



Criteria for Recognition to Award GCSE/GCE Qualifications

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This document contains criteria that must be met by any awarding body that wishes to award GCSE or GCE qualifications in Wales.

This document is available in [Welsh](#).

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General principles

In order to award regulated qualifications in Wales an awarding body must be recognised by Qualifications Wales. To be recognised, an awarding body must demonstrate that they are able to meet our [General Criteria for Recognition](#).

Section 6 of the Qualifications Wales Act 2015 allows us to set and publish criteria for different qualifications or different descriptions of qualifications.

Section 9 of the Qualifications Wales Act 2015 allows us to recognise an awarding body to award such qualifications or description of qualifications, subject to them meeting the requirements of such qualification-specific recognition criteria.

This document contains the Criteria for Recognition to award GCSE / GCE qualifications.

Any awarding body wishing to award GCSE / GCE qualifications must demonstrate that they meet these criteria, or that they have sufficient arrangements in place to satisfy us that they will be able to meet the criteria.

Based on the evidence provided, Qualifications Wales will determine whether the awarding body meets the criteria and, subsequently, decide whether to grant recognition to award GCSE / GCE qualifications.

The way we recognise awarding bodies, including those wishing to award GCSE / GCE qualifications in Wales, is set out in our [Regulatory Framework and Approach](#).

Who can apply

Any awarding body recognised by Qualifications Wales can apply for recognition to award GCSE / GCE qualifications in Wales.

If an awarding body is not yet recognised by Qualifications Wales, then they must first apply for general recognition before presenting an application to be recognised to award GCSE / GCE qualifications.

How to apply

For further details on how to apply for recognition to award GCSE / GCE qualifications in Wales, please see our **Rules About Applications to Award GCSE / GCE Qualifications**.

Notes on Criteria

This document includes examples of evidence that applicants can provide. These are intended to be illustrative and to help applicants understand how to meet the criteria. These examples are not comprehensive or exhaustive and do not form part of the requirements of the criteria.

An applicant which meets these Criteria will be recognised to award GCSE / GCE qualifications in Wales.

Criteria for Recognition to award GCSE / GCE Qualifications

Awarding body recognition

Criterion 1

The awarding body has general recognition from Qualifications Wales to award regulated qualifications at the time of its application.

Criterion 2

The awarding body can demonstrate that it will be able to comply on an ongoing basis with the [Standard Conditions of Recognition](#) in respect of the development, delivery and award of GCSE / GCE qualifications.

The awarding body should provide evidence of how it will be able to meet our Standard Conditions of Recognition in the context of delivering GCSE / GCE qualifications.

Criterion 3

The awarding body can demonstrate that it will be able to comply on an ongoing basis with the [Additional Standard Conditions of Recognition for GCSE / GCE Qualifications](#).

Examples of evidence for Criteria 1-3

- A proposed approach to ensure that any GCSE / GCE qualifications comply with our [Standard Conditions of Recognition](#).
- A proposed approach to ensure that any GCSE / GCE qualifications comply with our [Additional Standard Conditions of Recognition for GCSE / GCE Qualifications](#).
- An approach to compliance that reflects our [additional regulatory requirements](#) in respect of the development, delivery and award of GCSE / GCE qualifications; including
 - Additional certificate requirements;
 - Requirements for setting specified levels of attainment for GCSE and GCE qualifications, and
 - Resit rules

Availability of adequate resources and arrangements

Criterion 4

The awarding body has the capacity to develop, deliver, and award GCSE / GCE qualifications for at least a five-year period following the first award or to the end date of the relevant qualification(s) (whichever is the longest)¹.

Examples of evidence

- Audited accounts for the three most recent financial years for the awarding body legal entity: these statements must include profit and loss (or income and expenditure), balance sheet, capital and reserve and/or cash flow².
- Published commentary that explains the key financial and accounting policies underpinning the statement.
- The most recent business plan for the awarding body legal entity covering a period of at least three years which outlines its plans for awarding award GCSE / GCE qualifications in Wales.
- A financial forecast that outlines a proposed approach to the development (where applicable), delivery and award of GCSE / GCE qualifications and provides assurance of financial viability.
- Organisational structure, governance arrangements and workforce plan (or proposed plans) that demonstrate sufficient resources, skills, knowledge and experience for the development, delivery and award of GCSE / GCE qualifications.

