

GCSE BUSINESS



**Summary of decisions and analysis of responses
to our consultation on reforming GCSE Business
for first teaching in September 2017**

Summary of decisions and analysis of responses to our consultation on reforming GCSE Business for first teaching in 2017

Executive Summary

Between 4 April and 15 May 2016, Qualifications Wales consulted on proposals for a reformed GCSE Business qualification to be Approved for first teaching in Wales from September 2017. A copy of the consultation proposals and questions is available at [this link](#).

In July 2016 we published *Approval Criteria for GCSE Business (2016)*¹, which set out the detailed requirements for how the reformed qualification should be designed and assessed. The requirements are informed by the responses to our consultation and by views expressed by learners through a supplementary engagement exercise.

This report summarises the responses we received to the consultation of the proposals and explains the decisions that we took in light of these, which are reflected in the *Approval Criteria for GCSE Business (2016)*¹.

This report is available in English and in Welsh. Respondents' comments have been translated, where appropriate, in accordance with the language of the report.

Percentages used throughout this document have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

Background

GCSE Business is being reformed in Wales for first teaching from September 2017, as part of a wider programme of reforms to GCSEs, AS and A levels. The only awarding body who will develop and offer the reformed GCSE Business qualification in Wales will be WJEC, as it is the only awarding body who has agreed to develop reformed GCSEs designed specifically for award in Wales.

The proposals on which we consulted were developed through engagement with a number of stakeholders including the awarding body WJEC, schools and further education institutions (FEIs), higher education institutions (HEIs) and the Welsh Government (WG).

Summary of proposals and decisions

Aims and Objectives

We proposed a set of aims and objectives for the reformed qualification. In the Approval Criteria, we have made some small amendments to the final wording of the subject aims and objectives to improve the clarity of the statements.

Content

We proposed that the content to be studied and assessed in the new qualification should cover six key areas. We have retained these six key content areas in the Approval Criteria, expanding on them to indicate in more detail the specific knowledge, understanding and skills to be included in each area.

¹ [Approval Criteria for GCSE Business](#)

Quantitative skills

We proposed, and have decided, that at least 10% of the assessment marks available should be awarded for quantitative skills. In light of responses, we have made a small change to the specific list of mathematical techniques and calculations that we proposed learners should be able to apply, to remove the requirement to calculate the 'average rate of return'.

Assessment objectives

We have adopted the proposed assessment objectives and weightings on which we consulted.

Assessment

As we proposed, the qualification will not be tiered and will be wholly assessed through written examinations only.

Consultation responses

In total, thirteen respondents completed all, or part of, the online consultation for GCSE Business. Of these, four participants responded as individuals, eight responded on behalf of an organisation and one did not indicate the basis of their response. Of those who responded on behalf of an organisation, six represented schools, one represented a further education college and one represented an awarding body.

Subject aims and objectives

For the reformed GCSE Business qualification, we proposed the following subject aims and objectives:

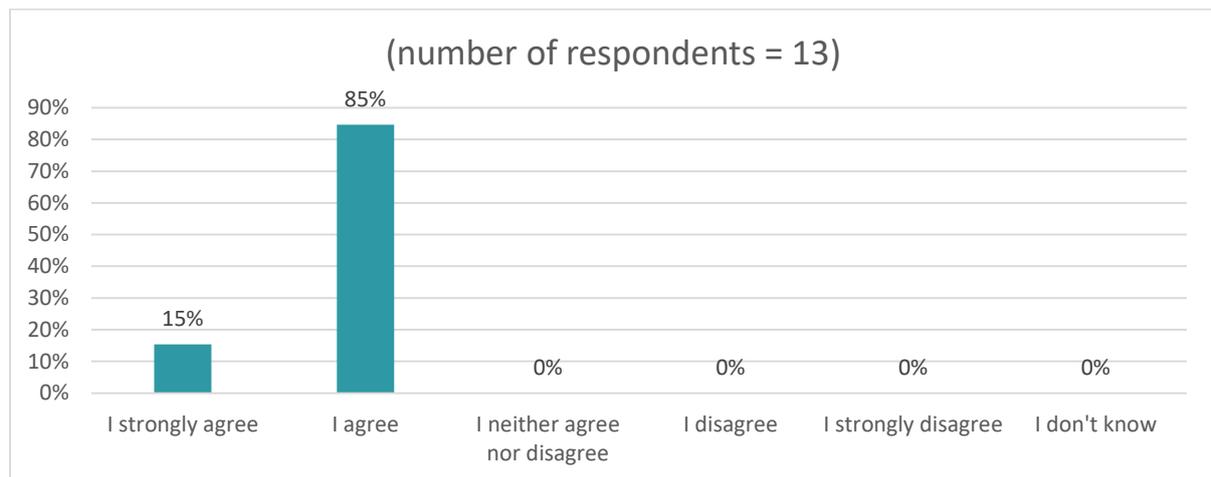
- *GCSE specifications in Business subjects must enable learners to:*
 - *actively engage in the study of business and economics to develop as effective and independent learners, and as critical and reflective thinkers with enquiring minds;*
 - *use an enquiring, critical approach to distinguish facts and opinions, to build arguments and make informed judgements;*
 - *develop and apply their knowledge, understanding and skills to contemporary issues in a range of local, national and global contexts;*
 - *appreciate the range of perspectives of different stakeholders in relation to business activities;*
 - *consider the extent to which business activity can be ethical and sustainable;*
 - *develop and apply quantitative skills relevant to business including using and interpreting data;*
 - *apply and relate knowledge and understanding to real business opportunities and scenarios.*

