

Kirsty Williams AS/MS
Y Gweinidog Addysg
Minister for Education



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref
Ein cyf/Our ref
David Jones OBE, DL
Chair of Qualifications Wales
&
Philip Blaker,
Chief Executive Officer, Qualifications Wales
Q2 Building, Pencarn Lane,
Newport
NP10 8UH

19 February 2021

Dear Philip and David

I am writing further to my letter of 19 January, outlining my intention to adopt the revised policy proposals from the Design and Delivery Advisory group as my policy in relation to general qualifications approved by Qualifications Wales.

The purpose of this letter is to issue you with the enclosed Direction under section 53 of the Qualifications Wales Act 2015 to have regard to the Welsh Ministers' policy regarding the cancellation of exams and the adoption of a centre determined grade model.

To support transparency across Wales, it is my intention that arrangements to support professional dialogue between centres will also be developed. I am clear that this will not be for Qualifications Wales to design or deliver as it will not be delivered by WJEC or any other body regulated by you, and as such sits outside of your regulatory framework. However, it is my intention that it should form part of the overall process for centre determined grades. We are currently exploring a range of options that centres can use and will provide support to facilitate this. This will not supersede or replace any external quality assurance process that you develop with WJEC but it will need to complement it. You are an observer on the Design and Delivery Advisory Group where these proposals are being developed.

I am confident that this approach puts learner well-being and progression at its heart and is flexible and responsive to the challenges we continue to face. I am extremely grateful for the hard work and dedication your organisation has shown in getting us to this point, but I also recognise that significant work lies ahead in order to successfully operationalise it.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

However, I am clear that this is the responsibility of the education sector as a whole and that we must come together to collectively deliver for our learners - through the delivery of these assessment arrangements, but also through ongoing commitment to teaching and learning, and a wider package of support for learner progression.

I look forward to continuing to work closely with you over the coming months.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Kirsty Williams". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'K'.

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Minister for Education

DIRECTION UNDER SECTION 53 OF QUALIFICATIONS (WALES) ACT 2015

Under section 53 of the Qualifications Wales Act 2015, Qualifications Wales must have regard to such aspects of government policy as the Welsh Ministers may direct.

The Minister for Education, one of the Welsh Ministers, directs Qualifications Wales to have regard to:

A policy statement regarding the development of alternative assessment arrangements for learners in Wales who were due to take Qualifications Wales approved GCSE, AS and A-levels this summer to support their future progression, dated 20 January 2021, that was published by the Welsh Ministers on the Welsh Government website and can be found by following this link (and which is summarised in the bullet points below):

<https://gov.wales/written-statement-update-general-qualifications-2021-0>

- The Welsh Government policy that the summer 2021 cohort of GCSE, AS, and A-level learners in Wales taking Qualifications Wales approved qualifications should not sit nationally co-ordinated and timetabled exams this summer. As an alternative, learners should have their qualifications awarded through a centre determined grade model, with grades determined by their school or college based on an assessment of the learner's work.
- That schools and colleges should be able to use a range of evidence to determine the grades to be awarded to their learners. An assessment framework should be developed to support schools and colleges in developing their plans for assessment. This will give schools and colleges flexibility when deciding what assessment information to use as they focus on teaching the core content that will help learners as they progress to the next step in their education.
- These assessment plans should be quality assured and should demonstrate how the centre will determine a learner's grade. Every school and college should be required to establish and implement a quality assurance process that determines accurate grades for their learners. Supporting guidance should be provided. Once this quality assurance has been completed at the centre, the grade will be submitted to WJEC. Whilst there will not be any moderation, profiles of grades submitted may be reviewed and any atypical profiles discussed with the centre.
- The Welsh Government's view is that centres should be supported to discuss their process, application of process, and outcomes, with other centres across Wales before submitting grades to WJEC. Whilst this process should not be part of Qualifications Wales regulatory framework as it will not be developed or delivered by WJEC or any other body regulated by them, Welsh Government policy is that Qualifications Wales should reference this the guidance it develops, as it should form part of the overall process for centre determined grades.
- An appeals process should be developed that enables learners to appeal to their school or college if they believe they have been awarded a grade that doesn't reflect their level of attainment, and to WJEC if they do not believe their centre has followed an appropriate process.
- Arrangements should be made, as part of this centre determined grade model, to support the progression of private candidates by enabling them to be awarded qualifications.

- Learners in Year 10 completing their qualifications this year should receive a centre determined grade however there should be no assessment of individual units. Learners in Year 12 taking their AS levels should receive a centre-determined grade however this will not contribute to their A level award in 2022.
- The Design and Delivery Advisory Group should continue to work with Qualifications Wales and WJEC as they seek to establish the regulatory and operational basis for the approach to centre determined grades and associated delivery arrangements.