



Sent by email

13 January 2022

Dear Head of Centre

### **Exams 2022 and Qualified for the future: working together to reimagine GCSEs**

We hope you have had time over Christmas to recharge, take some rest and have a peaceful break.

We recognise the sterling efforts of all teaching professionals during what continues to be a challenging time for education.

Over recent weeks we have been engaging widely with leaders in the education sector, and with unions and representative bodies. We have also spoken to learners through our Learner Advisory Group. The pandemic is still having a significant impact and the education sector is subject to much disruption.

### **Exams 2022**

Decisions related to qualifications this year are difficult. We believe that exams with adaptations and an approach to grading intended to give outcomes that are broadly at the midway between 2019 and 2021 still provide the fairest approach to assessment at this time. At present, all exams planned to take place in 2022 are set to go ahead.

The assessment requirements for the Welsh Baccalaureate Skills Challenge Certificates, vocational qualifications, GCSEs, AS and A Levels have been adapted to take into account the ongoing disruption caused by the pandemic.

#### **Qualifications Wales**

Q2 Building, Pencarn Lane  
Imperial Park,  
Newport  
NP10 8AR  
☎ 01633 373 222



[www.qualificationswales.org](http://www.qualificationswales.org)

#### **Cymwysterau Cymru**

Adeilad Q2, Lôn Pencarn  
Parc Imperial,  
Casnewydd  
NP10 8AR  
☎ 01633 373 222

This month, you may receive applications from private candidates who wish to register with your centre for GCSE, AS and A level exams, ahead of entries deadlines. We encourage you to accept the entry of private candidates where possible.

## **Contingency plans**

If further substantial disruption leads to a decision by Welsh Government to cancel the summer 2022 exam series, the contingency arrangements already outlined to centres will be implemented. We published our [Guidance](#) on contingency assessment arrangements for approved GCSEs, AS and A levels in November. Our guidance will be updated with additional information and WJEC's detailed operational guidance is ready to be published as soon as possible after any decision to implement the contingency assessment arrangements.

As is the case for general qualifications, if further significant disruption results in the cancellation of exams in summer 2022, contingency arrangements will also be implemented for vocational qualifications. We have been working closely with awarding bodies on contingency arrangements for vocational qualifications, you can find out more about the arrangements in place [here](#).

## **Qualified for the future: working together to reimagine GCSEs**

Since publishing our [decisions](#) in October on the future range of GCSEs, we have started working with a wide group of practitioners and experts to reimagine and co-construct new qualifications.

To help us explore the links between curriculum design, teaching practice and assessment, we have established a stakeholder engagement model that includes:

- 26 subject-level working groups
- 6 Area of Learning and Experience (AoLE) networks
- An academic advisory group
- An overarching stakeholder reference group

This term, we will run an extensive engagement exercise with learners across Wales, from primary school age and up. We will ask learners to share their knowledge, experiences, and expectations of the qualifications system, including what they think should be assessed and how.

We are working with the Welsh Government's National Network for Curriculum Implementation to hold a national conversation on the future of qualifications. The conversation will run later this term.

We'd like to thank those who have already joined one of our groups. For those who still want to be involved, please get in touch via [reform@qualificationswales.org](mailto:reform@qualificationswales.org).

### **Welsh language qualifications**

At the end of this month, we expect to decide the range of Welsh language qualifications required to support the new Curriculum for Wales. We will announce our decision in February.

There are opportunities for subject practitioners to join our subject-level working group to help develop the design of any new Welsh language qualifications. We're seeking representation from Welsh-medium, bilingual and English-medium schools. You can find details of how to apply on our [website](#). Applications close on Monday 31 January.

### **GCSE Science Double Award**

If you haven't seen it already, we've compiled a list of [commonly asked questions](#) about our decision to create a new GCSE Science Double Award. You can read these on our website as well as the recent [blog](#) which outlines the reasons behind this decision.

### **Reshaping the wider offer of qualifications for 14-16 year olds**

We want to know which qualifications should be available alongside new GCSEs to meet the needs of all learners aged 14 to 16. We are looking at all qualifications currently available, from entry level up and all subject areas, including the World of Work, Financial Capability, Careers Development, Equality and Diversity, Food Safety, Essential Skills, Sport and First Aid.

We have two online surveys running to gather your views to help shape the wider qualifications offer. One [survey is for learners](#) and the other is for [teachers and other stakeholders](#). Both surveys are live until Monday 31 January 2022. Please share this survey link with your colleagues, learners and in any newsletters.

## **Our Annual Report 2021**

Last year saw another extraordinary period for education, as the continuing pandemic meant that exams had to be cancelled for the second year in a row.

As well as working to find the best way to award qualifications in the absence of exams we have conducted our second Qualified for the future consultation, reformed qualifications for the construction and built environment sector, supported the creation of Welsh-medium qualifications and much more.

Our latest annual report, which we published in December last year, details all of the work we have undertaken over 12 months. You can read the report on our [website](#).

We recognise the ongoing pressures in schools and colleges and welcome all your support. We look forward to ongoing collaboration with you and your colleagues in the coming months.

Yours sincerely



Philip Blaker

Chief Executive