



11 May 2022

Dear Colleagues

### **UK Government announcement on the defunding of level 3 qualifications in England**

The UK Government's Department for Education (DfE) has today [published a list of qualifications](#) that overlap with waves 1 and 2 of T levels and will be defunded in England from August 2024.

I recognise that you will be concerned about the potential impact of these policy and funding changes on the availability of some level 3 qualifications in Wales, and I would like to reassure you of the steps that we have taken and will continue to take to ensure that an appropriate range of qualifications is available to Welsh learners.

Today's DfE announcement relates to level 3 qualifications that will be defunded in England only. This defunding of qualifications in England does not mean that they will cease to be available in Wales. Qualifications Wales has been working extensively with awarding bodies to identify the likely impact of the changes and to ensure that a suitable range of qualifications continues to be available in Wales.

Our work over recent years has done much to mitigate the risks posed by the changes to qualifications policy happening in England. You will be aware, for instance of our series of sector reviews of qualifications. Four reviews have been completed: Health and Social Care, including Childcare (HSC); Construction and the Built Environment (CBE); Digital Technology (DT) and Engineering, Advanced Manufacturing and Energy (EAME). Our fifth review of Travel, Tourism, Hospitality and Catering will be published in early 2023 but we are already holding discussions with awarding bodies about the future qualifications offer in this area.

We are also undertaking a series of lighter-touch phase 2 sector reviews which focus on whether there is likely to be a suitable range of qualifications, including Welsh-medium qualifications, available in future. The first phase 2 review (Sport and Public Services) was

#### **Qualifications Wales**

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



#### **Cymwysterau Cymru**

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

published last September, and we intend to publish our second review (Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Care) later this year. Further reviews are planned for Business Administration and Retail (2022), Art, Creative and Media (2022) and Hair and Beauty (2023).

Where we have commissioned new qualifications for Wales (in HSC and CBE) the risk posed by the changes in England has been removed – we are self-sufficient in these sectors moving forwards. However, this is not the case for every sector. The DT and EAME reviews did not propose the commissioning of new qualifications specifically for use in FE colleges and apprenticeships – neither is it expected that the phase 2 sector reviews will lead to significant commissioning activity. Rather, over the past three years, we have been managing the risks brought about by changes to qualifications policy in England by engaging with awarding bodies currently awarding substantial numbers of vocational qualifications in post-16 education in Wales.

We have had regular discussions with the large awarding bodies such as Pearson, City and Guilds, WJEC, NCFE, VTCT, EAL and Highfield, as well as specific discussions with awarding bodies as part of phase 2 sector reviews. Further meetings are scheduled with a range of other awarding bodies who offer vocational qualifications in Wales. All of these discussions have been reassuringly positive and awarding bodies have confirmed their desire to remain active in Wales. For example, as a result of our discussions, Pearson have extended the designation start dates of a range of their level 3 BTEC qualifications to August 2026 with certifications until August 2028 (meaning that at least four more cohorts can take those qualifications) to provide medium-term certainty for learners and providers in Wales. We are also working closely with City & Guilds to extend a range of their level 3 qualifications.

We are confident about the steps we are taking. In most sectors there are alternative qualifications available that are not being defunded in England but, where valued qualifications are being defunded, we will continue to work with awarding bodies to extend the end dates of those qualifications to ensure that gaps do not emerge in the post-16 qualification offer in Wales.

We will then continue to work together with awarding bodies and centres to ensure that a sustainable, modern and bilingual qualifications offer is secured for learners in Wales in the longer term. Where necessary, we will consider using one or more of our regulatory tools to secure the availability of some vocational qualifications. These tools may include adopting qualifications used elsewhere in the international market, adapting existing qualifications to meet the needs of Wales or, where necessary, commissioning new qualifications to fill any gaps. In this work we will bring together centres and awarding bodies to ensure that fit for purpose qualifications continue to be available in Wales.

We recognise that announcements such as that being made today in England can be alarming but we hope that this letter provides you with reassurance that Qualifications Wales will ensure that learners in Wales are not disadvantaged by policy changes in England. If you would like

to discuss any of the information in this letter, our Qualifications Policy and Reform team would be more than happy to meet with you to discuss any particular concerns. You can contact them at [enquiries@qualificationswales.org](mailto:enquiries@qualificationswales.org).

Yours sincerely



Philip Blaker

Chief Executive