

Reform of the Advanced Skills Challenge Certificate (SCC) qualification and the Advanced Welsh Baccalaureate Framework

Analysis of consultation responses

Presented to Qualifications Wales by Arad Research

February 2021



Contents

- Glossary 3**
- Executive Summary 4**
- 1. Introduction14**
 - 1.1 About the consultation..... 14
 - 1.2 Approach to the analysis 15
 - 1.3 About this report..... 15
- 2. Overarching themes17**
- 3. The Advanced Welsh Baccalaureate Framework.....19**
 - 3.1 Proposal 1 19
- 4. The New Advanced Skills Challenge Certificate23**
 - 4.1 Proposal 2..... 23
 - 4.2 Proposal 3..... 26
 - 4.3 Proposal 4..... 30
 - 4.4 Proposal 5..... 35
 - 4.5 Proposal 6..... 38
 - 4.6 Proposal 7..... 43
 - 4.7 Proposal 8..... 46
 - 4.8 Proposal 9..... 50
 - 4.9 Proposal 10..... 53
- 5. Integrated Impact Assessment57**
 - 5.1 Regulatory Impact Assessment..... 57
 - 5.2 Equalities Impact Assessment..... 59
 - 5.3 Welsh Language Impact Assessment 61
- 6. Next steps.....64**

Glossary

| Term | Description |
|--------------|--|
| Advanced SCC | Advanced Skills Challenge Certificate (ASCC is sometimes used in quotations to refer to this qualification) |
| ALN | Additional Learning Needs |
| FE | Further education |
| GCE | General Certificate of Education |
| GCSE | General Certificate of Secondary Education |
| HE | Higher education |
| HEI | Higher education institution |
| KS3 | Key Stage 3 |
| KS4 | Key Stage 4 |
| UCAS | Universities and Colleges Admissions Service |
| UMS | Uniform Mark Scale: used as part of the Skills Challenge Certificate for reporting, recording and aggregating candidates' component marks. |
| (UN) SDGs | (United Nations') Sustainable Development Goals |
| Welsh Bacc | Welsh Baccalaureate (WB is sometimes used in quotations to refer to this framework) |

Executive Summary

This report presents an analysis of the responses received to Qualifications Wales' public consultation, 'Skilled for the Future', which ran between 21 September and 13 November 2020.

In the consultation, Qualifications Wales sought views on proposed changes to the Advanced SCC qualification and the overarching Advanced Welsh Baccalaureate (Welsh Bacc) framework. The full consultation document, 'Skilled for the Future', and the associated Integrated Impact Assessment are [available online on Qualifications Wales' website](#).

Qualifications Wales received **428 responses** to the consultation. Arad Research undertook the analysis of all responses on behalf of Qualifications Wales. This included:

- analysing responses to the 10 'closed questions', requiring respondents to state the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the proposals; and
- reviewing written comments provided by respondents to explain their answers to each of the 10 closed questions and categorising this information into overarching themes.

This Executive Summary provides a short overview of the findings from this analysis. Detailed findings are presented in the remainder of this report.

Throughout the report the themes and points presented are drawn from comments made by respondents and do not represent the views of the report authors or Qualifications Wales.

Overarching themes

The analysis identified overarching and recurring themes which respondents raised across multiple questions.

Respondents commented that:

- The proposals would help establish a qualification that is **clearer** for learners, practitioners and stakeholders;
- The proposals have the potential to benefit learners by making the qualification more **manageable and engaging**;
- The proposals could **reduce the workload** associated with the qualification from the perspective of practitioners;
- The existing arrangements disadvantage some learners and the proposals for the new Advanced SCC would potentially be **fairer and more equitable** for all learners of all ability levels to develop and demonstrate their skills;
- The proposals would help learners develop and apply **skills that are valuable and relevant** to continuing learning and future employment; and
- The proposals – including the focus on the four Integral Skills – are **aligned with the four purposes of the new Curriculum for Wales** and provide continuity for learners.

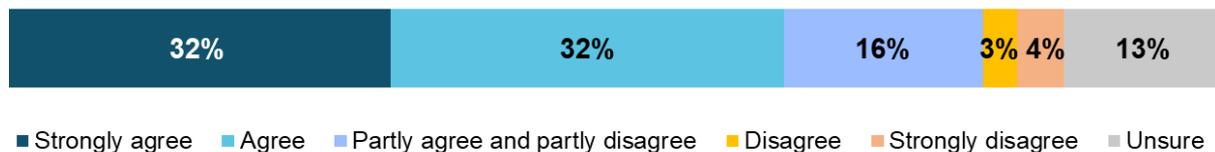
Respondents also identified a number of recurring issues requiring further consideration, such as a need for further **guidance to support the implementation** of the Advanced SCC, including further information on the proposed approach to assessment.

A small number of respondents expressed concerns that the proposals could devalue the qualification by **removing the Welsh Bacc brand** and by leading to a **perceived lack of rigour and lack of parity** with other level 3 qualifications.

Summary of responses

Respondents specified the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with each of Qualifications Wales' proposals and provided written comments to further explain their views. The key themes arising most frequently in these comments are summarised below.

Proposal 1. The overarching Advanced Welsh Baccalaureate framework should be discontinued allowing a focus on the Advanced Skills Challenge Certificate as a standalone qualification.



Respondents agreed with the proposal because they felt:

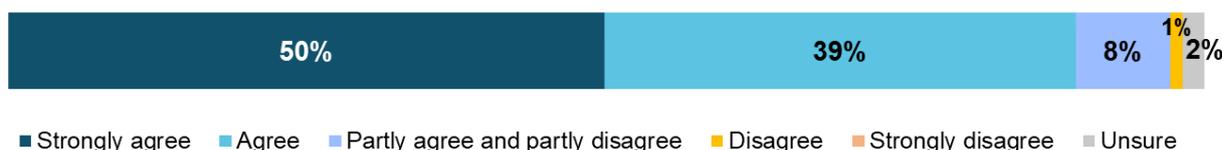
- It would make the qualification clearer for learners, centres and stakeholders to understand;
- The current system placed some learners at a disadvantage if they did not pass the Advanced Welsh Bacc framework because of their other exam results;
- The Advanced SCC would be more highly valued and recognised as a standalone qualification; and
- It would reduce the workload associated with the qualification, making it more manageable for learners and teachers.

Respondents raised some issues for consideration, primarily relating to the implementation of the Advanced SCC. These included identifying a need for training for staff in delivering the qualification and guidance relating to delivery.

Respondents disagreed with the proposal because they felt:

- It was important to preserve the Welsh Bacc brand, which they considered to be well-established and recognised by stakeholders;
- The Advanced Welsh Bacc framework is of particular benefit to some learners, particularly those following vocational routes;
- The Advanced Welsh Bacc framework complemented the Advanced SCC; and
- The Advanced Welsh Bacc framework and Advanced SCC should be optional.

Proposal 2. The purpose of the new Advanced Skills Challenge Certificate should be to enable learners to develop and apply skills in relevant contexts in preparation for employment, lifelong learning and active citizenship.



Respondents agreed with the proposal because they felt:

- It is important that the Advanced SCC remains a skills-based qualification;
- Welcoming of a focus on contexts that are of relevance to learners;
- It would help support learners' progression to higher education, employment and citizenship;
- It was beneficial for the purpose of the Advanced SCC to be aligned with the terminology used in the new Curriculum for Wales;
- It reflected the way in which the Advanced SCC was already being delivered; and
- The changes would make the Advanced SCC simpler and more streamlined.

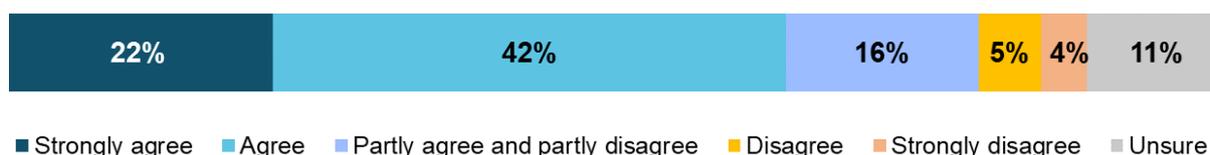
Respondents raised some issues for consideration, including:

- Issues related to the implementation of the proposal, such as a desire for more guidance around the relevant contexts, planning activities and assessment; and
- Ensuring a prominent role for learners in shaping their participation in the qualification.

Respondents disagreed with the proposal because:

- They did not value the Advanced SCC; and
- They felt the skills should be embedded across the curriculum rather than being taught in a standalone qualification.

Proposal 3. To prepare learners for employment, lifelong learning and active citizenship, the new Advanced Skills Challenge Certificate should require learners to develop and demonstrate their skills in contexts based on the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Wales' well-being goals.



Respondents agreed with the proposal because they felt:

- The SDGs and Wales' well-being goals to be important and relevant to learners' lives;
- The emphasis on the goals would help support learners to become active citizens, thereby aligning the Advanced SCC with the new Curriculum for Wales; and

- Including the goals would help to differentiate the Advanced SCC from the National/Foundation SCC and give learners a greater sense of progression between Key Stage 4 and post-16 education.

Respondents raised some issues for consideration, including:

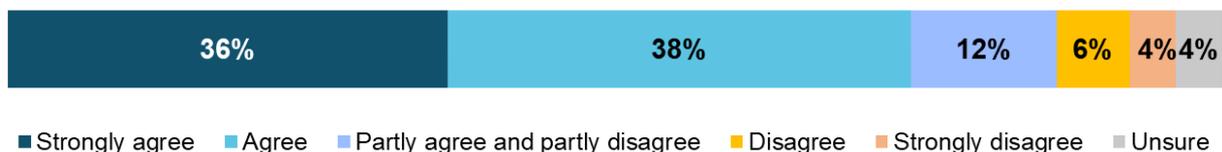
- The need to retain a sufficient degree of flexibility for learners to choose their own topics;
- A desire for further guidance to support implementation, such as detail on how the learning contexts relate to each component, resources and assessment processes;
- How referencing other strategic goals and frameworks within the Advanced SCC would enhance the proposals; and
- That this could be done without redesigning the qualification, noting that these goals were already a key focus of the way the Advanced SCC was delivered.

Respondents disagreed with the proposal because they felt:

- The SDGs and well-being goals would not enhance the Advanced SCC because they felt they are too broad and would not be widely understood; and
- The focus of the Advanced SCC should be on skills rather than content.

Proposal 4. The structure of the Advanced Skills Challenge Certificate should be revised to include a reduction in components from four to three. The three components included in the new Advanced Skills Challenge Certificate should be:

- **Component 1 - Global Community Project**
- **Component 2 - Future Destinations Project**
- **Component 3 - Individual Project**



Respondents agreed with the proposal because they felt:

- Reducing the number of components would improve learner wellbeing by reducing workload and stress, thereby improving the willingness of learners to engage with the qualification;
- It would make the qualification more manageable for teachers and simplify the qualification's delivery structure;
- It would reduce the duplication of learning and assessment;
- It would ensure learners understand and appreciate the purpose of the qualification;
- It would improve learners' understanding of each component and improve their skills development, thereby supporting learners to achieve better outcomes; and
- That specific aspects seemed reasonable, in particular the proposals to introduce the Global Community Project and the Future Destinations Project.

Respondents raised some issues for consideration, including:

- Practical considerations regarding implementation of this proposal, such as exactly what the revised components would include;
- Expressing some reservations about a specific element, in particular how the Community Challenge is valuable and shouldn't be lost during the transition or

querying how combining the Global Citizenship Challenge and Community Challenge would work in practice; and

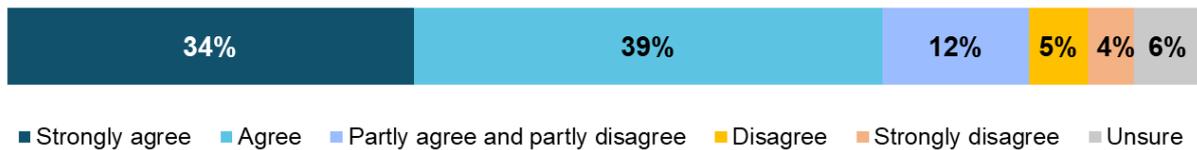
- Expressing differing opinions on some of the terminology changes, in particular the use of the term 'Project'.

Respondents disagreed with the proposal because they felt:

- It would risk reducing the overall content and learning hours of the qualification too much;
- the manageability of the qualification has only been a problem for teachers at Key Stage 4, not at Key Stage 5; and
- Concerned about particular elements of the proposal, for example that valuable elements of the Global Citizenship Challenge and Community Challenge would be diluted if merged into one Global Community Project.

Proposal 5. The three components of the new Advanced Skills Challenge Certificate should contribute to the overall qualification as follows:

- **Global Community Project – 25%**
- **Future Destinations Project – 25%**
- **Individual Project – 50%**



Respondents agreed with the proposal because they felt:

- The Individual Project should contribute 50% of the overall qualification as it requires learners to demonstrate valuable independent study skills;
- The weighting represents a more appropriate balance between components than the current Advanced SCC;
- It would be easier for teachers and learners to understand;
- Learner engagement in the Advanced SCC would improve if they understood exactly how the effort they put into each one contributes to their final grade; and
- It would provide a clear progression structure over a two-year course.

Respondents raised some issues for consideration, including:

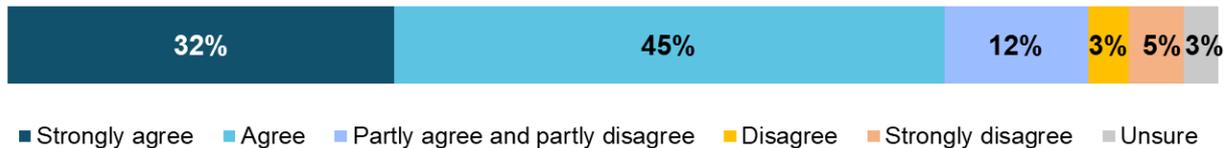
- The quality and amount of work which would be expected as part of these weightings; and
- How each of these components would be assessed, including how rigorous the assessment process would be for each component.

Respondents disagreed with the proposal because they felt alternative weightings would be more appropriate, for example that:

- All three components should be weighted equally to encourage equal commitment from learners in all components; or
- That the Individual Project should not contribute 50% to the qualification as learners' strengths might not always lie in independent study.

Proposal 6. The new Advanced Skills Challenge Certificate should focus on assessing the four Integral Skills of:

- **Critical Thinking and Problem Solving;**
- **Creativity and Innovation;**
- **Planning and Organising; and**
- **Personal Effectiveness.**



Respondents agreed with the proposal because they felt:

- These were the skills valued most by employers and that focusing on transferable skills would help to prepare learners for the workplace;
- The four Integral Skills would support progression to higher education;
- Reducing the skills to be assessed would streamline and simplify the process for teachers;
- Limiting assessment to the four Integral Skills would enable learners to focus in greater detail on their development in these areas; and
- The four Integral Skills are consistent with the aims and vision of the new Curriculum for Wales.

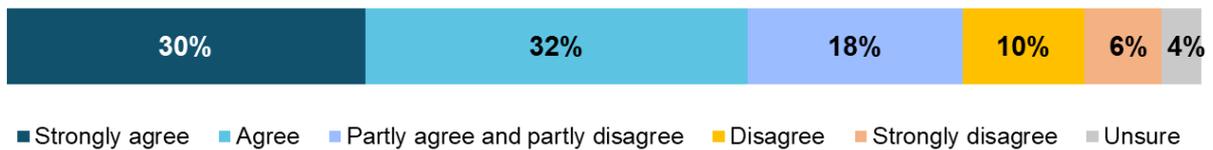
Respondents raised some issues for consideration, including:

- The need for further consideration of the arrangements for assessing the four Integral Skills;
- The need to consult with practitioners on the development of an assessment framework and further guidance, ensuring that assessment does not become 'over-bearing' for practitioners and learners;
- That further thought should be given to continued assessment of literacy and numeracy; and
- Promoting additional skills, including communication, teamwork, financial management and bilingual skills.

