



**Consultation on Criteria for Recognition for GCSE / GCE Qualifications and
Rules About Applications for Recognition to Award GCSE / GCE Qualifications**

Date of Issue: **21 January 2019**

Action Required: **Responses by 18 March 2019**

Overview	<p>This consultation seeks views on the following regulatory documents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Criteria for Recognition for GCSE / GCE Qualifications; • Rules About Applications for Recognition to Award GCSE / GCE Qualifications <p>The consultation is likely to be of interest to awarding bodies currently awarding GCSE and/or GCE qualifications, and those awarding bodies who may wish to award GCSE and/or GCE qualifications in future.</p>
How to respond	<p>Responses to this consultation should be submitted using the online form that is available at https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/EIQGZ/</p> <p>Responses should be sent by 18 March 2019 at the latest.</p> <p>If a question is not relevant or you are unsure how to respond, please skip that question and move onto the next one.</p> <p>The responses received will inform the final version of the Criteria for Recognition for GCSE / GCE Qualifications and Rules About Applications for Recognition to Award GCSE / GCE Qualifications. A report summarising the consultation responses will be published on our website.</p>
Further Information and related documents	<p>Qualifications Wales Act 2015 - http://www.legislation.gov.uk/anaw/2015/5/contents/enacted</p> <p>Regulatory Appeals policy – https://qualificationswales.org/english/publications/regulatory-appeals-policy/</p>
Contact details	<p>For further information:</p> <p>Email: policy@qualificationswales.org</p>
Data protection	<p>How the views and information you provide us will be used</p>

We will analyse and consider all responses received to this consultation. A summary report of the findings will be published on our website. Where appropriate, this report will identify trends in responses and relate these to respondent characteristics.

We may also publish responses in full, if it is deemed relevant to the consultation. Respondents will be asked for consent for their name or organisation name, and postal town to be published alongside their response. If you are happy to be identified, please indicate this in your consultation response by selecting the box in the 'Personal information' section of your response form.

All personal data that we hold will be retained in accordance with UK Data Protection Law. It will only be used for the purpose of developing and reviewing the policies incorporated in this consultation.

As we are a public body, all the written material we hold, including any correspondence you send to us, may be considered for release following a request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. The law does allow us to withhold information under some circumstances. If you have not given consent for your name or organisation name and postal town to be published, this will be considered when responding to requests for information. However, there may be rare instances when we must release this information. In these circumstances, we will endeavour to inform you of this decision.

Background

In order to offer regulated qualifications in Wales an awarding body must be recognised by Qualifications Wales. The Qualifications Wales Act 2015 provides a duty for Qualifications Wales to produce general recognition criteria which awarding bodies must meet in order to be recognised. We published general '[Criteria for Recognition](#)' in September 2015.

In addition, the Act provides us with the power to produce qualification-specific recognition criteria, which awarding bodies must meet in order to be able to award specific types of qualifications, such as GCSE or GCE.

Qualifications Wales, Ofqual and the Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessments (CCEA) are joint owners of the registered trademark for 'General Certificate of Secondary Education' and 'General Certificate of Education'.

We are now proposing to publish '**Criteria for Recognition for GCSE / GCE qualifications**'. Once these new criteria are published, any awarding body who wishes to award GCSE / GCE qualifications in Wales will be required to meet these criteria in order to gain recognition by Qualifications Wales.

All awarding bodies wishing to award GCSE / GCE qualifications in Wales will be required to submit an application in accordance with our **Rules About Applications for Recognition to Award GCSE / GCE Qualifications**. For those awarding bodies currently awarding GCSE / GCE qualifications, we intend to write to them outlining a deadline in which applications must be submitted. Subsequently, we intend to determine whether they have met the criteria based on evidence already available.

Where an awarding body does not currently award GCSE / GCE qualifications, they will need to satisfy us that they will be able to meet the criteria using relevant sources of evidence (see examples provided in Criteria).

