

GCSE WELSH SECOND LANGUAGE



Summary of decisions and analysis of responses to our consultation on reforming GCSE Welsh Second Language for first teaching in September 2017

Analysis of responses to our consultation and summary of decisions on reforming GCSE Welsh Second Language for first teaching in 2017

Introduction

Between 4 April and 15 May 2016, we consulted on the proposed design of a reformed GCSE Welsh Second Language qualification to be Approved for first teaching in Wales from September 2017. A copy of the consultation proposals and questions is available at [this link](#).

In July 2016 we published *Approval Criteria for GCSE Welsh Second Language (2016)*¹, which set out the detailed requirements for how the reformed qualification should be designed and assessed. The requirements are informed by the responses to our consultation, by the views of current and recent learners gathered through an independent learner engagement exercise, and by a Working Group of experts drawn from a range of backgrounds including current teachers and examiners.

In this report, we summarise the responses we received to our consultation proposals and explain how these have informed the detailed requirements set out in the *Approval Criteria for GCSE Welsh Second Language (2016)*¹.

This report is available in English and in Welsh. Respondents' comments have been translated, where appropriate, in accordance with the language of the report.

Percentages used throughout this document have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

Background

The changes we are making to GCSE Welsh Second Language for first teaching from September 2017 are part of a wider programme of reforms to GCSEs, AS and A levels. The only awarding body that will develop and offer the reformed GCSE Welsh Second Language qualification in Wales is WJEC, as it is the only awarding body that has agreed to develop reformed GCSEs designed specifically for award in Wales.

The proposals on which we consulted reflected early preparatory work conducted by Welsh Government, before Qualifications Wales was established. We also considered the findings and recommendations from the following reports and reviews that relate to Welsh second language:

- One language for all: review of Welsh second language at Key Stages 3 and 4 (September 2013)²
- A living language: a language for living – Bwrw mlaen (2014)³
- Successful Futures: Independent review of curriculum and assessment arrangements in Wales (2015)⁴.

During the consultation period, we held a series of events around the country to discuss and explain our proposals with teachers and other interested stakeholders.

¹ [Approval Criteria for GCSE Welsh Second Language](#)

² [One language for all: review of Welsh second language at Key Stages 3 and 4](#)

³ [A living language: a language for living - Bwrw mlaen](#)

⁴ [Successful Futures: Independent review of curriculum and assessment arrangements in Wales](#)

The views expressed at those meetings have helped us to interpret the formal responses to the consultation. We are grateful to all those who made time to attend these events.

Following the consultation, we established a Working Group to help advise us on the development of Approval Criteria for the subject. The group included current teachers and examiners of GCSE Welsh Second Language as well as representatives from the National Centre for Learning Welsh, further education, Estyn, WJEC, Welsh Government and higher education, including Professor Sioned Davies, the Chair of the group that produced *One language for all: review of Welsh second language at Key Stages 3 and 4* (September 2013)². Through the Working Group we were able to explore the technical and practical implications of some of our proposals in significant depth; the advice of the group was instrumental in shaping the requirements of the Approval Criteria.

Consultation responses

In total, 100 respondents completed all, or part, of our online consultation for GCSE Welsh Second Language. Of these, 49 participants responded as individuals, 17 responded on behalf of an organisation and 34 did not indicate the basis of their response. The majority of respondents identified themselves as teachers, with the remaining respondents identifying themselves as parents, a university lecturer, a student or “other”. Those representing organisations, represented schools a governmental organisation or “other”.

In addition to responses to the online questionnaire, we also received 163 representations by email. These were sent as part of a campaign organised by Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg in response to our consultation and each email was identically worded. The emails called on us not to reform the current GCSE Welsh Second Language qualification but to withdraw it completely, along with the newly reformed GCSE Welsh (first language) qualification, and to replace them with a single GCSE Welsh qualification based on a single language continuum. This was not a proposal on which we consulted and, for the reasons set out below, such a course of action is not currently possible for us to adopt. The responses received by email did not respond to any of the questions posed in our consultation so could not be included in the detailed analysis of responses to our proposals set out later in this report.

Welsh Government is currently developing a new Curriculum for Wales. As part of these reforms, it aims to remove the current distinction between Welsh and Welsh Second Language and to introduce a single approach to teaching Welsh based on a continuum of progression. We are working closely with Welsh Government as it develops the new curriculum. We are particularly interested in how to define a continuum for language acquisition and proficiency that will support and enable effective teaching and learning, as well as reliable, valid and manageable assessment. This work is still in its early stages and until it is progressed further, it is not possible to identify the design requirements of a new qualification or qualifications to support the intended approach.

In the meantime, the shortcomings of the current GCSE Welsh Second Language qualification are well documented and the Welsh Government is committed to withdrawing the short course option. During this period of transition towards a new curriculum, therefore, we consider that the interest of learners will be best served through improving the design of the GCSE Welsh Second Language qualification based on the existing curriculum. We believe that if we do not act now to make the improvements that can be made then we would be failing to act in the best interests of learners. During the development and introduction of this new qualification, we will continue to work with Welsh Government and other stakeholders to support the successful introduction of the new curriculum and any qualifications required to support it.

Summary of proposals and decisions

i. Aligning the new qualification to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)⁵

We proposed that the new GCSE Welsh Second Language specification should be designed to align with the common reference levels of the CEFR. We also identified the specific levels of the CEFR to which we proposed the new qualification should be aligned.

Decision:

We have drafted the detailed requirements of the Approval Criteria to reflect the levels of the CEFR. We have not gone as far as to require the qualification itself to be formally referenced to the CEFR as it is developed, as such a requirement would require an entirely new approach to developing the qualification to be agreed, which would likely lead to a delay in its introduction.

We will consider whether a more formal mapping exercise against the CEFR, and possibly against other reference frameworks for language acquisition, would be a helpful step to take as part of the development work on the new curriculum. Such an exercise could also encompass other related qualifications including GCSEs in Welsh language, English language and Modern Foreign Languages.

ii. Aims and objectives

We proposed that the aims of the new qualification should, among other things, focus on developing learners' speaking and listening skills and their ability to interact confidently in day to day situations and contexts. We also proposed the specific listening, reading, speaking and writing skills that the qualification should support learners to achieve.