Respondents disagreed with the proposal because they felt:

- By no longer explicitly assessing literacy, numeracy and digital literacy, the new qualification may be devalued and criticised for lacking in rigour;
- That removing the assessment of the core skills risks damaging its reputation as an 'academically worthy Level 3 qualification'; and
- These skills should be embedded and developed within core subjects.

Proposal 7. The new Advanced Skills Challenge Certificate should require learners to develop and apply their literacy and numeracy skills and their digital competence. These skills should not be learning outcomes in their own right, and learners should not be directly assessed on them.



Respondents agreed with the proposal because they felt:

- Literacy, numeracy and skills in digital competence should be developed as part of the new Advanced SCC, and embedded throughout the qualification, without the requirement to assess them as formal learning outcomes;
- Assessing the skills could add to the complexity of the assessment model and result in unnecessary duplication;
- Learners are already formally assessed on their literacy and numeracy skills through other qualifications;
- The proposal could reduce stress on learners and have a positive impact on learners' experiences;
- The current arrangement disadvantages lower ability learners and that the proposal was therefore more equitable for all learners; and
- This could have a positive impact on the workload of practitioners.

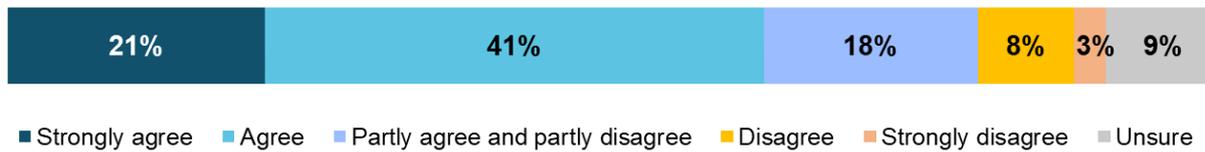
Respondents raised some issues for consideration, including:

- If literacy, numeracy and digital competence are not assessed, how would teachers be able to determine whether these skills are developed; and
- Some form of assessment of these skills should be incorporated into the qualification, such as assessing learners on their improvement in relation to literacy, numeracy and digital competence.

Respondents disagreed with the proposal because they felt:

- The skills in question are essential skills which should be assessed so that learners' proficiency in numeracy, literacy and digital skills can be gauged;
- If these skills are not assessed they would not be prioritised and may not receive sufficient attention as part of projects and learning programmes; and
- Learners would be disadvantaged by the proposal, as they are entitled to see outcomes relating to skills they have developed and applied.

Proposal 8. Each component of the new Advanced Skills Challenge Certificate should assess all four of the Integral Skills. Each skill could be weighted differently at component level, but all four skills must contribute equally to the overall qualification.



Respondents agreed with the proposal because they felt:

- Some Integral Skills are more relevant or applicable to some projects and that it is sensible to design an assessment structure that reflects this, weighted appropriately for each component project;
- Differential weighting of skills across the projects could remove the duplication of skills that takes place in the existing qualification;
- The proposed model would allow learners to revisit the skills and demonstrate their ability in each skill in different contexts; and
- Each Integral Skill is equally important and should carry the same contribution to the overall grade.

Respondents raised some issues for consideration, including:

- Assigning a different weighting to the four skills in each of the components could potentially lead to confusion; and
- They needed to see more detail before being able to offer full support to the proposal, including in relation to how an assessment grid could be used in practice.

Respondents disagreed with the proposal because they felt:

- Some of the Integral Skills may not apply in every component and that assessing the skills in each component would create unnecessary assessment burdens;
- There should not be an even split between the Integral Skills, noting that Critical Thinking and Problem Solving should hold greater weighting; and
- All skills should be weighted equally within each component, both for clarity and in order to avoid a situation where learners feel disadvantaged in any particular project which is weighted towards skills in areas where they may be less confident.

Proposal 9. The new Advanced Skills Challenge Certificate should continue to be graded A*-E.



Respondents agreed with the proposal because they felt:

- It would ensure that the Advanced SCC is graded consistently with other Level 3 qualifications, thereby ensuring parity;
- Grading the Advanced SCC A*-E would be clearer and easier to understand for teachers, learners and other stakeholders;
- It would give credibility and legitimacy to the Advanced SCC, by making it clear to stakeholders that it has equal value with other Level 3 qualifications;
- It would facilitate learner progression into employment and higher education;
- It was fairer than possible alternative grading options, as an A*-E grading system more directly reflects the amount of work learners put into the qualification; and
- It would increase learner engagement with the Advanced SCC, as there would be a direct correlation between the amount of work they put into the qualification and their final grade.

Respondents who disagreed with the proposal primarily did so because they felt that an alternative grading system would be more appropriate:

- Some of these respondents commented that a pass/fail model, or a pass/merit/distinction model would be more appropriate as they do not perceive the Advanced SCC to be the same type of qualification as a 'traditional' A Level; and
- Others emphasised that more rigour would be needed in the way the qualification is delivered and assessed before an A*-E grading system would be appropriate.

Proposal 10. Learners should be able to achieve a grade at qualification level without having to pass every component of the new Advanced Skills Challenge Certificate. In the interests of fairness, learners should continue to be entitled to one re-sit per component and the highest grade achieved for that component should count towards the qualification grade.



Respondents agreed with the proposal because they felt:

- It would ensure parity between the revised Advanced SCC and other Level 3 qualifications;
- The proposal is fair, for example because learners would be subject to the same grading system across different qualifications or because allowing re-sits would ensure learners are provided with a second chance to succeed;
- It would ensure any personal or extenuating circumstances which may negatively affect a learners' performance are taken into account in the grading system;
- It offers learners the opportunity to demonstrate and develop their skills in certain components even if they find other components more challenging;
- It would ensure the recognition and encouragement of learner improvement over time; and
- It would support learners to achieve the best outcomes they are capable of achieving.

Respondents raised some issues for consideration, including:

- How the proposal would be implemented in practice, in particular the practicalities of arranging re-sits; and
- Agreeing with the proposal to allow one re-sit per component (or, on rare occasions, one re-sit across the whole qualification) but disagreed with the proposal that learners would not have to pass every component to achieve a grade.

Respondents disagreed with the proposal because they felt that:

- Learners should be expected to pass every component in order to achieve a grade at qualification level; and
- Allowing learners to achieve a grade without passing every component could be seen to reduce the rigour and legitimacy of the Advanced SCC.

1. Introduction

This report presents an analysis of the responses received to Qualifications Wales' public consultation, 'Skilled for the Future', which ran between 21 September and 13 November 2020.

1.1 About the consultation

In the consultation, Qualifications Wales sought views on proposed changes to the Advanced SCC qualification and the overarching Advanced Welsh Baccalaureate (Welsh Bacc) framework. Specifically, Qualifications Wales consulted on proposals to:

- Discontinue the overarching Advanced Welsh Bacc framework allowing a focus on the Advanced Skills Challenge Certificate as a standalone qualification; and
- Develop a new Advanced Skills Challenge Certificate qualification.

The full consultation document, 'Skilled for the Future', and the associated Integrated Impact Assessment are [available online on Qualifications Wales' website](#).

Qualifications Wales promoted and circulated the consultation through a variety of channels in order to raise stakeholder awareness and encourage responses. These channels included the Qualifications Wales website, newsletters and social media. Qualifications Wales also capitalised on stakeholder channels and worked with partner networks such as the regional education consortia to widen their audience reach.

The consultation was provided in two formats: a main consultation document and a summary version for learners, their families and others who preferred a concise version. Both versions included the same consultation questions, worded in a way most appropriate to the intended audience. Respondents could access and respond to both versions of the consultation online or electronically (PDF or Word) through the Qualifications Wales website, or by paper, large print and braille on request.

Qualifications Wales received **428 responses** to the consultation, comprising:

- 209 responses to the main consultation; and
- 219 responses to summary version.

Not all respondents answered every consultation question. The 428 responses therefore include those who answered only a small number of questions, as well as those who answered most or all of the questions.

The table below provides a broad overview of the different types of respondent.

| Broad category of respondent | Number of respondents |
|--|-----------------------|
| Learner | 223 |
| Education professionals and providers | 158 |
| Education stakeholder organisations ¹ | 17 |

¹ Comprising local authorities, regional education consortia, teaching unions, regulatory or awarding bodies, representative and third sector organisations and other public bodies.

| | |
|------------------------|------------|
| Individual respondents | 30 |
| Total | 428 |

1.2 Approach to the analysis

Arad undertook the analysis of all 428 responses on behalf of Qualifications Wales. Five of these responses were submitted via e-mail rather than online and these were analysed in the same way as the online responses.

The consultation included 10 ‘**closed questions**’, requiring respondents to state the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with each proposal. Responses to these questions have been quantified and analysis of the results is presented in this report.

Arad then undertook a thematic analysis of the **written comments provided by respondents** to explain their answers to each of the 10 closed questions. Arad also undertook a thematic analysis of responses to the three open-ended questions on the Integrated Impact Assessment. The thematic analysis categorised the information provided by respondents into overarching themes.

- Initially, **a sample of responses** to each question was reviewed and the research team worked collaboratively to develop an overarching framework for thematic analysis. This framework identified the key themes likely to be allocated within individual questions, as well as ensuring consistency in how similar themes were recorded across different questions. This framework was not fixed; it was flexible enough to be modified and developed further as the team undertook the full analysis of all consultation responses.
- To ensure consistency in the analysis, the initial sample of responses was reviewed independently by two researchers. The researchers then came together to discuss their findings and agree the themes to include in the analysis framework and how these should be interpreted. This ensured that all researchers had developed a common understanding of how to interpret responses and a consistent approach to coding.
- The **remaining responses to open-ended questions** were analysed using the coding framework developed during the initial review stage. An evidence log (in the form of a spreadsheet) was used to attach key themes to each individual response. This evidence log ensured that all team members analysed and noted themes consistently and allowed the team to note the prevalence of each theme and variation in the views of different categories of respondent. A small number of additional key themes (not identified by the initial coding framework) were identified for each question during this stage, but these themes were usually raised by a small number of respondents.

1.3 About this report

Section 2 of this report presents an overview of key themes which arose regularly throughout responses to different consultation questions. These are high-level themes which reflect overarching issues raised by respondents. Sections 3 and 4 follow the structure of the consultation questions. The report summarises responses to each question in turn and, as such, some themes may be repeated in responses to different questions.

The total number of responses to each closed question and each open-ended question varies and is noted at the start of each question. Where appropriate, the themes identified are divided into:

- Reasons respondents agreed with the proposal;
- Issues for further consideration;² and
- Reasons respondents disagreed with the proposal.

The report presents key themes arising most frequently within the consultation responses, in order of prevalence. The comments made by respondents were typically very wide-ranging, each theme was generally raised by a minority of respondents.

There was a wealth of further evidence provided through the consultation responses which supports these themes and provides significant additional detail. All individual responses have been shared with Qualifications Wales so they can be considered further.

Throughout the report, the themes and points presented are drawn from comments made by respondents and do not represent the views of the report authors or Qualifications Wales. The report therefore:

- Provides a summary of views rather than drawing conclusions; and
- Represents respondent views regardless of how accurately respondents have interpreted Qualifications Wales' proposals or whether their views accurately reflect the current Advanced Skills Challenge Certificate and the Welsh Bacc framework.

This report is intended to provide a consolidation of the wide range of themes identified by respondents, presented as key messages for Qualifications Wales to consider. As such, the report does not present the numbers or proportions of respondents who raised each theme.

² These were particular issues respondents felt that Qualifications Wales should consider when further developing or implementing each proposal. They were raised by those who agreed with the proposals, as well as those who partly agreed and partly disagreed, and those who were not sure or did not provide a response to the closed question.

2. Overarching themes

The analysis identified overarching and recurring themes which respondents raised across multiple questions. This initial section of the report presents an overview of these themes.

Respondents commented that the proposals would help establish a qualification that is clearer for learners, practitioners and stakeholders. They felt that the proposals would simplify the qualification's delivery structure.

- Respondents felt that a standalone Advanced SCC qualification would be more clearly understood than the current arrangement of an Advanced SCC qualification and an Advanced Welsh Bacc framework.
- By basing the Advanced SCC on fewer components and by focusing on assessing four Integral Skills, respondents noted that the qualification would be less burdensome, and simpler for learners to understand.
- The redesign of the qualification and the focus on assessing fewer skills could reduce the repetition of learning and assessment that some perceived to be a weakness of the current qualification.

The proposals have the potential to benefit learners by making the qualification more manageable and engaging.

- Respondents inferred from the proposals that reducing the number of components to three would enable more time to be allocated to each one. Respondents believed this would enable learners to focus on developing a richer understanding of the topics being explored, while developing the Integral Skills more fully.
- The focus on fewer components and the reduction in the number of skills being assessed could ease the stress on learners and promote learner wellbeing.

Respondents suggested that the proposals could reduce the workload associated with the qualification from the perspective of practitioners.

- Simplifying the structure of the qualification could lead to a more focused approach in terms of teaching and assessment.
- Addressing the perceived duplication of activity across components would, it was suggested, make the qualification easier to manage and administer, and ensure practitioners remain engaged with the qualification.

Respondents indicated that the existing arrangements disadvantage some learners and felt that the proposals for the new Advanced SCC would potentially be fairer and more equitable for all learners of all ability levels to develop and demonstrate their skills.

- Respondents felt that some learners were at a disadvantage under current arrangements, particularly if they did not pass the Advanced Welsh Bacc framework because of their results in other GCSE and A-level qualifications. Respondents considered that this particularly affected learners who struggled with their literacy and numeracy skills and those from socio-economically deprived backgrounds.
- It was suggested that current arrangements, where literacy and numeracy are assessed as learning outcomes within the Advanced SCC, disadvantage lower

ability pupils and can prevent them from achieving good grades and impact on future learning pathways.

The proposals would help learners develop and apply skills that are valuable and relevant to continuing learning and future employment.

- The Integral Skills, which will be the focus of the qualification, will support learners to pursue a range of future pathways, including progression to the next stage of their education.
- These skills are transferable and valued by employers.
- Respondents were supportive of the emphasis on applying the skills in different contexts through the various components.

The proposals – including the focus on the four Integral Skills – are aligned with the four purposes of Curriculum for Wales and provide continuity for learners.

- The proposals would allow for the qualification to build on the skills that underpin the curriculum, providing progression and continuity from earlier stages of schooling.

Responses to the consultation identified a number of recurring issues requiring further consideration.

- Respondents felt that further guidance and detail would be required to support the implementation of the Advanced SCC. In some cases, respondents suggested that training would be required for practitioners to support delivery.
- Respondents noted that further information on the proposed approach to assessment is required to specify the criteria to be used to assess outcomes. In particular, respondents felt that guidance on weighting the skills within each component would be beneficial.
- Respondents emphasised the need to ensure that literacy, numeracy and digital competence are supported through the Advanced SCC, even if they are not assessed as learning outcomes.
- Respondents also highlighted the need to ensure parity with other Level 3 qualifications, ensuring the qualification's reputation and credibility are upheld.

A small number of respondents expressed concerns that the proposals could devalue the qualification.

- Respondents felt it was important to preserve the Welsh Bacc brand, which they considered to be well-established and recognised by stakeholders.
- Respondents expressed concerns that, by no longer explicitly assessing literacy, numeracy and digital literacy, the new qualification may be devalued and criticised for lacking in rigour.
- These respondents signalled that the reduced focus of the qualification could lead to a lack of parity with A-levels, impacting negatively on how employers and partners in FE and HE view the Advanced SCC.