For this consultation, we are seeking views on the proposed criteria, and the proposed rules. These criteria and rules are presented along with a series of questions. If, dependant on the findings of this consultation, we decide to publish criteria and rules, we may amend these prior to publication.

Consultation Questions

1. Are there any aspects of our proposed criteria or rules that require further clarification or explanation?
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
If yes, please state which aspects require further clarification or explanation. Please state which of our documents – criteria, rules or both –you are referring to.

2. Do you have any comments relating to the criteria that we have set for recognition to award GCSE / GCE qualifications?
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
If yes, please explain the reasons for your response. Please state which criteria your response relates to and include any suggestions for how these could be developed further.
Please note any other criteria that we should take into account:

3. If you were to prepare an application for GCSE / GCE recognition, would you find the examples of evidence that we have presented alongside the criteria helpful?

Please explain the reasons for your response. Please state which criteria your response relates to include any suggestions for how these could be developed further.

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Please note any other examples of evidence that we should take into account:

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4. Are there any aspects of the process for applying for recognition to award GCSE / GCE qualifications that require further clarification?

Yes No

If yes, please state which aspects require further clarification or explanation:

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5. Would the proposed criteria and rules result in any impacts (intended, or unintended) in relation to the following:

	Yes:	No:
(a) opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language,	[]	[]
(b) treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language	[]	[]
(c) individuals or groups who share protected characteristics outlined within the Equality Act 2010	[]	[]
(d) the finances of awarding bodies.	[]	[]

If you've answered yes to any of the above, please outline what these consequences might be:

If you have any other comments that you would like to feedback to us about these criteria or rules, please use the box below:

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Additional Information

Are you responding on behalf of an organisation or as an individual (If you select that you are responding on behalf of an organisation, we will assume that you have permission for your responses to be considered as representations of your organisation).

On behalf of the organisation

Individual

If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, please select the option below that best describes your organisation (if applicable):

Awarding body

Education or training provider

Other (please specify)

.....
.....
.....

We may publish responses in full, if it is deemed relevant to the consultation. (Please see the section on data protection in the consultation document). In these circumstances, we would publish the name and postal town of the respondent. If you are happy for these details to be published alongside your response, please select 'yes' below. If not, please leave this question blank.

'Yes, I am happy to be identified'

Contact information

Name:.....

Name of organisation:.....

Email Address:.....

Appendix 2 – Criteria for Recognition for GCSE / GCE qualifications



Regulatory Document

Criteria for Recognition for GCSE / GCE Qualifications

This document contains criteria that must be met by any awarding body that wishes to award GCSE or GCE qualifications in Wales.

This document is available in Welsh.

General principles

In order to award regulated qualifications in Wales an awarding body must be recognised by Qualifications Wales. To be recognised, an awarding body must demonstrate that they are able to meet our general [Criteria for Recognition](#).

Section 6 of the Qualifications Wales Act 2015 allows us to set and publish criteria for different qualifications or different descriptions of qualification.

Section 9 of the Qualifications Wales Act 2015 allows us to recognise an awarding body to award such qualifications or description of qualifications, subject to them meeting the requirements of such qualification specific recognition criteria.

This document contains the Criteria for Recognition for GCSE / GCE qualifications.

Any awarding body wishing to award GCSE / GCE qualifications must demonstrate that they meet these criteria, or that they have sufficient arrangements in place to satisfy us that they will be able to meet the criteria. Based on the evidence provided, Qualifications Wales will determine whether the awarding body meets the criteria and, subsequently, decide whether to grant recognition to award GCSE / GCE qualifications.

The way we recognise awarding bodies, including those wishing to award GCSE / GCE qualifications in Wales, is set out in our [Regulatory Framework and Approach](#).

Who can apply

Any awarding body recognised by Qualifications Wales can apply for recognition to award GCSE / GCE qualifications in Wales.

If an awarding body is not yet recognised by Qualifications Wales, then they must first apply for general recognition before presenting an application to be recognised to award GCSE / GCE qualifications.