⁵ [Common European Framework of Reference for Languages](#)

Decision:

We have refined the aims and objectives set out in the Approval Criteria. To ensure that the aims are as focussed as possible, we have moved some of the detail about the specific expectations for listening, speaking, reading and writing into the section on required content. We have also increased the focus on the development of language acquisition skills and the ability to communicate and interact confidently and spontaneously. We have also emphasised that the qualification should prepare learners for using Welsh in further study, in the workplace and in their community.

iii. Content

We proposed that the content to be assessed in the new qualification should reflect and build on the proposed aims and objectives for the subject. We also set out the main expectations for how the new specification should require learners to engage with and use written and spoken language.

Decision:

As we developed the detailed requirements to reflect these proposals, we have refined and amended our proposals.

We have added considerable detail to clarify the depth and breadth of what learners must be able to demonstrate when listening, reading, speaking and writing. For each skill, we have identified the range of written and spoken language that learners should be able to engage with and produce. We have deliberately avoided listing specific forms of written and spoken texts (such as letters, diaries etc.) that learners must be familiar with and focused instead on knowledge and understanding of how language is used differently for different purposes.

We have stipulated that the new qualification must set a broad range of contexts for teaching and assessment. This approach is in contrast to the current qualification which refers to specific, narrowly defined topic areas that increase the risk of predictable assessments and encourage learners to memorise specific stock phrases.

Many respondents raised concerns about the number of teaching hours that are currently timetabled for the subject. We have therefore required that the specification for the new qualification must stipulate that it has been designed to be delivered over two years with 120 guided learning hours. As with all qualifications, it remains at the discretion of individual schools how much teaching time they decide to allocate to courses leading to any one qualification. Nevertheless, we consider that it is important to make clear that the qualification has been designed to require a similar amount of teaching time as other full course GCSE qualifications.

iv. Translingual skills

We proposed that the assessment of reading and writing skills should include at least one translingual task in which students must write a response in Welsh to a writing task set in English.

Decision:

We have decided that a more relevant task for learners at this level is to require them to complete a simple translation task from English into Welsh, in which they must convey the same message and meaning of short and simple texts, making accurate use of Welsh.

We believe that such a requirement effectively balances the need to ensure that the demands of the skill to be assessed are appropriate to the learners while ensuring that learners develop their ability to operate in two languages.

This type of activity can help to develop learners' vocabulary and understanding of grammar and the importance of accuracy when conveying meaning.

v. Assessment objectives

We proposed that the assessment objectives should separate the four elements of listening, speaking, reading and writing, with an equal weighting on each. This would not mean that each skill must be assessed independently of the other, but it does mean that each assessment task should make clear which of the assessment objectives it is targeting and to what extent.

Decision:

We have retained our proposal of four separate assessment objectives, albeit with a slightly different weighting to that which we proposed. In setting the weighting for the assessment objectives we took into account the need to promote an integrated approach to the development and acquisition of each skill, as well as the need to consider how the weightings relate to GCSE Welsh Language. The weightings we have set represent an overall increase in emphasis on speaking and listening skills, which are currently weighted 40%. They also reflect our decision not to reintroduce a stand-alone externally set assessment of listening.

vi. Assessment methods

In our consultation we proposed that non-examination assessment should contribute 50% to the total assessment weighting of the qualification. We also proposed that 15% of marks for the qualification should be allocated to an

externally set listening assessment, and that this should form part of the 50% non-exam assessment weighting.

Decision

We have decided that the new qualification must include a non-examination assessment, contributing 50% of the qualification's assessment weighting, reflecting the combined weighting for the speaking and listening assessment objectives. Responses to the consultation indicated some concern and confusion about what type of assessment this would mean in practice, with many expressing their dissatisfaction with the current controlled assessment arrangements. To be clear, we do not expect that the non-examination assessment of the new qualification will mirror the current controlled assessment arrangements. We expect that this assessment will directly assess learners' listening and speaking skills, including their ability to understand, respond to and interact spontaneously using spoken language.

To ensure this, the Approval Criteria require that:

- non-examination assessments must be undertaken on specific dates set by the awarding body
- any assessment of speaking skills must require learners to communicate and interact verbally in a spontaneous manner
- the design and administrative arrangements of non-examination assessments must ensure the validity and reliability of results.

We have decided not to require 15% of marks for the qualification to be allocated to an externally set listening assessment. In reaching this decision we were persuaded by concerns raised about the practical challenges of administering a listening exam to a very large cohort. We were also persuaded by views expressed in the working group that it is important to ensure that sufficient weighting is given to assessing listening skills within a context of interaction.

vii. Assessment structure

We proposed that the assessment of the new qualification should be tiered and linear. That is, that all assessments should take place at the end of the course, at either foundation or higher tier. We further proposed that if the qualification was tiered, then learners should be able to choose to enter a mixture of higher and foundation tier assessment components.

Decision

We have decided not to adopt the assessment structure that we proposed in our consultation. The new qualification will not be tiered and it will be possible for up to half of the non-examination assessment, 25% of the overall qualification, to be taken before the end of the course.

Our decision not to require tiering was informed by the approach taken in the new GCSE Welsh language qualification, which is also not tiered. This means that question papers can be designed so that each question is accessible to and assesses the full ability range of the cohort.

We have permitted some proportion of assessment before the end of the course. This is in response to points made in consultation responses and in the working group, that some early assessment in the course can help to build confidence and motivate learners to improve in later parts of the course.

Summary of Consultation Responses

Referencing the expected level of the new qualification

We looked at the following levels of the CEFR when considering where to position the new GCSE Welsh Second Language qualification.

CEFR level	Description
A2 Basic user: Elementary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). • Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. • Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.
B1 Independent user: Intermediate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. • Can deal with most situations likely to arise in an area where the language is spoken. • Can produce simple connected text on topics that are familiar or of personal interest. • Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes and ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.
B2 Independent user: Upper intermediate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialization. • Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party. • Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.

