effectively.
- Our messages are clear, consistent and understood.
- We are trusted as the custodian of qualifications.
- We understand the wider environment and are able to engage with it proactively.
- We are recognised as being truly independent.
- We are thought leaders.
- The National Assembly for Wales is confident that we are fulfilling our remit.

3. Operational Priorities (2016/17)

3.1 Introduction and Context

We are starting the year 2016/17 with the solid foundations that we established in our first eight months, during which we focused on establishing the organisation, completing staff induction and creating regulatory and corporate policies, processes and systems. This included the successful development and launch of 'QiW' a new qualifications database for Wales.

We also carried out our regulatory duties, including giving consideration to requests for recognition and for the surrender of recognition) of awarding bodies, and the approval and designation of qualifications. We oversaw the award of the November and January general qualifications, making sure outcomes were fair and reliable, conducting monitoring activities in relation to awarding body compliance and in respect of the award of key qualifications in Wales. During 2016/17 we will continue to strengthen and develop our regulatory functions.

We assumed our responsibilities part way through a major reform of general qualifications in both England and Wales. We oversaw the reform programme and were able to approve 14 of the proposed new GCE and GCSEs for first teaching in 2016 (taking the decision to defer GCSE History and GCSE Religious Studies until 2017). Through this work we re-considered mixed-tier entry, electing to allow cases with a clear rationale to remain in place. We looked at grading in the two new mathematics GCSEs and took the decision to amend the foundation tier grade range. We also managed the grants for Welsh-medium qualifications and for implementation of the Welsh Baccalaureate and Essential Skills Wales that were transferred to us from the Welsh Government.

Over the next two years the majority of the general qualifications taught in schools and colleges in Wales will become 'approved' qualifications that comply with Welsh education policy, which in some instances is different from policy developed in England. Most notably qualifications developed in Wales will retain the A*- G grading structure for GCSEs and the AS level will remain a 'coupled' part of A levels. Where the number of learners in Wales has been too low to justify the development of a Wales-specific qualification, then the version offered in England may be available as a designated qualification. It is important that these new qualifications are implemented effectively and during 2016/17 we will be listening to stakeholders and closely monitoring the impact of the reforms, giving support where appropriate and maintaining our provision of grants for Welsh-medium assessment.

It is equally important to us that vocational qualifications are effective in helping learners to progress into employment or further training and education, and to continue to develop or maintain the skills and knowledge that they need in work. We have embarked

on a programme of vocational reform whereby we will review the qualifications that are available to learners in Wales on an industry sector-by-sector basis and identify areas for improvement. In doing so we will take into account Welsh Government policy in relation to apprenticeships. We have already completed the analysis phase of our first sector review of qualifications in Health and Social care, engaging extensively with stakeholders including awarding bodies, learners and centres. We will be using this work to inform development of our longer-term strategy for vocational qualifications. During 2016/17 we will implement agreed recommendations for health and social care and commence sector reviews in IT and Construction.

We listened to stakeholder concerns about implementation of the new Welsh BaccaLaureate and revised Essential Skills Wales suite of qualifications. As a result we have developed a joint Welsh BaccaLaureate action plan with WJEC and the Welsh Government; during 2016/17 we will be monitoring delivery of the recommendations. We will also continue to monitor implementation of the new Essential Skills Wales qualification and review the support provided.

Our 2016/17 Operational Priorities relate to strengthening our on-going functions in Regulation, and to the delivery of our GQ and VQ reform programmes. They also relate to strengthening those functions that support this core activity, namely policy and research, grants, stakeholder engagement and corporate services. This is pictured in Table 1 below.



Table 1: Diagram of Qualifications Wales operation

Our Operational Priorities consolidate work that we had already started, including the review of our regulatory approach, the review of our approach to grants and the development of a risk-based approach to monitoring. We have allocated our budget to support the delivery of our priorities.

In addition to these priorities we continue with the activities that we undertake as a matter of course, such as monitoring the performance of Awarding Bodies. The development of our staff continues to be important and we look forward to recruiting our full staffing complement and setting up our internal research and data management function.