How to apply

For further details on how to apply for recognition to award GCSE / GCE qualifications in Wales, please see our **Rules About Applications to Award GCSE / GCE Qualifications**.

Notes on Criteria

This document includes examples of evidence that applicants can provide. These are intended to be illustrative and to help awarding bodies understand how to meet the criteria. These examples are not comprehensive or exhaustive and do not form part of the requirements of the criteria.

An awarding body which meets these Criteria will be recognised to award GCSE / GCE qualifications in Wales.

Criteria for Recognition for GCSE / GCE Qualifications

Awarding body recognition

Criterion 1

The awarding body has general recognition from Qualifications Wales to award regulated qualifications at the time of its application.

Criterion 2

The awarding body can demonstrate that it will be able to comply on an ongoing basis with the [Standard Conditions of Recognition](#) in respect of the development, delivery and award of GCSE / GCE qualification(s)*.

*The awarding body should provide evidence of how it will be able to meet our Standard Conditions of Recognition in the context of delivering GCSE / GCE qualification(s).

Criterion 3

The awarding body can demonstrate that it will be able to comply on an ongoing basis with the [Additional Standard Conditions of Recognition for GCSE / GCE Qualifications](#).

Examples of evidence

- A proposed approach to ensure that any GCSE / GCE qualifications comply with our Standard Conditions of Recognition.
- A proposed approach to ensure that any GCSE / GCE qualifications comply with our Additional Standard Conditions of Recognition for GCSE / GCE Qualifications.
- An approach to compliance that reflects our [additional regulatory requirements](#) in respect of the development, delivery and award of GCSE / GCE qualifications.

Availability of adequate resources and arrangements

Criterion 4

The awarding body has the capacity to develop, deliver, and award GCSE / GCE qualification(s) for at least a five-year period following the first award or to the end date of the relevant qualification(s) (whichever is the longest).

Examples of evidence

- The most recent audited accounts for the awarding body legal entity: these statements must include profit and loss (or income and expenditure), balance sheet, capital and reserve and/or cash flow.
- Published commentary that explains the key financial and accounting policies underpinning the statement.
- The most recent business plan for the awarding body legal entity covering a period of at least three years which outlines its plans for awarding / if it were to award GCSE / GCE qualifications in Wales.
- A financial forecast that outlines a proposed approach to the development (where applicable), delivery and award of GCSE / GCE qualifications and provides assurance of financial viability.
- Organisational structure and workforce plan (or proposed plans) that demonstrate sufficient resources, skills, knowledge and experience for the development, delivery and award of GCSE / GCE qualifications.

Setting specified levels of attainment

Criterion 5

The awarding body has the systems, processes and resources in place to set specified levels of attainment in respect of GCSE / GCE qualification(s).

Examples of evidence

- Proposed arrangements and processes for setting grade boundaries that demonstrate an understanding of and ability to comply with of our [Requirements for Setting Specified Levels of Attainment for GCSE and GCE Qualifications](#), Standard Condition H3 and Additional Standard Condition ASC.Q.
- Proposed arrangements for the reflection of our [Qualification and Component Levels](#) in the design of any proposed GCSE / GCE qualifications.
- Proposed arrangements and processes for the use of a uniform mark scale.
- Proposed arrangements and processes for the use of comparable outcomes as the principal mechanism for maintaining standards.
- Proposed arrangements and processes for ensuring comparability with similar qualifications awarded by other awarding bodies.
- Evidence of skills and experience (including statistical) to set specified levels of attainment in the context of GCSE / GCE qualifications.

External assessment

Criterion 6

The awarding body is able to deliver valid and reliable external assessment for GCSE / GCE qualification(s).

Examples of evidence

- Evidence of having awarded externally assessed regulated qualifications previously.
- Evidence of approaches to marking and moderation, and marked assessment material, that comply with our Additional Standard Conditions of Recognition for GCSE / GCE qualifications.
- Examples of specifications for relevant externally assessed qualifications.

Fitness for purpose

Criterion 7

The awarding body is able to develop, deliver and award GCSE / GCE qualification(s) that are fit for purpose, in accordance with Standard Condition of Recognition D1.

