



To responsible officers of awarding bodies offering GCSE qualifications in Wales

01/11/2018

Dear Responsible Officer

Curriculum and qualification reform in Wales

We are writing to all awarding bodies currently offering GCSE qualifications in Wales to set out our plans for considering the implications of the new national curriculum for Wales for qualifications taken by 14 to 16-year-olds.

The new curriculum for Wales is being introduced by Welsh Government. You can read more about how the new curriculum is being developed on the Welsh Government website. The new curriculum is intended to be introduced for all pupils up to year 7 in September 2022, and for all students up to year 11 by September 2027. See the attached high-level timeline for more detail.

To help with these reforms, we would value the involvement and contribution of awarding bodies from as early as possible in the work. To that end we are inviting awarding bodies to express an interest in working with us to develop proposals for a new suite of GCSE-level qualifications for Wales. To explain our plans and what involvement at this early stage would entail, we would like to arrange a meeting with you before the end of the year.

We want to make sure that the qualifications available to 16-year-olds in Wales, at the end of their statutory education, are designed to meet their needs and to support the aims and purposes of the new curriculum. To achieve this, we expect that a new range of approved qualifications will need to be developed to update and replace existing GCSE qualifications.

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Until the new curriculum is finalised we won't know the extent to which the new qualifications will need to differ from the existing GCSE qualifications. Decisions on the titling of any new qualifications, as well as the range of subjects required will rest with Welsh Government. However, we expect that the new qualifications will be comparable in demand to the existing GCSEs. They will also need to be offered bilingually, in Welsh and English.

Over the coming year, we will be conducting research and engaging with stakeholders to develop consultation proposals on the purposes of the new qualifications, the range of subjects they should cover, and their high-level design. Once those overarching decisions are taken by Welsh Government, we will then move on to developing the detailed approval criteria for each new qualification. To secure the provision of the new qualifications required, we are not currently planning to use our powers to restrict the market or conduct a procurement exercise to secure an awarding body provider. This is because we currently anticipate a market response to the approval criteria that we develop for the new qualifications. We will keep this under review. We are currently considering the detail of our regulatory approach to managing the provision of the new qualifications by recognised awarding bodies.

To secure the availability of a coherent range of qualifications, we will require any awarding body seeking approval of the new qualifications to offer the whole or significant parts of the required suite of qualifications and to maintain this offer for the lifetime of the qualification. This approach is intended to secure provision of qualifications that are likely to attract lower numbers of students, as well as those with a guaranteed high take-up.

Early involvement of awarding bodies with this work will help us to shape and refine our approach. To arrange a meeting to discuss our plans and expectations in more detail, please contact laura.evans@qualificationswales.org.

To help explain the approach we are taking, we will publish a copy of this letter on our website.

Yours faithfully



Philip Blaker
Chief Executive

Work with curriculum pioneers and others to consider how qualifications could support the new curriculum

Consult on :
 - Purpose and role of qualifications
 - Range of subjects to be offered
 - High-level design principles

Welsh Government and Qualifications Wales confirm decisions on future qualifications offer

Co-construct and consult on detailed design proposals for individual qualifications

New qualifications approved

Training and resources are developed

New qualifications taught in schools

2018

2019

2020

2021

2022

2025

Gweithio gydag arloeswyr y cwricwlwm ac eraill i ystyried sut all cymwysterau gefnogi'r cwricwlwm newydd

Ymgynghori ar:
 - Ddiben a rôl cymwysterau
 - Ystod o bynciau fydd ar gael
 - Egwyddorion dylunio lefel-uchel

Llywodraeth Cymru a Cymwysterau Cymru yn cadarnhau penderfyniadau am y cymwysterau caiff eu cynnig yn y dyfodol.

Cyd-adeiladu ac ymgynghori ar gynlluniau cymwysterau unigol.

Cymwysterau newydd wedi eu cymeradwyo

Hyfforddiant ac adnoddau yn cael eu datblygu

Cymwysterau yn cael eu darparu gan ysgolion.