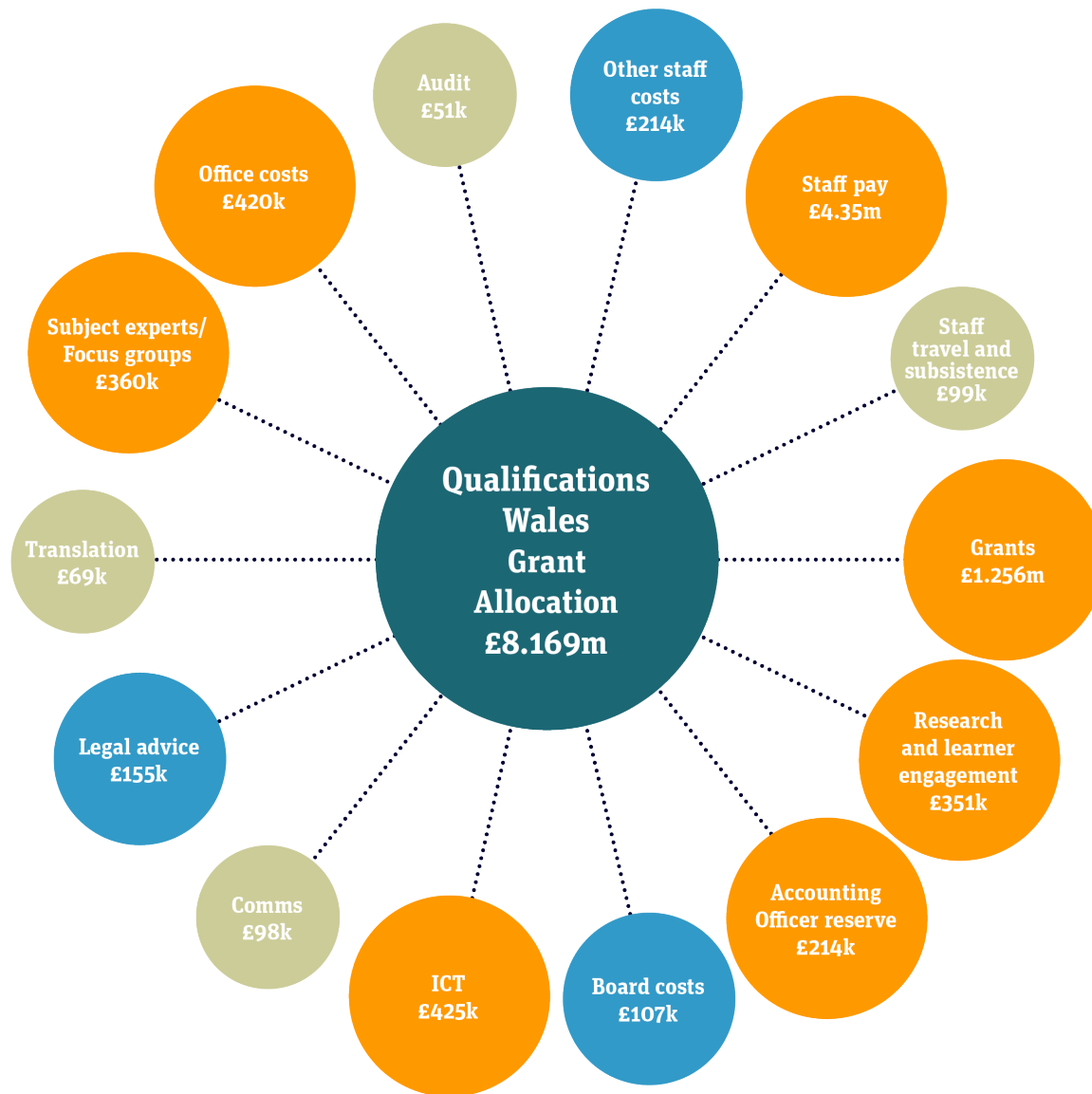
3.2 Funding and Planned Expenditure

Qualifications Wales receives an annual grant allocation from the Welsh Government to cover its operational costs. Our grant allocation for 2016/17 is £8.169m.

At a summary level our expenditure forecast is as follows:

Budget Area	2016-17 Budget £'000
Pay Budgets	4350
Programme Budgets	
Grants	1256
Other Programme Budgets	794
Running Costs	1551
Accounting Officer Reserve	218
Total	8169

Diagram 3 shows how we anticipate spending this allocation:



3.3 Operational Priorities (2016/17)

Priority No	Priority	Headline Actions	Link to Strategic Priorities
GENERAL QUALIFICATIONS REFORMS			
1	<p>Deliver the 2017* GQ reform programme to the agreed timeline</p> <p>(*Qualifications for first teaching in September 2017)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and publish subject approval criteria • Work with WJEC to ensure that reformed qualifications are submitted for each stage of a robust approval process in a timely manner • Support reform implementation by facilitating the work of stakeholders including WJEC, Welsh Government and Regional Consortia to provide teacher support materials and training including Welsh medium materials 	SP1, SP4
2	<p>Continue to consider the impact of qualification reform on examination centres and work with partners in the education system to facilitate clear and effective support.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate the impact of current qualification reform on teachers, lecturers, work based learning providers and examination centres – and the effectiveness of the various support mechanisms and develop a Qualifications Wales policy towards support for reform in the future 	SP1, SP4
VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS REFORMS			
3	<p>Establish and communicate our VQ Strategy and 10-year reform programme</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a Vocational Qualifications strategy to underpin the delivery of our principal aims in relation to VQs • Further develop and embed the model for conducting sectoral reviews, evaluating and learning from the lessons of the first review • Develop a schedule of sector reviews 	SP1, SP4

