

Questions and answers from webinars

Topic Area	Question	Answer
General	Do you not consider that developing Wales only qualifications will by their very nature be limiting the opportunities to Welsh learners?	There are many qualifications currently being taken by learners in schools and colleges that have been developed as Wales-only qualifications, including most of the GCSEs currently taken by learners.
General	Providing schools with a specification for teaching in 2025 only a year in advance does not allow schools to design their curriculum for years 7 - 9 with a view to what is needed for the GCSE, You need to give a very clear idea of what will be needed a long time before this.	We will agree the high-level design for each new qualification next year to help make clear for each one what the specific aims will be, what content will be covered, and what the assessment approach will be.
General	Will certain qualifications be identified as "mandatory" or "core" in a similar way to English/Welsh and Maths currently?	As the independent regulator of qualifications, our role and remit is to ensure that schools and colleges can choose from a suitable and appropriate range of publicly-funded qualifications that meets the reasonable needs of all learners. We want qualifications to offer schools and learners the opportunity to deliver and experience their own school curriculum. Schools are of course free to choose what qualifications they make available to their learners.
General	When you talk about integrated GCSEs, have you considered the difficulty in terms of administering them? This is speaking as a coordinator of double science which is considerably more difficult to manage than single GCSE qualifications. This is on many levels.	How manageable qualifications are for centres to deliver is one of the key considerations we take into account when developing new qualifications. This will be factored into the next stage of the development process as we consider the high-level content and assessment requirements for the new GCSEs

General	Are you going to be offering ALL awarding bodies the opportunity to offer qualifications in Wales? The need for choice is surely vital in light of Donaldson findings and curricular amendments.	WJEC has committed to working with us to develop the future range of made-for-Wales GCSE and other related qualifications. WJEC and other awarding bodies wanting to deliver qualifications for 14–16-year-olds in Wales will need to develop them in such a way that meets the criteria set. As Emyr also stated, the wider qualification offer is likely to include a mix of made-for-Wales qualifications as well as those which are offered across the UK. These are currently made available by a range of different awarding bodies.
General	Will all pupils be expected to take a qualification in each of the 6 AoLE's at 16?	The new curriculum requires schools to give all six Areas equal status until the age of 16. As the independent regulator of qualifications, our role and remit is to ensure that schools and colleges can choose from a suitable and appropriate range of publicly funded qualifications that meets the reasonable needs of all learners. We want qualifications to offer schools and learners the opportunity to deliver and experience their own school curriculum. Schools are of course free to choose what qualifications they make available to their learners.
General	Have you considered the astronomical amount of work that has already been carried out to support the current specification in terms of blended learning resources, booklets, report statements, Google Classrooms, tests, mark schemes, PowerPoints, videos, practical activities, booklet mark schemes, TA support resources, braille resources? In having to re-do all of this, pupils will be affected as everything is re-done from scratch.	We are reforming qualifications for learners aged 14 to 16 in order to support the new Curriculum for Wales. We are aware that changes to qualifications can have a significant impact on schools and teachers. Throughout the co-construction phase we will work with stakeholders to identify and consider the potential impacts of changes to inform decisions about the changes that are ultimately introduced. We will also work with awarding bodies, Welsh Government and others to identify and secure the necessary support, training and resources required to support any changes. We are also committed to securing sufficient lead-in time for new qualifications to allow teachers to take advantage of development and training opportunities, to become familiar with updated resources and to prepare to teach new courses.

General	The only reason we are not able to apply for the subject specific working groups is because they're too much of a time commitment that would require teachers being away from classes. Would you consider offering the opportunity to be involved in the subject specific groups in the hours after teaching as you've offered to the AoLE group?	We have clarified and reduced the time commitment we are asking teachers and lecturers to contribute to these groups. As far as possible we will avoid asking staff to leave school for whole days, and each working group will aim to organise virtual meetings at times that are convenient to its members. Unfortunately, we cannot promise that these will always be outside of school teaching hours.
General	How are these GCSE's future focussed? How are they preparing children for a complex world?	We have developed a set of priorities for stakeholders to consider when exploring ideas for the aims, content and assessment of new GCSEs. One priority is to look for opportunities for including digital technology more effectively, both in the content that learners study and in the assessment methods. We also want to look again at the specific knowledge, skills and experiences that learners should gain from taking GCSEs to ensure they are relevant and forward looking. For example, more use of open-book assessments could encourage learners to develop their ability to select and apply information rather than simply recalling knowledge, which could better prepare them for life, learning and work in a technology-enabled and information-rich society.
Expressive Arts	Many pupils are not necessarily minded choosing Performing Arts subjects at GCSE. Will they have to sit a qualification in that area?	The new curriculum requires schools to give all six Areas equal status until the age of 16. As the independent regulator of qualifications, our role and remit is to ensure that schools and colleges can choose from a suitable and appropriate range of publicly-funded qualifications that meets the reasonable needs of all learners. We want qualifications to offer schools and learners the opportunity to deliver and experience their own school curriculum. Schools are of course free to choose what qualifications they make available to their learners.

