



15 July 2021

Dear Head of Centre

Re: Qualified for the future: rethinking qualifications for the new curriculum

As we reach the end of another exceptional academic year, I wanted to give you an update on the work to reform qualifications for the new curriculum.

Earlier this year, we [consulted](#) on proposals for the range of subjects for brand new GCSEs.

Consultation outcomes

We had over 1200 responses to the consultation, with 11% of those coming from learners and 9% from parents and carers. Over the summer, we will be carefully analysing the feedback to help us decide how to take forward our proposals.

In October, we will confirm which new qualifications will be created. We will publish reasons for our decisions, an assessment of their potential impacts, and a full analysis of consultation responses.

Working together to rethink GCSEs

Confirming the range of subjects is the start of the next and most crucial phase of curriculum and qualifications reform. We can only do this by collaborating with teachers, experts, learners and a wide range of contributors to reimagine a brand-new set of GCSEs.

The curriculum and its purposes will be the starting point. Our focus will be to explore how qualifications can underpin effective teaching, learning and progression to help learners achieve and thrive. To help us, we will need input from schools, colleges and others across the education sector.

We want to hear your ideas

We are committed to exploring new ways of doing things and to rethinking the current relationship between curriculum, teaching practice and assessment. We'd like to hear your ideas about how qualifications can be redesigned. We want the new qualifications to be as engaging as possible for learners and support their mental health and wellbeing. We need you to help us find ways to give schools more flexibility to reflect their own local curriculum and offer their learners a positive teaching and learning experience. We want to explore with you how digital technology can play a part in assessments; we have some ideas of how we could do this, and would like to hear your views.

Our focus in the coming academic year will be to work closely and iteratively with as wide a range of contributors as possible to shape ideas about aims, content and assessment for each new qualification. Colleagues from across the education sector will be involved at all levels: as part of panels looking at individual qualifications, in stakeholder groups focusing on individual Areas of Learning and Experience, and in wider groups looking at emerging ideas in the round. We will say more about how you and your colleagues can get involved early in the 2021 autumn term.

Shaping the wider 14-16 qualifications offer

As well as rethinking GCSEs, we will also be working with stakeholders this academic year to consider which other qualifications for 14 to 16-year-olds should be available so that there is a suitable range of qualifications for all.

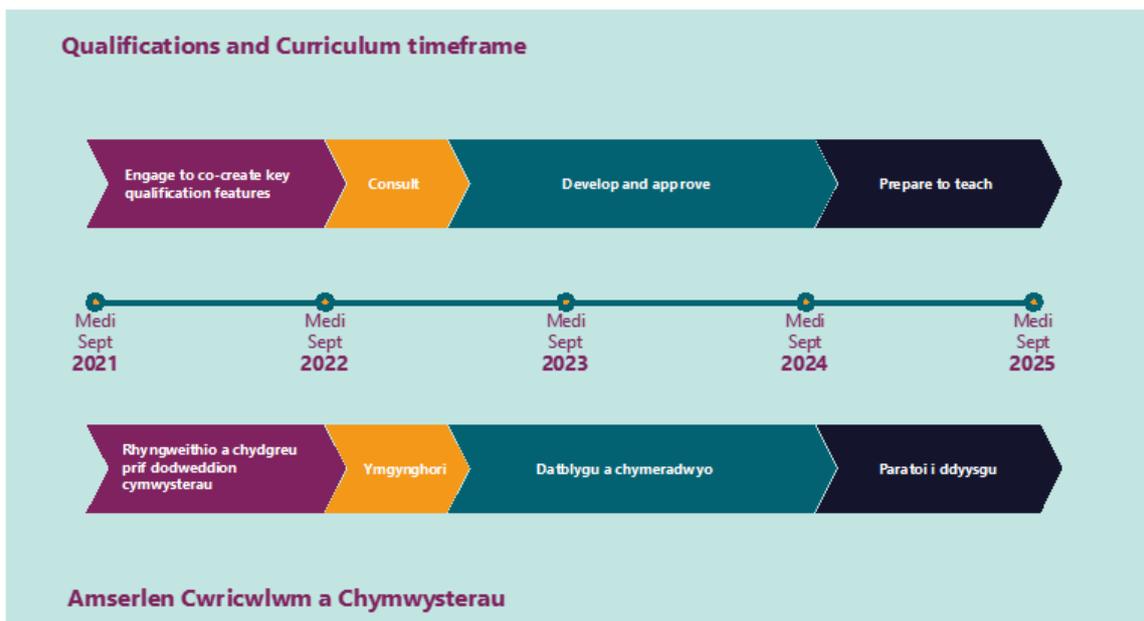
We want to make sure that schools and learning providers can choose from a clear and inclusive range of bilingual qualifications that supports their local curriculum and meets the needs of all learners.

Starting in September, we will be seeking views on what other qualifications should be available alongside GCSEs. This is likely to include a mix of existing and new qualifications, some new qualifications made-for-Wales, and some qualifications from elsewhere in the UK.

Looking ahead

We know how important it is for schools and colleges to know as early as possible what the future range of 14-16 qualifications will look like. We also know how important it is for new qualifications to be available in plenty of time to prepare to teach them and advise learners about their choices.

To secure a smooth transition, we need to work effectively this academic year to explore, test and agree the key features of future GCSEs and the wider qualification offer.



We know that the continuing challenges and uncertainty of responding to the COVID pandemic will continue to absorb time and attention, in addition to developing and introducing your new curriculum. We realise this is a big ask for schools and colleges to work with us on qualification reform, given the other demands that next year will bring.

That said, we also have an excellent opportunity to rethink what qualifications can offer learners and how they can help make the new curriculum a success. We look forward to working closely with you and your colleagues in the coming months to help make that happen.

Yours sincerely

Philip Blaker
Chief Executive