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effectively communicate the VQ strategy to stakeholders to build confidence in our approach Ensure that Qualifications Wales embeds an effective approach to VQs across its core activities 	
4	VQ programme – continue with the programme of Sector Reviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manage the effective transition from Analysis to Solutions phase of the Health and Social Care sector review including the development of a high level action plan for the delivery of the recommendations. Initiate and progress the Analysis phase of the sector reviews of Construction and ICT 	SP1, SP4
5	Consult on the best way to ensure the development of new priority qualifications in Health and Social Care and implement agreed actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consult on the development of new ‘approved’ Health and Social Care qualifications for Wales to inform the most effective approach. Proceed with phase 2 - Solutions for the Health and Social Care review Commence phase 3 - the Implementation phase of the Health and Social Care review in relation to qualification development. 	SP1, SP4
CROSS CUTTING QUALIFICATION REFORMS			
6	Welsh BaccaLaureate and Essential Skills Wales (ESW) – continue to closely review implementation of these Wales specific qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor action plans developed by awarding bodies to address recommendations made by Qualifications Wales Where appropriate, issue grants to fund specific support activities delivered by partners such as the Regional Consortia Undertake a further review of the Welsh BaccaLaureate after the summer 2016 series. Undertake a review of the fitness for purpose of the ESW qualification for work based learning 	SP1, SP4

REGULATION DEVELOPMENT			
7	Establish and maintain appropriate standards for general qualifications including co-regulated qualifications; facilitating reforms and managing increased divergence from English qualification policy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to work with other regulators on setting standards for three country qualifications • Agree methodologies and approaches to setting standards in approved qualifications via the Standards and Awarding Group • Monitor and manage progress, risks and issues in the development of procedures for awarding approved qualifications 	SP2, SP4
8	Deliver our monitoring programme for reformed GQs (including Welsh Baccalaureate and ESW) and vocational qualifications and establish targeted risk based monitoring of Awarding Bodies and qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor the awarding of the summer 2016 examinations • Observe awarding body meetings and report on findings • Monitor implementation of new Welsh Baccalaureate, ESW and general qualifications • Consult with learners and centres • Implement risk based awarding body and vocational qualifications monitoring 	SP2, SP4
9	Amend our Statement of Compliance (SoC) process to improve the quality of returns, building intelligence about Awarding Bodies and ensuring that issues are better understood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop effective SoC process for 2016 focused on key areas of compliance • Communicate revised SoC process to awarding bodies • Analyse SoC returns and report on findings • Use analysis to inform future monitoring and compliance activity 	SP2, SP4
10	Review our approach and processes for Designating qualifications (as eligible for public funding)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review designation procedures to ensure full alignment with the Qualifications Wales Act • Evaluate effectiveness of designation criteria and process to ensure Qualifications Wales' principal aims are addressed 	SP2, SP4

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clarify any limitations on ability to change approach to designating qualifications that are also regulated by Ofqual 	
POLICY, RESEARCH, COMMUNICATIONS AND CORPORATE SERVICES DEVELOPMENT			
11	Review and develop our Regulatory Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate our current approach and alternatives in order to identify whether there are drivers for change Subsequently, either a) review, consolidate and articulate our regulatory approach or b) develop proposals for change 	SP2, SP4
12	Publish our suite of Regulatory policies, complying with the five principles identified by the Better Regulation Commission and making clear our approach to using our powers in Wales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft, review, consult where appropriate and publish policies on Consultation, Restriction, Designation, Recognition, Welsh medium and Monetary penalties in order to ensure compliance with the requirements of the Act Respond to Education policy development requirements resulting in changes to the education sector Review and consult as appropriate all published policies in accordance with the outcomes of the Regulatory Strategy project Establish a Qualifications Wales template and framework for regulatory documents 	SP1, SP4
13	Build our professional expertise through developing our research and data collection capabilities, growing our own evidence base and publishing our findings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete recruitment of our research and statistics function Carry out or commission our programme of research Develop a consistent approach to learner engagement Establish our data collection and management strategy Develop mechanisms to learn lessons from other research evidence and the experience of other administrations 	SP1, SP4
14	Administer a Welsh medium grant fund and review the	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review how the Welsh medium provision is being delivered by the awarding bodies and being used by centres 	SP1, SP4