Health and Well-being	Is it likely that there will be big changes to the Health and Social Care and Childcare qualifications, given that we haven't have the opportunity to even deliver these yet!	We are aware that some of the subjects identified in this decisions report have only recently been reformed, for example Health and Social Care and Childcare and Built Environment. While they may ultimately require less change than others, we will need to assure ourselves that these qualifications align with the aims and purposes of the new curriculum, and that their content and assessment arrangements remain appropriate.
Humanities	With there being no GCSE Humanities. Can you see the view that teaching it in year 7, 8, 9 almost pointless?	We have been clear in our position that the curriculum should shape which qualifications are available, their purpose and their design – not the other way round. As we begin to co-construct new GCSEs, we will need to consider how its design can reflect and support the design of each school's own curriculum.
Humanities	You mentioned that over 50% of the respondents of the consultation felt that an integrated humanities qualification, what was the proportion of the respondents who felt that the removal of triple science was desirable?	Page 43 of the consultation summary report gives details of the views on the science proposals https://www.qualificationswales.org/media/7987/qualified-for-the-future-ors-summary.pdf
Languages, Literacy and Communication	Once approval comes, one year is not sufficient for Welsh in education unit to commission and produce resources to support from 2025.	We know how important it will be for resources to be in place in a timely manner to allow schools and colleges to prepare for first teaching. We are currently working with Welsh Government to gain a better understanding of its proposed strategic model for commissioning bilingual teaching and learning materials for the new curriculum and any new qualifications developed to support it.
Languages, Literacy and Communication	To replace separate English language and Literature or in addition to?	To confirm that the new integrated GCSE in English will replace the current separate language and literature qualifications.

<p>Languages, Literacy and Communication</p>	<p>With so many strongly disagreeing with English proposal, why did you decide to do it anyway?</p>	<p>Several factors influenced our final decision to proceed with combining language and literature for English. Giving schools more flexibility to reflect the breadth and balance of their own school curriculum and to create more space for learners to pursue other subject was an important part of our thinking. Not only does this reflect the broader ethos of the new curriculum but it also its aim of moving away from a narrow, inflexible and crowded curriculum. From a subject point of view, there is inherent overlap between the current language and literature qualifications and combining them would not necessarily result in a significant loss to either discipline. Combining also avoids the artificial division between language and literature, particularly as literature provides context for language -it is an appreciation of how language works and helps to enrich the study of both elements. Internationally it is common for qualifications to be taken at 16 and post-16 to combine language and literature and many of those jurisdictions show stronger performance in PISA reading assessments. We know that GCSE literature qualifications in some schools, are currently offered only as optional subjects. In line with the expectation that learners continue to engage with all four Statements of what matters in this Area equally, as set out in the Curriculum Guidance, we want to make sure that qualifications not only play an appropriate role in supporting that expectation, but – perhaps crucially – that they do not undermine the curriculum’s overall ambition in this Area.</p>
<p>Languages, Literacy and Communication</p>	<p>If you intend to move forward with the 1.5 GCSE Welsh qualification, can you explain where the staff will come from to teach this subject when there is already a significant recruitment problem for Welsh teachers?</p>	<p>We have decided to reserve our decisions in relation to Welsh language qualifications until January 2022. This will allow time for a 10 further review of the proposals alongside other potential options informed by Welsh Government’s current policy intentions for the Welsh language continuum as part of curriculum implementation or any wider policy work. The current and future availability of Welsh language teacher will be one of the factors we consider when reviewing the possible approaches in this area.</p>