Table 1. showing the levels within the CEFR

For the reformed GCSE Welsh Second Language qualification, we proposed that it should be designed to align with the common reference levels of the CEFR.

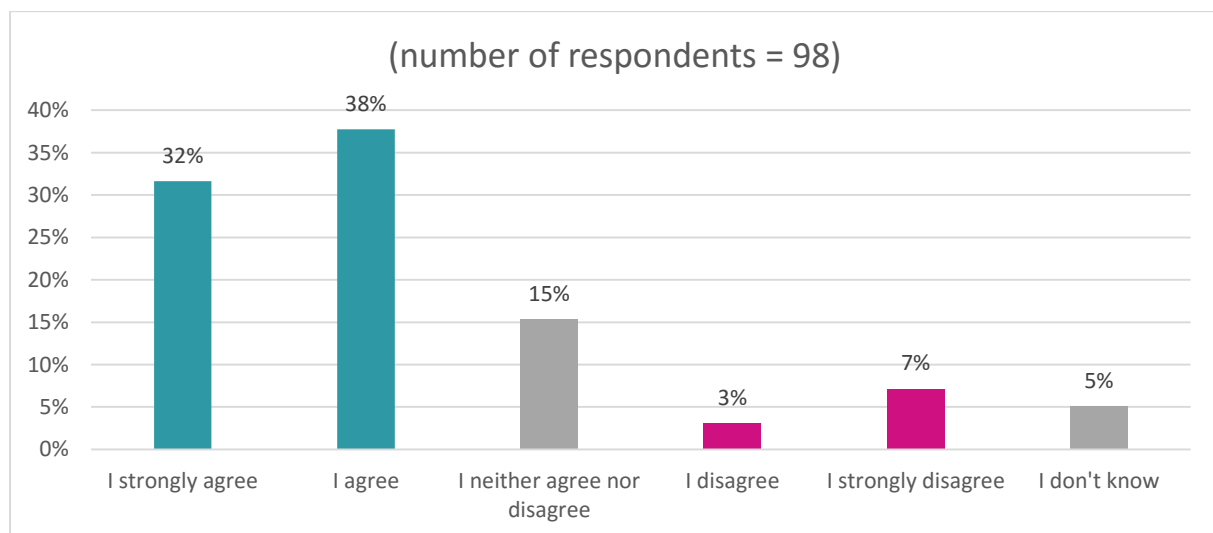
We also proposed that the reformed GCSE Welsh Second Language qualification should be designed to enable learners to achieve level B1 and to aim for developing some elements of level B2.

In our consultation we asked:

Question 1a: To what extent do you agree/disagree that the new GCSE Welsh Second Language should be aligned to the CEFR?

As indicated in Chart 1 below, the majority (70%) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the proposal, 10% disagreed or strongly disagreed, 15% neither agreed or disagreed and 5% did not know.

Chart 1. Responses to question 1a of the GCSE Welsh Second Language consultation



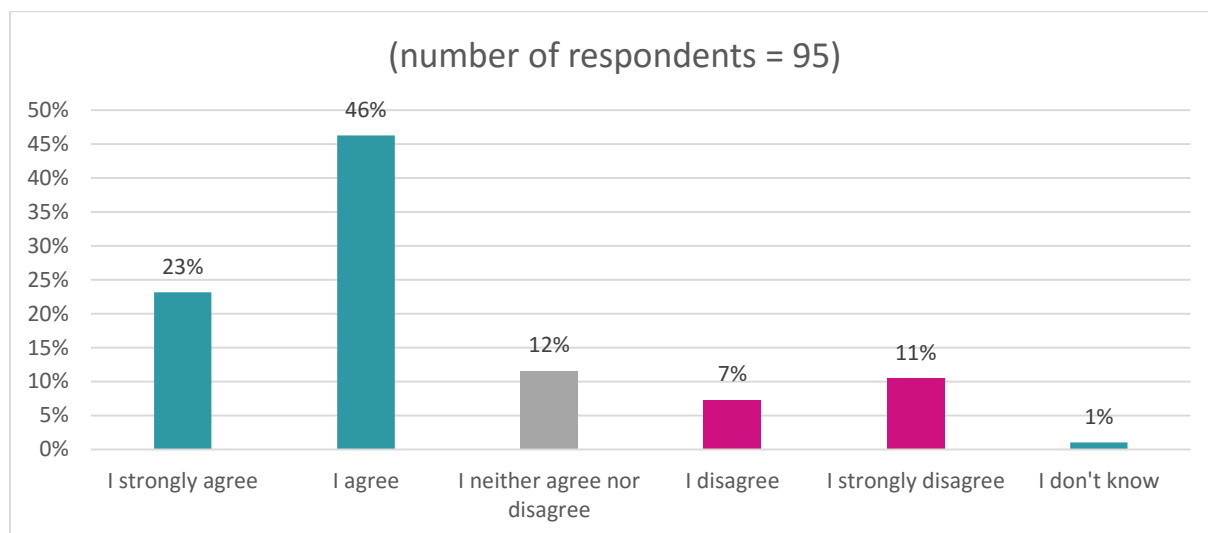
Comments made by respondents who either agreed or strongly agreed indicated that referencing the qualification to a framework such as the CEFR would provide a fair basis for measuring Welsh alongside other languages and help to provide a basis for a continuum approach.

In our consultation we asked:

Question 1b: To what extent do you agree/disagree that the new GCSE Welsh Second Language should be designed to enable learners to achieve and demonstrate Welsh language ability at levels B1 and B2 on the CEFR?

As Chart 2 below shows, 69% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the proposal, 18% disagreed or strongly disagreed, 12% neither agreed nor disagreed and 1% did not know.

Chart 2. Responses to question 1b of the GCSE Welsh Second Language consultation



Comments made by respondents who either agreed or strongly agreed suggested that the proposed level corresponds broadly to the current level of the qualification.