¹ Please refer to Standard Condition of Recognition A5.

² If these accounts were published more than nine months prior to the date of the application, applicants should also submit their most recent management accounts, including a balance sheet.

Setting specified levels of attainment

Criterion 5

The awarding body has the systems, processes and resources in place to set specified levels of attainment in respect of GCSE / GCE qualifications.

Examples of evidence

- Proposed arrangements and processes for setting grade boundaries that demonstrate an understanding of and ability to comply with our [Requirements for Setting Specified Levels of Attainment for GCSE and GCE Qualifications](#), Standard Condition H3 and Additional Standard Condition ASC.Q.
- Proposed arrangements for the reflection of our [Qualification and Component Levels](#) in the design of any proposed GCSE / GCE qualifications.
- Proposed arrangements and processes for the use of a uniform mark scale.
- Proposed arrangements and processes for the use of comparable outcomes as the principal mechanism for maintaining standards.
- Proposed arrangements and processes for ensuring comparability with similar qualifications awarded by other awarding bodies.
- Evidence of skills and experience (including statistical) to set specified levels of attainment in the context of GCSE / GCE qualifications.

Assessment

Criterion 6

The awarding body is able to deliver valid and reliable assessment for GCSE / GCE qualifications, through varied methodologies.

Examples of evidence

- Evidence of having awarded both externally and internally assessed qualifications, including relevant case studies;
- Evidence of approaches to marking and moderation that comply with our [Additional Standard Conditions of Recognition for GCSE / GCE qualifications](#);
- Examples of specifications, including those that incorporate external assessment.

Fitness for purpose

Criterion 7

The awarding body is able to develop, deliver and award GCSE / GCE qualifications that are fit for purpose, in accordance with Standard Condition of Recognition D1.

Examples of evidence

- Proposed approaches for ensuring that their GCSE / GCE qualifications will be as far as possible Valid, Reliable, Comparable, Manageable and will Minimise Bias.
- Proposed approaches for ensuring that their GCSE / GCE qualifications will meet the needs of learners based on evidence from engagement.

Confidentiality of assessment materials

Criterion 8

The awarding body is able to maintain the confidentiality of GCSE / GCE assessment materials.

Examples of evidence

- Records of conflict of interest for current qualifications and records of those who have had access to confidential assessment materials and demonstrable evidence of how these were managed effectively, including templates, policies and processes to be used.
- Risk management and contingency plans for proposed GCSE / GCE qualifications.
- Proposed approaches to managing relationships with centres and third parties, including enforceable agreements.
- Malpractice and maladministration policies and procedures.
- Examples of confidentiality/non-disclosure agreements.
- Examples of incidents where incident management was implemented.
- Appropriate digital security certification.

Training

Criterion 9

The awarding body is able to provide appropriate guidance and training to relevant persons in respect of GCSE / GCE qualifications.

Examples of evidence

- Proposed approach to complying on an ongoing basis with the [Standard Conditions of Recognition](#) in respect of GCSE and/or GCE qualifications and [Additional Standard Conditions of Recognition for GCSE / GCE](#).
- Training material or plans for training to be provided e.g. to centres, teachers and assessors.

Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration

Criterion 10

The awarding body has clear arrangements for making a Reasonable Adjustment and giving Special Consideration in respect of GCSE / GCE qualifications.

Examples of evidence

- Reasonable Adjustments policies which reflect clear specifications on the use of Reasonable Adjustments with reference to Equalities Law and relevant guidelines.
- Special Consideration policies which reflect clear specifications on the use of Special Considerations.
- Evidence of any arrangements currently in place, or it proposes to put in place.

Reviews of Marking, Reviews of Moderation and Appeals

Criterion 11

The awarding body is able to describe processes for how it would respond to requests for, and undertake, reviews of marking, reviews of moderation and appeals in respect of GCSE / GCE qualifications.

