

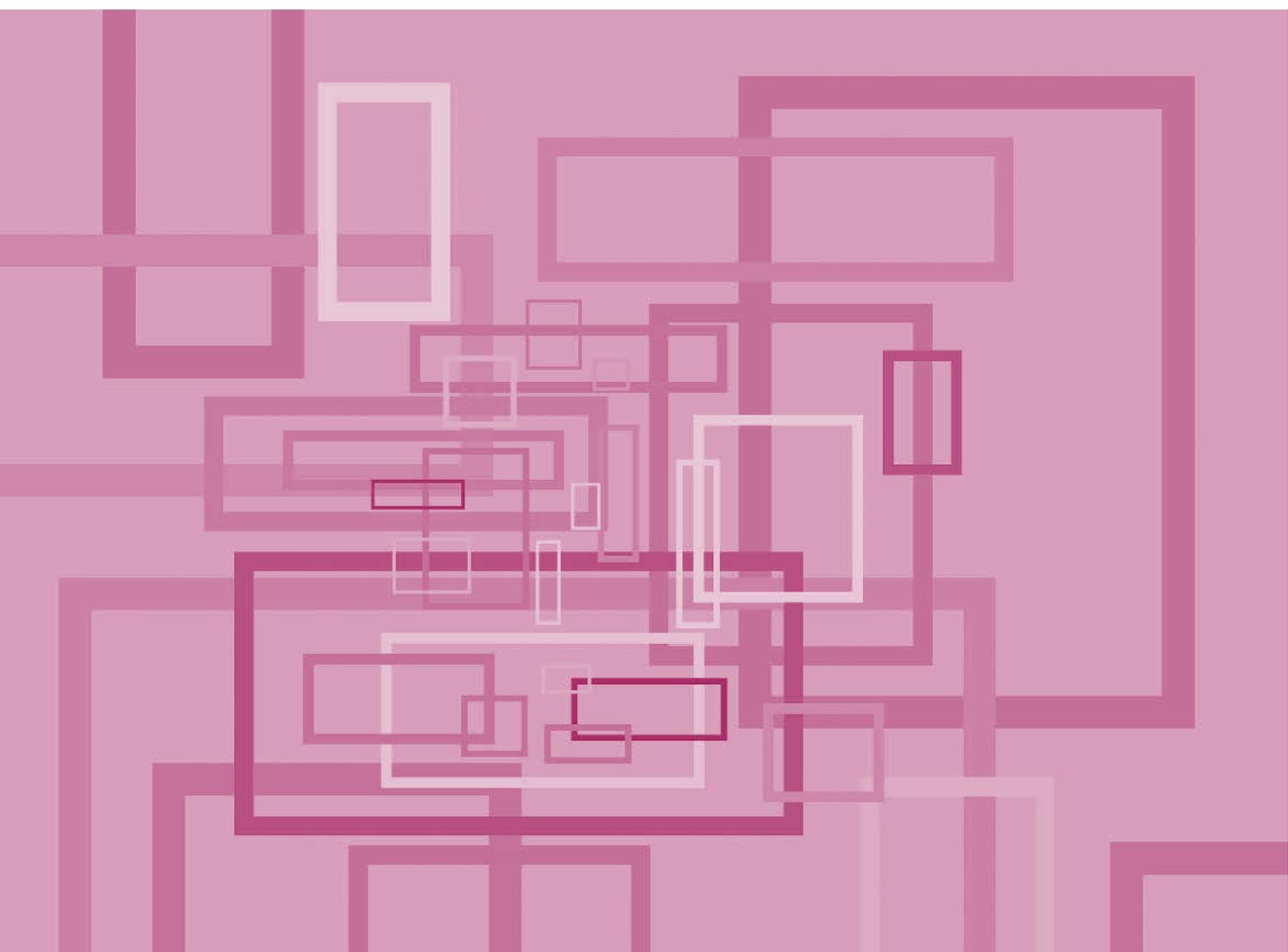


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# GCE AS and A level qualification principles

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## Information

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# GCE AS and A level qualification principles

<b>Audience</b>	Awarding organisations and those delivering GCE AS and A level qualifications in Wales.
<b>Overview</b>	This document sets out the overarching principles for all GCE AS and A levels developed for teaching in Wales from September 2015 onwards.
<b>Action required</b>	Awarding organisations must ensure that GCE AS and A levels developed for use in Wales meet these overarching principles.
<b>Further information</b>	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: <a href="mailto:QualsReform@wales.gsi.gov.uk">QualsReform@wales.gsi.gov.uk</a>
<b>Additional copies</b>	This document can be accessed from the Qualifications Wales website at <a href="http://www.qualificationswales.org/as-and-a-levels-timeline-for-change/">www.qualificationswales.org/as-and-a-levels-timeline-for-change/</a>

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## **Introduction**

1. These qualification principles set out the requirements for all new or revised GCE AS and A level 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 GCE AS and A level specifications to be presented for accreditation in Wales.