3. The Advanced Welsh Baccalaureate Framework

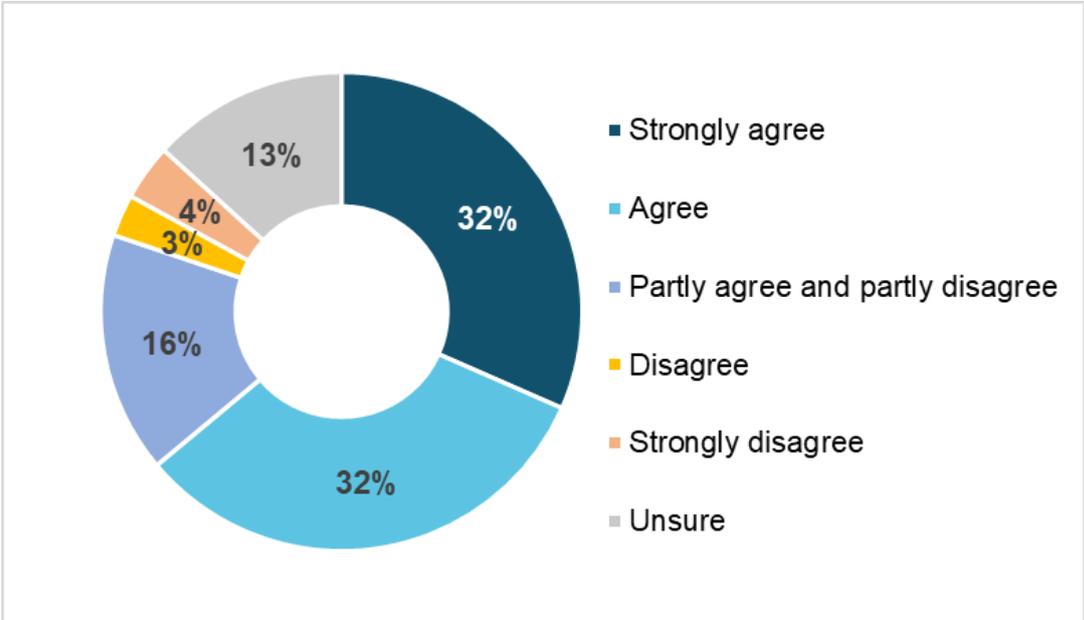
The first section of the consultation presented Qualifications Wales’ proposal to discontinue the Advanced Welsh Bacc framework to allow a focus on the Advanced Skills Challenge Certificate as a standalone qualification. The consultation asked respondents to state to what extent they agree with the proposal.

3.1 Proposal 1

The overarching Advanced Welsh Baccalaureate framework should be discontinued allowing a focus on the Advanced Skills Challenge Certificate as a standalone qualification.

To what extent do you agree with this proposal?

Figure 1: Percentage of respondents who agree and disagree with proposal 1



N = 424

Almost two thirds of respondents stated that they either strongly agreed (32%) or agreed (32%) with the proposal. Smaller proportions partly agreed and partly disagreed with the proposal (16%) or were unsure (13%). Only 7% disagreed with the proposal to some extent.

A total of 233 respondents chose to provide written comments to explain their view. The key themes arising most frequently in these comments are summarised below.

3.1.1 Reasons respondents agreed with the proposal

Respondents said that they supported the proposal because it would make the qualification **clearer** for learners, centres and stakeholders to understand. Respondents noted that the distinction between the Advanced Welsh Bacc framework and Advanced SCC is not well understood, and can be confusing for some learners. This was mentioned by respondents as being of particular concern for learners who passed the Advanced SCC but not the Advanced Welsh Bacc framework.

'I think more of a focus on making the SCC a completely standalone qualification makes it much clearer for everyone involved, including universities.' [Education professional]

'It confuses pupils and makes no sense that there are two separate qualifications. The SCC alone is robust and fits the needs of pupils in terms of academic rigour and UCAS application.' [Education professional]

Respondents agreed with the proposal as they felt **the current system placed some learners at a disadvantage** if they did not pass the Advanced Welsh Bacc framework because of their other exam results.³ Respondents considered that this particularly affected learners who struggled with their literacy and numeracy skills and those from socio-economically deprived backgrounds.

'Borderline D grade learners often excel in the SCC but the P/F [pass/fail] grades attached to the overarching Welsh Baccalaureate often cause confusion to those who don't achieve the qualifying C and above grades at GCSE Maths/English.' [Education professional]

Respondents agreed with the proposal because they believed the Advanced SCC would be **more highly valued and recognised** as a standalone qualification. Respondents felt that learners valued the Advanced SCC more highly than the Advanced Welsh Bacc framework, and they considered the focus on skills to be the most important aspect of the qualification.

'Students generally interested in the value of SCC and not the WBQ [Advanced Welsh Bacc framework] add on. Students who do not achieve two other A levels get disappointed to see F [fail] on their final results and this again created confusion. From an educator point of view the WBQ does not hold value anymore.' [Education professional]

Respondents felt the proposal would reduce the workload associated with qualification, making it **more manageable** for learners and teachers. Respondents commented that they considered the amount of work associated with the Advanced Welsh Bacc framework and Advanced SCC to be significant, particularly when being undertaken alongside other courses. Respondents considered that the proposed changes could make the qualification more appealing and engaging for learners.

³ To pass the Welsh Bacc, a learner must achieve the Advanced SCC, along with two further A levels or other equivalent qualifications, as well as achieving a grade C or above in GCSE Mathematics or GCSE Mathematics Numeracy and in GCSE Welsh Language or GCSE English Language.

3.1.2 Issues for consideration

Some respondents agreed with the proposal but raised a few issues relating to the **implementation** of the Advanced SCC. These included identifying a need for training for staff in delivering the qualification and guidance relating to delivery.

‘A key issue will be the training provided for teachers and the resources that are available. These will need to be provided with sufficient lead time to allow staff to properly consider and implement them. They will need to be of the highest quality that can be provided. They will, of course, need to be available in English and in Welsh at the same time. There needs to be a concerted effort between QW [Qualifications Wales] and the WJEC to address these issues.’ [Teaching Union]

3.1.3 Reasons respondents disagreed with the proposal

Respondents disagreed with the proposal because they felt it was important to **preserve the Welsh Bacc brand**, which they considered to be well-established and recognised by stakeholders, including Universities.

‘The Welsh Baccalaureate has been at the heart of Welsh education policy for twenty years and is a recognised brand both nationally and internationally. The accredited title of the Skills Challenge Certificate was amended at the request of HEIs across the UK to include ‘Advanced Welsh Baccalaureate’ reinforcing the importance of the brand to this sector.’ [Education stakeholder organisation]

Respondents also said they disagreed with the proposal because they felt the Advanced Welsh Bacc framework is of particular **benefit to some learners**, particularly those following vocational routes. Respondents expressed some concern that discontinuing the Advanced Welsh Bacc could lead to a lack of parity for learners on vocational courses.

‘The Framework should remain. The Welsh Baccalaureate has two important roles at post 16. It provides employers and HE with an overall picture of student achievements as all require the GCSE Maths and English grade C or above. I feel the most important role is what it has done for vocational students in Wales. They were always seen as second class citizens by A level students and by academic staff. As the Welsh Baccalaureate requires 2 A levels or equivalent vocational it puts all students on a level playing field.’ [Education professional]

‘This flagship Welsh qualification provides parity of esteem between academic and vocational learning at Advanced level with all qualifications having the same status within the framework.’ [Education stakeholder organisation]

A few respondents disagreed with the proposal because they felt the **Advanced Welsh Bacc framework complemented the Advanced SCC** and that both should therefore be retained. A small number of respondents expressed the view that both the Advanced Welsh Bacc framework **and Advanced SCC should be optional**, and felt that neither qualification was valued by learners.⁴ This view was reiterated by a small number of respondents in their responses to subsequent consultation questions, and are therefore not repeated in the sections that follow.

⁴ Decisions on whether the Advanced SCC should be compulsory or optional are outside of the scope of the consultation and not within the remit of Qualifications Wales.

4. The New Advanced Skills Challenge Certificate

The second section of the consultation outlined Qualifications Wales' main proposals for a new Advanced SCC qualification. The proposals relate to the following aspects of the Advanced SCC qualification:

- Purpose
- Learning contexts
- Structure
- Assessment structure
- Grading system

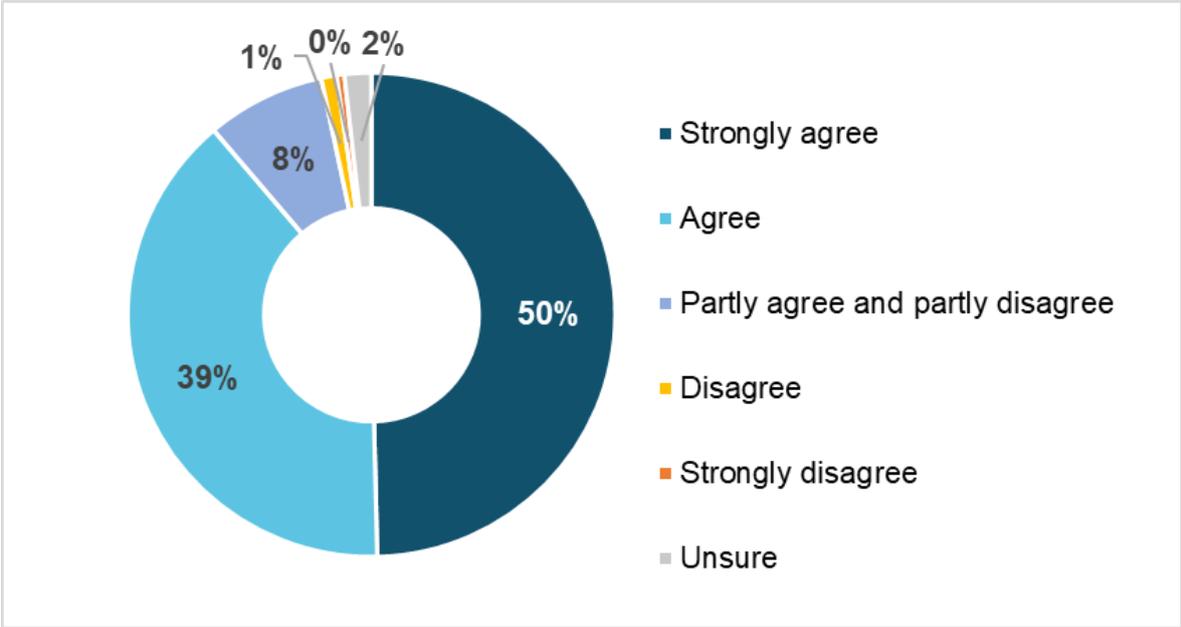
The consultation asked respondents to state to what extent they agree with the proposals.

4.1 Proposal 2 – Purpose

The purpose of the new Advanced Skills Challenge Certificate should be to enable learners to develop and apply skills in relevant contexts in preparation for employment, lifelong learning and active citizenship.

To what extent do you agree with this proposal?

Figure 2: Percentage of respondents who agree and disagree with proposal 2



N = 393

Almost all respondents stated that they either strongly agreed (50%) or agreed (39%) with the proposal, while a small proportion (8%) partly agreed and partly disagreed. A total of 2% were unsure and only 1% disagreed with the proposal to some extent.

A total of 197 respondents chose to provide written comments to explain their view. The key themes arising most frequently in these comments are summarised below.

4.1.2 Reasons respondents agreed with the proposal

Respondents supported this proposal because they considered it important that the Advanced SCC **remains a skills-based qualification**. They noted that the qualification supports the development of skills which are important to learners pursuing a variety of different pathways. Respondents commented that the skills developed through the Advanced SCC are not a specific focus in other subjects, but are important for learners' futures.

'These are crucial abilities that I believe will help many learners in the future prepare themselves for the workplace and have the knowledge to flourish in their surroundings.' [Learner]

'The skills delivered and developed are vital to bridge the gap between school and future study / career. There is not time to cover these elements within the traditional curriculum due to pressure on schools to deliver exam content in other subject areas. Students research skills for example are woefully under-developed.' [Education professional]

Respondents agreed with the proposal because they welcomed a focus on contexts that are of **relevance to learners**. Respondents tended to express their support for including 'real life', 'practical' or 'work-related' contexts and noted that these would be more likely to make the qualification appealing to learners.

'As the SCC is a skills qualification, it makes sense to focus on the most important skills that need developing...developing and applying skills in relevant contexts allows the learner to understand the aim of the qualification more. Applying those skills to real life contexts enables learners to enhance their skills more as they can see the relevance to their futures.' [Education professional]

Respondents agreed with this proposal because they felt it would **help support learners' progression** to higher education, employment and citizenship. Respondents commented that the skills developed through the Advanced SCC are valued by employers and universities. Respondents also described ways in which they felt the focus on active citizenship, and related skills developed through the qualification, would provide wider benefits to society.

'It's important to be prepared for employment as that is what we'll be in for most of our lives after education. It's also good to learn how to be a good citizen as that would help you in all aspects of life.' [Learner]

'Yes, the qualification should not only open doors to HE but have a wider additional benefit to equip students with the skills to enter the wider world,

both from an employment and social perspective.’ [Education professional]

Respondents felt it was beneficial for the purpose of the Advanced SCC to be **aligned with the terminology used in the new Curriculum for Wales**. Respondents considered that the content of the Advanced SCC as a skills-based qualification was already well-aligned with the new curriculum.

‘It is important to use consistent language and terminology in line with the new curriculum in order to future proof the qualification.’ [Non-departmental government body]

‘The new ASCC will align well with the four purposes of the new curriculum and the National Mission.’ [Regional education consortium]

On occasion, respondents commented that the proposed purpose of the new Advanced SCC reflected the way in which the current qualification was **already being delivered**. On occasion, these respondents emphasised that it was important that any proposed changes maintain the strengths of the current qualification.

‘These are the strengths of the current Welsh Baccalaureate and they need to be built upon in this new qualification.’ [Regional education consortium]

A few respondents supported the proposal as they felt the changes would make the Advanced SCC **simpler and more streamlined**, reinforcing some of the responses to consultation question 1.

4.1.3 Issues for consideration

Respondents raised some issues for consideration, particularly related to the **implementation** of the proposal. These included a desire for more guidance around the relevant contexts, planning activities and assessment.

‘As part of the design process, there will need to be sufficient guidance for teachers to plan activities. Mechanisms for ‘approving’ activities need to be efficient and avoid placing unnecessary burden on teachers and centres. Where possible, the new qualification should build upon the work of Curriculum for Wales, particularly the development of the four purposes.’ [Education stakeholder organisation]

A few stakeholders felt that consideration should be given to ensuring a **prominent role for learners** in shaping their participation in the qualification. This included learners being involved in choosing the activities and relevant contexts for themselves.

'I would go further to say that contexts and purposes should be authentic and real life and preferably chosen by the learners themselves.'
[Parent/carer]

4.1.4 Reasons respondents disagreed with the proposal

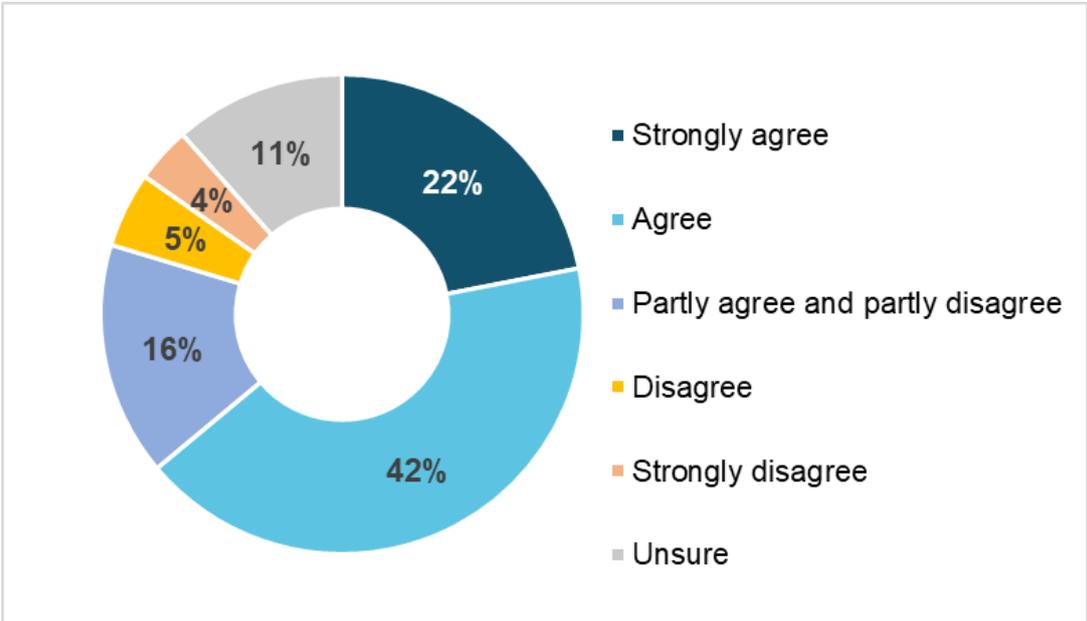
Few respondents disagreed with the proposal. Respondents disagreed with the proposal because they **did not value the Advanced SCC** and felt the skills should be embedded across the curriculum rather than being taught in a standalone qualification. A few commented that they felt the qualification should be optional.

