

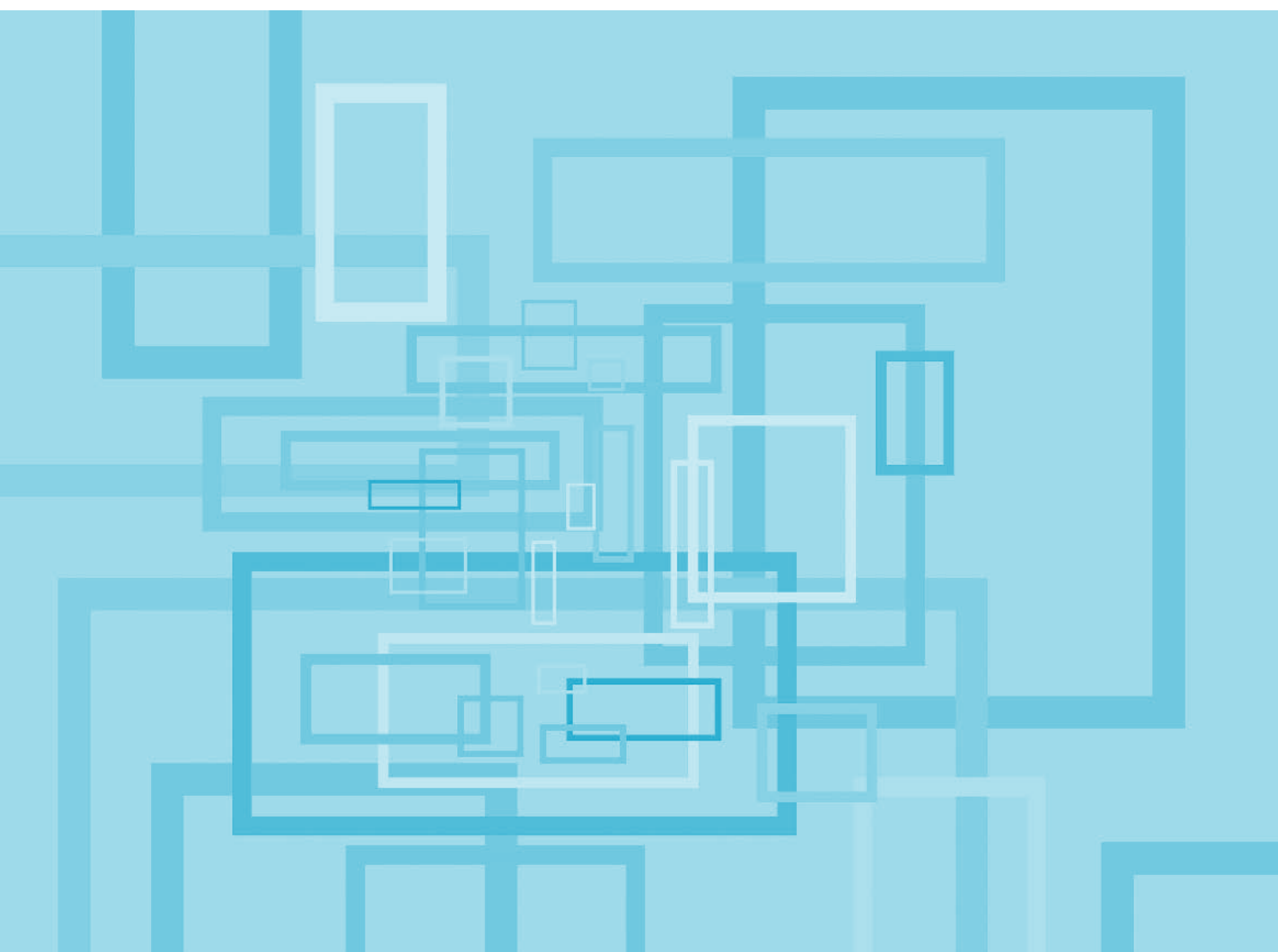


Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

GCSE qualification principles

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Information

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GCSE qualification principles

Audience	Awarding organisations and those delivering GCSE qualifications in Wales.
Overview	This document sets out the overarching principles for all GCSEs developed for teaching in Wales from September 2015 onwards.
Action required	Awarding organisations must ensure that GCSEs developed for use in Wales meet these overarching principles.
Further information	Enquiries about this document should be directed to: Qualifications and Regulation Division Department for Education and Skills Welsh Government Tŷ'r Afon Bedwas Road Bedwas Caerphilly CF83 8WT Tel: 01443 663725 e-mail: QualsReform@wales.gsi.gov.uk
Additional copies	This document can be accessed from the Qualifications Wales website at www.qualificationswales.org/gcses-timeline-for-change/

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Introduction

1. These qualification principles set out the requirements for all new or revised GCSE specifications developed to be taught in Wales from September 2015.
2. These principles provide the framework and criteria within and against which an awarding organisation or awarding organisations develop all GCSE specifications to be presented for accreditation in Wales.