A point raised by several respondents, irrespective of whether they agreed with the proposal or not, indicated a concern about the amount of time that is devoted to teaching Welsh in the classroom and that the range of ability covered by the qualification needed to allow for the variation in learners' exposure to the Welsh language from region to region and school to school.

Among those who stated that they neither agreed nor disagreed with the proposal, some were of the view that B2 was a too ambitious standard to aim for, while others were concerned that B2 was the lowest standard that should be aimed for.

Aims and objectives

For the reformed GCSE Welsh Second Language, we proposed the following subject aims and objectives, that the specification should:

- focus on developing learners' speaking and listening skills
- prepare learners for using Welsh in further study, in the workplace and in their community
- focus on developing language skills and strategies to interact confidently in day to day situations and contexts
- foster curiosity about and enjoyment of the Welsh language
- prepare candidates for further study of Welsh and in Welsh.

We further proposed that the reformed GCSE Welsh Second Language qualification should be designed to:

1. Encourage learners to enjoy communicating through Welsh and to practise and develop their confidence and ability to use the language in a range of personal, social and vocational situations.
2. Develop the speaking, listening, reading and writing skills required by learners to:
 - express themselves verbally, to respond to everyday situations and to elicit information from others;
 - read and understand a range of routine texts, including complex sentence structures within a familiar subject area;
 - write using a range of different forms on familiar subject matter;
 - select and adapt speech and writing to different situations and purposes;
 - develop language learning skills to allow them to further improve their grasp of the language.

In line with these aims, we proposed that the new GCSE Second Language specification should be designed to achieve the following learning objectives.

Listening: Understand and respond to different types of spoken language in familiar contexts including conversations, presentations, news reports and television programmes.

Reading: Understand and respond to written language in different written forms written for a variety of purposes and audiences, including letters, articles, blogs, emails, web pages, online forums, marketing materials, reference and literary texts.

Speaking: Communicate and interact spontaneously and effectively in frequently encountered situations describe experiences, give reasons and explanations, make plans, give opinions, and relate the plot of books and films, and describe reactions. Use a range of strategies to support and sustain effective communication, including asking questions to clarify meaning and elicit information.

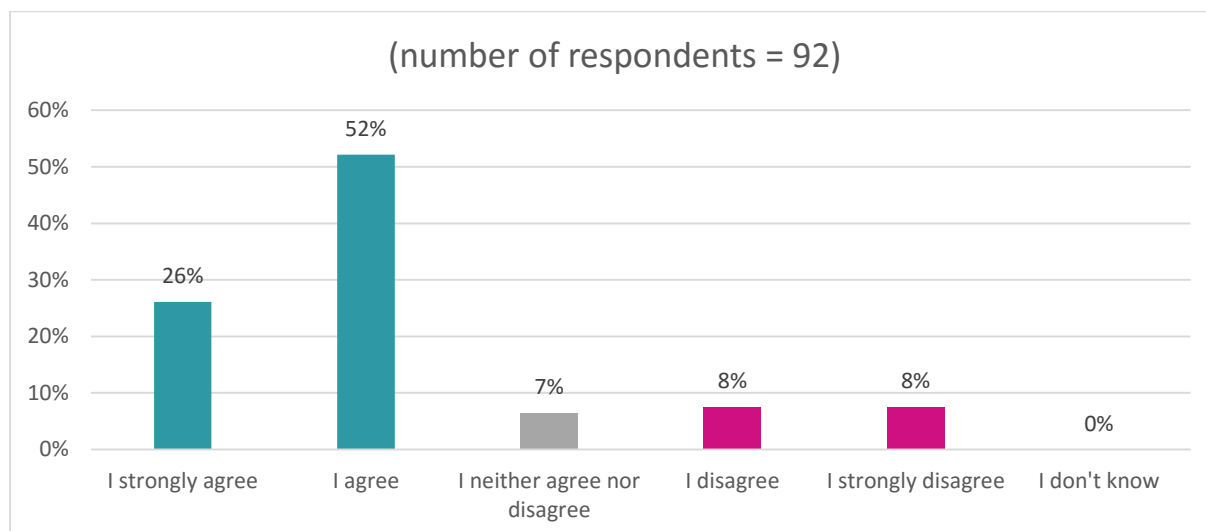
Writing: Write for different purposes and audiences on matters of personal interest expressing opinions, relating information, giving descriptions and explanations, using a range of written forms, including letters, emails, reports, articles and essays.

In our consultation we asked respondents:

Question 2: To what extent do you agree/disagree with the proposed aims and objectives for GCSE Welsh Second Language?

As illustrated in Chart 3 below, 78% of those who responded to question 2 agreed or strongly agreed with the proposed aims and objectives, 16% disagreed or strongly disagreed and 7% neither agreed nor disagreed.

Chart 3. Responses to question 2 of the GCSE Welsh Second Language consultation.



A common theme raised by respondents, whether or not they agreed with the proposals, was the need to secure sufficient teaching time if the stated aims and objectives are to be achieved.

Subject content

We proposed that the content required in GCSE Welsh Second Language specifications must reflect the aims and objectives for the qualification in a way that promotes an integrated approach to the development of speaking, listening, reading and writing skills. To that end, we proposed that the design of content for the new GCSE Welsh Second Language should be subject to the following requirements.

Subject content must:

- be relevant and meaningful to learners across a range of contexts, appropriate to their age and interests;
- reflect Welsh culture and communities.