Mathematics and Numeracy	What level/tiers will the Maths digital qualification be pitched at?	This smaller qualification will be aimed at those learners who may not achieve a grade C or above at GCSE and will provide a basis from which they can demonstrate attainment in sufficient mathematical concepts to progress to further education, training, and employment. So as not to overly constrain the design of the qualification, we have not prescribed the level of the CQFW the qualification will ultimately sit; this will depend on the specific content it covers and the demand of the assessment. As a smaller, more focused qualification than the GCSE, we don't expect the assessment will need to be tiered.
Mathematics and Numeracy	What does one and a half GCSE's look like?	<p>In the consultation, we explicitly referred to qualification size in relation to some of our proposals. This was primarily designed to illustrate what a new qualification could look like in comparison to its current equivalent, and to indicate how this could influence the manageability of the qualification offer as a whole. For example, a combined GCSE Mathematics and Numeracy qualification would not need to be as big as the two separate GCSEs currently available to learners, as the overlap and duplication in terms of content and assessment would be significantly reduced.</p> <p>These larger GCSEs will be awarded as a single-award GCSEs, with learners receiving a single overall grade. This is the case currently in England, where there GCSE Mathematics is awarded as a single, larger GCSE.</p>
Science and Technology	I have read with interest your proposals today. Why is it that for example our chemists can no longer have the opportunity to achieve a GCSE in that subject? Why has science specifically been targeted? Why is it appropriate that learners who may struggle with science will no longer have the opportunity to study Single Award (in our school this will	We will take forward integrated GCSEs in a number of areas (English, Maths and Science). Our work on shaping the wider 14-16 qualifications offer will specifically consider whether and what other qualifications may be required alongside the new Science GCSE.

	also affect the ASDAN course which runs alongside it).	
Science and Technology	Not continuing with single sciences is a disaster for Physics and Chemistry. So can we do an English GCSE to ensure they are prepared to study 'A' level and beyond. We live in a scientific world after all, so should we not encourage subject specialists in Wales?	No. Maintained schools in Wales can only offer qualifications that are approved or designated as eligible for public funding in Wales. We will not designate GCSE designed for England in subjects that substantially overlap with made-for-Wales GCSEs.
Science and Technology	How much curriculum time are you considering for double award as currently it's 9 as opposed to 15 hours per fortnight?	We envisage that new GCSEs will be roughly the same size as they are now. We refer to guided learning hours as an indication of the time in which a qualification is designed to be delivered. This is only an indication as decisions about how long to spend teaching an individual subject are for schools to take. We have proposed that the new GCSE Science qualification will be designed to be delivered in around 240 guided learning hours. We will keep this under review as work on the content and assessment of the qualification progresses.
Science and Technology	What were the responses like around the proposal for science?	The summary report details the responses, page 43 details the responses for science https://www.qualificationswales.org/media/7987/qualified-for-the-future-ors-summary.pdf

Science and Technology	In our school around a third of pupils currently opt to do triple award. How does this proposal cater to those children?	Page 83 of our Decisions Report discusses the rationale for replacing the current suite of Science GCSEs with one, double-award qualification. We expect that alternative provision will still need to be available so that the needs of all learners can be met. We also know that some learners will want to specialise in science and have greater choice and flexibility on the aspects of science they would like to focus on. There could be a place for other made-for-Wales qualifications to supplement the common GCSE that we will introduce. However, we have decided that this should be further explored with stakeholders over the coming year, and as part of our work to reshape the wider 14–16 qualification offer. This work will happen in parallel to the work on the design of our GCSE Science, allowing us to consider in the round the needs of different learners and what existing, new, or different qualifications in this space could offer them in addition to the common GCSE. It will also allow us to make more informed decisions around the purpose of these supplementary qualifications and how they should relate to the common GCSE.
Science and Technology	Not continuing with single sciences is a disaster for Physics and Chemistry. So can we do an English GCSE to ensure they are prepared to study 'A' level and beyond. We live in a scientific world after all, so should we not encourage subject specialists in Wales?	The perception that separate science GCSEs are a pre-requisite for progression to AS and A level and that universities favour learners who have taken separate sciences at GCSE over those who have achieved a double award. In our decisions report, we have explained why we believe this to be unsubstantiated.
Science and Technology	Why can a child no longer have the choice to achieve a GCSE in chemistry? They can do Geography, Rs, Dance, Art etc (which I support) but not chemistry (or biology or physics). I'm sorry, I simply cannot understand this. I would be very interested to understand the justification.	As for other Areas of Learning and Experience, there will be a range of GCSE qualifications available in the Science and Technology. The new Science GCSE will still need to include content drawn from the disciplines of biology, chemistry, and physics in order to reflect the Curriculum Guidance. It will also need to reflect the curriculum's expectation that learners are able to make links between learning experiences and knowledge developed within and beyond this Area. As such, we expect to

		see each discipline retain its visibility and distinctness in the new GCSE Science qualification.