

Letter to centres re outcomes of Ofqual consultation



25 February 2021

Dear Head of Centre

### **Update on assessment arrangements for vocational qualifications**

We wrote to you on [12 February with an update](#) on alternative assessment arrangements for Approved GCSEs, AS and A levels. We also told you that we were continuing to work on arrangements for vocational qualifications. This letter will give you more information about the assessment arrangements for vocational qualifications for Summer 2021, following today's [announcements](#) made by Ofqual.

In January, Ofqual held a consultation to ask for views on the arrangements for vocational qualifications. That consultation has now closed and Ofqual has published the [findings](#).

Many vocational qualifications taken in Wales are also taken by learners in England and Northern Ireland. Some vocational qualifications, such as Essential Skills and those in Health and Social Care, and Childcare, are only available in Wales. We've made sure the approaches to awarding vocational qualifications in 2021 are the same, regardless of where they are taken.

### **What are the arrangements for qualifications that are similar to an A level or GCSE?**

Learners taking a qualification similar to A levels or GCSEs, such as BTECs, WJEC Vocational Awards and Applied Certificates and Diplomas or the new Health and Social Care: Principles and Contexts qualifications, will be awarded a Centre Determined Grade based on a range of assessment information. The awarding bodies will provide guidance for centres on using appropriate evidence to determine the learner's grade or outcome. These learners should receive their results no later than those studying GCSEs and A levels.

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



[www.qualificationswales.org](http://www.qualificationswales.org)

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

## **What about qualifications that are not similar to GCSE or A level but are used for progression to further study or employment?**

Some qualifications support progression to further study or employment but are not similar to GCSEs or A levels. Exams and assessments for these qualifications can continue where it is safe to do so, remotely or in person. Adaptations that have been put in place will still be available. If learners are unable to take the assessment when they need to, then alternative arrangements will be available to give them every chance to progress. Awarding bodies will provide guidance to centres on the alternative arrangements.

This is the case for Essential Skills Wales qualifications for example. Assessments will continue to be available, but if learners cannot take the assessments due to the impact of COVID-19, then you will be able to give them a grade based on your judgement on the available evidence. Awarding bodies will provide guidance on the range of assessment evidence that can be used to support the learner outcome.

## **What are the arrangements for qualifications that require learners to demonstrate practical or occupational competency?**

Since autumn 2020, awarding bodies have put in place adaptations to their qualifications to accommodate disruption to learning and assessment. Learners taking a qualification that requires them to demonstrate practical skills, such as plumbing, construction, performing arts or hairdressing, will need to be assessed on their practical skills to achieve their qualification. Assessments should be continuing as normal, using the adaptations, where possible and in line with Welsh Government's [operational guidance](#). In some cases, assessments may need to be delayed until they can be carried out safely in line with public health guidance. Your awarding body will let you know when your learners are likely to receive their results.

## **How can teachers, lecturers and learners find out what is happening with their qualifications?**

Check the awarding body's website for more information on the approach for each qualification. The awarding bodies will be sending more information to schools, colleges and training providers about the approach for each qualification as soon as possible. You can also look out for the Ofqual explainer tool, which will be published during March where you will be able to search for the details for specific qualifications, including qualifications only available in Wales.

## **When will learners get their results?**

The Minister for Education in Wales has confirmed that GCSE and A Level results and selected vocational qualifications results in Wales will now be published earlier in

August. A levels results will be published on 10 August and GCSE results on 12 August.

### **What about Wales approved GCSE, AS and A levels?**

Ofqual's consultation on General Qualifications apply to England only, except for learners taking Ofqual regulated qualifications in low uptake subjects where a Wales only qualification is not available or independent schools. Guidance for learners taking Wales only qualifications that are regulated only by Qualifications Wales is published on our [website](#).

### **Supporting learners**

We've sent a letter to learners today to update them. We also wanted to let you know that we are setting up a Learner Advisory Group that will help us talk to learners and understand what they need from us. If you could pass this information to your learners, we would be very grateful. It's important to us to hear their views. The closing date to apply is 7 March and there is more information about what is required on our [website](#).

If you would like more information, we will be publishing regular updates about the assessment approach for Summer 2021 on our [website](#).

Yours sincerely,



Philip Blaker

Chief Executive