Subject content must require students to:

- understand and use language for a variety of purposes and with a variety of different audiences, including for personal, education and employment related use
- adapt their language, including informal and formal address and register, to suit different audiences and a range of situations, including domestic, social, education and workplace situations
- understand different types of spoken language, including recorded input from one or more speakers in public and social settings and recorded material from

authentic sources and the media, covering a range of conversations, presentations, news reports and television programmes

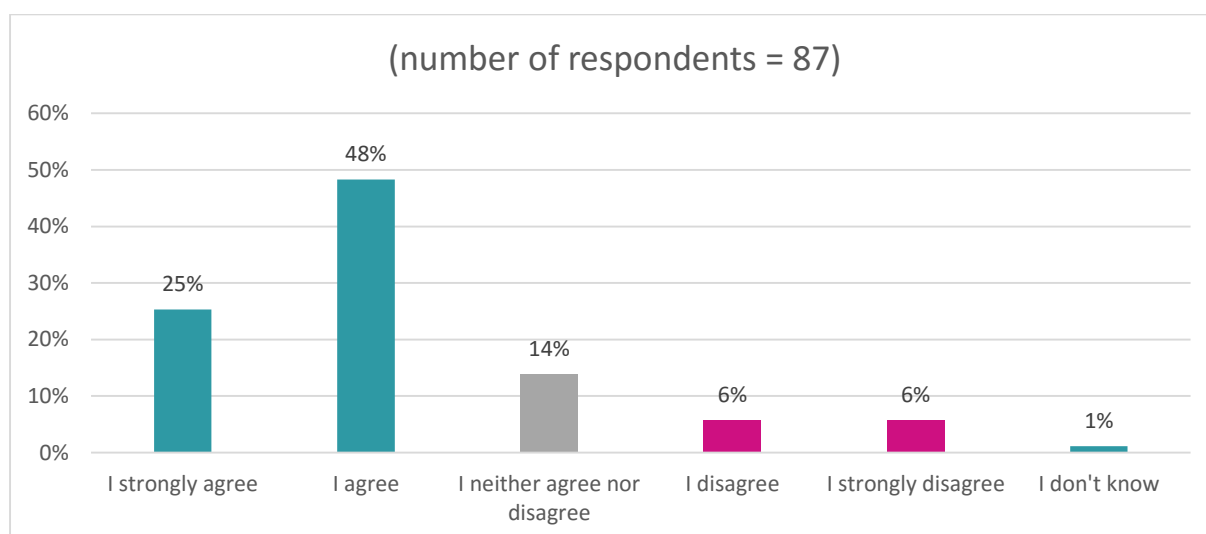
- understand, interpret and critically analyse different types of written language, including relevant personal communication, public information, factual and literary texts, appropriate to the level of the qualification, from a range of letters, articles, blogs, emails, web pages, online forums, reports, marketing materials, reference and literary texts for the purposes of explanation, instruction, narration, description, persuasion and information
- use appropriate grammar, syntax and idiom.

In our consultation we asked:

Question 3: To what extent do you agree/disagree with the proposed subject content for GCSE Welsh Second Language?

As Chart 4 shows, the majority (73%) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the proposed content areas, 12% disagreed or strongly disagreed, 14% neither agreed nor disagreed and 1% did not know.

Chart 4. Responses to question 3 of the GCSE Welsh Second Language consultation.



From the comments given by respondents to support their views, a number raised concerns about the requirement for learners to “understand different types of spoken language”. It appears that some have interpreted this as requiring learners to have a firm grasp of different regional accents and dialects.

Our intention was to indicate that learners should be able to understand language spoken for different purposes and in different settings, rather than a range of colloquial phrases and dialects.

Translingual skills

For the reformed GCSE Welsh Second Language qualification, we proposed that the new GCSE Welsh Second Language qualification should encourage learners to develop translingual skills. Specifically, we proposed that the assessment of reading

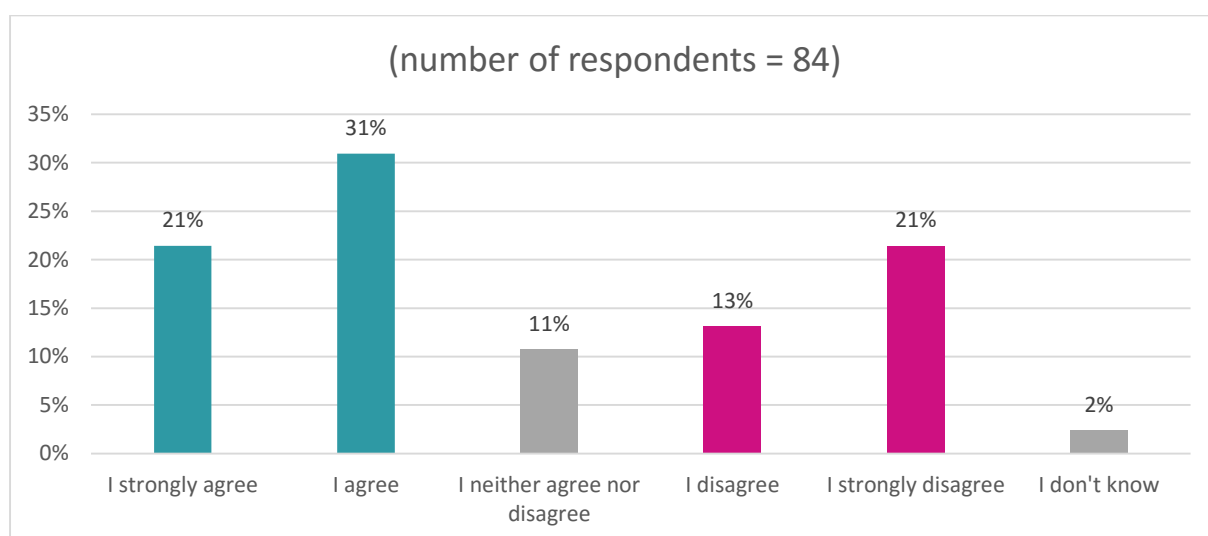
and writing skills should include at least one translingual task in which students must write a response in Welsh to a writing task set in English.

In our consultation we asked:

Question 4: To what extent do you agree/disagree with the proposal that translingual skills should be included within the reformed GCSE Welsh Second Language?

As Chart 5 shows, nearly half (52%) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the proposed content areas, 34% disagreed or strongly disagreed, 11% neither agreed nor disagreed and 2% did not know.

