



## **Guidance for awarding bodies on Standard Condition of Recognition D6**

**Management of the change in  
the status of qualifications or  
withdrawal of qualifications**



# Guidance for awarding bodies on Standard Condition of Recognition D6 – Management of the change in the status of qualifications or withdrawal of qualifications

## Background

We are responsible for regulating qualifications and the qualification system in Wales.

We regulate the awarding bodies that are recognised by us to develop, deliver and award qualifications to Learners in Wales. All recognised awarding bodies are subject to our rules, including those set out in the [Standard Conditions of Recognition](#).

The purpose of this guidance document is to support awarding bodies in complying with Condition D6. It is not intended to be prescriptive, and it is the awarding body's responsibility to determine how to comply with its Conditions of Recognition.

## Version History

This guidance was first published in June 2021.

An updated version of this guidance was published in September 2023 to reflect amendments made to Condition D6 as a result of our decision to incorporate our existing rules relating to the availability of Welsh-medium qualifications into our Standard Conditions of Recognition.

From 1 September 2023, where an awarding body decides to change its qualification offer in terms of the language(s) in which a qualification is made available, this will constitute a change in status for the purposes of Condition D6.

If you have any questions or feedback on this guidance document, please email the Regulatory Policy Team at [policy@qualifications.wales](mailto:policy@qualifications.wales).

This document is available in [Welsh](#).

## Contents

1. Introduction .....	1
2. Categories of Regulated Qualifications .....	2
Approved Qualifications .....	2
Designated Qualifications .....	2
Other Regulated Qualifications.....	3
3. Withdrawing and changing the status of a qualification .....	4
Steps to take when withdrawing, or changing the status of a qualification .....	5
4. Language availability of a qualification .....	9
5. Written plan .....	10
6. Making changes on our QiW database .....	12

# 1. Introduction

- 1.1 When an awarding body wishes to withdraw a qualification or change the status of a qualification, they must comply with Condition D6 of our [Standard Conditions of Recognition](#).
- 1.2 When a qualification is being withdrawn, or its status changed, it could mean that Learners are no longer able to take those qualifications and they could be adversely affected. A change of status can also impact Centres and Learners when the course that leads to the qualification is no longer eligible for public funding.
- 1.3 Condition D6 is there to protect Learners who are seeking to obtain the qualification, and awarding bodies must take all reasonable steps to protect the interests of those Learners. This includes Learners who have registered or are about to register for the qualification.

*D6.6 Where an awarding body intends to, otherwise believes it to be likely that it will, or is obliged to, change the status or withdraw a qualification, it must take all reasonable steps to protect the interests of Learners in relation to that qualification.*

## 2. Categories of Regulated Qualifications

- 2.1 All qualifications offered by recognised awarding bodies are regulated by us unless the awarding body has surrendered its recognition in respect of a particular qualification or qualifications.
- 2.2 We organise the qualifications that we regulate into three categories; these are Approved, Designated and Other Regulated qualifications. Approved and Designated Qualifications are eligible for use on publicly funded programmes of study in Wales.
- 2.3 Awarding bodies must comply with Condition D6 when withdrawing or changing the status of any such qualifications.

### Approved Qualifications

- 2.4 Approved qualifications are those qualifications that have been specifically designed to meet the needs of Learners in Wales. We often refer to these as Made-for-Wales qualifications.
- 2.5 Ordinarily, these qualifications will be published on our [Priority Qualifications List](#) as they have been identified by both ourselves and the Welsh Government as being of highest priority to Learners and employers in Wales.
- 2.6 An awarding body wishing to make available Approved qualifications must first meet our requirements, as set out in the Approval Criteria.
- 2.7 Once Approved, the awarding body is able to offer these qualifications and they are eligible for use on publicly funded programmes of learning for Learners under the age of 19.
- 2.8 An awarding body must make an Approved Qualification available in Welsh, as specified by Condition D9.1. Therefore, an awarding body cannot change the language availability of an Approved qualification.

