Consultation Outcomes by Subject

June 2023
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Consultation outcomes: design requirements for GCSE Art and Design

Introduction

We consulted on design proposals for a new GCSE Art and Design between 4 October and 14 December 2022. You can read the full design proposal here.

We received 41 responses to the consultation, and we have carefully analysed all of them. As part of our commitment to the co-creation of new qualifications, we shared the feedback with our subject-level working group. Together, we considered how the proposed design could be amended and refined to address the points raised.

Summary of decisions

We have now agreed the final design requirements (known as approval criteria) for these qualifications. These set out the requirements that awarding bodies must follow when developing these new GCSEs.

You can read the approval criteria for the new GCSE Art and Design here.

In finalising these approval criteria, we have made the following design decisions to address points raised in the consultation and further co-creation activity.

Purpose and aims

As with all expressive arts subjects, we have reviewed the aims of GCSE Art and Design and strengthened them to ensure learners are given opportunities to explore the cross-curricular theme of human rights and diversity, including Black, Asian, and minority ethnic perspectives, identity, culture, and contributions.

Content

The content will include a breadth of sources to develop understanding of Welsh and global art. In exploring art, craft and design made in Wales, learners will be given opportunities to explore its unique and diverse traditions, history, and culture, supporting them to develop their understanding of cynefin.

Where appropriate to the different learner pathways within the qualification, the content will also enable learners to explore sustainability in relation to art, craft, and design.
Assessment

GCSE Art and Design will be assessed entirely through non-exam assessment (NEA), in line with the consultation proposal. The NEA assessments will be internally marked by the school and externally moderated by the awarding body to ensure consistency and accuracy in marking.

In line with the consultation proposal, assessment of GCSE Art and Design will not be tiered. All learners will be able to access the full range of marks available.

GCSE Art and Design will be a linear qualification. This means that learners will have sufficient time to develop their skills, knowledge, and understanding throughout the duration of the two-year course. This will ensure that learners have ample opportunity to fully explore and develop their artistic abilities.

Where it is appropriate to do so, learners will be able to submit evidence for the NEA assessments digitally.
### Summary of responses

**To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed design of GCSE Art and Design supports the Curriculum for Wales?**

41 responses

76% **agreed** that the proposed design of GCSE Art and Design would support the Curriculum for Wales, whilst 5% **disagreed**.

- The most common reason for agreeing that the proposal supports the Curriculum for Wales is that it is designed to reflect key aspects of the curriculum - including the four purposes and the statements of what matter for the expressive arts area of the Curriculum.
- The decision for this qualification to include 100% NEA is also widely accepted.
- A limited number of respondents raised concerns about manageability stating that this approach to assessment potentially puts undue burden on teachers.

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<td>44%</td>
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**To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed purposes and aims of GCSE Art and Design?**

40 responses

85% **agreed** with the proposed purpose and aims of GCSE Art and Design, whilst 5% **disagreed**.

- The purpose and aims of the proposed qualification received significant support from respondents.
- The majority of respondents found the purpose and aims appropriate, as they felt that they support the Curriculum for Wales.
- While a limited number of respondents noted similarity to the current GCSE qualification, they also recognised that they are relevant and appropriate.

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<td>38%</td>
<td>48%</td>
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To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed content (knowledge, understanding, skills and experiences) for GCSE Art and Design?

41 responses

80% agreed with the proposed content (knowledge, understanding, skills and experiences) for **GCSE Art and Design**, whilst 7% disagreed.

- The proposal received positive feedback from respondents, with many noting that the content appears both relevant and accessible for learners.
- Respondents felt that the proposal meets the knowledge, skills, and experiences requirements outlined in the Curriculum for Wales and reflects the proposed purpose and aims.
- While some respondents commented on the lack of changes made to the content from current qualifications, this was not seen as overly negative.
- Many respondents agreed with the proposal as they felt it has the potential to provide valuable educational experiences for learners.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed assessment arrangements, including the role of digital technology, for GCSE Art and Design?

40 responses

78% agreed with the proposed assessment arrangements, including the role of digital technology, for **GCSE Art and Design** whilst 8% disagreed.

- Respondents generally agreed that the proposed assessment arrangements are fair and appropriate.
- Respondents noted that presenting and/or submitting work in a digital format is both relevant and beneficial given the increasing use and application of digital technology in the field of art and design.
- Some noted the volume of internal marking and expressed concerns about the potential burden on teachers. Whilst some expressed these concerns from an individual subject perspective, others noted the cumulative impact across the qualification suite due to the overall increase in NEA.
- While some respondents commented on the lack of changes made to the content, this was not seen as overly negative.
To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposal for GCSE Art and Design meets the reasonable needs of learners in Wales? Please consider factors such as accessibility, manageability, wellbeing, and progression onto post-16 pathways.