In our consultation we asked respondents:

Question 1: To what extent do you agree/disagree with the proposed subject aims and learning outcomes for GCSE Business in Wales?

As illustrated in Chart 1 below, all those who responded to question 1 agreed or strongly agreed with the proposed aims and objectives.

Chart 1. Responses to question 1 of the GCSE Business consultation.



Following the consultation, we have decided to make the following small amendments to the wording to improve clarity:

- in 1.3: 'their' has been replaced with 'apply business knowledge'
- in 1.4: 'appreciate the range of perspectives of different stakeholders in relation to business activities' has been replaced with 'appreciate a range of perspectives on the impacts of business on wider society'
- in 1.5: 'and sustainable' has been replaced with 'and support sustainable development'
- in 1.7: 'to real business opportunities and scenarios' has been replaced with 'to real enterprise and business opportunities, decision making and scenarios'.

These changes are reflected in the *Approval Criteria for GCSE Business (2016)*¹.

Subject Content

Key content areas

For the reformed GCSE Business qualification, we proposed that the subject content should cover the following six key content areas:

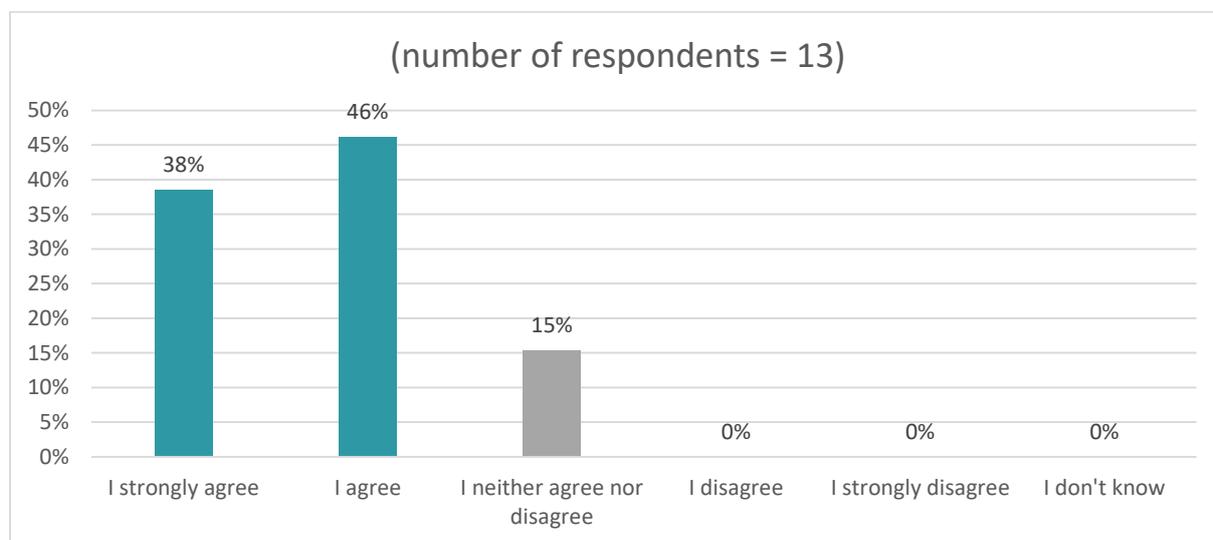
- business activity;
- influences on business;
- business operations;
- finance;
- marketing;
- and Human resources.

