



By email to all schools and colleges in Wales

15 July 2020

Dear colleague

Summer 2021

I wrote to you on 3 July with an update on arrangements for summer 2020, the November series and summer 2021 planning. Since then we have been looking at the complex issues related to next year's GCSE, AS and A level and Skills Challenge Certificate qualifications and working with WJEC to identify the best approach in these uncertain times.

We have required WJEC to make appropriate adaptations to GCSEs due to be awarded in summer 2021, and we have published the regulatory requirements^{1 2} that WJEC must follow when making adaptations.

WJEC ran a stakeholder engagement exercise with centres from 3 July to 9 July, to gather views on their proposals for GCSEs. They are now finalising the adaptations and will be communicating these before the end of the summer term. This has not been a simple process since no single adaptation suits all qualifications, and therefore, each qualification has had to be considered on an individual basis. Generally, the adaptations either support compliance with potential social distancing requirements or streamline assessment to allow more flexibility. The aim of introducing these adaptations is to ease the assessment arrangements for learners and centres, whilst retaining reliable, valid and credible qualifications.

In March, we announced that learners who were entered for units in year 10 would not need to take those units in year 11 and the GCSE result would be projected from the year 11 units. This was a time when the potential impact of Covid-19 into next year was unknown. Now, four months on, when considering WJEC's proposed

¹ [Requirements for Adapting assessments for GQ Qualifications in 2021](#)

² [Special Conditions for Adapting assessments for GQ Qualifications in 2021](#)

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adaptions for summer 2021, we find there are some qualifications where this approach cannot be sustained while also making adaptations for next summer that retain the validity required in order for qualifications to be awarded. So, in some cases, WJEC's proposals require centres to enter learners for units they may have been entered for in summer 2020 to ensure that enough of the qualification is assessed in summer 2021 for a grade to be awarded. More details on these qualifications will be outlined by WJEC, and we hope that centres understand the rationale for this necessary change in approach.

We know that when schools and colleges reopen in September, teachers will be doing everything they can to support learners so that by the summer 2021 examinations they have, as far as possible, developed the full range of knowledge, understanding and skills in their subject to enable them to be successful and progress. Our aim is that the adaptations put in place will go some way to reducing the assessment for learners and allow teachers more time to deliver the qualification content.

WJEC have considered adaptations for AS and A levels for summer 2021 within the same regulatory framework as that established for GCSEs and are currently carrying out a similar engagement exercise with centres. We encourage staff in centres to respond to this engagement. The proposed adaptations to A levels are on a smaller scale than for GCSEs. However, some adaptations may be required to accommodate potential social distancing rules and to make assessment arrangements more proportionate where this is possible and does not undermine the validity of the qualification for progression to Higher Education. We will update you shortly on plans for AS, A levels and the Skills Challenge Certificate qualifications.

Awarding bodies offering vocational qualifications will also consider whether any adaptations are needed for assessments from September 2020 onwards. We have published a [statement](#) on the proposed approach to adaptations to vocational qualifications and will issue more information as soon as possible. We are working closely with Ofqual to ensure a common set of principles will be followed by awarding bodies.

We appreciate there is a lot of information for centres to keep track of so will continue to update the Coronavirus (Covid-19) area of our website with information related to summer 2020, November 2020 and summer 2021 exams.

If you have any suggestions for information you would find useful in future, please get in touch at enquiries@qualificationswales.org.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Philip Blaker". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "P".

Philip Blaker

Chief Executive