### Designated Qualifications

- 2.9 Typically, qualifications that fall into this category have been developed for Learners elsewhere but are made available to Learners in Wales.
- 2.10 While Designated Qualifications will need to comply with rules set by qualifications regulators in other jurisdictions e.g. Ofqual, they must also meet our requirements as set out in our [Designation Policy](#) and [Rules about Applications for Designation of Qualifications](#).

- 2.11 Once a qualification has been Designated, they are eligible for use on publicly funded programmes of learning for Learners under the age of 19.
- 2.12 As specified by Condition D9.2, where a Designated Qualification is made available to pre-16 Learners, such qualifications must be made available in Welsh from:
- (a) 1 September 2027, or
  - (b) any such date specified by Qualifications Wales  
whichever is the earliest.
- 2.13 Therefore, an awarding body cannot change the language availability of such qualifications from English-Welsh or Welsh only to English only.

### **Other Regulated Qualifications**

- 2.14 Other Regulated qualifications are those qualifications awarded in Wales which have not been Approved or Designated by Qualifications Wales, and which awarding bodies have not surrendered from the scope of their recognition.
- 2.15 Other Regulated qualifications are not eligible for use on publicly funded programmes of learning for Learners under the age of 19.

### 3. Withdrawing and changing the status of a qualification

- 3.1 Condition D6.1 sets out the circumstances of withdrawing a qualification as follows:
- (i) the awarding body ceases to register Learners for the qualification; or
  - (ii) ceases to deliver or award that qualification to Learners; or
  - (iii) surrenders its recognition in respect of that qualification; or
  - (iv) has its recognition withdrawn by Qualifications Wales in respect of that qualification.
- 3.2 Once a qualification has been withdrawn, it will no longer be deemed a Regulated Qualification and will be removed from the qualifications market in Wales.
- 3.3 A change in the status of a qualification for the purposes of Condition D6 means that:
- (i) the qualification changes category – between Approved, Designated and Other Regulated;
  - (ii) the qualification is no longer available to Learners, for example its Designation Period has expired, or
  - (iii) the language(s) in which the qualification is made available changes – for example, from being available in both Welsh and English to English only (Please see [section 4 of this Guidance](#) for further detail around language availability);
- 3.4 Conditions D6.2 and D6.3 set out the circumstances where you may change the category of Approved and Designated Qualifications respectively.
- 3.5 Condition D6.4 sets out the circumstances where you may change the language in which an Other Regulated Qualification is made available.
- 3.6 Similar to the withdrawal of a qualification, a qualification's status can change as a result of decisions you take as an awarding body or decisions taken by us. For example, you may decide that you no longer wish to make available a particular qualification through public funding, or as a Regulated Qualification, and put a plan in place to manage that change.
- 3.7 Similarly, we may take steps to revoke Designation in respect of a qualification. For example, in cases where we have taken a decision to publish Approval Criteria and restrict the number of forms of qualification that can be made available.

3.8 Where we take such decisions, we will ensure timely communication with affected awarding bodies. However, awarding bodies will still need to take appropriate steps to secure compliance with Condition D6 (see below).

### **Steps to take when withdrawing, or changing the status of a qualification**

3.9 When you intend to withdraw a qualification, or change the status of a qualification, you must take the following steps. Guidance on each of the six steps is set out below:

1. Notify us of the anticipated change;
2. Promptly prepare, maintain and comply with a written plan, demonstrating that you take all reasonable steps to protect the interests of Learners;
3. Provide clear and accurate information about the change to those likely to be affected;
4. Update the QiW database;
5. Comply with all the Conditions of Recognition when making the change; and
6. Comply with any requirements that we communicate to you in writing.

#### **1. Notify us of the anticipated change**

Firstly, you will need to notify us of your intention to withdraw or change the status of a qualification.