Examples of evidence

- Proposed approaches for ensuring that their GCSE / GCE qualification(s) will be as far as possible Valid, Reliable, Comparable, Manageable and will Minimise Bias.
- Proposed approaches for ensuring that their GCSE / GCE qualification(s) will meet the needs of learners based on evidence from engagement.

Confidentiality of assessment materials

Criterion 8

The awarding body is able to maintain the confidentiality of GCSE / GCE assessment materials.

Examples of evidence

- Records of conflict of interest for current qualifications and records of those who have had access to confidential assessment materials and demonstrable evidence of how these were managed effectively, including templates, policies and processes to be used.
- Risk management and contingency plans for proposed GCSE / GCE qualifications.
- Examples of confidentiality/non-disclosure agreements.
- Examples of incidents where incident management was implemented.
- Appropriate digital security certification (e.g. Cyber Essentials Plus).

Training

Criterion 9

The awarding body is able to provide appropriate guidance and training to relevant persons in respect of GCSE / GCE qualification(s).

Examples of evidence

- Proposed approach to complying on an ongoing basis with the [Standard Conditions of Recognition](#) in respect of GCSE and/or GCE qualification(s) and [Additional Standard Conditions of Recognition for GCSE / GCE](#).
- Training material or plans for training to be provided e.g. to centres, teachers and assessors.

Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration

Criterion 10

The awarding body has clear arrangements for making a Reasonable Adjustment and giving Special Consideration in respect of GCSE / GCE qualification(s), in accordance with Equalities Law.

Examples of evidence

- Reasonable Adjustments/Special Consideration policies which reflect the [Welsh Government Specifications on the use of Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations](#).
- Evidence of any arrangements currently in place or it proposes to put in place.

Making GCSE / GCE qualifications available

Criterion 11

The awarding body can provide an appropriate proposed timetable and approach for the period in which it intends to make GCSE / GCE qualification(s) available. The timetable should include awarding and certification dates which are in line with awarding bodies awarding similar qualifications elsewhere.

Examples of evidence

- A timetable for the upcoming examination series which demonstrates the full cycle including development, registration, assessment, marking, moderation, appeals through to award and certification, with reference to our [Additional Standard Conditions of Recognition for GCSE / GCE qualifications](#).

Defined Terms

In this document, and in accordance with the provisions outlined in Section J of our Standard Conditions of Recognition, the following words shall have the meaning given to them below:

Valid	<p>The extent to which the assessment tests the things it is supposed to assess. The use(s) of the outcome(s) of an assessment is/are valid if supported by evidence and theory.</p> <p>The evaluation of validity involves the development of a clear argument to support the proposed interpretation of the outcomes and the intended uses of the assessment. The validity argument should be built on statements of the proposed interpretation and supporting evidence collected from all stages of the assessment process.</p>
Reliable	<p>Reliability is about consistency and so concerns the extent to which the various stages in the assessment process generate outcomes which would be replicated were the assessment repeated. Reliability is a necessary condition of validity, as it is not possible to demonstrate the validity of an assessment process which is not reliable. The reliability of an assessment is affected by a range of factors such as the sampling of assessment tasks and inconsistency in marking by human assessors.</p>
Comparable	<p>Generating assessment outcomes that are comparable in standards between assessments within a qualification, between similar qualifications, with other awarding bodies, and over time. Where an assessment has equivalent forms then it is important to ensure comparability of outcomes.</p> <p>There are two reasons for this:</p> <p>(a) to reach fair comparisons about the attainment of learners: it is impossible to produce different forms with exactly the same content and statistical specifications (such as the level of difficulty or demand on the learner). Therefore, a requirement to ensure comparability of outcomes makes sure the level of difficulty or demand of the test forms is taken into account when setting</p>