Chart 5. Responses to question 4 of the GCSE Welsh Second Language consultation



As the chart above suggests, this proposal split respondents. Those who agreed with the proposal tended to highlight the necessity of these skills for operating in a bilingual society, as the following comment illustrates:

“Key skill in the modern world - simple translingual skills will support learners and be important in the workplace / college when continuing to use the language in future.”

Those who disagreed with the proposal tended to express the view that these are difficult skills to apply and that they would be too challenging for learners at this level, as indicated by the following quote:

“Very difficult skill which will be quite challenging for second language pupils.”

From the range of comments that this proposal has generated, many of them expressed in very firm terms, it appears that there is a considerable difference of view about what constitutes translingual, or translanguaging skills.

Assessment objectives and weightings

For the reformed GCSE Welsh Second Language qualification, we proposed the following assessment objectives and weightings:

Objective	Requirements	Weighting
AO1	Listening – understanding and responding to different types of spoken language in familiar contexts	25%
AO2	Reading – understanding and responding to a variety of written language about contemporary matters, expressing particular attitudes or opinions and descriptions of events, feelings and preferences	25%
AO3	Speaking – communicate and interact effectively in a range of contexts, including formal and informal settings	25%
AO4	Writing - communicate in writing about matters of personal interest expressing opinions and relating descriptions and explanations for different purposes and audiences	25%

Table 1. showing the proposed assessment objectives and weightings for the reformed GCSE Welsh Second Language.

Assessment: the balance of exam and non-exam assessment.

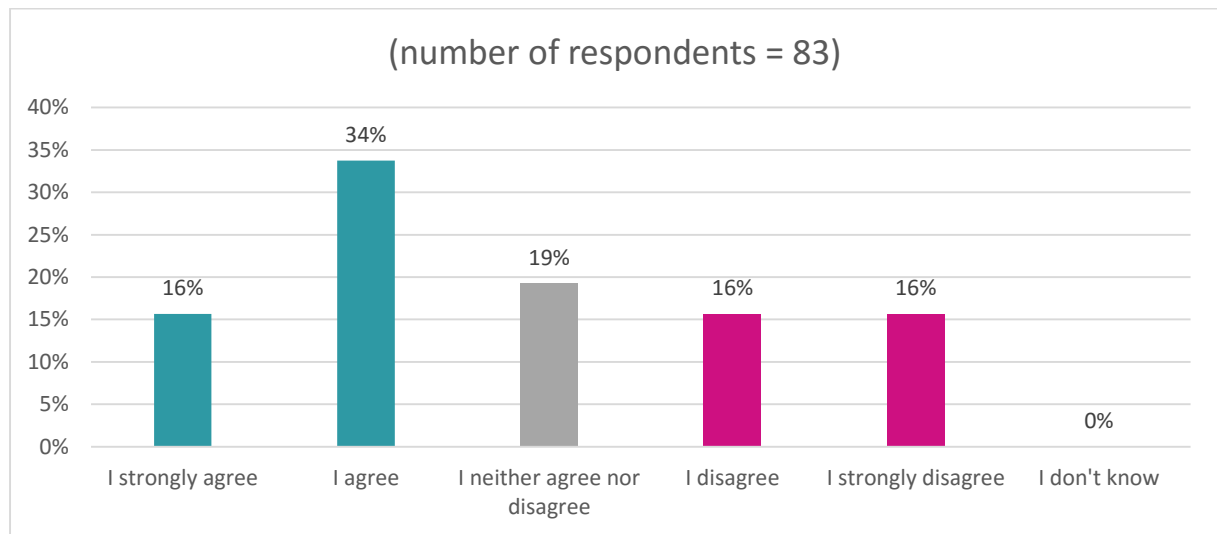
We proposed that the reformed GCSE Welsh Second Language qualification should be wholly assessed through written examinations only.

In relation to the assessment structure we asked:

Question 5a: To what extent do you agree/disagree with the proposal to that non examination assessment will contribute to 50% of the total reformed GCSE Welsh Second Language assessment weighting?

As Chart 6 shows, half (50%) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the proposed content areas, 32% disagreed and 19% neither agreed nor disagreed.

Chart 6. Responses to question 5a of the GCSE Welsh Second Language consultation



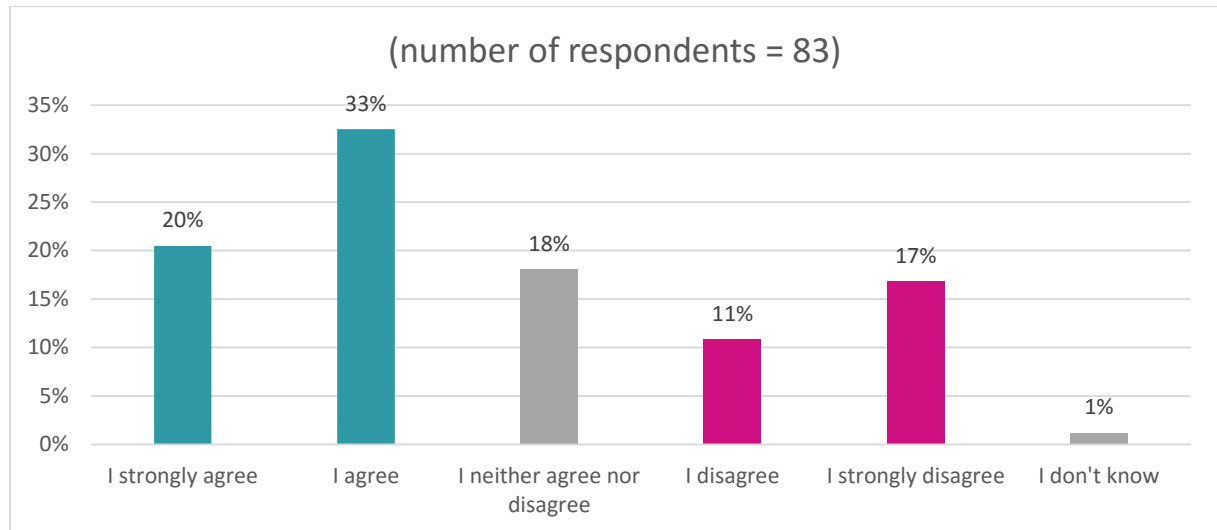
Many of the comments expressed by respondents to this question expressed dissatisfaction with the current controlled assessment tasks and arrangements, stating that they did not support valid assessment, they encouraged scripted and artificial responses, and did not ensure a fair and consistent approach across centres.