In our consultation we asked:

Question 2a: To what extent do you agree/disagree with the proposed subject content for GCSE Business in Wales?

As Chart 2 below shows, the majority (84%) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the proposed content areas, with the remaining respondents neither agreeing nor disagreeing.

Chart 2. Responses to question 2a of the GCSE Business consultation.



**percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number.*

- Respondents who agreed or strongly agreed with the proposal commented that:
 - “the 6 topic areas represent a good coverage of the breadth needed for business”
 - “these changes are needed for the development of the subject”.

We have adopted the proposed six areas of content. In the *Approval Criteria for GCSE Business (2016)*¹ we have included additional detail on the specific knowledge, understanding and skills to be included in each of the key content areas. This reflects

some of the more detailed content specified by the Department for Education for GCSE Business qualifications offered in England.

Quantitative skills

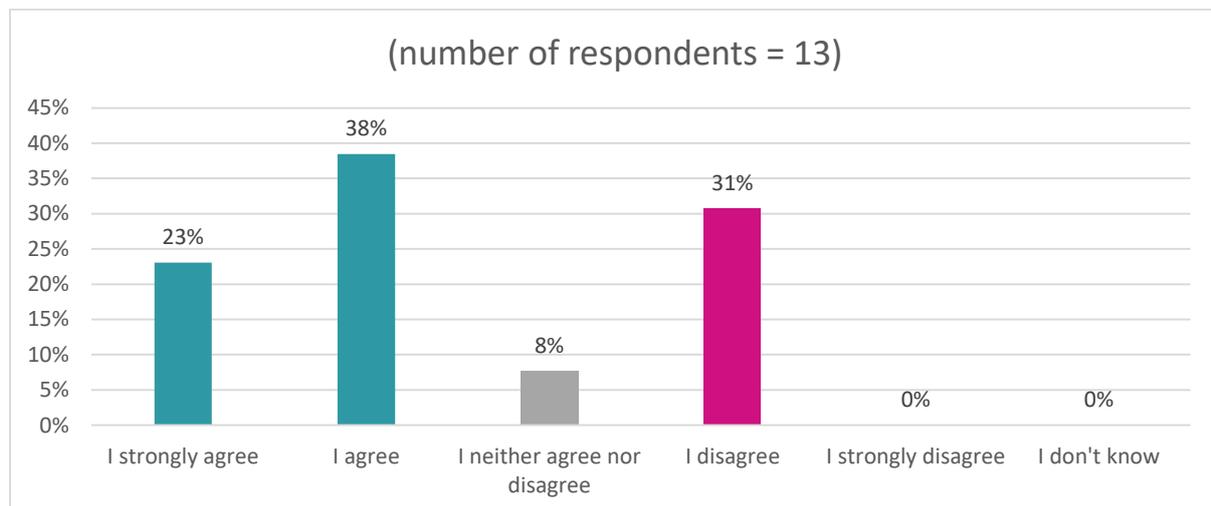
For the reformed GCSE Business qualification, we proposed that at least 10% of the assessment marks allocated should be awarded for quantitative skills.

In our consultation we asked:

Question 2b: To what extent do you agree/disagree that GCSE Business should have a minimum requirement of 10% of the marks being awarded for quantitative skills?

As Chart 3 below shows, 61% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the proposal, 31% disagreed with the proposal and 8% of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed.

Chart 3. Responses to question 2b of the GCSE Business consultation



- Of the respondents who disagreed with the proposal, respondents stated:
 - quantitative skills content “may cause accessibility issues for less able pupils”
 - a larger weighting of “15-20% for quantitative skills” would be preferable
 - “specifying 10% may reduce the time available for teaching.”

We have decided to adopt the proposal. This takes into account the responses from the consultation and the fact that AS and A Level Business qualifications also require 10% of the assessment marks to be allocated to quantitative skills.

