

By email



17 September 2020

Dear Head of Centre,

I hope this letter finds you safe and well as we begin the autumn term. This will be a challenging term for all, and we recognise the significant task that you have already undertaken providing a safe environment for learners and staff, and re-engaging all learners with their curriculum.

Summer 2020 was an incredibly difficult time for everyone. I want to assure you that the decisions made leading up to summer 2020 were made with the best intentions, and were set within a context of unprecedented times for all of us. We welcome the independent review announced by the Minister for Education in August.

### **Summer 2020**

On 4 September, we [published](#) an update to our summer results overview, giving the best estimates of the final national results for grades awarded this summer, which also included further analysis of attainment gaps linked to some protected characteristics.

Over the coming weeks, we will be providing more information about summer 2020 results, principally two ad hoc statistical publications. The first, which is due to be published in early October, looks at centre-level variability in the final summer 2020 results, the centre assessment grades and the standardised grades compared to summer results in recent years for GCSE, AS and A level qualifications. The release will also include some data at local authority and regional consortia levels. The second, which is due to be published late October, contains further equalities analysis of the summer 2020 results.

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### **Summer 2021 GCSE, AS and A level and Skills Challenge Certificate adaptations**

In response to the temporary closure of schools and colleges in March 2020, we committed to considering the need for possible adaptations to qualifications for assessment in 2021. This is to mitigate lost teaching and learning time and to assist schools and colleges in complying with social distancing guidelines.

As part of the process, on 15 July 2020, we [issued](#) a requirement for WJEC to make appropriate changes to GCSEs and A levels for learners taking exams in summer 2021. On 6 August 2020, we [published](#) final requirements for adaptations to assessments in summer 2021.

To inform its thinking, WJEC consulted with teachers from across Wales on GCSE and A level qualifications, ensuring that the validity of qualifications for learners is maintained. A list of adaptations can be found on WJEC's [website](#).

Awarding qualifications in summer 2021 is a priority for Qualifications Wales, and we will shortly be consulting on the best way to do this and issuing a timeline of events that will support our thinking.

### **Summer 2021 vocational qualifications adaptations**

Vocational qualifications are just as important to learners in Wales, and Ofqual is presently [consulting](#) on the arrangements for the assessment and awarding of vocational, technical and other general qualifications in 2020 to 2021. The closing date for responses to the consultation is 20 September 2020. For qualifications taken only by learners in Wales, we are working closely with awarding bodies and stakeholders to make the right decisions for our learners, and will provide an update shortly.

WJEC will announce arrangements for the vocational qualifications that it offers when they are finalised. Frequently asked questions about level 1/2 and level 3 qualifications can be found on the WJEC [website](#).

The adaptations for approved Health and Social Care and Childcare qualifications have been published by the Consortium on the Health and Care Learning Wales [website](#).

Adaptations for learners completing their Essential Skills Wales qualifications before 30 November were agreed in April as part of the work on 2020 arrangements. These details can be found on the Qualifications Wales [website](#). We are working with the Essential Skills Wales awarding bodies to consider what adaptations may be required beyond November 2020, and further details will be available in the coming weeks.

### **Qualification reform**

Our programme of review and reform work is ongoing, to ensure that existing and new qualifications meet the needs of learners, employers and centres in Wales. This activity includes:

- Development of GCE AS/A Level Digital Technology Approval Criteria – 14 September;
- Advanced Skills Challenge Certificate consultation – 21 September;
- Engineering, Advanced Manufacturing and Energy Sector Review findings and decisions report launch – 21 October and
- Phase 2 *Qualified for the Future* consultation preparation, to support the new curriculum.

Recognising the ongoing disruption in centres, we will continue to engage with centres and publish information as it becomes available, sharing information directly with you, on our social media channels and website.

If you have any questions about our work, then please do not hesitate to contact me or my colleagues.

I appreciate your ongoing support and collaboration.

Yours sincerely



Philip Blaker  
Chief Executive