In relation to the assessment structure we asked:

5b. To what extent do you agree/disagree with the proposal that at least 15% of marks for the new GCSE Welsh Second Language assessment should be allocated to an externally set listening exam?

As Chart 7 shows, the majority (53%) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the proposed content areas, 28% disagreed or disagreed strongly, 18% neither agreed nor disagreed and 1% did not know.

Chart 7. Responses to question 5b of the GCSE Welsh Second Language consultation



Comments made by those who support this proposal emphasised the importance of developing and practising the skill of listening, some referred to an externally set listening test as an objective and therefore potentially fairer approach than controlled assessment. Those who were less supportive tended to highlight the shortcomings of the previous attempts to assess listening in this way and the practical challenges of running a successful listening test with very large year groups.

Tiering

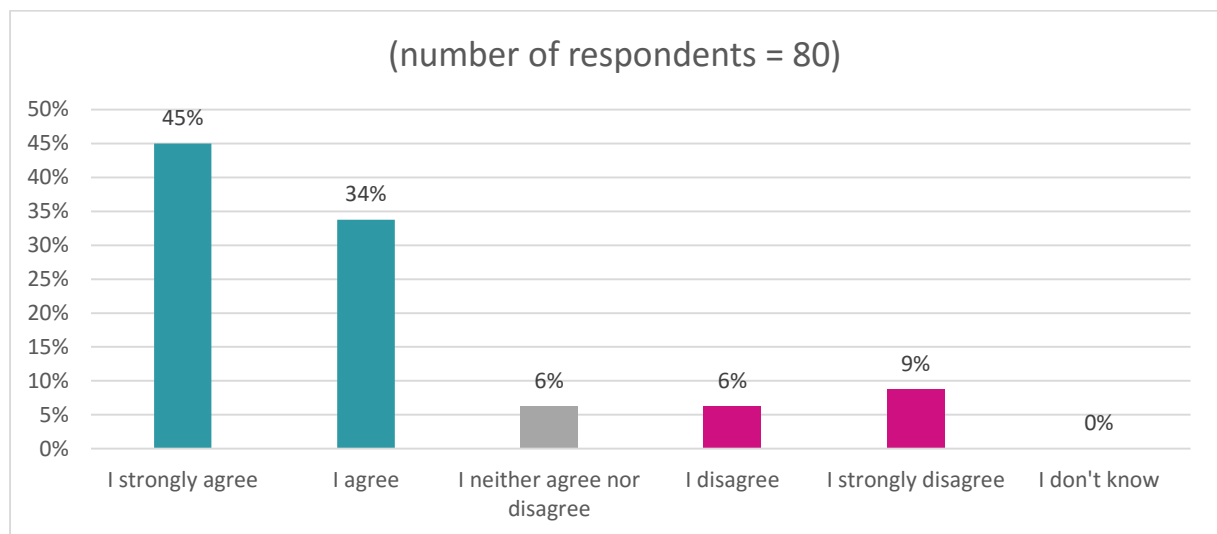
For the reformed GCSE Welsh Second Language qualification, we proposed that it will be tiered.

On whether the qualification should be tiered we asked:

6a. To what extent do you agree/disagree with the proposal that the reformed GCSE Welsh Second Language should be tiered?

As Chart 8 shows, the majority (79%) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the proposal, 15% disagreed or disagreed strongly and 6% neither agreed nor disagreed.

Chart 8. Responses to question 6a of the GCSE Welsh Second Language consultation

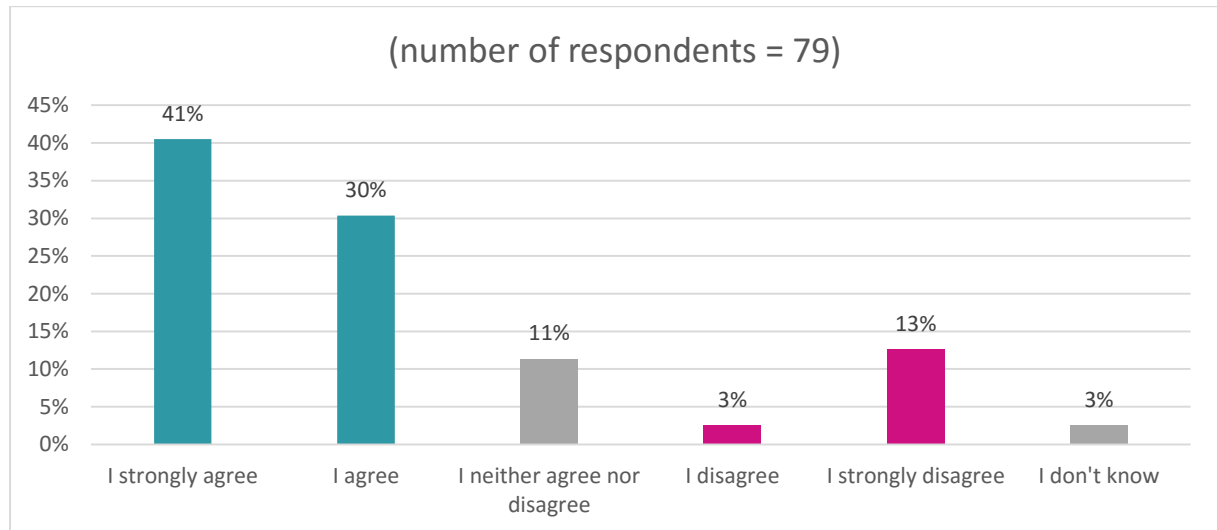


On whether to permit mixed tier entry we asked:

6b. To what extent do you agree/disagree with the proposal that mixed tier entry should be permitted in the new GCSE Welsh Second Language?