	<p>standards so that learners taking the different forms can be compared fairly.</p> <p>(b) to ensure that the outcomes can be used as a measure of standards: outcomes from different forms of the same test must be comparable if they are to be used to measure standards over time. Both expert judgements and statistical procedures such as test equating can be used to ensure comparability of outcomes from different forms of the same test. It is, however, important to ensure that assessments are not so similar that they become predictable, as this would be a threat to validity.</p>
Manageable	<p>Manageability relates to the feasibility of carrying out particular assessment processes. A manageable assessment process is one which places reasonable demands on centres and learners. The evaluation of the reasonableness of the demands will be based on the scale of the assessment process on the participants, balanced by the usefulness of the outcomes. As with the other requirements (validity, reliability, comparability and minimising bias), judgements about manageability must be balanced with considerations around the other requirements.</p>
Minimising Bias	<p>Minimising bias is about ensuring that an assessment does not produce unreasonably adverse outcomes for learners who share a common attribute. The minimisation of bias is related to fairness to all learners and is also closely related to statutory equality duties.</p>
Reasonable Adjustments	<p>Adjustments made to an assessment for a qualification so as to enable a disabled learner to demonstrate his or her knowledge, skills and understanding to the levels of attainment required by the specification for that qualification.</p>
Special Consideration	<p>Consideration to be given to a learner who has temporarily experienced:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) an illness or injury, or (b) some other event outside of the learner's control, which has had, or is reasonably likely to have had, a material effect on that learner's ability to take an assessment or demonstrate his or her level of attainment in an assessment.

Appendix 3 – Rules about Applications for Recognition to Award GCSE / GCE qualifications



Regulatory Document

**Rules about Applications for
Recognition to award GCSE / GCE
qualifications**

General Principles of the Rules about Applications for Recognition to award GCSE / GCE qualifications

This document is for any recognised awarding body wishing to apply for recognition to award GCSE/GCE qualifications

Under Section 10 of the Qualifications Wales Act 2015 we must make rules about the making of applications to us for the recognition of an awarding body.

The aim of these rules is to provide clarity to an applicant on the process to apply for recognition to award GCSE / GCE qualifications.

This document should be read in conjunction with the Criteria for Recognition for GCSE / GCE qualifications.

Contents

Recognition

How to apply for recognition to award GCSE and/or GCE qualifications

Recognition

In order to be granted recognition to award GCSE / GCE qualifications in Wales an awarding body must first be recognised by Qualifications Wales.

Our awarding body recognition process can be found [here](#).

Any awarding body wishing to award GCSE / GCE qualifications must demonstrate that they meet GCSE / GCE criteria or are able to satisfy us that they have sufficient arrangements in place to that they will be able to meet the criteria within an appropriate time period. Based on the evidence produced, Qualifications Wales will determine whether the awarding body has met the criteria and, subsequently, decide whether to grant recognition to the awarding body to award GCSE / GCE qualifications.

How to apply for recognition to award GCSE and/or GCE qualifications

If you would like to enquire about becoming recognised to award GCSE / GCE qualifications, please email recognitionandapproval@qualificationswales.org.

For those awarding bodies currently awarding GCSE / GCE qualifications, we intend to write to them outlining a deadline in which applications must be submitted. Subsequently, we intend to determine whether they have met the criteria based on evidence already available.

Where an awarding body does not currently award GCSE / GCE qualifications, they will need to satisfy us that they will be able to meet the criteria using relevant sources of evidence (see examples provided in Criteria). We will ask them to formally submit a completed application form for recognition to award GCSE / GCE qualifications and upload any supporting evidence they wish to submit alongside your application form.

We will then review all submitted evidence against our Criteria for Recognition for GCSE / GCE Qualifications, so that a decision is normally reached within 40 working days.

If we are satisfied that you have met our criteria, we will formally recognise you to award GCSE / GCE qualifications in Wales.

If you have not sufficiently met the requirements of our Criteria for Recognition for GCSE / GCE Qualifications, we will write to you and explain why we have not accepted your application.

After considering our feedback you may re-apply.

You may submit a request for a regulatory appeal of our decision, in line with our [Regulatory Appeals Policy](#).