4.2 Proposal 3 – Learning Contexts

To prepare learners for employment, lifelong learning and active citizenship, the new Advanced Skills Challenge Certificate should require learners to develop and demonstrate their skills in contexts based on the United Nation’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Wales’ well-being goals.

To what extent do you agree with this proposal?

Figure 3: Percentage of respondents who agree and disagree with proposal 3



N = 374

Almost two thirds of respondents stated that they either strongly agreed (22%) or agreed (42%) with the proposal. Smaller proportions partly agreed and partly disagreed with the proposal (16%) or were unsure (11%). Only 9% disagreed with the proposal to some extent.

A total of 157 respondents chose to provide written comments to explain their view. The key themes arising most frequently in these comments are summarised below.

4.2.1 Reasons respondents agreed with the proposal

Respondents agreed with the proposal because they considered the SDGs and Wales' well-being goals to be **important and relevant to learners' lives**. Respondents felt the goals were relevant because they reflected some of the biggest challenges facing learners and society. Respondents also felt that including reference to a local and global framework would make the proposals more relevant to learners.

'Young people are more aware of sustainable issues in our world than they have ever been before but may not be aware of Welsh government's goals for climate change targets and biodiversity. This is going to be crucial for future generations health and wellbeing and so I agree it should play a large part of the Skills Challenge Certificate. I believe that most young people understand the importance of this and would be open to developing these sorts of skills.' [Education professional]

'It sounds like a really good thing to do because I feel as though it could open people's eyes to these situations such as climate change even more. It will also set people up for their futures by doing global challenges/individual projects. I already know what I am going to do mine about already.' [Learner]

Respondents welcomed the inclusion of the goals as learning contexts, commenting that the emphasis on the goals would help support learners to become active citizens, thereby aligning the Advanced SCC with the new Curriculum for Wales. A few respondents felt that including the SDGs and Wales' well-being goals could contribute to raising awareness of, and potentially achieving, some of the goals in future.

'I believe that to achieve and deliver on the goals and the Wellbeing goals for Wales, we need citizens to understand and support the agenda. Embedding this clearly into qualifications will support this journey.'
[Education stakeholder organisation]

On occasion, respondents commented that including the goals would help to differentiate the Advanced SCC from the National/Foundation SCC and give learners a greater sense of progression between Key Stage 4 and post-16 education.

'Clear progression from National/Foundation will also be better, as there is the concern that under the current SCC, students at Advanced level are purely repeating and relying on knowledge already completed at the lower levels. This will give a much clearer progression path for students and a clear focus for their studies.' [FE provider]

4.2.2 Issues for consideration

Respondents who agreed with the proposal raised some issues for consideration including the need to retain a sufficient degree of **flexibility for learners** to choose their own topics. Some raised concerns about learners being restricted from selecting topics that fell outside of the SDGs and Wales' well-being goals.

'Despite the goals covering a variety of bases and topics, I don't believe that limits should be placed on young people who are conducting the certificate, as they might like to write about additional topics not covered by the goals. I believe it to be important that young people are aware of these topics and that it should be included within the challenge but they should be able to choose topics for the different task based upon these goals and or other topics they see fit.' [Learner 17-19]

Respondents who agreed with the proposal expressed a desire for **further guidance** and details to support the implementation of the Advanced SCC. These included a desire for guidance on how the learning contexts relate to each component, resources and assessment processes. Respondents also provided specific views on implementation such as suggesting the types of practical skills that should be focused upon.

'These underpinning contexts would provide a level of complexity that would be needed for Advanced Level, but it would be useful for centres to be supported with resources. The 2015 revised WB [Welsh Bacc] arrived suddenly at centres and aside from some skills development booklets, centres were ill-equipped to teach the qualification on such a grand scale. It is imperative that resources are designed, and are appropriate to the level and issued to centres in an appropriate time frame.' [Education provider]

A few respondents agreed with the proposal but felt that **referencing other strategic goals and frameworks** within the Advanced SCC would enhance the proposals. Suggestions included the *Cymraeg 2050* goal of reaching a million Welsh speakers, the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

A few respondents supported the proposal to incorporate the SDGs and well-being goals within the qualification, but noted that this **could be done without redesigning the qualification**. These respondents noted that these goals were already a key focus of the Advanced SCC, or that they were already delivering the qualification in a way that aligned with these goals, for example by including them in the current Global Citizenship Challenge.

'We would also like to note that the United Nations SDGs and Wales' well-being goals could be easily be incorporated in the current Global and

Community Challenges without having to significantly restructure and redevelop these Components.’ [Education stakeholder organisation]

*‘The current qualification has such a focus and the UNSDG and Wales well-being goals could easily be explicitly included in the current set up without having to completely reorganise and re write a new qualification.’
[Education professional]*

4.2.3 Reasons respondents disagreed with the proposal

Respondents disagreed with the proposal because they felt the inclusion of **the SDGs and well-being goals would not enhance the Advanced SCC**. A variety of reasons for this view were given by respondents including that:

- the two sets of goals are too broad;
- learners would not understand why both sets of goals were included;
- the focus of the Advanced SCC should be on skills rather than content.

A small number of respondents felt that focusing on the UN SDGs in the Advanced SCC could cause some confusion among learners by leading them to believe the Advanced SCC is a citizenship qualification. There was some concern among these comments that this could affect the perceived value of the Advanced SCC because, in their view, existing citizenship qualifications were not widely recognised by Universities.

*‘There is also a risk that this approach will give the perception that the reformed SCC is a ‘Citizenship’ qualification and we are aware that the GCE in Citizenship is not widely accepted by higher education institutions whereas, due to the work undertaken by Qualifications Wales, Welsh Government and WJEC, the SCC is widely accepted by higher education alongside or in place of a GCE A Level grade in many university offers.’
[Education stakeholder organisation]*

Respondents also disagreed with the proposal because they were concerned about the **content of the Advanced SCC becoming too prescriptive**. A few respondents highlighted a perceived risk of including too much focus on content rather than skills, while a small number felt the goals were too complex for learners to understand. On occasion, respondents believed that including the SDGs and well-being goals would not allow sufficient choice for learners.

‘Whilst we agree that the United Nations SDGs should form the basis of the reformed Global Citizenship component, requiring all aspects of the reformed SCC to be completed in the context of the SDGs could significantly restrict learners, particularly in relation to the Independent Project where learners are encouraged to focus their Project on an area

of interest related to their future destinations.’ [Education stakeholder organisation]

‘I don’t feel this should be limited to UN SDG, more restrictions will limit breadth of learning / skills development - any compulsory knowledge elements is a negative feature for many students of this age who like to choose / take ownership of topic areas that most apply to their circumstances.’ [Education professional]

‘Let pupils make their own decisions on what they want to do in it and whether or not they should do it.’ [Learner 17-19]

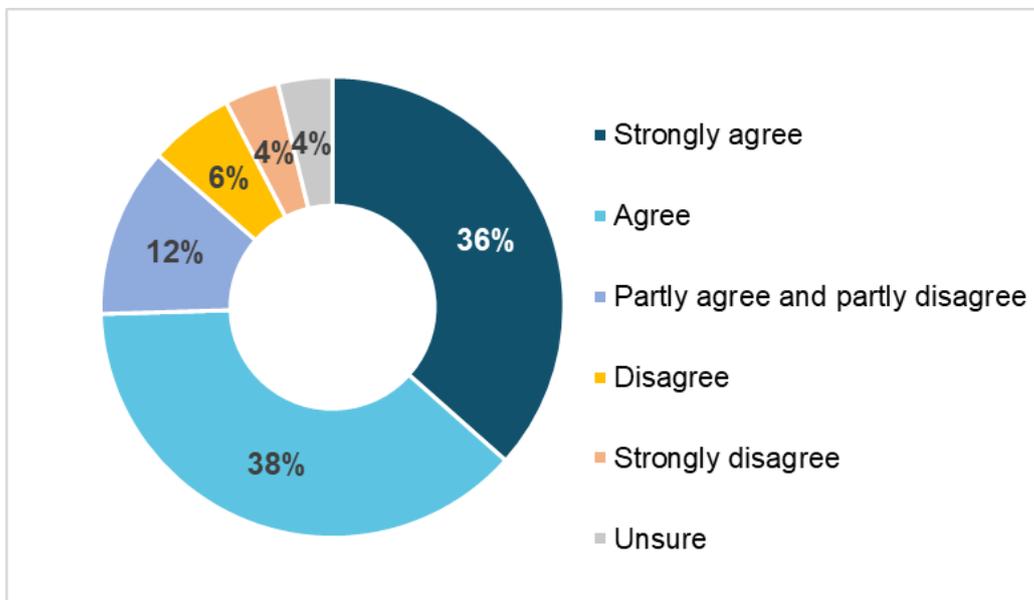
4.3 Proposal 4 - Structure

The structure of the Advanced Skills Challenge Certificate should be revised to include a reduction in components from four to three. The three components included in the new Advanced Skills Challenge Certificate should be:

- Component 1 - Global Community Project
- Component 2 - Future Destinations Project
- Component 3 - Individual Project

To what extent do you agree with this proposal?

Figure 4: Percentage of respondents who agree and disagree with proposal 4



N = 369

Almost three quarters of respondents stated that they either strongly agreed (36%) or agreed (38%) with the proposal. Smaller proportions partly agreed and partly disagreed with the proposal (12%) or were unsure (4%). Only 10% disagreed with the proposal to some extent.

A total of 196 respondents chose to provide written comments to explain their view. The key themes arising most frequently in these comments are summarised below.

4.3.1 Reasons respondents agreed with the proposal

Respondents commented that reducing the number of components would **improve learner wellbeing** by reducing workload and stress. The current qualification is seen as onerous for some learners, demanding significant work alongside other Level 3 qualifications. Reducing the number of components was seen as a way of reducing the pressure felt by learners during Key Stage 5 and **improving the willingness of learners to engage** with the qualification.

'I think that 4 components can be considered too many and by the time you're near the end you have lost motivation and dedication due to the volume and demand of the subject.' [Learner]

Respondents also commented that reducing the number of components would **make the qualification more manageable for teachers**, meaning the qualification would be easier to deliver within the allotted timescales. These respondents noted that the current qualification is too large to be delivered effectively and involves too much paperwork for both delivery and assessment. The proposal would ensure a more focused approach in terms of teaching, learning and resources.

'[We agree] that the content of the SCC needs to be reduced. [We are] aware that both members delivering the qualification and students believe that the current content is both onerous and repetitive. The workload of staff is a long-standing concern of [ours], and a reduction in the content will therefore go some way to reducing the burdens, both in regard to the manageability and the over-assessment of skills.' [Teaching union]

Alongside making the qualification more manageable for teachers, this proposal was also seen as a way to **simplify the qualification's delivery structure**. Respondents reported that reducing the number of components would make the overall structure simpler for learners to understand and for teachers to deliver. In particular, they commented that the new component structure would be easier to deliver over two years at Key Stage 5, with the Global Community Project and the Future Destinations Project delivered in the first year and the Individual Project in the second year.

This proposal was also seen as a way of **reducing the duplication and repetition of learning and assessment**. Respondents reported that reducing the number of components would reduce the risk of duplication and repetition between each component, as well as between the current National/Foundation SCC at Key Stage 4 and the Advanced SCC at Key Stage 5.

'The removal of the Enterprise Challenge is a positive change as there is clear overlap between the current challenge and others (i.e. Community) and this will therefore reduce duplication. With the KS4 version still running as is (for the moment) it will also allow for progression from National to Advanced which at the moment is not seen by students and some teachers due to the commonality between the two specifications.'
[Education professional]

Respondents also believed that this proposal would **ensure learners understand and appreciate the purpose of the qualification**. This belief was primarily based on respondents' positive views on the overview of the new components. They felt that the proposed components would ensure learners understand the value of the qualification while progressing into higher education or employment, as well as understanding its value to their role as global citizens. Respondents commented that the proposal would ensure learners are better equipped to make decisions about their futures and would make learners more aware of how their actions relate to global challenges.

'It's great to be able to think about my future plans and be encouraged to work better and more effectively. It's also great to understand what your choices do to yourself and the people you are currently surrounded by.'
[Learner]

The proposal would also **improve learners' understanding of each component and improve their skills development** according to respondents. They commented that a reduction in the number of components would enable more time to be allocated to each of the three components, allowing learners to focus on developing an in-depth understanding of the topics and improving related skills. As such, respondents also felt that the proposal would **support learners to achieve better outcomes** in both the Advanced SCC and equivalent level 3 qualifications (in particular A levels). Respondents felt that the proposal would support a focus on the quality of learners' work, rather than the quantity.

'More time would be allowed on each project and the projects wouldn't be rushed. In previous years I've felt the teaching was rushed because we have to keep up with many deadlines and that is reflected in the quality of the work submitted.' [Learner]

On occasion, respondents explained that they agreed with the proposal because they believed **specific aspects seemed reasonable**.

- Respondents noted that the specific proposal to **combine the Global Citizenship Challenge and Community Challenge into one Global Community Project seems reasonable**. In particular, they felt that the two previous components clearly relate to one another and that the Community Challenge element tends to be both unpopular amongst learners and difficult for teachers to deliver.

- Similarly, respondents commented that the specific proposal to **remove the Enterprise and Employability Challenge and have a new Future Destinations Project also seems reasonable**. In particular, respondents commented that this change would reduce the duplication which is currently perceived to exist between the current SCC at Key Stage 4 and the Advanced SCC at Key Stage 5, as well as placing a clearer emphasis on learners' future progression.
- On occasion, respondents also emphasised that the Individual Project is a valuable component of the qualification and so they were pleased to see it retained.

'Merging both the community and global components will hopefully support learners in seeing the connection between the two and understand how local actions can have global impacts (a key feature of being an active citizen). Enterprise activities have often been 'overdone' in schools by the time learners reach KS5 and often didn't add much value to the learners understanding of their future aspirations/employability.' [Regional education consortium]

'The enterprise challenge was only relevant to learners going into entrepreneurship; the new future destinations project seems more open ended and therefore relevant to more students.' [Learner]

4.3.2 Issues that need further consideration

Respondents identified various **practical considerations regarding implementation** of this proposal. For example, they felt that further consideration must be given to exactly what the revised components would include; how to ensure that too much content isn't merged into the Global Community Project; how the voices of learners would be taken into account during this process; and how assessment of the components would be undertaken, including how the qualification could be certified across two years of study.

'We agree that a reduction in the challenges (components) for the ASCC would make the qualification more attainable, however this still requires the learner sign up for a two-year programme to attain the full qualification. The qualification needs to be structured with interim certification at the end of year one with equivalent UCAS points associated with an AS Level qualification and full certification at the end of 2 years with the full A level equivalence through the UCAS tariff.' [FE provider]

While agreeing with the overarching principle of the proposal, some respondents also **expressed some reservations about a specific element**. In particular, respondents noted that the Community Challenge is valuable and shouldn't be lost during the transition or expressed uncertainty about how combining the Global Citizenship Challenge and Community Challenge would work in practice. Others emphasised that the Enterprise and Employability Challenge included a valuable focus on enterprise skills which they do not wish to see lost during the transition.

