Qualifications Wales is the independent regulator of qualifications in Wales. We are here to protect learners and promote public confidence in qualifications and the qualifications system.

Reforming Qualifications

Education in Wales is embarking on a significant period of change, and at the centre of these changes is an innovative curriculum for 3 to 16-year olds.

To complement the new curriculum, we want the next generation of 16-year olds to take globally respected qualifications that inspire and prepare them for life, learning and work. We want to be sure that any changes we make lead to long-lasting improvements and stability for the qualifications system.

Vision

Our vision is that 16-year olds take globally respected qualifications that inspire and prepare them for life, learning and work.

Achieving this vision and developing our approach to future qualifications will require a collective effort with input from stakeholders across the education system and beyond. We will work openly and collaboratively with others to agree how qualifications will need to change.

Qualifications should be designed to promote positive teaching and learning and should not be the sole means by which 14-16-year olds engage with and experience the curriculum. We want to make sure we get the balance right.

Qualifications work best when there is a good level of public understanding about their value and why they are needed, who and what they are for, and how to interpret them. Through our open and collaborative approach, we want to create a sense of ownership in the classroom as well as in society.

Purpose of consultation

This consultation is about working together so that everyone can play their part in shaping the future qualifications offer. We want to hear from everybody with an interest.

This consultation asks for views on our proposals for:

• Key principles that should apply to all publicly funded qualifications taken at 16;
• Keeping the GCSE name and reviewing existing GCSEs to identify how they could be more forward-looking and better support the purposes of the new curriculum;
• Redeveloping the Skills Challenge Certificate to continue offering learners the choice of a standalone qualification that assesses wider skills.

Future work

This is the first of a series of consultations around qualifications for the new curriculum, and your feedback will help us to shape our approach to this important work. The following diagram illustrates the timing and sequencing of our planned programme of work.

For more information or to take part in the consultation, please e-mail reform@qualificationswales.org or go to www.qualificationswales.org
Consultation on:
- Principles for qualifications taken at 16 that are eligible for public funding
- Keeping the GCSE name as part of the qualification offer
- Redesigning the Skills Challenge Certificate as a free-standing qualification

**Next steps:**
- Summary of responses to the consultation and resulting decisions
- Advice to the Minister for Education

**Consultation on:**
- Which subject areas will form part of the public offer
- Qualifications to support the continuum for Welsh language learning
- Design principles for future GCSE qualifications (if retained)
- More detailed proposals on standalone qualifications to assess “wider skills” (if retained)

**Next steps:**
- Summary of responses to the consultations and resulting decisions
- Confirmation of timeline for developing new and updated qualifications
- Consider the regulatory requirements needed to put the vision and principles into practice

**Consultations on individual qualifications:**
- Detailed design features and content of new or updated qualifications

**Next steps:**
- Consider the responses to the consultations and report on the outcomes
- Publish approval criteria for individual subjects

**From 2021:**
- Awarding bodies develop new and updated qualifications to meet regulatory requirements
- Requirements for essential teaching and learning resources to support qualifications identified and fed into strategic commissioning model