



Rules about Applications for Designation of Qualifications

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Version control

This version (3) of Qualifications Wales' Rules About Applications for Designation of Qualifications was published on 9 March 2021.

Feedback from the public on this regulatory document is welcomed in the meantime. Please send your comments to policy@qualificationswales.org

General Principles of the Rules About Applications for Designation of Qualifications

This document is for a recognised awarding body who wishes to apply for its qualification to be designated by Qualifications Wales. Under section 33 of the Qualifications Wales Act 2015 we must make rules about the making of applications to us for the designation of qualifications.

The aims of the rules are to provide clarity to a recognised awarding body on:

- i) the information that Qualifications Wales needs to be able to consider a qualification for designation.
- ii) the process to apply for its qualification to be designated.

Before applying, an awarding body should read this document in conjunction with any published:

- i) Designation Policy
- ii) Priority Qualifications List¹
- iii) QW Awarding Body Guide to Designation

An awarding body must only submit a qualification for designation where it is satisfied that the qualification is not on the Priority Qualifications List and that Qualifications Wales has not published any approval criteria for the qualification and has not indicated that it will be considering applications for approval for this qualification.

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EVIDENCE RELATING TO THE MATTERS WE WILL TAKE INTO ACCOUNT WHEN DECIDING WHETHER TO DESIGNATE A QUALIFICATION

The designation policy outlines which matters we will take into account when deciding whether to designate a qualification.

To satisfy ourselves that these are met, we will only designate qualifications where:

1. There is demand for the qualification from candidates in Wales at the relevant age range(s) [this requirement relates to Standard Condition of Recognition E1.3 and E1.4]

In the context of designation, this evidence of demand must:

- i. Be from a centre and presented either by email or letter, and dated within the last academic year
- ii. Include the full title of the qualification
- iii. Show demand from the lowest age range that you're requesting designation for. Letters from multiple centres can be submitted.
- iv. Potential number of candidates - based either on the previous year figures or centre planning figures
- v. Where there is not a centre due to nature of qualification delivery, evidence of either registration or recent activity of learners in Wales will be accepted
- vi. Brief explanation as to why they are interested in offering this qualification

If the qualification submitted is replacing an earlier version of a qualification, (i.e. a qualification of the same level, in the same subject, targeting the same type of learners for the same purpose) the awarding body should note this on the submission, along with the old qualification number. Evidence of registrations for the qualification being replaced will be accepted as evidence of demand in place of the evidence options listed above.

Please note:

- Awarding bodies do not need to submit evidence against this criteria in relation to:
 - o GCSEs, AS and A levels

2. There is support from relevant end users or stakeholders [this requirement relates to Standard Condition of Recognition E1.3, E1.4 and E1.5]

In the context of designation, the evidence of support must:

- i. Be representative and related to the intended purpose and progression route of the qualification (please see annex a)
- ii. Include the full title of the qualification
- iii. Include the applicable age range(s)
- iv. Include a brief explanation as to why the qualification is supported

The support can be in the form of:

Either A signed letter from a senior member of staff of a relevant body on headed paper or an email from a company or organisation, and dated within the last calendar year

OR

A credible document such as an internal business case which includes details of consultation with relevant end users, or minutes of a consultation meeting with relevant end users

OR

A description of qualification development undertaken detailing engagement with relevant stakeholders

Please note:

- Awarding bodies do not need to submit evidence against this criteria in relation to:

- GCSEs, AS and A levels
- Entry Level Qualifications

- If an awarding body is also a professional/industry or sector body, and wishes to submit support from the professional/industry or sector body arm, it must complete and submit the conflict of interest declaration at annex b.

- If you are seeking designation for a qualification that is part of a suite, and you have already submitted evidence of support in relation to another relevant qualification within the suite, you will not need to supply the support again, but note the relevant qualification number in your submission

3. References to legislation, policies and organisations within the qualifications are applicable in Wales [this requirement relates to Standard Condition of Recognition D1.1]

Additional sector or occupation specific requirements relating to areas where the Welsh Government has devolved powers may be identified over time. Where this happens, we will give awarding bodies advance notice of the introduction of these specific requirements and will issue a revised version of this guide.