Calculations in a business context

For the reformed GCSE Business qualification, we proposed that the subject content should require learners to apply a variety of mathematical techniques in a business context, including calculating:

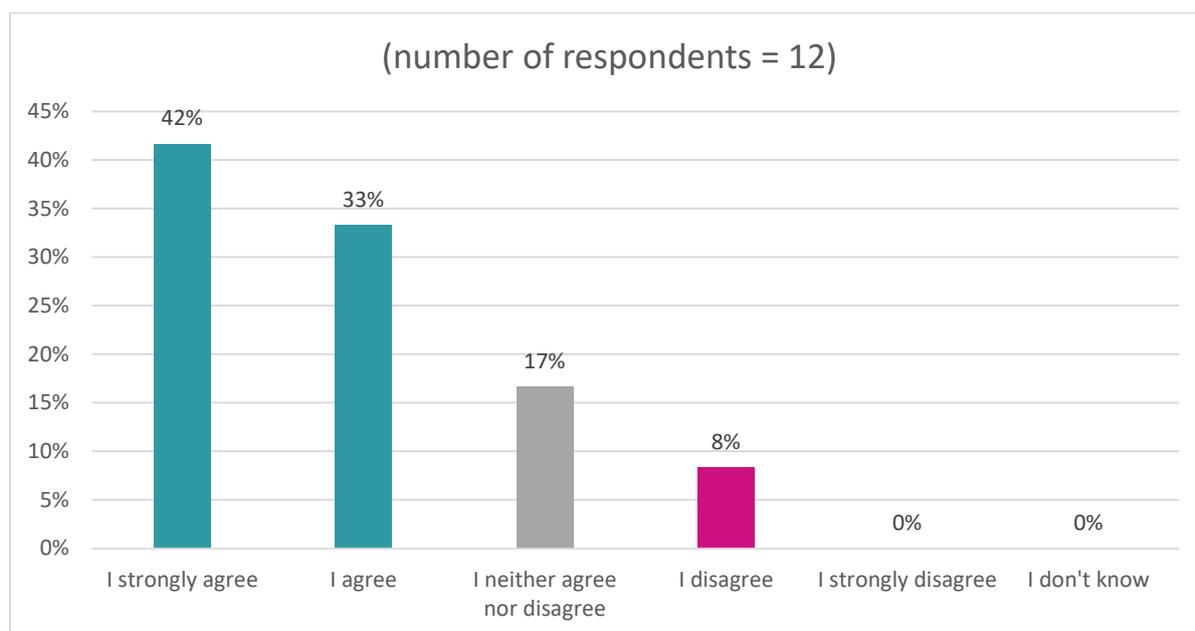
- percentages and percentage changes;
- averages;
- revenue, costs and profit;
- gross profit margin and net profit margin ratios;
- average rate of return;
- cash-flow forecasts, including total costs, total revenue and net cash flow.

In relation to calculations in a business context we asked:

Question 2c: To what extent do you agree/disagree that GCSE Business should require the assessment of calculations in a business context?

As indicated in Chart 4 below, the majority (75%) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the proposal, 8% disagreed and 17% neither agreed nor disagreed.

Chart 4. Responses to question 2c of the GCSE Business consultation



- Three of the respondents who agreed or strongly agreed to the proposal outlined some caveats to their positive response, indicating that the requirement to calculate average rate of return was an unnecessary element of calculations in a business context.

We have therefore amended the list of mathematical techniques and calculations that learners must be able to apply to remove the requirement to calculate the 'average rate of return'.

Assessment objectives and weightings

We proposed the following assessment objectives and weightings for the reformed GCSE Business qualification:

Table 1. Proposed assessment objectives and weightings for the reformed GCSE Business.

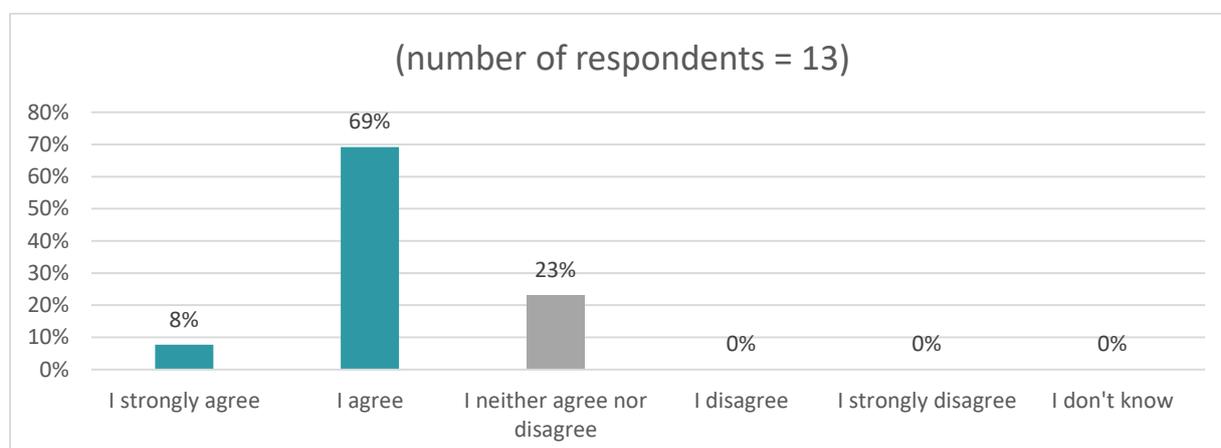
Objective	Requirements	Weighting
AO1	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of business concepts and issues	35%
AO2	Apply knowledge and understanding of business concepts and issues to a variety of business contexts	35%
AO3	Analyse and evaluate business information and issues to demonstrate understanding of business activity, make reasoned judgements and draw conclusions	30%