Such a notification should be made in writing through our Qualifications in Wales (QiW) database, and prior to any information provided to Learners, Centres, or purchasers of qualifications.

In order to be able to consider any matters that may arise from a withdrawal, or change in status to a qualification, and to satisfy ourselves that the interests of Learners are protected, we expect awarding bodies to give us reasonable notice of such changes.

We recognise that you will need to contact Centres and/or Learners to ascertain whether there would be an impact on them as a result of the proposed withdrawal, or change in status. However, we consider these to be initial discussions prior to a final decision being taken.

For further information on how to notify us on QiW, please see the [relevant section below](#).



## **2. Prepare, maintain and comply with a plan**

Once you have confirmed your intention to withdraw, or change the status of a qualification, you must promptly prepare, maintain, and comply with a written action plan. This plan will demonstrate how you have considered the impact of the change on Learners and how you plan to implement the change.

The plan will also need to outline what steps you propose to take to protect the interests of any Learners seeking to obtain the qualification. This includes Learners that have not yet enrolled/ registered for the qualification but who are preparing to do so.

We expect you to contact your approved Centres (those approved to deliver the qualification) and find out if there are any Learners working towards the qualification. If the change in status means the Centre will no longer be able to access public funding to deliver the qualification e.g. a Designated Qualification becomes an Other Regulated Qualification, the plan should set out how you propose to implement the change and how the interests of Learners will be protected.

Once you have a plan in place, you must ensure that you implement that plan, keep the plan up to date and review it regularly.

We may want to see your plan and you must comply with any requirements we communicate to you in writing about the plan.

Further guidance on what to include in the plan itself is available in the [section below](#).

## **3. Provide clear and accurate information about the change to Learners, Centres and purchasers of the qualification**

Prior to making any changes, it is important that you communicate clearly and accurately with all those stakeholders likely to be affected by the change.

It is also important that all communications are made in a timely manner so that Centres can plan their provision and prepare Learners effectively for assessments, so that Learners are not adversely affected by any changes.

When making changes to qualifications, you need to update all your published information and documentation to reflect the changes so that all stakeholders are made aware of any changes in a timely manner. Keeping information accurate and up to date ensures that Users of qualifications have the right information available to them to make effective decisions and are not misled by inaccurate information

about their availability or eligibility for use on publicly funded programmes of learning for Learners under 19. For example, a qualification described as a Regulated Qualification, or as eligible for public funding when they are not.

#### **4. Update QiW database**

Awarding bodies are required to keep the information up to date and accurate on the QiW database. In this regard, any withdrawal or changes to the status of a qualification will need to be reflected on QiW in a timely manner. This will ensure that Users of qualifications are able to rely on the accuracy of this data to make decisions about their choice of qualifications, and similarly, we can rely on this data in order to carry out our regulatory functions effectively.

A practical guide on how to make the changes on QiW is provided in a [section below](#).

#### **5. Comply with all relevant Conditions of Recognition**

When planning to make any change(s), or when making the change(s) you must do so in a way that complies with your Conditions of Recognition. These will be the Standard Conditions of Recognition and any qualification-level or Special Conditions that are relevant to you.

It is important to note that Conditions A-J are inter-related and there are other Conditions that interact with Condition D6. For example, in accordance with A6, awarding bodies must take all reasonable steps to identify the risk of any incident which could have an Adverse Effect. This would include identifying any risks to withdrawing or changing the status of a qualification in the regulated market.

Similarly, Condition B3.1 requires you to promptly notify us when you have cause to believe that any event has occurred or is likely to occur which could have an Adverse Effect. This also applies if a withdrawal or change in status has led, or is deemed likely to lead to an Adverse Effect.

Condition B5.1 prohibits you from making any statement (and take all reasonable steps to ensure that any person connected with your awarding body does not make any statement) that would be likely to lead Users to believe that a qualification is:

- (a) a Regulated Qualification when it is not a Regulated Qualification;
- (b) an Approved Qualification when it is not an Approved qualification, or
- (c) a Designated qualification when it is not a Designated qualification.