'Removing the Enterprise aspect in its entirety is shame, as many students enjoyed the entrepreneurial element, especially if they are more business-minded and do not want to go to University, however we agree that often the National/Foundation level and Advanced level delivery is very similar.' [FE provider]

Respondents also expressed **differing opinions on some of the terminology changes** included in this proposal, though these opinions were not raised very frequently in responses. While some respondents felt that using the term 'Project' was more relevant to the qualification's content and to progression opportunities, others felt that this term was not appropriate for the nature of the qualification. Occasionally, respondents also suggested that the titles of the components aren't sufficiently clear.

4.3.3 Reasons respondents disagreed with the proposal

Respondents expressed concerns that this proposal would risk **reducing the overall content and learning hours of the qualification too much**, potentially leading to a lack of parity with A Levels and a reduction compared to the previous qualification. Some respondents felt that the **manageability of the qualification has only been a problem for teachers at Key Stage 4**, not at Key Stage 5. They therefore deemed it unnecessary to reduce the size of the qualification at all.

'The Advanced SCC is equivalent to a GCE A Level and includes 360 guided learning hours. The proposal to reduce the number of components in the SCC, combined with the proposal to reduce the skills and content within each Component and the proposed reduction in community participation hours introduces a significant risk that the qualification will not be sufficiently large enough to justify 360 hours of guided learning. This could lead to a perception from some sectors including higher education, that the qualification is no longer equivalent in size to a GCE A Level.' [Education stakeholder organisation]

On occasion, respondents **disagreed with particular elements** of the proposal.

- Some felt that the valuable elements of the Global Citizenship Challenge and Community Challenge would be diluted if merged into one Global Community Project, though others felt that none of these components were of particular value.
- Some expressed support for the Enterprise and Employability Challenge, noting disappointment that this valuable challenge would be amended.

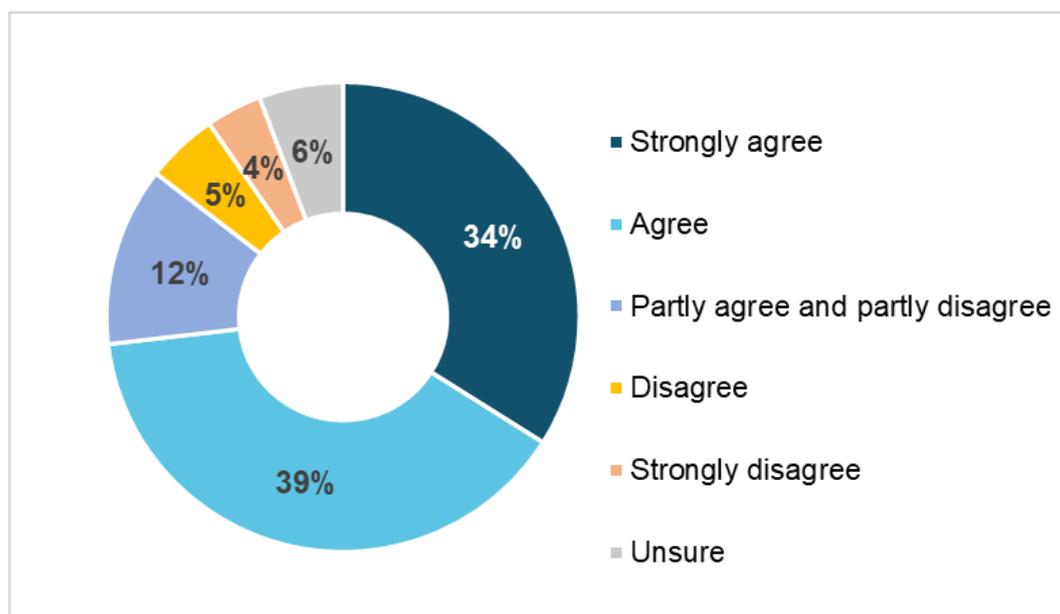
4.4 Proposal 5 - Structure

The three components of the new Advanced Skills Challenge Certificate should contribute to the overall qualification as follows:

- Global Community Project – 25%
- Future Destinations Project – 25%
- Individual Project – 50%

To what extent do you agree with this proposal?

Figure 5: Percentage of respondents who agree and disagree with proposal 5



N = 365

Almost three quarters of respondents stated that they either strongly agreed (34%) or agreed (39%) with the proposal. Smaller proportions partly agreed and partly disagreed with the proposal (12%) or were unsure (6%). Only 9% disagreed with the proposal to some extent.

A total of 153 respondents chose to provide written comments to explain their view. The key themes arising most frequently in these comments are summarised below.

4.4.1 Reasons respondents agreed with the proposal

Respondents agreed that the **Individual Project** should contribute 50% of the overall qualification as it requires learners to demonstrate **valuable independent study skills**. The Individual Project is perceived to demonstrate skills which employers and Universities value. Respondents reported that learners commit significant time and effort to the Individual Project and the proposed weighting reflects this commitment.

'I believe the individual project to be the most substantial of the challenge, so I like that the individual project remains to be the most weighted of the three. The individual project is often a great contributor to portfolios and can often be used during university interviews, and in the personal

statement to show the skills and knowledge they've gained from the project.' [Learner]

'The weighting on the individual project is beneficial from a HE perspective: independent learning is a key skill for HE, and this echoes such requirements. It also enables creativity, and for students to pursue an area of passion or interest particularly.' [Education professional]

Respondents also commented that the proposal represents a **more appropriate balance between components** (and the skills required for each component) than the weighting included in the current Advanced SCC. This proposal was seen as more reflective of the amount of work that learners put into each component. In particular, respondents agreed with the proposed equal balance between the Global Community Project and the Future Destinations Project, which reflects the equal work learners should put into each component.

This more equal balance between component weightings was also seen as **easier for teachers and learners to understand**. The weightings were perceived to be simpler and clearer, meaning teachers and learners would be able to understand how the work learners put into each component contributes to the overall final grade. Respondents commented that this is an improvement from the current Advanced SCC, where less equal weightings make it difficult for teachers and learners to predict the final overall grade.

'Under the current SCC, students (and staff) feel that the unequal weighting of the three Challenges was confusing and this had a detrimental impact of their view of the UMS marks attached and the work they needed to put into each Challenge. Students often felt dismayed that they put a lot of work into their Community Challenge when it only represented a small proportion of the overall qualification. The new proposals will bring much more consistency and validity to the new components.' [FE provider]

Respondents felt that as a result, **learner engagement in the Advanced SCC would improve**. They felt that learners would be more committed to each component if they understood exactly how the effort they put into each one contributes to their final grade. For example, learners would know they needed to put an equal amount of work into both the Global Community Project and the Future Destinations Project, as well as realising that the Individual Project demands a larger commitment.

The proposal was also seen as a way of providing a **clear progression structure over a two-year course**. Respondents explained that the Global Community Project and the Future Destinations Project (worth 50% of the qualification when combined) could be completed during the first year of the Advanced SCC and the Individual Project (also worth 50%) could be completed during the second year. They felt this would be a simple structure for teachers to follow and would represent an appropriate transition from the first two components into independent study.

Other respondents expressed general agreement with the proposal with no further explanation.

4.4.2 Issues that need further consideration

The main issue raised by respondents was the need for further consideration of (or information regarding) **the quality and amount of work which would be expected** as part of these weightings. Respondents agreed with the proposed weightings but queried how much work each component would be expected to include, which skills learners would be expected to demonstrate in each component and how to ensure the Global Community Project doesn't include too much content.

'Care must be taken in the amalgamation of the old Community Challenge and Global Citizenship Challenge that the size of the combined new challenge (component) does not present an excessive workload impacting on completion. With the update of new level 3 qualifications with additional assessment requirements, it is vitally important that the new qualification does not exceed the previous workload.' [FE provider]

Respondents also identified a need to consider **how each of these components would be assessed**. This included querying how rigorous the assessment process would be for each component and how / when assessments would be carried out. Some respondents suggested that requiring learners to complete the Global Community Project and Future Destinations project in the first year would allow an interim qualification at the end of the first year, as is available with AS Levels.

'We welcome the suggested structure and believe that placing a greater emphasis on the individual project will be a positive for learners. We would wish to note that any design specifications will need to ensure that these projects are suitably demanding and that they show clearly how learners' skills will be assessed.' [Education stakeholder organisation]

Other respondents re-emphasised concerns regarding the previous proposal (Proposal 4) but agreed that if components are reduced from four to three, then the proposed weighting is appropriate.

4.4.3 Reasons respondents disagreed with the proposal

Respondents commented that **alternative weightings would be more appropriate**. Occasionally, respondents commented that all three components should be weighted equally instead, as they felt this would encourage equal commitment from learners in all components. They often felt that the Individual Project should not contribute 50% to the qualification as learners' strengths might not always lie in independent study. They felt that allocating as much as 50% of the final grade to the Individual Project put too much pressure on learners during their second year of study and creates too high a level of expectation in relation to the Individual Project.

'I think 50% for one unit is too much I have been doing this subject 4 years 2 at GCSE and 2 A level and personally even though it is achievable for me to get the grade...it should be evenly distributed across all 3 so should be 30% for global and future and then 40% for individual.'
[Learner]

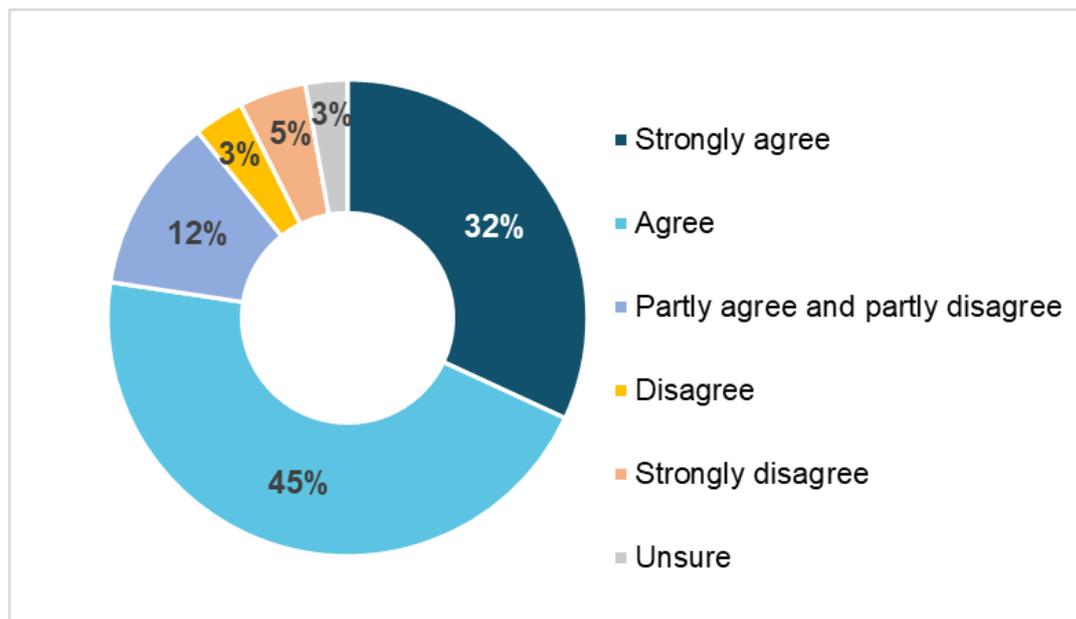
4.5 Proposal 6 – Assessment Structure

The new Advanced Skills Challenge Certificate should focus on assessing the four Integral Skills of:

- Critical Thinking and Problem Solving;
- Creativity and Innovation;
- Planning and Organising; and
- Personal Effectiveness.

To what extent do you agree with this proposal?

Figure 6: Percentage of respondents who agree and disagree with proposal 6



N = 354

Just over three quarters of respondents stated that they either strongly agreed (32%) or agreed (45%) with the proposal. Smaller proportions partly agreed and partly disagreed with the proposal (12%) or were unsure (3%). Only 8% disagreed with the proposal to some extent.

A total of 154 respondents chose to provide written comments to explain their view. The key themes arising most frequently in these comments are summarised below.

4.5.1 Reasons respondents agreed with the proposal

Respondents agreed with the proposal to focus on the four Integral Skills, noting that these are **the skills valued most by employers**. Respondents highlighted the transferability of

these skills and their importance for employability, suggesting that the proposed approach would help to prepare learners for what will be required of them in the workplace and in a range of 'real world' situations.

'These are skills that all learners need for employment.' [Education professional]

The proposal was also considered beneficial in preparing learners for progression into **higher education**. Respondents noted that these are important skills that are generally not well developed in other qualifications and are not assessed as part of most A-level subjects. It was suggested that these are the skills that higher education institutions are seeking from learners and the proposal to focus on them as part of the Advanced SCC provides valuable additional opportunities to develop skills that are relevant to a range of future career pathways.

'By focusing on skills that employers and universities value, it is developing the learners into more rounded candidate[s] for their chosen pathway after A level.' [School]

Respondents also referred to the proposal's potential benefits for teachers and learners. They stated that reducing the skills to be assessed to the four Integral Skills **would streamline and simplify the process for teachers**, making delivery more manageable. Removing the core skills of literacy, numeracy and digital literacy from assessment would, it was suggested, alleviate pressure on teachers without specialisms in those areas. Respondents also noted that limiting assessment to the four Integral Skills would provide greater clarity and **enable learners to focus in greater detail on their development in these areas**. It was suggested that the proposal would help avoid the perceived duplication and repetition that has existed to date in view of the fact that literacy and numeracy are assessed through other areas of the curriculum.

'Literacy and numeracy are already assessed in our other subjects so including them in this seems redundant and over complicated. It makes sense that the skills challenge certificate focuses on the four integral skills.' [Learner]

'It is sensible to remove the assessment of literacy, numeracy and digital literacy as these are currently acquired and developed from a young age across the curriculum and this avoids unnecessary over assessment and duplication.' [Education professional]

Respondents noted that the four Integral Skills identified **are consistent with the aims and vision of the new Curriculum for Wales**. Respondents affirmed that it is important that the new Advanced SCC provides continuity in developing the skills that underpin the whole curriculum. Additionally, it was noted that the focus on these skills would provide progression and continuity from the new qualifications for learners aged 14-16.

4.5.2 Issues that need further consideration

Respondents indicated that there is a need for further consideration of the **arrangements for assessing the four Integral Skills**. Respondents noted that there is a lack of clarity in the proposal regarding the criteria to be used to assess outcomes. There was recognition that assessing these skills can be complex, with some respondents providing comments to illustrate these complexities.

'With my assessor's hat on it's so very complex to assess these skills. Personal effectiveness is relative to an individual, someone could have made huge self-improvement but still be below par in comparison to a set of criteria or in comparison to a peer.' [Education professional]

Respondents referred to the need to **consult widely with practitioners on the development of an assessment framework and further guidance**, ensuring that an effective and workable model of assessment is developed. Equally, respondents noted the need to ensure that assessment does not become 'over-bearing' for practitioners and learners.

'With regard to the assessment of skills in this qualification, it is important that guidance is developed to clarify the expectations for these skills and outline how they may be assessed. This will support teachers to put a suitable emphasis on learners' skills development.' [Education stakeholder organisation]

Some respondents suggested that there should **continue to be some assessment of literacy and numeracy** in particular. Concern was expressed that if literacy, numeracy and digital competence are not assessed as part of the Advanced SCC, this may convey the impression that they are not considered important for learners' progression. Linked to this, respondents noted that evidence from Estyn inspections indicates that these skills are not developed effectively as part of general teaching and learning within the current Welsh Bacc.

'If these 'Embedded skills' are not to be assessed, then there needs to be some sort of assessment of literacy, numeracy and digital competence in the new curriculum, with a progressive development of pupils' skills in these areas throughout KS3 and KS4, so that young people can evidence their knowledge and skills.' [Teaching union]

Respondents identified a range of considerations relating to this proposal. In some cases, respondents suggested that there **should be greater emphasis on some skills (particularly Critical Thinking and Problem Solving)**, with a need to work with employers to determine which skills should have the greatest weighting.