40 responses

75% agreed that the proposal for GCSE Art and Design meets the reasonable needs of learners in Wales, whilst 5% disagreed.

• Respondents generally agreed that the proposal for GCSE Art and Design is accessible and manageable for learners.
• Some respondents noted that the proposed design would appropriately support learners to develop their knowledge, understanding and skills.
• Some expressed the view that the qualification would provide opportunities for the full range of learners, including supporting them with their progression.

To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed GCSE Art and Design is manageable for teachers to deliver? Please consider factors such as the size of the qualification, resources, and the proposed approach to assessment.

40 responses

78% agreed that the proposed GCSE Art and Design are manageable for teachers to deliver, whilst 8% disagreed.

• Most respondents acknowledged that the assessment proposals are manageable. Some commented on the comparability to the manageability of the current GCSE assessment arrangements.
• Some respondents highlighted the potential impact of an increase in NEA across multiple qualifications, which could impact teaching and learning time, and the time that is required for marking.
**Overall, to what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposal for GCSE Art and Design?**

39 responses

87% **agreed** with our proposal for **GCSE in Art and Design**, whilst 8% **disagreed**.

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<th>Strongly agree</th>
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<tr>
<td>33%</td>
<td>54%</td>
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- Overall, respondents felt that the proposal for **GCSE Art and Design** is clear and does not raise significant concerns.
- It was felt that this qualification would support suitable progression routes for learners in line with the aims of Curriculum for Wales.
- While some respondents expressed concerns about the lack of changes, they also felt that the proposal adequately reflects the needs of learners.
Consultation outcomes: design requirements for GCSE Dance

Introduction

We consulted on design proposals for a new GCSE Dance between 4 October and 14 December 2022. You can read the full design proposal here.

We received 18 responses to the consultation, and we have carefully analysed all of them. As part of our commitment to co-creation of new qualifications, we shared the feedback with our subject-level working group. Together, we considered how the proposed design could be amended and refined to address the points raised.

Summary of decisions

We have now agreed the final design requirements (known as approval criteria) for these qualifications. These set out the requirements that awarding bodies must follow when developing these new GCSEs.

You can read the approval criteria for the new GCSE Dance here.

In finalising these approval criteria, we have made the following design decisions to address points raised in the consultation and further co-creation activity.

Purpose and aims

As with all expressive arts subjects, we have reviewed the aims of GCSE Dance and strengthened them to ensure learners are given opportunities to explore the cross-curricular theme of human rights and diversity, including Black, Asian, and minority ethnic perspectives, identity, culture, and contributions.

Content

We have revised the content to ensure opportunities for learners to understand how the representation of diverse groups and individuals affects and impacts health and wellbeing, diversity, and inclusion.

The content will include a range of sets works, including dance created in or inspired by Wales and created by a diverse range of choreographers to support learners to develop their understanding of cynefin.

We have provided more clarification in terms of the breadth of content that needs to be covered to effectively prepare learners for the exam, and the degree of choice and flexibility that will be given to schools in the selection of set works for study.
We removed the requirement to experience at least one professional performance and/or workshop in person, in response to concerns over the socio-economic and geographical barriers for some learners. The qualification will now require that learners are given opportunities to experience Dance either in person or onscreen.

**Assessment**

We have now specified that the qualification will be linear. This means that learners will have sufficient time to develop their skills, knowledge, and understanding throughout the duration of the two-year course. This will ensure that learners have ample opportunity to fully explore and develop their creative abilities.

The proportion of examination and non-examination (NEA) assessment reflects the consultation proposal. 70% of GCSE Dance will be assessed through NEA and 30% by exam. The high proportion of NEA gives schools flexibility to timetable other assessments in the final year of the course.

We originally proposed that the arrangements for externally marking the 30% performance unit would be prescribed by the awarding body. We amended this to require that the performance unit is externally marked by a visiting examiner. This reflects feedback that assessing a dance in person is more valid and reliable than remote assessment. It also minimises the risk that the quality of recordings or other technical equipment could affect marking.

Our original proposal said the external exam would include “an element of digital assessment.” After further discussions with the awarding body, we can confirm that the exam will be digital-only. It will include, and require learners to review and respond to, recordings of prepared and unprepared professional works. In proceeding with this, we will consider the range of views shared with us about ensuring digital assessment is manageable for schools.

We added a requirement for breadth and diversity of assessed works across the lifetime of the qualification, to promote assessment of an appropriate range of set and unprepared works in the exam.

We added requirements to give greater clarity about the minimum requirements for the reflective log and its weighting as part of the choreography unit.