As Chart 9 shows, the majority (71%) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the proposed content, 16% disagreed or disagreed strongly, 11% neither agreed nor disagreed and 3% did not know.

Chart 9. Responses to question 6b of the GCSE Welsh Second Language consultation



Comments made by those who supported tiered approach to assessment tended to reference the need to ensure that the qualification is accessible to the whole range of ability. For example, one respondent stated that tiering and mixed tier entry would be “more fair for less able children”.

Some of those who indicated agreement used the comments to qualify their support by adding a condition that there should be an expectation that the majority of the cohort would sit the higher paper., The following quote is an example of this:

“... I strongly believe that it should be compulsory for 80% of the cohort to sit the higher tier; if not, teachers will aim for the foundation tier for the majority which will lead to a poor grasp of the language. There should be an alternative approach where the majority of the cohort sit the higher tier.”

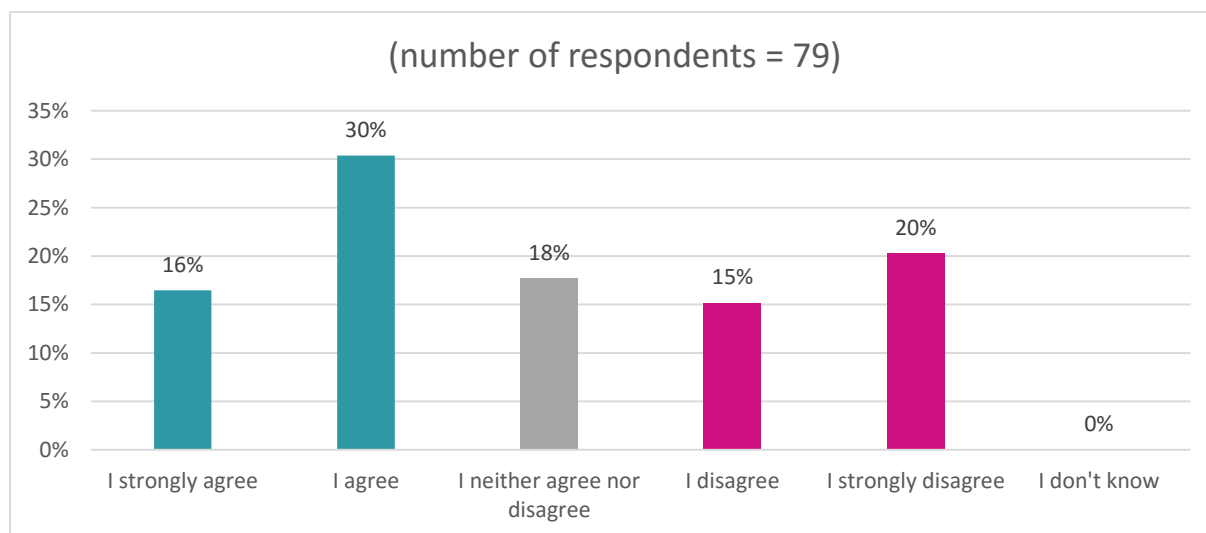
Of those who did not agree with the proposals, comments given indicated a concern that learners may not be incentivised to aim for the highest grade possible. Another point made was that in a language qualification, the standard of the assessment is often determined by the quality of the response rather than the ‘difficulty’ of the question. Others felt that a tiered approach would not be aligned to the new GCSE Welsh language approach, nor with the idea of developing a single approach to assessment based on a continuum.

Assessment structure

7. To what extent do you agree/disagree with the proposal that the assessment of reformed GCSE Welsh Second Language should be linear?

As Chart 10 shows, 46% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the proposed content areas, 35% disagreed or disagreed strongly and 18% neither agreed nor disagreed.

Chart 10. Responses to question 7 of the GCSE Welsh Second Language consultation



As the chart above indicates, respondents were reasonably divided on this question. This is reflected in their comments. Of those who commented on this question, some argued in favour of retaining the current, fully unitised model. Others gave more nuanced responses which suggested support for less assessment throughout the course than the current model, but still giving learners an opportunity to complete some of their assessment before the end of the course. Respondents stated:

“A unitised approach works well at the moment. I understand that each of the skills improves each other but studying units in the first year gives pupils confidence rather than leaving.”

“We understand the argument in favour of summative assessment, but we believe that the pressure on children during the summer exams is extreme and allowing pupils to sit a limited number of units in the previous January should be considered.”

“Although I agree that the inter-relationship and development of all skills can improve all skills. The learning and teaching elements must be considered. If learners don't complete any skill until the end of the course, it places far more pressure on learners to perform in assessments (particularly when every other subject has its own requirements).”

“Language learning consists of a great deal of confidence. The opportunity for students to sit one module and feel confident is important.”

Support and Resources

In all our consultations, we asked respondents the following question:

What support and resources do you feel centres and teachers may require to achieve maximum readiness to deliver the revised specification? Please provide comments

As previously noted in this report, respondents to the online consultation commented throughout their responses on the need to be clear about the teaching time required to deliver the new qualification.

Other suggestions noted the need for more teachers to receive training on how to teach Welsh, centrally organised and locally delivered INSET training and CPD events to introduce the new specification, online teaching and learning resources to support the new course, sample assessment materials and tasks to practise and develop skills in the classroom.

We will share the points raised with the awarding body, regional consortia and Welsh Government.

Impact on individuals with protected characteristics

In all our consultations, we asked respondents the following question:

Please highlight below if you feel any of this proposal has the potential to have a positive or negative impact on individuals with protected characteristics and whether any of the proposal would cause accessibility issues for learners in Wales.

For the reformed GCSE Welsh Second Language consultation, the following potential impacts on individuals with protected characteristics were raised.

One respondent noted that: “A linear exam, with no frequent repetition and an assessment that shows actual use of the language will disadvantage those with any kind of barriers to learning.”

Another noted that, in relation to the translanguaging proposal, learners whose first language is not English nor Welsh might be disadvantaged by a task requiring them to operate in both languages.

**Further
information**

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