Examples of evidence

- Documentation outlining criteria against which applications for reviews of marking, reviews of moderation and appeals will be judged.
- Evidence of proposed approaches to amending grades on the basis of findings of any reviews of marking, reviews of moderation or appeals.

Submitting data to Qualifications Wales

Criterion 12

The awarding body has clear arrangements for collecting, storing and transferring to Qualifications Wales data in respect of GCSE / GCE qualifications.

Examples of evidence:

- Evidence of an understanding of [routine data collections](#), including the types of data collected (such as entries and certifications) and their frequency;
- Evidence of workforce planning to ensure relevant data management and statistical expertise.

Making GCSE / GCE qualifications available

Criterion 13

The awarding body is able to provide an appropriate proposed timetable and approach for the period in which it intends to make GCSE / GCE qualifications available.

The timetable should include awarding and certification dates which are in line with awarding bodies awarding similar qualifications elsewhere.

Examples of evidence

- A timetable for the upcoming examination series which demonstrates the full cycle including development, registration, assessment, marking, moderation, award through to appeals and certification, with reference to our [Additional Standard Conditions of Recognition for GCSE / GCE qualifications](#).

Defined Terms

In this document, and in accordance with the provisions outlined in Section J of our Standard Conditions of Recognition, the following words shall have the meaning given to them below:

Valid	The extent to which the assessment tests the things it is supposed to assess. The use(s) of the outcome(s) of an assessment is/are valid if supported by evidence and theory. The evaluation of validity involves the development of a clear argument to support the proposed interpretation of the outcomes and the intended uses of the assessment. The validity argument should be built on statements of the proposed interpretation and supporting evidence collected from all stages of the assessment process.
Reliable	Reliability is about consistency and so concerns the extent to which the various stages in the assessment process generate outcomes which would be replicated were the assessment repeated. Reliability is a necessary condition of validity, as it is not possible to demonstrate the validity of an assessment process which is not reliable. The reliability of an assessment is affected by a range of factors such as the sampling of assessment tasks and inconsistency in marking by human assessors.
Comparable	Generating assessment outcomes that are comparable in standards between assessments within a qualification, between similar qualifications, with other awarding bodies, and over time. Where an assessment has equivalent forms then it is important to ensure comparability of outcomes. There are two reasons for this: (a) to reach fair comparisons about the attainment of learners: it is impossible to produce different forms with exactly the same content and statistical specifications (such as the level of difficulty or demand on the learner). Therefore, a requirement to ensure comparability of outcomes makes sure the level of difficulty or demand of the test forms is taken into account when setting standards so that learners taking the different forms can be compared fairly.

	<p>(b) to ensure that the outcomes can be used as a measure of standards: outcomes from different forms of the same test must be comparable if they are to be used to measure standards over time. Both expert judgements and statistical procedures such as test equating can be used to ensure comparability of outcomes from different forms of the same test. It is, however, important to ensure that assessments are not so similar that they become predictable, as this would be a threat to validity.</p>
Manageable	<p>Manageability relates to the feasibility of carrying out particular assessment processes. A manageable assessment process is one which places reasonable demands on centres and learners. The evaluation of the reasonableness of the demands will be based on the scale of the assessment process on the participants, balanced by the usefulness of the outcomes. As with the other requirements (validity, reliability, comparability and minimising bias), judgements about manageability must be balanced with considerations around the other requirements.</p>
Minimising Bias	<p>Minimising bias is about ensuring that an assessment does not produce unreasonably adverse outcomes for learners who share a common attribute. The minimisation of bias is related to fairness to all learners and is also closely related to statutory equality duties.</p>
Reasonable Adjustments	<p>Adjustments made to an assessment for a qualification so as to enable a disabled learner to demonstrate his or her knowledge, skills and understanding to the levels of attainment required by the specification for that qualification.</p>
Special Consideration	<p>Consideration to be given to a learner who has temporarily experienced:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) an illness or injury, or (b) some other event outside of the learner's control, <p>which has had, or is reasonably likely to have had, a material effect on that learner's ability to take an assessment or demonstrate his or her level of attainment in an assessment.</p>