Respondents also suggested amendments and additions to the four Integral Skills. These included the following:

- Ensuring that **communication skills are given prominence within the skills developed and assessed**. Respondents questioned whether effective communication was incorporated within the *Personal Effectiveness* skill. It was also suggested that communication could replace *Planning and Organising*.
- Promoting **teamwork and leadership skills**.
- Including **financial education and financial management** skills.
- Ensuring that **learners' bilingual skills are assessed and progress in this area is acknowledged**.

'As part of the strategy for the post-16 sector, there is a need to ensure that learners and students develop their Welsh language skills from a level of awareness to understanding to confidence to fluency, and this pyramid model should be incorporated into the Advance Skills Challenge Certificate.' [Translated from Welsh] [HE provider]⁵

4.5.3 Reasons respondents disagreed with the proposal

Respondents expressed concerns that, by no longer explicitly assessing literacy, numeracy and digital literacy, **the new qualification may be devalued and criticised for lacking in rigour**. Assessment of these three skills, it was suggested, gives the current qualification academic credibility. It was felt that the proposal could remove the qualification's rigour in the eyes of higher education institutions, who consequently may view it as less 'academically robust' and not accept it as an alternative to an A-level. It was suggested that there is a danger that, as a result of this proposal, parents and learners could question the value of the qualification.

'No, this takes away the academic rigour the qualification requires. Many students will not want to take the qualification and we will be back to the situation of years ago when parents and students had a negative outlook about the qualification. We are in a really good place and the present qualification has helped many students from Wales achieve the entry requirements for many universities.' [Education professional]

In a similar vein, respondents referred to the time and effort expended in ensuring that the qualification was accepted as a robust and 'academically worthy Level 3 qualification'. It

⁵ Original: 'Fel rhan o'r strategaeth ar gyfer y sector ôl-16, mae angen sicrhau bod dysgwyr a myfyrwyr yn datblygu eu sgiliau iaith Gymraeg o lefel ymwybyddiaeth i ddealltwriaeth i hyder i rhuglder, a dylid ymgorffori model y pyramid hwn i'r Dystysgrif Her Sgiliau Uwch.'

was felt that removing the assessment of the core skills risks damaging its reputation.

Respondents cited a range of other reasons for disagreeing with the proposal. One respondent referred to what they considered to be **a contradiction in the rationale for the proposal set out in the consultation.**

'In section 2.8.1 of your document, it is argued some skills are embedded in current Challenges but not explicitly assessed and that this is unfair to the students. How does this argument marry with embedding literacy, digital literacy and numeracy throughout the new qualification but not explicitly assessing them?' [Education professional]

Other respondents disagreed with the focus on the four Integral Skills, asserting that these skills **should be embedded and developed within core subjects.** Respondents also questioned whether the focus on the four Integral Skills was appropriate.

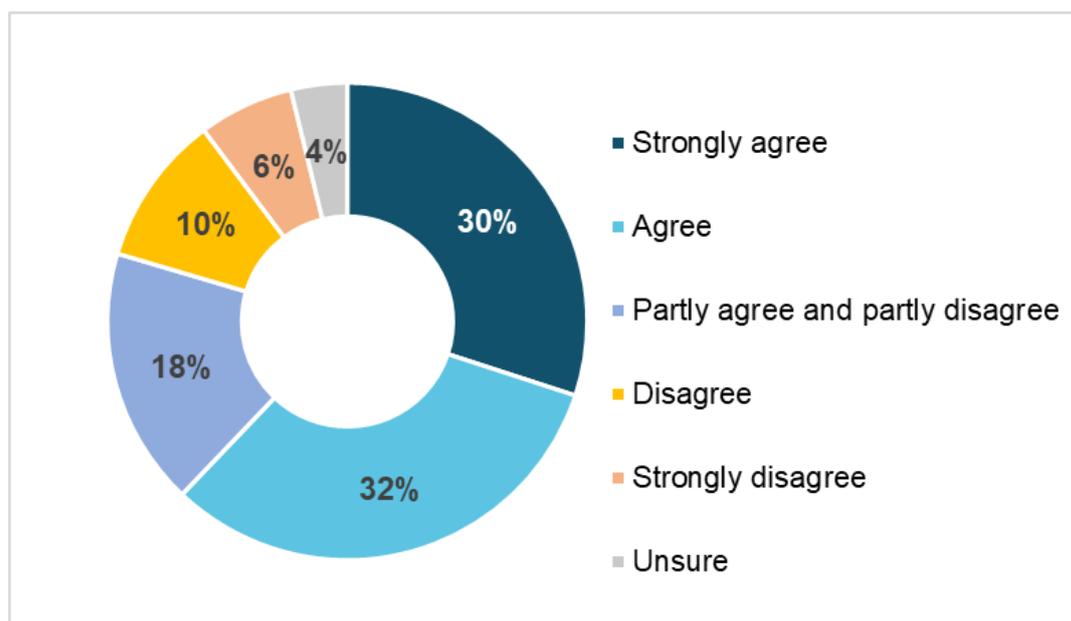
'Although these things may help someone on the way to getting a job, ultimately these are not the most important things to be learning. you pick up all of these skills from other subjects like languages and arts so there is no need to go back over these subjects.' [Learner]

4.6 Proposal 7 – Assessment Structure

The new Advanced Skills Challenge Certificate should require learners to develop and apply their literacy and numeracy skills and their digital competence. These skills should not be learning outcomes in their own right, and learners should not be directly assessed on them.

To what extent do you agree with this proposal?

Figure 7: Percentage of respondents who agree and disagree with proposal 7



N = 343

Just under two thirds of respondents stated that they either strongly agreed (30%) or agreed (32%) with the proposal. Smaller proportions partly agreed and partly disagreed with the proposal (18%) or were unsure (4%). A total of 16% disagreed with the proposal to some extent.

A total of 165 respondents chose to provide written comments to explain their view. The key themes arising most frequently in these comments are summarised below.

4.6.1 Reasons respondents agreed with the proposal

Respondents agreed that literacy, numeracy and skills in digital competence should be **developed as part of the new Advanced SCC, and embedded throughout the qualification, without the requirement to assess them as formal learning outcomes.** These respondents emphasised the importance of these three skills and the need to ensure that these skills are applied as part of their projects in a range of scenarios alongside the Integral Skills.

'These skills are still essential for our learners to develop and are necessary skills to function in society. I agree that they should not be learning outcomes in their own right, but the importance of them should

still be emphasised. Written projects should still reflect the level of literacy expected of a level 3 qualification, along with the enhanced use of digital technologies and complex numeracy analysis.’ [FE provider]

Assessing the skills could, it was suggested, **add to the complexity of the assessment model and result in unnecessary repetition**. Respondents noted that employers often refer to other qualifications to provide evidence of literacy, numeracy and digital competence. As such, including additional assessment of these skills as part of the Advanced SCC would not benefit learners.

Related to the above point, respondents noted that learners are **already formally assessed on their literacy and numeracy skills through other qualifications**. Some of these respondents stated that learners are assessed on their literacy and numeracy skills throughout their statutory schooling. Others noted that these skills should be formally assessed through core GCSE subjects and not as part of other qualifications.

‘Learners have been assessed already on their literacy and numeracy skills at several points in their academic career. Digital Literacy skills do not need to be assessed. Particularly in this current climate learners are demonstrating a very high level of digital competency.’ [FE provider]

Respondents also referred to learner wellbeing as a reason for agreeing with the proposal. By removing the assessment of literacy, numeracy and digital competence, it was felt that the proposal **could reduce stress on learners who already experience a significant amount of assessment**. It was also suggested that **the proposal could have a positive impact on learners’ experiences** by giving them opportunities to develop and apply skills without them being formally assessed.

‘I agree with the overall aim that by focussing assessment on the four integral skills, a greater balance is allowed between the time spent on developing skills and the time spent on assessing them. Making assessment manageable can maximise time for learning and development of skills, and reduce exam pressure on young people.’
[Education stakeholder organisation]

Respondents suggested that **the current arrangement, where literacy and numeracy are assessed, disadvantages lower ability pupils** and can prevent them from achieving good grades. For those learners who already experience difficulties with aspects of literacy or numeracy, it was suggested that an emphasis on assessment in these areas can result in them not achieving their full potential. **The proposal was therefore seen as being more equitable for all learners**.

Respondents also noted that by not having learning outcomes for numeracy and literacy this **could also have a positive impact on the workload of practitioners**, enabling them to concentrate on supporting learners’ Integral Skills.

4.6.2 Issues that need further consideration

Respondents provided comments or expressed reservations about aspects of the proposal. Some of these respondents questioned how the arrangement would work in practice: **if literacy, numeracy and digital competence are not assessed, respondents wondered how teachers would be able to determine whether these skills are developed.**

Other respondents suggested that some form of assessment of these skills should be incorporated into the qualification. Among these, some suggested that learners **could be assessed on their improvement in relation to literacy, numeracy and digital competence.** Others questioned whether assessment of these skills could be included as an optional additional component within the assessment model or could be assessed informally.

'I agree that students should not be assessed on these skills separately through project work, although they should be assessed informally to guide and support if needed without the added pressure of achieving set learning outcomes.' [Education professional]

'I feel as though it shouldn't be a main focus but it would be nice if people could gain extra marks through showing good literacy, numeracy and digital skills in their work.' [Learner]

4.6.3 Reasons respondents disagreed with the proposal

Those who disagreed with this proposal emphasised that the skills in question are essential **skills which should be assessed so that learners' proficiency in numeracy, literacy and digital skills can be gauged.** Other respondents commented on the need to retain literacy and numeracy skills as an explicit and assessed learning outcome as it ensures that learners focus on these important skills. Practitioners noted that learners at Key Stage 5 are not required to continue studying language or mathematics and that the SCC can ensure ongoing development of core skills, which should be assessed in order to evidence progress and identify where further development or support is needed.

Respondents suggested that if these skills are not assessed they **would not be prioritised and may not receive sufficient attention as part of projects and learning programmes.** They felt that the importance of literacy, numeracy and digital competence risks being diminished under the proposed arrangements. Echoing comments provided in response to the previous proposal, respondents noted concerns that the qualification's reputation could be damaged by not assessing these core skills.

'If you do not directly assess them, you lessen the importance of them. The truth of the matter is this, students will only work on something or develop something if they know that they will be assessed. So the reality is that these skills will not develop for those in post 16. I think these 3 skills should be at the heart of the skills challenge and if we are encouraging lifelong learning, they should develop and assess these throughout post-16.' [Education professional]

Other respondents felt that learners **would be disadvantaged by the proposal**. If the skills are embedded and learners are expected to develop and apply the skills, it was suggested that learners are entitled to see outcomes that are directly linked to the relevant skills as part of the qualification.

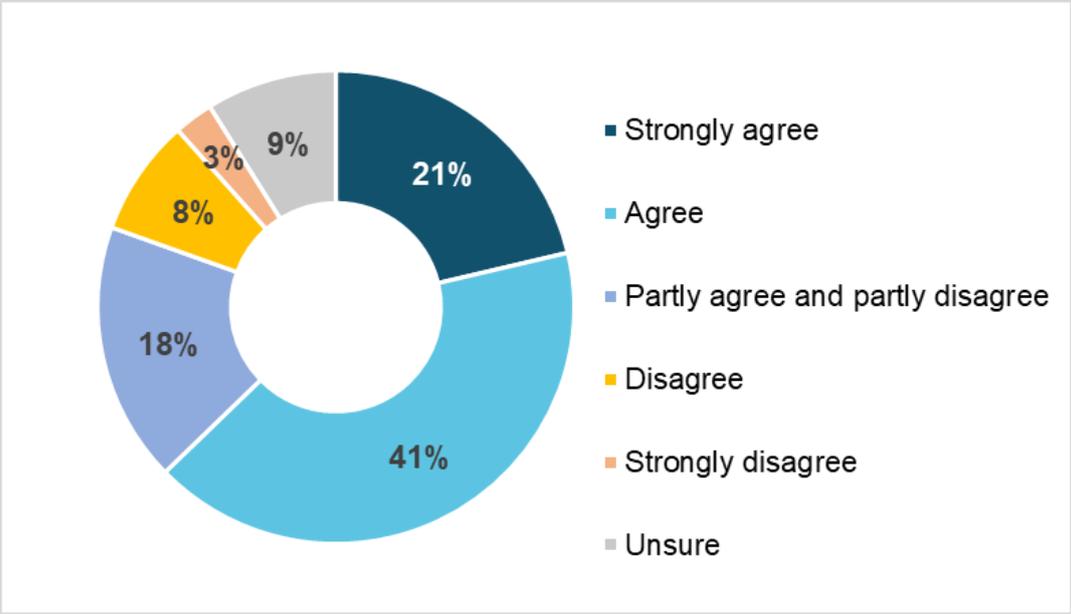
'[We] strongly reject the proposal that literacy, numeracy and digital skills should be embedded but not assessed. We believe that that the whole point of a competencies-based qualification is to meld together skills, knowledge and habit of mind. In referencing 2.73, we are not persuaded by the rationale behind the statement that "embedding these skills, rather than explicitly assessing them, will not disadvantage the learner"....if we accept that these skills constitute an advantage in their own right, then the advantage to the learner is, by definition, diminished.' [Teaching union]

4.7 Proposal 8 – Assessment Structure

Each component of the new Advanced Skills Challenge Certificate should assess all four of the Integral Skills. Each skill could be weighted differently at component level, but all four skills must contribute equally to the overall qualification.

To what extent do you agree with this proposal?

Figure 8: Percentage of respondents who agree and disagree with proposal 8



N = 338

Just under two thirds of respondents stated that they either strongly agreed (21%) or agreed (41%) with the proposal. Smaller proportions partly agreed and partly disagreed with the proposal (18%) or were unsure (9%). Only 11% disagreed with the proposal to some extent.

A total of 116 respondents chose to provide written comments to explain their view. The key themes arising most frequently in these comments are summarised below.

4.7.1 Reasons respondents agreed with the proposal

There are two distinct but inter-related elements to this proposal: the first element relates to different weighting for each skill at component level; the second is the proposal that all skills contribute equally to the overall qualification.

On the first point, respondents agreed that differential weighting for each skill should be applied to each component. **It was noted that some Integral Skills are more relevant or applicable to some projects and that it is sensible therefore to design an assessment structure that reflects this, weighted appropriately for each component.** Respondents provided examples to illustrate this point, including that learners may be able to apply and demonstrate Critical Thinking Skills more readily as part of the Global Community Project, whereas the Individual Project may involve a greater focus on Creativity and Innovation.

'I am in agreement, particularly with weighting the skills within each component dependent on what is required of them; the current qualification definitely sees some skills 'shoehorned' in awkwardly just to assess them, for example Numeracy in the essential and employability skills which works for the Innovation Venture but less so for the Destination Plan.' [Education professional]

Respondents suggested that the **differential weighting of skills across the projects could eradicate the repetition of skills that takes place under the existing qualification.** It was noted that learners currently spend time repeating skills across areas, which is viewed as unnecessary and can be demotivating.

'The most positive consequence of this change will be the reduction in duplication of assessment across the projects. The current structure assesses too many skills in not enough depth so this should hopefully avoid this happening.' [Education professional]

Respondents noted that the proposed model would allow learners to revisit the skills and **demonstrate their ability in each skill in different contexts.** This would, it was suggested, encourage a greater focus on skill development and application.

In relation to the second point within the proposal, respondents noted that **each Integral Skill is equally important and should carry the same contribution to the overall grade.** Echoing points raised in responses to earlier proposals, respondents noted that all four Integral Skills are linked to the Curriculum for Wales, and relevant to higher education and future employment and that this should be reflected in the qualification's assessment structure.