Condition E6 also requires that the data held on the QiW database about these qualifications is accurate. This includes ensuring that information on the language in which a qualification is made available (English only, English-Welsh, or Welsh only) is accurate.

Information made available to Users of qualifications must therefore be accurate at all times. This includes ensuring that the category of qualification (Regulated/ unregulated, as well as Approved/ Designated / Other Regulated) is communicated accurately.

Where a qualification is withdrawn as a Regulated Qualification but continues to be made available to Learners, this should be clearly communicated to avoid Users of qualifications being misled and you must ensure that you comply with the requirements of Condition B5.1.

Similarly, when you are advertising and promoting your qualifications, you must not do so in a way that is likely to be misleading to Users of qualifications, as set out in Condition B5.2.

Conditions B5.3 and I3.1 are also relevant. If a qualification is withdrawn, or has its status changed which results in that qualification becoming unregulated, our logo should be removed and no longer appear on certificates.

## **6. Comply with any requirements which we communicate to you in writing regarding the matter**

In accordance with Conditions B4 and D6.9, if we serve a written notice asking for the plan then you must provide the plan to us within the specified timeframe included in the notice and ensure that the information provided to us is accurate, complete and meets any requirements that we have communicated.

## 4. Language availability of a qualification

- 4.1 QiW provides awarding bodies with the option to select one of three categories when referring to the language(s) in which a qualification is made available. The three categories are as follows:

**English ONLY**

**English - Welsh**

**Welsh ONLY**

**English ONLY** - qualifications that are only available in English.

**Welsh ONLY** - qualifications that are only available in Welsh.

**English - Welsh** - qualifications that are available in both English and Welsh.

- 4.2 Where a qualification is identified as English-Welsh, this could mean that the qualification is either fully available, or partially available, in Welsh. QiW allows you to specify whether the qualification is 'Fully available in Welsh' or 'Partially available in Welsh'.
- 4.3 Condition D6.5 confirms that for the purposes of Conditions D6.3 (c) and D6.4, where you change the language in which a qualification is made available to Learners, Conditions D6.6- D6.9 only apply in circumstances where such a change results in that qualification no longer being available in a language previously made available to Learners.
- 4.4 Where a Designated or Other Regulated qualification is made available in both English and Welsh and you change the language availability of the qualification on QiW to English only, you will need to take all reasonable steps to protect the interests of Learners in relation to that qualification and comply with the provisions of Conditions D6.6-D6.9.
- 4.5 It is important to note that no such expectations are placed on an awarding body in circumstances where you make the qualification available in additional languages to those made previously available.
- 4.6 Our requirements relating to Welsh-medium qualifications can be found in **Condition D9** of our [Standard Conditions of Recognition](#).
- 4.7 Our [Guidance for awarding bodies on Condition D9](#) includes further guidance on how to submit information on the language medium of a qualification to QiW and what supporting materials of a qualification need to be made available in Welsh.

## 5. Written plan

5.1 Condition D6.8 requires an awarding body to prepare, maintain and comply with a written plan (“plan”) relating to any intended change in status or withdrawal of a qualification. This plan must specify how the interests of Learners in relation to that qualification will be protected. An awarding body is also required to comply with any requirements we may specify.

5.2 When preparing your plan, these are examples of areas to include (but this does not preclude you from including others):

- an explanation of why the qualification is being withdrawn or changed in terms of its status;
- consideration of the uptake and purpose of the qualification, and detail as to how timely and relevant information will be provided to Learners, Centres and purchasers of qualifications about alternative or replacement qualifications that are available and how these differ from the qualification being withdrawn or its status changed;
- clear timescales;
- information about the numbers of Learners or Centres that may be affected;
- information about how the interests of Learners taking the qualification will be protected, and
- the actions you propose to take to implement the changes effectively and to manage any impacts on Centres and Learners and any other stakeholders.