4. The qualification is appropriate for the age ranges selected. In particular, if the qualification to be designated for pre-16 learners, the qualification should not normally attest to occupational competence [this requirement relates to Standard Condition of Recognition D1.1]

We need the awarding body to:

- i. Confirm that there are no health and safety issues due to the age of potential students
- ii. Ensure that qualifications for pre16 students do not attest to competence (and are not classified as 'CVET')

5. Additional requirements for GCSEs, AS and A levels

We will only consider designating GCSEs, AS or A level qualifications if:

- The qualification is offered in a subject in which there is no GCSE qualification approved by Qualifications Wales, or a subject in which there is no GCE qualification approved by Qualifications Wales
- If the qualification is offered in a subject for which Ofqual has not published subject-specific regulatory requirements, the qualification must:
 - o Have accreditation from Ofqual, and
 - o Be offered in Wales as a designated qualification in the same form as it is regulated by Ofqual
- If the qualification is offered in a subject for which Ofqual has not published subject-specific regulatory requirements, the qualification must:
 - o Be offered in a subject that is already designated by Qualifications Wales as a GCSE or GCE qualification, and
 - o Comply with any regulatory requirements included by Qualifications Wales on its Regulatory Documents List for GCSEs, AS and A levels for first teaching prior to the academic year 2015/2016
- The awarding body offering the qualification must have and will maintain a published policy statement explaining to users whether the qualification is available through the medium of Welsh, or English, or both.
- The policy must explain:
 - o The basis on which the awarding body will offer the qualification through the medium of Welsh, where it chooses to do so, and

- What aspects of the qualification, including supporting materials, the awarding body will make available through the medium of Welsh.

6. Additional requirements for qualifications in Subject Sector Areas 4 and 6

We will only consider designating a qualification in Subject Sector Area 4 and 6 if the awarding body has provided evidence that:

- the subject content is up to date.
- the qualification meets the needs of learners and industry in Wales.

7. Additional requirement for qualifications in Sector Subject Area 4

We will only consider designating a qualification in Subject Sector Area 4 if the awarding body has also provided evidence that:

- the assessment balances the requirements for validity, reliability and manageability.

Further guidance can be found in the Awarding Body Guide to Designation.

8. There are additional requirements for qualifications included/proposed for inclusion in Apprenticeship Frameworks in Wales

We will only consider designating a qualification that is included/proposed for inclusion in an Apprenticeship Framework in Wales if we have received confirmation that the qualification is aligned to the latest NOS or relevant industry standards.

Please contact us if you would like to discuss potential evidence before submitting a qualification for designation.

THE PROCESS FOR REQUESTING DESIGNATION

All requests for designation will be submitted to QiW, and our feedback will also be made on QiW. Further information on QiW and the details of submitting a qualification onto QiW can be found in [QiW guidance](#)

Before submitting a qualification for designation, an awarding body must assure itself that the qualification complies with the requirements of its Conditions of Recognition, making any changes to the qualification which are necessary for that purpose, in line with Standard Condition of Recognition E5.1.

Awarding bodies must also ensure that its submission of qualification to QiW contains all the information required, and that the information is accurate, in line with Standard Condition of Recognition E6.2. In order for a qualification to be considered for designation, QiW requires Awarding bodies to submit information relating to Standard Conditions of Recognition E1.2, E2.1, E3.1, E7.1, E9.1 and provide evidence relating to Standard Conditions of Recognition E1.3, E1.4 and D1.1 as outlined in the section 'Evidence relating to....'.

We will then check that the information submitted is fair and accurate, and may also check compliance against Standard Conditions E1.1, E3.2.

Via QiW, we will let you know that your qualification has been designated or let you know which of our requirements have not been met and what further evidence or action we require of you. You can then resubmit.

AMENDMENTS TO DESIGNATED QUALIFICATIONS

Awarding bodies should be reviewing their qualifications before the Operational End Date. Six months before the Operational End Date, an automated reminder email from QiW will be sent to the relevant awarding body to inform them that the end date is approaching. This should prompt awarding bodies to consider whether the Operational End Date needs to be amended.

If the new Operational End Date is within five years of the start date of the qualification, you will only be required to complete the Amendment request on QiW – we will not require any further supporting evidence.