'All four skills are linked to the new curriculum and so should be assessed accordingly with time allowed for this. They are all relevant to the projects and to future career choices. They should be manageable to assess and clearly help to inform students within the framework and improve the final overall qualification.' [Education professional]

4.7.2 Issues that need further consideration

Respondents voiced concerns regarding the **potential confusion caused by assigning a different weighting to the four skills in each of the components**. These respondents felt that the aim should be to streamline assessment and not create an additional and overly complicated assessment framework that is difficult to administer and difficult for learners to understand.

Other respondents felt that **they needed to see more detail before being able to offer full support to the proposal**. This included detailed guidance on how each skill would be assessed within each new component. Some noted that they felt they would need to experience the assessment first-hand in order to be able to make an informed judgement.

'We think that this sounds logical, but would want to see how it works in practice. We agree in principle. The danger is that the administration of the assessment in terms of weighting becomes confusing. We would want this to be clear and consistent.' [FE provider]

Respondents referred to the need to avoid the 'over-assessment of skills across different components', which is perceived as a problem under the current qualification.

Linked to this, some respondents who were unsure about the proposal **expressed concern about how an assessment grid could be used in practice, noting that it could become 'artificial' or 'forced'**. It was argued that some skills may not apply at all to some components.

'It's important to assess what naturally occurs in each of the challenges, and not shoehorn skills into the assessment criteria for the sake of it.'
[Education professional]

Some respondents sounded a note of caution about this proposal, emphasising the need for clarity in how project briefs/requirements are set out in order to avoid confusion among learners.

'A proposal such as the one above will require careful qualification design to avoid repetition and ensure coverage, and importantly this qualification design must also be straightforward enough to be understood by young people so that the assessment structure is transparent to them, and not confusing. Having a clear structure will help them feel able to prepare for

assessment and understand how this will happen. [Education stakeholder organisation]

4.7.3 Reasons respondents disagreed with the proposal

Respondents who disagreed argued that some of the Integral Skills **may not apply in every component and that assessing the skills in each component would create unnecessary assessment burdens**. Respondents suggested that different components should assess specific skills relevant to that project.

'It may be easier to concentrate on Planning and Organising and Personal Effectiveness as part of the Individual Project. This would allow the other two projects to focus on Critical Thinking and Problem Solving and Creativity and Innovation. This would make it far easier to assess.'
[Translated from Welsh] [Teaching Union]

Respondents who disagreed raised a number of other points:

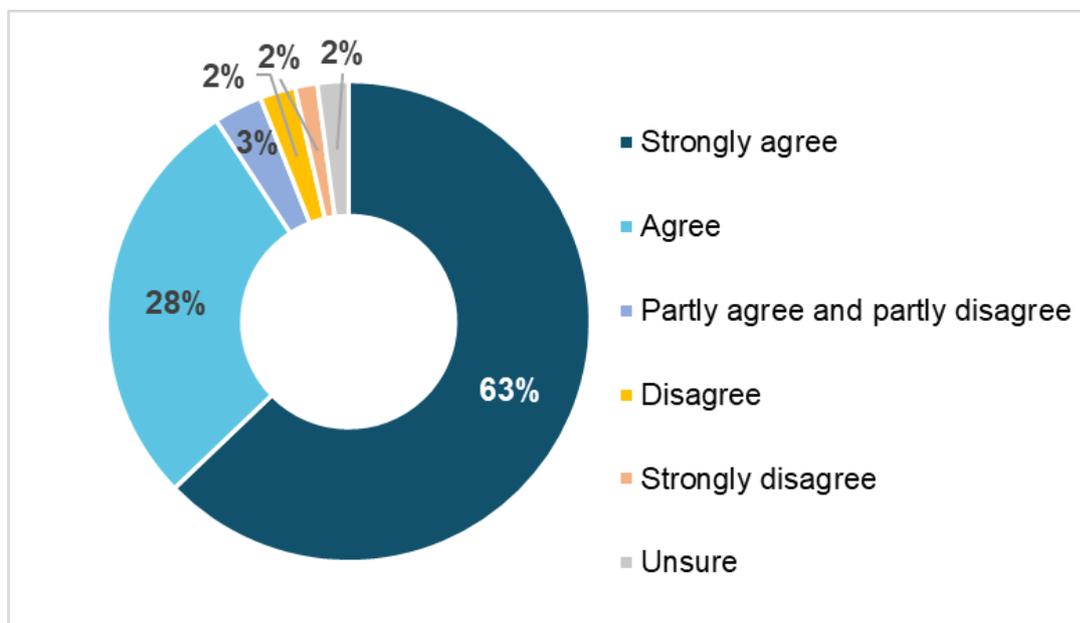
- Some disagreed with the proposed even split between the Integral Skills (where each of the four skills contributes 25 per cent to the overall qualification outcome). **In these cases, it was suggested that Critical Thinking and Problem Solving should hold greater weighting.**
- Some suggested that all skills should be **weighted equally within each component**, both for clarity in order to avoid a situation where learners feel disadvantaged in any particular project which is weighted towards skills in areas where they may be less confident.
- Some expressed opposition to the Skills Challenge Certificate, arguing that it has limited benefits for learners and should be optional.
- A small number answered 'disagree' but argued that all skills should contribute equally to the qualification, which is what the proposal advocates. This suggests that the question may have been misinterpreted by a small number of respondents.

4.8 Proposal 9 – Grading System

The new Advanced Skills Challenge Certificate should continue to be graded A*-E.

To what extent do you agree with this proposal?

Figure 9: Percentage of respondents who agree and disagree with proposal 9



N = 336

Almost all respondents stated that they agreed with the proposal, with almost two thirds (63%) strongly agreeing and 28% agreeing. Smaller proportions partly agreed and partly disagreed with the proposal (3%) or were unsure (2%). Only 4% disagreed with the proposal to some extent.

A total of 140 respondents chose to provide written comments to explain their view. The key themes arising most frequently in these comments are summarised below.

4.8.1 Reasons respondents agreed with the proposal

The most frequent reason given by respondents for agreeing with the proposal was to **ensure that the Advanced SCC is graded consistently with other Level 3 qualifications to ensure parity**. On occasion, respondents raised this point without further elaboration, but others explained in more detail why parity in grading systems is important.

These respondents often commented that grading the Advanced SCC A*-E would be **clearer and easier to understand** for teachers, learners and other stakeholders. The proposal would ensure there is no confusion over what the grades mean, as A*-E grades are a familiar and established model.

Respondents also emphasised that the proposal would give **credibility and legitimacy** to the Advanced SCC, by making it clear to stakeholders that it has equal value with other Level 3 qualifications. Using an A*-E grading system is seen as a way of demonstrating to

employers and Universities in particular that the qualification holds as much weight as A Levels and that the qualification is just as rigorous.

'The ASCC must be graded in the same manner as all other A levels so that the qualification holds equal value and importance and has parity across the curriculum. Anything different to the current grading arrangements would cause confusion and could risk undervaluing the qualification.' [Education professional]

As such, respondents felt that this proposal would **facilitate learner progression into employment and higher education**. They commented that, as Universities and employers are familiar with A*-E grading systems and are likely to understand the legitimacy of the qualification as a result, they would be more likely to accept the Advanced SCC as part of entry requirements into employment or onto higher education courses.

'The qualification will be devalued without a grading system in place and learner's motivation to succeed would be lessened. An increased number of L3 [level 3] learners are being accepted into universities and on to higher level degree apprenticeships because of their success with the ASCC.' [Educational professional]

This proposal was also perceived as **fairer than possible alternative grading options**. Respondents noted that an A*-E grading system **more directly reflects the amount of work learners put into the qualification**, rather than a pass/fail model where learners might fail to achieve a qualification despite completing some elements of the required work. Respondents therefore believed the proposal is fair as it would allow learners to achieve a grade appropriate to their ability level.

As such, respondents also commented that the proposal would **increase learner engagement** with the Advanced SCC, as there would be a **direct correlation between the amount of work they put into the qualification and their final grade**. Respondents were of the opinion that learners would be more likely to fully commit to all aspects of the qualification if they could see that doing so would improve their final grade. This is compared to a pass/fail model where only two outcomes are available for learners regardless of their level of commitment.

'A higher mark would be able to demonstrate the hard work put into the certificate by the student, which a mere pass mark would not reflect. Similarly, having a pass/fail approach, would cause students to lose interest and not work as hard. A quote I often hear around pass/fail topics/qualifications is "It doesn't matter, I just have to pass".' [Learner]

4.8.3 Reasons respondents disagreed with the proposal

Respondents who disagreed with the proposal primarily did so because they felt that **alternative an alternative grading system would be more appropriate**. Some of these respondents commented that a pass/fail model, or a pass/merit/distinction model would be more appropriate as they do not perceive the Advanced SCC to be the same type of qualification as a 'traditional' A Level. Others emphasised that more rigour would be needed in the way the qualification is delivered and assessed before an A*-E grading system would be appropriate. One respondent in particular suggested that an A*-E grading system would not necessarily support the development of talents and optimise learner wellbeing and self-esteem.

'even when professionals celebrate achievement at all levels, it is not always the case that grades D and E feel like success for young people. This may be because wider society can often understand any grade below a C as a failure to pass...Therefore, these grades are not always consistent with developing optimum wellbeing and self-esteem, and they are also not always consistent with developing skills to the full as they can de-motivate young people...My preference would be to adopt a grading system that does not have the negative connotations of an A-E, and recognises achievement in a positive way.'* [Education stakeholder organisation]

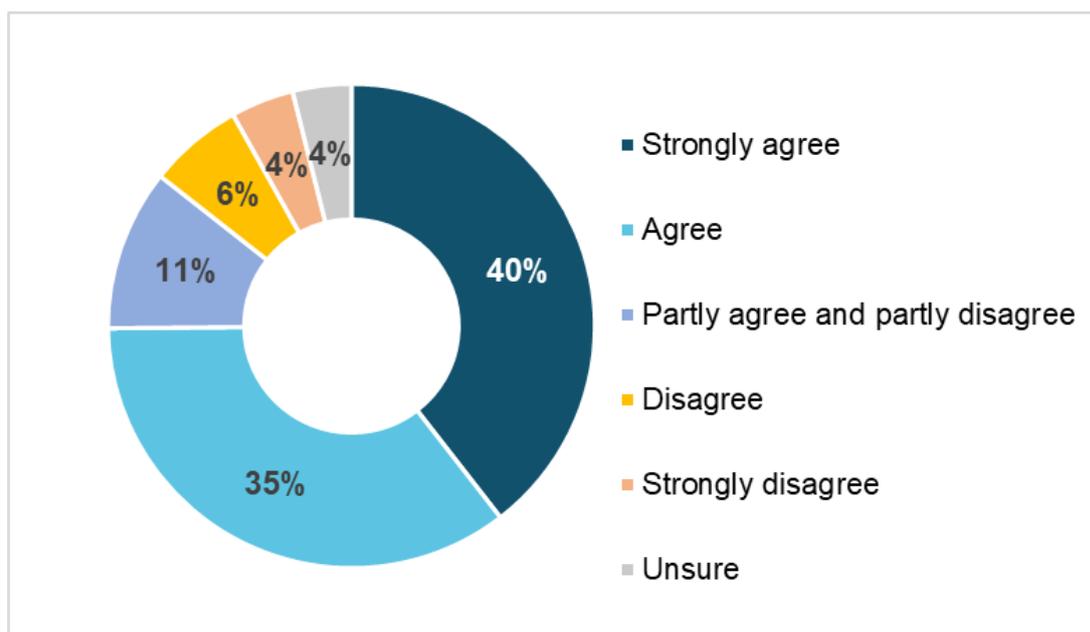
On occasion, respondents took this opportunity to re-emphasise earlier comments relating to the need to **discontinue the Advanced SCC in general** or to express their view that the **Advanced SCC should continue as a qualification** but shouldn't be graded.

4.9 Proposal 10 – Grading System

Learners should be able to achieve a grade at qualification level without having to pass every component of the new Advanced Skills Challenge Certificate. In the interests of fairness, learners should continue to be entitled to one re-sit per component and the highest grade achieved for that component should count towards the qualification grade.

To what extent do you agree with this proposal?

Figure 10: Percentage of respondents who agree and disagree with proposal 10



N = 334

Three quarters of respondents stated that they either strongly agreed (40%) or agreed (35%) with the proposal. Smaller proportions partly agreed and partly disagreed with the proposal (11%) or were unsure (4%). Only 10% disagreed with the proposal to some extent.

A total of 135 respondents chose to provide written comments to explain their view. The key themes arising most frequently in these comments are summarised below.

4.9.1 Reasons respondents agreed with the proposal

Respondents commented that the proposal would **ensure parity between the revised Advanced SCC and other Level 3 qualifications** (and higher education levels). They noted that these other qualifications also adopt a compensatory approach and allow re-sits; as such, it was deemed appropriate that the Advanced SCC should follow the same approach. It was also suggested that this consistent approach would make it easier for learners to understand, as it would be familiar from other qualifications. Respondents emphasised that aggregating marks (regardless of whether each individual module or unit has been passed) to provide a final grade is a standard method of grading qualifications and should therefore apply in this case.

The proposal was also seen as **fair**, though respondents gave different reasons for why they felt the proposal is fair. Some felt that the proposal is fair because learners would be subject to the same grading system across different qualifications. Others felt that allowing re-sits would ensure learners are provided with a second chance to succeed, which was seen as fair. A compensatory approach was also seen as fair by some respondents, who deemed it unfair to fail a qualification when achieving high marks in all skill areas apart from one.

'The current arrangements are unfair. Students can resit other Level 3 qualifications but they cannot resit elements of the Advanced Skills Challenge Certificate so this change should ensure there is parity with other qualifications studied.' [Education professional]

Respondents also noted that the proposal would **ensure any personal or extenuating circumstances which may negatively affect a learners' performance are taken into account** in the grading system. There are three main circumstances which respondents noted the proposal might alleviate.

- Some respondents highlighted specific extenuating circumstances which could have an impact on a learners' ability to pass every component, for example: needing to leave the course before the qualification is complete; moving schools and needing time to adjust; or learners needing to familiarise themselves with the Advanced SCC if they had not studied towards the SCC at Key Stage 4.
- Others highlighted the need to ensure the qualification is achievable for learners from different backgrounds and with different skill levels. The proposal is seen as a way of ensuring those who struggle with particular skills won't be barred from receiving a grade.
- Respondents also noted that the proposal would recognise good quality work completed by learners throughout the year even if learners face challenges undertaking final assessments.

'A student may work really hard at all components of the Advanced Skills Challenge Certificate for an illness or event to cause one area of the certificate to drop at no fault of the student's. Consequently, the student should be able to accommodate for these unprecedented events that effect their educational performance.' [Learner]

The proposal was also seen to **offer learners the opportunity to demonstrate and develop their skills in certain components** even if they find other components more challenging. Respondents emphasised that not all learners would be equally strong in all skill areas and should not be penalised if they demonstrate strengths in certain areas.

Respondents also commented that the proposal would ensure the **recognition and encouragement of learner improvement** over time. They emphasised that providing opportunities for learners to re-sit components would ensure the final grade takes into account the ongoing development of learners' skills and understanding. As such, the

proposal was also seen as a way of encouraging learner engagement, as further commitment to the qualification and further study could result in a higher grade during re-sits.

'The previous 'cap at a pass' if resitting was not in line with other A Level subjects and offered no incentive for learners to try hard to complete a Challenge. Learners should be permitted to resit, particularly as they develop a more sophisticated understanding of complex global issues etc. They are quite often catapulted into completing Challenges when they are not quite ready to sit them, but this is often necessary because of time constraints and timetabling constraints.' [FE provider]

As such, respondents believed that the proposal would **support learners to achieve the best outcomes** they are capable of achieving. They noted that requiring learners to pass all components and requiring them to pass all assessments first time could result in lower grades than they would otherwise be capable of achieving. In this sense, the proposal was seen as a positive way of helping learners achieve a grade which is an accurate reflection of their overall ability.