# Content

## Titling

3. The titles of GCE AS and A level qualifications must:
  - 3.1 use the words 'GCE AS' or 'GCE A level' for single awards
  - 3.2 use the words 'GCE AS (double award)' or 'GCE A level (double award)' if equivalent to two separate AS or A level qualifications.

## Subject matter

4. The subject matter of GCE AS and A level qualifications 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. AS qualifications must:
  - 5.1 provide an appropriate balance of knowledge, skills and understanding to match the first year of a full A level course of study
  - 5.2 have a total weighting of 40 per cent of the A level
  - 5.3 for double-award specifications, have a total weighting of 40 per cent of the A level double award
  - 5.4 include a Welsh perspective where appropriate
  - 5.5 ensure suitable progression from the relevant programme of study at Key Stage 4
  - 5.6 ensure learners achieving the qualification are well prepared for progression to A2 units of work in the same subject
  - 5.7 prepare learners effectively for future studies and the world of work

- 5.8 ensure that the level of demand is broadly equivalent to other GCE AS qualifications in Wales.
- 6. A2 units that are combined with AS units to lead to the award of a full A level must:
  - 6.1 provide an appropriate balance of knowledge, skills and understanding to ensure progression from AS studies
  - 6.2 have a total weighting of 60 per cent of the A level qualification
  - 6.3 for double-award specifications, have a total weighting of 60 per cent of the A level double award qualification
  - 6.4 include a Welsh perspective where appropriate
  - 6.5 include a strong element of synoptic learning in the course content
  - 6.6 ensure that the level of demand is broadly equivalent to other GCE A level qualifications in Wales
  - 6.7 prepare learners effectively for future studies and the world of work.

## **Assessment**

- 7. The assessment arrangements for GCE AS and A level qualifications must:
  - 7.1 offer candidates the opportunity to be assessed at the end of both the AS and A2 courses, but only during the summer assessment period
  - 7.2 normally have a minimum examining time for external assessments of three hours at AS and four hours at A2
  - 7.3 set out the relationship between the assessment objectives and the assessment units
  - 7.4 show the proportion of marks allocated to each assessment objective (or group of assessment objectives) and to each assessment unit
  - 7.5 state clearly if an assessment objective will include the assessment of written communication

- 7.6 include sufficient synoptic assessment at A2 to test the candidates' understanding of the connections between the different elements of the subject and their holistic understanding of the subject
- 7.7 include questions that provide candidates with the opportunities to gain marks by demonstrating their ability to:
  - (i) integrate and apply their knowledge, understanding and skills across different aspects of the subject
  - (ii) construct a response that develops a sustained line of reasoning, is coherent, relevant, comprehensive and logically structured
- 7.8 ensure that the grammatical accuracy of candidates is assessed when they are required to provide extended written responses
- 7.9 be comparable for all candidates, even where there are optional assessment units or optional examination questions
- 7.10 allow only one resit of an assessment unit with the better result counting towards the qualification
- 7.11 use internal assessment only where it is the most appropriate method of assessing specific skills within the assessment objectives
- 7.12 normally contain two units at AS and at least two units at A2.

## **Reporting**

- 8. There must be arrangements for the grading and reporting of GCE AS and A level qualifications so that:
  - 8.1 attainment that is sufficient to lead to the award of a certificate at AS is reported on a five-grade scale from A to E, where A is the highest grade
  - 8.2 attainment that is sufficient to lead to the award of a certificate at A level is reported on a six-grade scale from A\* to E, where A\* is the highest grade
  - 8.3 attainment that is insufficient to lead to the award of a certificate at AS or A level is reported as Unclassified or U

- 8.4 the grade for the AS double award is reported in the format: AA, AB, BB, BC, CC, CD, DD, DE, EE
- 8.5 the grade for the A level double award is reported in the format: A\*A\*, A\*A, AA, AB, BB, BC, CC, CD, DD, DE, EE.