In relation to the assessment objectives and weightings we asked:

Question 3: To what extent do you agree/disagree that the proposed assessment objectives and weightings should apply to the reformed GCSE Business in Wales?

As Chart 5 below shows, the majority (77%) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the proposal, with other respondents neither agreeing nor disagreeing with the proposal.

Chart 5. Responses to question 3 of the GCSE Business consultation.



- Of those who agreed or strongly agreed with the proposal, one respondent stated that the assessment “weightings will encourage students to learn rather than recite and the evaluation section is sufficient for the more able students to realise higher grades”.

We have included the proposed assessment objectives and weightings in the published *Approval Criteria GCSE Business (2016)*¹.

Assessment

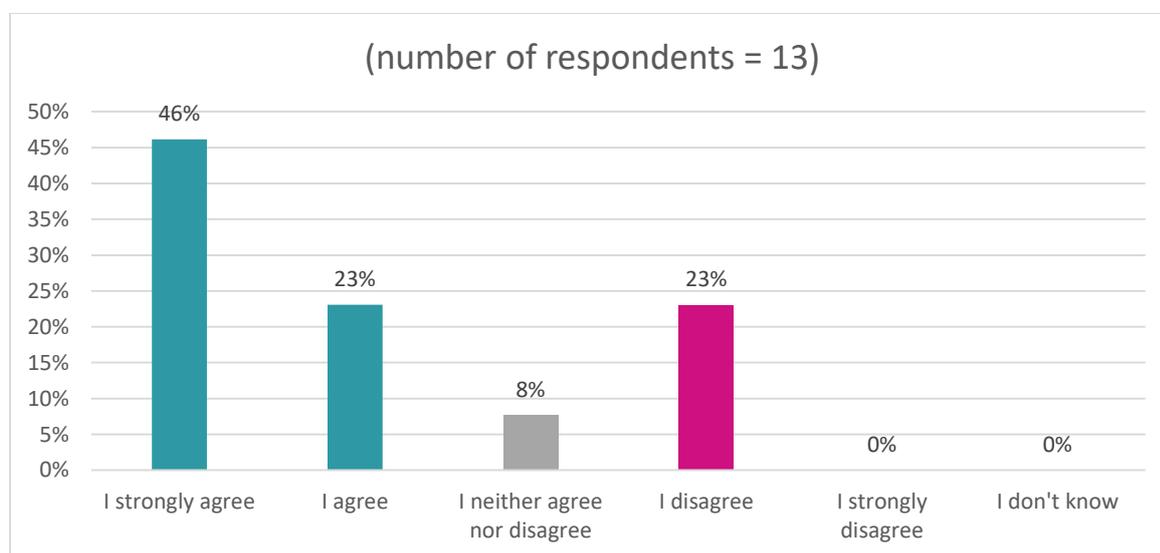
We proposed that the reformed GCSE Business qualification will be wholly assessed through written examinations only.

In relation to the assessment structure we asked:

Question 4: To what extent do you agree/disagree with the proposal to wholly assess the reformed GCSE Business through examination?

Chart 6 below shows that of the 13 responses to this question, 69% either agreed or strongly agreed with the proposal, 23% disagreed and 8% neither agreed nor disagreed.

Chart 6. Responses to question 4 of the GCSE Business consultation



- Of the respondents who agreed or strongly agreed with the proposal, one stated that NEA “can be a distractor to the teaching and learning of the business content, having 100% examination will improve the reliability of assessment”.
- Of the respondents who disagreed with the proposal, respondents stated that NEA can:
 - “add towards the placing of the business in context and especially in developing entrepreneurial skills”
 - allow “students to apply knowledge through practical skills”.