'I think that qualifications show the top of your ability and the top of what you are able to achieve instead of the average that you achieve on a day to day basis. It would be scary to be given your average because your top achievements could be very far above your average score for your subjects.' [Learner]

4.9.2 Issues that need further consideration

On occasion, respondents queried or made suggestions regarding how the proposal would be **implemented in practice**. Most of these comments related to the practicalities of arranging re-sits, for example querying how they would work with long-term projects, emphasising the need for individual pupils to be given opportunities to re-sit (rather than only whole year groups) and the need to ensure sufficient teaching and learning time to support learners through re-sits. Respondents also emphasised the need to ensure the qualification is rigorously assessed if the proposal is implemented.

'The re-sit approach outlined seems proportionate, but I note that this does mean that young people could still be assessed on each element of the qualification twice, and effectively repeat the entire assessment for the qualification. Whilst I welcome the opportunity to enable re-sits, I think this should come with clear guidance that re-sits should only take place if the young person has made this choice themselves.' [Education stakeholder organisation]

In addition, a small number of respondents agreed with the proposal to allow one re-sit per component (or, on rare occasions, one re-sit across the whole qualification) but disagreed with the proposal that learners would not have to pass every component to achieve a grade. These respondents noted that learners should be expected to pass every component to achieve an appropriate grade.

'Resitting components is consistent with other courses but there is no objection to learners passing each one in order to receive a grade because this is consistent with other non-exam-based qualifications.'
[Translated from Welsh] [Education professional]⁶

4.9.3 Reasons respondents disagreed with the proposal

Respondents who disagreed with the proposal often felt that **learners should be expected to pass every component** in order to achieve a grade at qualification level. These respondents emphasised that learners should be expected to demonstrate all the required skills and understanding across all components, noting that achieving a grade without completing all the required work would be inappropriate.

'I think that if the qualification is sufficiently rigorous and has appropriate assessment levels then students should have to pass each of the 3 components to pass...this will discredit the qualification.' [Education professional]

Some respondents further explained that allowing learners to achieve a grade without passing every component **could be seen to reduce the rigour and legitimacy of the Advanced SCC** as a qualification. They identified a risk that the qualification would not be seen as rigorous as other Level 3 qualifications.

A small number of respondents disagreed specifically with the proposal to allow one re-sit per component, emphasising that re-sits are often difficult to arrange or that learners should be expected to pass first time.

⁶ Original: 'Mae ailsefyll cydrannau yn cydfynd gyda cyrsiau eraill ond does dim gwrthwynebiad i'r dysgwyr yn pasio pob un er mwyn derbyn gradd gan bod hwn yn cydfynd gyda cymwysterau eraill di-arholiad.'

5. Integrated Impact Assessment

Qualifications Wales also produced an Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) of the proposals outlined in the consultation. This section summarises respondent views on the Regulatory Impact Assessment, Equalities Impact Assessment and Welsh Language Impact Assessment.

5.1 Regulatory Impact Assessment

A total of 143 respondents chose to provide written comments regarding the Regulatory Impact Assessment. Over a third of respondents either:

- Expressed general agreement with the Regulatory Impact Assessment and/or with the proposals set out in the consultation without providing any further comment; or
- Stated that they were uncertain or had no further comments.

The key themes arising most frequently in the other comments are summarised below.

5.1.1 Views on the impact assessment

Respondents agreed that the proposals set out in the consultation do seem to focus on **learner wellbeing and putting learners first** in the reform process. They noted that the proposals should improve learner wellbeing by reducing workload and associated stress, while maintaining the value of the qualification.

Respondents also agreed that the proposals aim to **improve learner engagement**. They commented that the proposals would improve learner independence and enjoyment of the qualification, by allowing learners to focus on issues which interest them. One respondent in particular provided suggestions as to how learner engagement could be further improved; they noted that ensuring learners participate in decision-making regarding their own learning is important, as well as ensuring learners have explicit opportunities to engage in learning in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals and human rights frameworks.

'Having a subject that allows students to choose their own areas of study could really change the outcome as they're choosing what they're interested in rather than something they're forced to do. I think that by supporting students to set right goals and prepare for life is a massive help for students who may not have the time or people to talk about it to, this can really boost motivation and aspirations to succeed.' [Learner]

The proposals were also seen by a few respondents as a way to **improve teacher engagement** with the qualification and to ease their workload. Simplifying the structure of the qualification and easing the burden associated with duplication of activity was seen as a way to ensure teachers remain engaged with the qualification.

A small number of respondents also identified the proposals as relevant to wider education changes in Wales, in particular the new curriculum for Wales.

5.1.2 Further suggestions

Respondents made suggestions about how to improve the **assessment process**. The suggestions were very varied and included suggestions such as:

- A need to ensure more rigour in the assessment process (for example through streamlining the process and introducing stricter assessment methods, such as exams);
- A need to streamline and make consistent the assessment process (for example by ensuring practitioners are marking consistently); and
- Providing an interim certificate at the end of the first two components, with the full certificate awarded at the end of the Individual Project.

Respondents emphasised the importance of ensuring **awareness and understanding** of the qualification amongst key stakeholders. In particular, respondents noted that universities must understand the value of the new Advanced SCC and the status of the new qualification must be clear to practitioners, universities and learners.

‘Important to engage with universities and secure their commitment to the new qualification. If they are engaged with the changes and feel that they have contributed, they are more likely to recognise the qualification from our learners.’ [Education professional]

Respondents also emphasised the importance of providing **training and resources** to support those teaching the Advanced SCC. This includes ensuring that practitioners have the appropriate skillset to deliver the Advanced SCC and that sufficient time is allocated to the qualification in schools’ timetables. In addition, respondents identified a need to provide clear communication and guidance surrounding the new Advanced SCC to practitioners, ensuring they understand how the new Advanced SCC can be implemented in practice.

‘[Practitioners] tell us that there is a challenge in finding teachers who ‘specialise’ in the teaching of the Welsh Baccalaureate, or the Advanced Skills Challenge Certificate as it could be known. We believe that extra money is needed to recruit and train people to teach the Advanced Skills Challenge Certificate.’ [Teaching union]

Others highlighted the need to provide a **reasonable timeframe** for implementing the new Advanced SCC, to allow practitioners to plan and adapt before they start delivering the qualification. They emphasised that practitioners need to develop or acquire new resources and familiarise themselves with the new qualification.

On occasion, small numbers of respondents raised a variety of other issues to consider such as: Ensuring the needs of all types of learners are taken into account; and a need to reduce the amount of administration tasks which practitioners and learners need to undertake as part of the qualification.

5.2 Equalities Impact Assessment

A total of 117 respondents chose to provide written comments regarding the Equalities Impact Assessment. Over a third of respondents either:

- Expressed general agreement with the Equalities Impact Assessment and/or with the proposals set out in the consultation without providing any further comment; or
- Stated that they were uncertain or had no further comments.

The key themes arising most frequently in the other comments are summarised below.

5.2.1 Views on the impact assessment

There was agreement amongst respondents that the proposals set out in the consultation would ensure **fairness for learners**. By this, respondents meant that the proposals would allow all learners an equal opportunity to achieve good outcomes in the qualification regardless of their background or any disadvantage they may face. They noted that all learners have a right to be treated fairly in relation to the qualification.

'[Our] enthusiasm is based upon the obvious proposition that a part of [the qualification's] function is to provide learners with a level playing field upon which to develop and demonstrate skills which might otherwise only be available to those who can access placements, networks and structured extra-curricular activities. In the same vein, the proposal that learners will not be assessed on digital literacy (even where this is embedded) suggests that there is no necessity to ensure that they receive access to digital tools.' [Teaching union]

In particular, respondents noted that the proposals would **support those who face barriers in relation to the current qualification**. As such, the proposals were seen as a way to address any disadvantage in learner outcomes and are clearly focused on supporting those who are likely to struggle with certain components of the qualification or with wider education.

'A good example is the incorporation of numeracy, literacy and digital skills into the certificate. While I previously mentioned that these skills to already be well developed by students at this stage, it will help benefit those students with learning difficulties, language/cultural barriers and those from less fortunate backgrounds.' [Learner]

Respondents also commented on how the new qualification would **encourage respect for and understanding of diversity** amongst learners. In particular, they noted that the proposals would develop learners' understanding of the local and global communities, giving them a new understanding of the world around them.

'I think they will allow learners to connect with their community more and understand the people within it.' [Learner]

5.2.2 Further suggestions

Some respondents suggested **additional topics which could be covered in the qualification**, to further support the theme of equality. Suggestions were varied and examples included:

- A wider range of approved briefs;
- A wider interpretation of equality and diversity, to include all types of diversity within the local community;
- Expressly linking the equalities and the Sustainable Development Goals with human rights frameworks;
- Addressing challenges which face local communities in Wales in particular; and
- Ensuring learning encompasses a wider variety of contexts and opportunities across different sectors (e.g. volunteering, caring, creative pursuits, private sector opportunities, politics).

Respondents also emphasised **a need to ensure the qualification is accessible for all learners**. This includes ensuring that the learning needs of all students are adequately catered for, including providing support to learners with ALN, those who tend to perform lower or higher in other subject areas and those from different backgrounds. Envisaged support might include additional resources, one-to-one support and a greater degree of challenge for some pupils.

'Those learners from disadvantaged backgrounds have been greatly affected by the current Covid-19 health crisis, especially when schools were closed, and learning was done remotely. Those pupils who had no access to IT hardware (PC, laptop) and no connection to the internet were particularly affected. As the Advanced Skills Challenge Certificate focuses on developing learner independence and autonomy, it is essential that those from disadvantaged backgrounds have what is necessary to complete the Advanced Skills Challenge Certificate to the best of their ability. This could include access to funding to support young people to undertake specific project work, and to undertake activities both inside and outside of the classroom setting.' [Teaching union]

Consistency and quality of delivery was also seen as a key consideration for equality. Respondents emphasised that in order for the qualification to support equality amongst learners, it must be available consistently across Wales to a high standard. It was highlighted that the quality of teaching must be consistent across providers and regions, and all providers must be appropriately resourced to deliver the qualification.

5.3 Welsh Language Impact Assessment

A total of 130 respondents chose to provide written comments regarding the Welsh Language Impact Assessment. Over a third of respondents either:

- Expressed general agreement with the Welsh Language Impact Assessment and/or with the proposals set out in the consultation without providing any further comment; or
- Stated that they were uncertain or had no further comments.

The key themes arising most frequently in the other comments are summarised below.

5.3.1 Views on the impact assessment

On occasion, respondents expressed agreement that the proposals set out in the consultation would **help promote the Welsh language**, particularly by raising awareness of the language. They commented that the proposals would provide opportunities for learners to develop their Welsh language skills and that the proposals demonstrate a clear focus on Welsh language (for example through inclusion of the Well-being of Future Generations Act).

'I believe the proposed changes have kept the importance of the Welsh language in mind, and I believe that these changes do not hinder, but continue to promote the importance of the Welsh Language.' [Learner]

'A focus on the Welsh language is evident through the inclusion of the Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015. The opportunity for learners to complete the qualification has also been considered.' [FE provider]

Respondents also commented that learning about **Welsh culture (including Welsh language) is important for learners**. Welsh culture, identity and local history were seen as valuable topics to study within the Advanced SCC and Welsh language was seen as a core component. Respondents explained that studying such topics would ensure learners understand their local communities and would foster appreciation of Welsh culture and language.

'We have a language and culture we should be educating others about however that is hard to do when the Welsh culture is normally not part of our education! This would be a great way to be able to connect with one another and help others understand our culture and background a little more.' [Learner]

A small number commented that Welsh language didn't seem to have been discussed much in the proposals. These respondents felt that further commentary on Welsh language would be needed within the proposals themselves before they could comment on the Impact Assessment.

Others took this opportunity to express a view that the **Welsh language is not particularly relevant to the Advanced SCC, or at least shouldn't be a priority** within the qualification. These respondents felt that the Advanced SCC should not focus on Welsh language to the detriment of any other skill areas. Some also commented that the Welsh language should be optional within education in general, which also applies to the Advanced SCC, or generally criticised the value of Welsh language in wider society.

'I think this is not as vital as the other considerations, especially as many learners need to leave Wales for their further education.' [Education professional]

5.3.2 Further suggestions

A small number of respondents made suggestions about how to **further engage learners in the language, including how the content of the Advanced SCC could be further developed** and how Welsh language could be integrated into the qualification. Examples included studying some part of the qualification in Welsh. One respondent provided a more detailed commentary, suggesting that the Advanced SCC could:

'introduce awareness of the Welsh language and bilingualism to every learner for example...you could ask them to evaluate the value of the Welsh brand to a business or a product, or of introducing a bilingual customer service. When the learner is completing a skills audit you could ask them to audit their Welsh language skills and how they could develop those skills...you could ask them to research the Welsh language provision [in higher education], Welsh language scholarships which Universities in Wales have or compare the costs of studying in a University in Wales and outside Wales.' [Translated from Welsh] [HE provider]⁷

Respondents also emphasised the need for **bilingual resources and guidance** to support the new Advanced SCC. They noted that such resources and guidance must be provided in a timely manner, with the English-language and Welsh-language resources provided at the same time. Respondents warned that learners studying the Advanced SCC through the medium of Welsh could be disadvantaged if high-quality, comprehensive resources are not available or if learners and teachers must rely on English-language resources. This includes resources about topics such as the SDGs.

⁷ Original: 'gyflwyno ymwybyddiaeth o'r Gymraeg a dwyieithrwydd i bob dysgwr er enghraifft...gellir gofyn iddynt werthuso gwerth y brand Cymreig i ryw fenter neu gynnyrch neu gyflwyno gwasanaeth cwsmer dwyieithog. Wrth i'r dysgwr gwblhau archwiliad sgiliau, gellir gofyn iddynt archwilio eu sgiliau Cymraeg a sut y gallent ddatblygu'r sgiliau hynny...gellir gofyn iddynt ymchwilio mewn i'r ddarpariaeth cyfrwng Cymraeg [mewn addysg bellach], ysgoloriaethau cyfrwng Cymraeg sydd gan brifysgolion yng Nghymru neu gymharu costau byw o astudio mewn prifysgol yng Nghymru a thu allan i Gymru.'

‘There is a potential inequity for learners in the medium of Welsh in that there are fewer learning, research and experiential resources available in Welsh across the wide range of themes, subjects and contexts that might come into the scope of this qualification. In effect this will mean that learners in Welsh medium settings will undertake some of the learning for their qualification (e.g. researching wider sources) in English.’ [Education stakeholder organisation]

On occasion, respondents also emphasised that learners must be provided with **support and opportunities to complete the qualification in their preferred language**. While respondents acknowledged that the proposals address this requirement, they also make suggestions about additional support which could be provided to ensure learners are provided with the opportunity to study the Advanced SCC in either Welsh or English. This includes supporting learners with their Welsh language literacy and confidence, which may hinder some from studying through the medium of Welsh. This also includes providing support for learners to develop additional skills which may be needed to study through the medium of Welsh, such as translation skills and familiarity with appropriate vocabulary in both languages; and how the qualification could recognise the additional workload that such work requires.

6. Next steps

Alongside this analysis of consultation responses, Qualifications Wales has published a separate document detailing its decisions in relation to the new Advanced SCC and the Advanced Welsh Bacc. In reaching its decisions, Qualifications Wales has considered all responses to the consultation.

Qualifications Wales' decisions document is available to [read online](#).

In the consultation, Qualifications Wales also asked respondents to share views to help them make decisions about the title of the new qualification. A discussion of these responses can also be found in the decisions document.

Having made their decisions, Qualifications Wales intends to work with the awarding body developing the new qualification in preparation for it to be introduced for first teaching in September 2023.

Alongside their work on the Advanced SCC and Advanced Welsh Bacc, Qualifications Wales have also been considering the current version of the National / Foundation SCC and the National / Foundation Welsh Bacc as part of their work looking at future qualifications for learners in Wales aged 14 to 16. Over the coming months, Qualifications Wales will continue to work with stakeholders to develop and refine their proposals.

You can read more about Qualification Wales' work to reform qualifications for 14 - 16-year-olds on [Qualifications Wales' website](#).