For new Operational End Dates of more than five years from the start date of the qualification, we will require evidence of support as listed in the evidence section below.

For new Operational End Dates where the qualification is used on a Welsh apprenticeship framework, we will require:

- Confirmation that the qualification meets the latest NOS or relevant industry standards

AND

- If the qualification was last revised more than 5 years ago, evidence of support dated within the last year, from a relevant, large employer/sector skills body operating in Wales

OR

- A credible document such as an internal business case which includes details of consultation with relevant end users, or minutes of a consultation meeting with relevant end users.

Annex a – supporting evidence additional guidance

If a qualification spans more than one of the categories below, please select the most relevant based on the main purpose of the qualification.

	Support Required (All evidence must be signed by a relevant senior manager, dated within the last year and submitted on headed paper)
Qualifications that prepare learners for further learning in school	Either: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Letter from a regional consortium or school in Wales, focussing on the relevance of the qualification for further study OR <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Evidence of a recent qualification review by the awarding body that demonstrates support from schools in Wales OR <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An agreed business plan or formal minutes demonstrating evidence of support from schools in Wales This evidence could cover both support and demand
Qualifications that prepare learners for further learning in Further Education	Either: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Letter from a Further Education college in in Wales, focussing on the relevance of the qualification for further study OR <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Evidence of a recent qualification review by the awarding body that demonstrates support from Further Education colleges in Wales OR <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An agreed business plan or formal minutes demonstrating evidence of support from Further Education colleges in Wales This evidence could cover both support and demand
Qualifications that prepare learners for Higher Education	Either: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Letter from an UK Higher Education Institution OR <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Evidence of a recent qualification review by the awarding body that demonstrates

	<p>support from UK Higher Education Institutions</p> <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An agreed business plan or formal minutes demonstrating evidence of support from UK Higher Education Institutions
<p>Qualifications that prepare learners for further learning with a Work based learning provider or training provider</p>	<p>Either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Letter from a Work based learning provider or training provider <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Evidence of a recent qualification review by the awarding body that demonstrates support from a Work based learning provider or training provider <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An agreed business plan or formal minutes demonstrating evidence of support from a Work based learning provider or training provider
<p>Qualifications that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - give learners personal growth and engagement in learning 	<p>Either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Letter from a relevant centre or organisation in Wales, focussing on the relevance of the qualification for personal growth and engagement in learning <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Evidence of a recent qualification review by the awarding body that demonstrates support from a relevant centre or organisation in Wales <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An agreed business plan or formal minutes demonstrating evidence of support from a relevant centre or organisation in Wales
<p>Qualifications that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prepare learners for employment - Support a role in the workplace <p>Demonstrate competence</p>	<p>Either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Letter from a relevant professional/sector body with a remit that covers Wales <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Letter from the Head Office of a large/significant relevant employer who is active in Wales <p>OR</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Letters from a minimum of 3 smaller relevant employers active in Wales <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Evidence of a recent qualification review that demonstrates support from any of the stakeholders listed above <p>OR</p> <p>An agreed business plan or formal minutes demonstrating evidence of support from any of the stakeholders listed above</p>
<p>Qualifications on an existing Welsh apprenticeship framework</p>	<p>EITHER</p> <p>Evidence of support from a relevant, large employer/sector skills body operating in Wales</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Evidence of engagement with stakeholders, including Welsh Government, indicating that this qualification is needed within an apprenticeship framework in Wales.</p>
<p>Qualifications that will be used in a new Welsh apprenticeship framework</p>	<p>EITHER :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An agreed business plan or formal minutes demonstrating evidence that qualification will be used in a Welsh apprenticeship framework <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An agreement in principle from the relevant Issuing Authority.

Annex b – conflict of interest declaration for awarding bodies that are also professional bodies offering support for the qualification

If an awarding body is submitting support by the professional body arm of the same organisation, it must complete and submit the following declaration, which must be signed by a relevant senior member of staff.

'I confirm that xxx is both a professional body and a recognised awarding body. We have a conflict of interest policy and take care to maintain divisions between any awarding body activity and our professional body activity.'

Signed

Dated'