We have decided that GCSE Business qualification will be wholly assessed through written examinations only. This is reflected in the *Approval Criteria for GCSE Business (2016)*¹.

Tiering

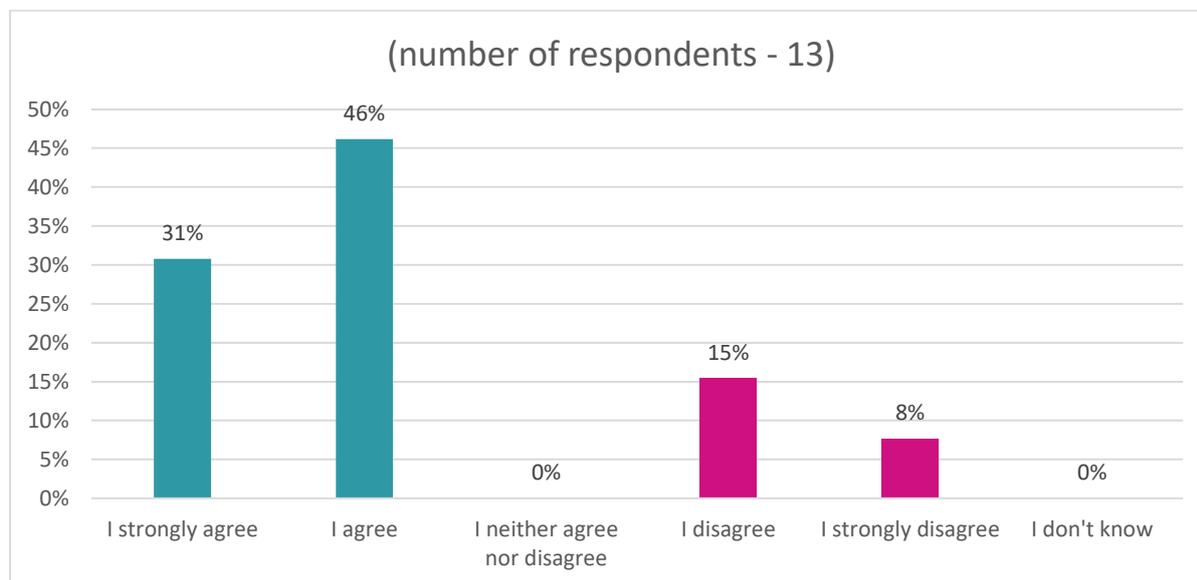
We proposed that the reformed GCSE Business qualification should not be tiered.

In our consultation we asked:

Question 5: To what extent do you agree/disagree with the proposal that GCSE Business will not be tiered?

As illustrated in Chart 6 below, 77% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with this proposal, whereas 23% either disagreed or strongly disagreed with it.

Chart 6. Responses to question 4 of the GCSE Business consultation.



- A respondent who agreed with the proposal stated that “tiered papers favoured candidates at the top of the lower tier but disadvantaged candidates at the bottom of the higher tier. Decisions about which tier to enter therefore affected individual results rather than the abilities of candidates.”
- A respondent who disagreed with the proposal stated that “candidates at the lower end find the present GCSE challenging and demotivating due to the number of extended questions required, the language used in questions and timing is a big issue for some”.

We have decided that the new GCSE qualification should not be tiered. We expect question papers to be designed that are accessible to the whole cohort of candidates taking the qualification.

Support and Resources

In all our consultations, we asked respondents the following question:

What support and resources do you feel centres and teachers may require to achieve maximum readiness to deliver the revised specification? Please provide comments

Those who responded to this question highlighted, amongst others:

- the need to provide textbooks and online resources
- the potential benefits of centrally-organised CPD events and INSET training

- the need for exemplar exam papers and sample assessment materials
- and the usefulness of model answers to indicate the expected level of response.

We will share the points raised with the awarding body, consortia and Welsh Government.

Impact on individuals with protected characteristics

In all our consultations, we asked respondents the following question:

Please highlight below if you feel any of this proposal has the potential to have a positive or negative impact on individuals with protected characteristics and whether any of the proposal would cause accessibility issues for learners in Wales.

For the reformed GCSE Business consultation, no respondents highlighted any positive or negative impacts on individuals with protected characteristics.

Further information

Enquiries about this document should be directed to:

Enquiries
Qualifications Wales
Q2 Building
Pencarn Lane
Imperial Park
Coedkernew
Newport
NP10 8AR

enquiries@qualificationswales.org