	effectiveness of our grants interventions. Also, set out our long-term strategy to support the delivery of Welsh medium qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce a robust set of procedures in regards to the awarding, monitoring and payment of the Welsh medium grant fund • Work with awarding bodies to maximise the availability of Welsh medium assessment in designated qualifications 	
15	Launch Qualifications in Wales (QiW) - our new Regulations database, and continue to improve data quality and accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch QiW on 1st April 2016 • Conduct staggered cleanse of all data within QiW, prioritising fields linked to business needs, to ensure that all data contained within QiW is accurate • Develop QiW workflow in line with reviewing designation and approval processes • Gather feedback from users (internal and external) in order to continuously improve QiW • Define any additional business needs and consider enhancements 	SP3, SP4
16	Improve our networks and stakeholder feedback channels making best use of our new CRM system and acting on informed feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance our external relations team function to act as an effective feedback loop • Develop a stakeholder engagement plan to improve stakeholder channels – including regional networks, events for head teachers, awarding body forums and UCAS Regional events • Improve engagement with employers and the Higher Education sector • Implement CRM system and ensure the system is used effectively • Issue regular e-newsletters via CRM and monitor stakeholder responses 	SP4
17	Grow stakeholder understanding of our role and confidence in our actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to develop relationships with stakeholders using a wide variety of communication methods including e-newsletters, social media, and meetings, using the Qualifications Wales website as the central source of information. 	SP4

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further develop relationships with key journalists in the education sector both in Wales and across the UK • Monitor and evaluate communications activity on a weekly basis and adapt as necessary • Develop our Communications strategy • Organise stakeholder events in north and south Wales to highlight Qualifications Wales' work and to gather feedback. • Compile a list of stakeholder organised events in the education and employment sectors that should be attended by Qualifications Wales staff, either as exhibitors or as speakers • Ensure all publications and other external communications are of a high quality, produced bilingually and meet all deadlines 	
18	Prepare for future development – work with the new Welsh Government administration with focus on developments in curriculum and apprenticeships. Develop our longer term scenario planning and financial forecasting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide senior management support for Welsh Government curriculum programme including attendance at Change Board, Programme Board, Curriculum and Assessment expert group and accountability group. • Maintain close working relationship with officials responsible for developing Welsh Government apprenticeship policy • Liaise with Welsh Government to understand financial scenarios and continue to develop Qualifications Wales approach 	SP3, SP4
19	Agree and adopt appropriate Welsh Language Standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During 2016, work with the Welsh Language Commissioner to agree which Standards are appropriate for our organisation and work to adopt and embed these into our ways of working with a clear policy and action plan 	SP3

20	Build organisational resilience through effective development of our people, on-going development of our corporate functions and systems and establishing longer term effective arrangements with our external subject expert advisors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete our Annual Accounts • Continue to review our budget forecasting and reporting processes; • Maintain and test business continuity plans and cover provisions for both corporate and regulatory functions • Publish a full suite of HR policies • Implement workforce planning including training and development and succession plans • Improve utilisation of reporting tools from the finance and HR systems • reporting tools • Increase our maturity levels in terms of IT operations and information security • Implement the procurement tender and contract management plan • Complete our procurement strategy • Establish a longer term expert advisors agreement • Continue to work across teams to effectively embed corporate functional policies and processes and develop skills and confidence • Address internal audit recommendations as appropriate • Review governance arrangements so that we continue to operate an effective governance structure and embed effective risk management through the organisation • Embed effective project management and process mapping across the organisation aiding good governance and promoting efficiency • Continue to build on our understanding of our statutory functions and responsibilities in relation to the Qualifications Wales Act (2015) and other relevant legislation. 	SP3
----	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----

We will be using our internal management processes to set and monitor detailed milestones and KPIs for these priorities and to report progress to our Board. We will be producing our Annual Report in late autumn, reflecting our first twelve months of operation. This will be provided to the National Assembly for Wales for scrutiny and publication. In addition to delivering our plan we will also measure our success by the positive difference we have made for learners in Wales, how we have engaged with stakeholders and overall what we believe this has meant for public confidence.

4. Looking ahead

Education policy across the UK will continue to receive a high level of political focus. We will continue to monitor developments in the UK and wider afield and use our understanding and expertise, gained from our research activities, to inform development of the qualifications system in Wales. At the same time we will be advising the Welsh Government on qualifications as it considers how to implement the curriculum review driven by the Donaldson report 'Successful Futures'. It is vital that the timetable for development of the curriculum aligns to a realistic timeframe for any associated changes to qualifications. It is equally important that our vocational qualifications and apprenticeship frameworks are aligned to the development of the Welsh economy.

We look forward to playing our role in these areas and providing views and advice to Welsh Government. As an independent body we will always seek to act in the long-term interest of learners in Wales.

Finally, we will continue to work with all the partners across the qualifications system in Wales to ensure that the system works cohesively to make the best use of our collective resources.