5.3 In terms of its implementation, you should:

- deliver the plan effectively;
- keep the plan under review (including seeking and analysing feedback from Centres about how the withdrawal or change of status is progressing) and change as necessary; and
- keep us informed and update QiW where necessary to ensure that information about the qualification is accurate and up to date for Users.

5.4 Communication is key throughout the change process. You should provide relevant and timely information to Users about the qualification being withdrawn or having its status changed. The level of information should be proportionate to the anticipated impact of the withdrawal or the change in status, and could include (where applicable):

- which qualifications are being withdrawn, or are changing status, and why;

- how the withdrawal, or change in status could affect Learners and at what point in time;
- dates for final registrations for new Learners, and assessments and resit opportunities for existing Learners;
- information about deadlines for completing specific actions; and
- arrangements for Learners to switch to alternative qualifications, if appropriate.

## 6. Making changes on our QiW database

- 6.1 Qualifications in Wales (QiW) is the database that contains all the qualifications we regulate.
- 6.2 When you make changes to qualifications, whether that is withdrawing, changing status, or any other type of amendment in relation to a qualification, it is your responsibility to ensure that those changes are accurately reflected on QiW.
- 6.3 The following section provides practical support on how to make changes on our QiW database and ensure that information regarding your qualifications are accurate. For more detailed information, please refer to our [Awarding Body Guide to QiW](#).

### How to withdraw a qualification on QiW

- 6.4 To withdraw a qualification on QiW, you must give notice of your intention by requesting to bring forward the Operational End Date and Certification End Date through the amendment process on the QiW database.
- 6.5 You must also include detail of any impacts, where relevant, on Learners, and confirm that you are compliant with the requirements of Condition D6. We may contact you for further information in relation to your withdrawal plan before we proceed to archive this qualification on QiW.

### How to change the status of a qualification on QiW

- 6.6 If you wish to change a qualification's status, you will need to submit an amendment request (in the case of Approved and Designated qualifications) or edit the qualification (in the case of Other Regulated qualifications).
- 6.7 If you wish to change a qualification's status from 'Other Regulated' to 'Designated', press the appropriate button on the qualification record and submit the additional information and evidence as required for the Designation process. For further detail, please see our [Awarding Body Guide to Designation](#).
- 6.8 If you wish to change a qualification's status from 'Designated' to 'Other Regulated', you will need to amend the Operational End Date and Certification End Date and add a comment stating that you wish to end the Designation of the qualification. You will need to confirm whether there will be an impact on Learners, and that you are compliant with the requirements of Condition D6. We may contact you for further information, including asking for details of your plan or a copy of the plan.

- 6.9 Designated Qualifications will automatically change to Other Regulated when the Certification End Date expires unless you request otherwise.
- 6.10 QiW will send an automated email six months prior to the Operational End Date as a prompt for you to extend its Designation should you wish to do so. In the absence of any extension, the qualification will automatically change to 'Other Regulated'.
- 6.11 If you wish to change the language availability of a Designated or Other Regulated qualification on QiW, you will need to submit an amendment request (in the case of Designated qualifications) or edit the qualification (in the case of Other Regulated qualifications). You will need to press the appropriate button on the qualification record and amend the language(s) in which the qualification is made available.
- 6.12 You will have the option of selecting 'English ONLY', 'English-Welsh' or 'Welsh ONLY'. You will also need to confirm that you are compliant with the requirements of Condition D6 where the qualification will no longer be available in a language previously made available. You will need to confirm whether there will be an impact on Learners, and that you are compliant with the requirements of Condition D6.

### **How to amend dates on QiW**

- 6.13 There is online advice and guidance on [www.qiw.wales](http://www.qiw.wales) or [www.qualifications.wales](http://www.qualifications.wales), or you can contact the Approvals and Recognition team directly at [approvalanddesignation@qualifications.wales](mailto:approvalanddesignation@qualifications.wales) for assistance.