Content

Titling

3. The titles of GCSEs must:
 - 3.1 use the word 'GCSE' for single-award GCSEs
 - 3.2 use the words 'GCSE (short course)' if based on a short-course specification
 - 3.3 use the words 'GCSE (double award)' if equivalent to two separate GCSEs.

Subject matter

4. The subject matter of GCSEs outlined in the specifications must, where appropriate, support opportunities to develop the skills that are being assessed through the Core of the Welsh Baccalaureate:
 - Literacy
 - Numeracy
 - Digital Literacy
 - Critical Thinking and Problem Solving
 - Planning and Organisation
 - Creativity and Innovation
 - Personal Effectiveness.
5. The subject matter of GCSEs must:
 - 5.1 for short-course specifications, include half of the content of a single-award GCSE
 - 5.2 for double-award specifications, include content equivalent to two separate single-award GCSEs
 - 5.3 include a Welsh perspective where appropriate
 - 5.4 ensure suitable progression from the relevant programmes of study at Key Stage 3
 - 5.5 be consistent with and build upon the relevant programmes of study at Key Stage 4
 - 5.6 support the content of the National Literacy and Numeracy Framework (LNF) for Key Stage 4 where appropriate

- 5.7 ensure learners achieving the qualification are well prepared for progression to an AS or A level in the same, or a related, subject
- 5.8 ensure that the level of demand is broadly equivalent to other GCSEs in Wales
- 5.9 prepare learners effectively for future studies and the world of work.

Assessment

- 6. The assessment arrangements for GCSEs must:
 - 6.1 include question papers normally targeted at either a single tier covering grades A* to G or two tiers of grades: A* to D with an allowed grade E, and C to G
 - 6.2 not exceed a maximum examining time for external assessments of three hours, unless otherwise agreed with the Welsh Government
 - 6.3 set out the relationship between the assessment objectives and the assessment units/components
 - 6.4 show the proportion of marks allocated to each assessment objective (or group of assessment objectives) and to each assessment unit/component
 - 6.5 state clearly if an assessment objective will include the assessment of written communication
 - 6.6 require, across both controlled and external assessment units/components, a variety of question types and tasks
 - 6.7 ensure that the grammatical accuracy of candidates is assessed when they are required to provide extended written responses
 - 6.8 be comparable for all candidates, even where there are optional assessment units/components or optional examination questions
 - 6.9 allow the use of controlled assessment only where there is a clear case for doing so due to the nature of the subject.
- 7. Unitised specifications must:
 - 7.1 contain a maximum of four assessment units in a single award
 - 7.2 allocate a weighting of at least 20 per cent to each assessment unit
 - 7.3 allow only one re-sit of an assessment unit with the better result counting towards the qualification

- 7.4 allocate a weighting of at least 40 per cent to terminal assessment
 - 7.5 ensure that results for a unit have a 'shelf life' limited only by that of the specification.
8. Linear specifications must:
- 8.1 contain a maximum of four assessment components in a single award
 - 8.2 allocate a weighting of at least 20 per cent to each assessment component
 - 8.3 ensure that all components are assessed at the end of the course
 - 8.4 ensure that results for a component have a 'shelf life' limited only by that of the specification.

Reporting

9. There must be arrangements for the grading and reporting of GCSEs so that:
- 9.1 attainment that is sufficient to lead to the award of a certificate at GCSE is reported on an eight-grade scale from A* to G, where A* is the highest grade
 - 9.2 attainment that is insufficient to lead to the award of a certificate at GCSE is reported as Unclassified or U
 - 9.3 the grade for double award GCSEs is reported in the format A*A*, A*A, AA, AB, BB, BC, CC, CD, DD, DE, EE, EF, FF, FG, GG
 - 9.4 the grades on short-course and double-award GCSE certificates are accompanied by explanatory notes on the nature of these types of GCSE.