In line with the consultation proposals, assessment of GCSE Dance will not be tiered.
## Summary of responses

### To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed design of GCSE Dance supports the Curriculum for Wales?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>18 responses</th>
<th>94% agreed that the proposed design of GCSE Dance would support the Curriculum for Wales, whilst 0% disagreed.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="chart1.png" alt="Bar chart" /></td>
<td><strong>Strongly agree</strong></td>
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<td>22%</td>
<td>72%</td>
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</table>

- Respondents supported the development of a Made-for-Wales GCSE Dance, which reflects the Curriculum for Wales, including the four purposes and the statements of what matter for the expressive arts area of the Curriculum.
- The proposal supports learners’ mental and physical wellbeing, and cultural awareness.

### To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed purposes and aims of GCSE Dance?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>17 responses</th>
<th>94% agreed with the proposed purpose and aims of GCSE Dance, whilst 0% disagreed.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="chart2.png" alt="Bar chart" /></td>
<td><strong>Strongly agree</strong></td>
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<td>59%</td>
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- Respondents felt that the proposed purpose and aims will give learners a range of opportunities to engage with dance.
- Respondents said the proposals include an appropriate balance between theory and practical that will give the GCSE credibility and comparability with other expressive arts subjects.
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed content (knowledge, understanding, skills and experiences) for GCSE Dance?
16 responses

94% agreed with the proposed content (knowledge, understanding, skills and experiences) for GCSE Dance, whilst 0% disagreed.

- Respondents who supported the proposal reported that the content is accessible and has enough flexibility to allow learners to pursue their own interests.
- Other respondents said the content includes appropriate knowledge, skills, and experiences to support progression.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed assessment arrangements, including the role of digital technology, for GCSE Dance?
18 responses

67% agreed with the proposed assessment arrangements, including the role of digital technology, for GCSE Dance whilst 11% disagreed.

- Respondents supported the balance of exam and NEA, which will allow learners with different strengths to engage with the subject.
- Some respondents thought the GCSE should put more emphasis on the performance unit (30%) instead of choreography (40%).
- A view was expressed for the need to ensure assessments are accessible for learners with religious or philosophical convictions about modesty.
- Respondents welcomed the introduction of a digital exam, provided schools have appropriate IT resources to support delivery, and clear guidance on how to deal with technical problems should they arise.
- Some expressed concerns about assessing dance performances using recordings, and the impact of the recording quality on marking.
- Some respondents expressed a preference for assessing performance by visiting examiner.
- Some respondents asked for clarification about the requirements of the reflective log.
To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposal for GCSE Dance meets the reasonable needs of learners in Wales?

*Please consider factors such as accessibility, manageability, wellbeing, and progression onto post-16 pathways.*

18 responses

78% agreed that the proposal for GCSE Dance meets the reasonable needs of learners in Wales, whilst 0% disagreed.

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<tr>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
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<td>22%</td>
<td>56%</td>
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- Respondents said that the proposal is accessible and manageable and will support learners' well-being and progression.
- Some highlighted the value of the transferable skills learners will develop.
- Others noted the need for an inclusive approach to teaching and learning in schools to support wellbeing.

To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed GCSE Dance is manageable for teachers to deliver?

*Please consider factors such as the size of the qualification, resources, and the proposed approach to assessment.*

17 responses

71% agreed that the proposed GCSE Dance is manageable for teachers to deliver, whilst 6% disagreed.

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<tr>
<td>18%</td>
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- In general, respondents felt the proposal will be manageable to deliver.
- Several respondents highlighted that schools would need access to specialist teachers and studio facilities to deliver the GCSE.
Overall, to what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposal for GCSE Dance?

18 responses

89% agreed with our proposal for GCSE in Dance, whilst 6% disagreed.

- Respondents expressed support and enthusiasm for including dance as a GCSE qualification.
- They noted how engaging the subject is for learners and that the proposal presents opportunities to engage with cynefin through outdoor learning and site-specific choreography.
Consultation outcomes: design requirements for GCSE Digital Media and Film

Introduction

We consulted on design proposals for a new GCSE Digital Media and Film between 4 October and 14 December 2022. You can read the full design proposal here.

We received 15 responses to the consultation, and we have carefully analysed all of them. As part of our commitment to the co-creation of new qualifications, we shared the feedback with our subject-level working group. Together, we considered how the proposed design could be amended and refined to address the points raised.

Summary of decisions

We have now agreed the final design requirements (known as approval criteria) for these qualifications. These set out the requirements that awarding bodies must follow when developing these new GCSEs.

You can read the approval criteria for the new GCSE Digital Media and Film here. In finalising these approval criteria, we have made the following design decisions to address points raised in the consultation and further co-creation activity.

Title

We have decided to change the qualification’s title to reflect the changes from the existing GCSEs and to emphasise that both media and film can be digital. The title will now be GCSE Digital Media and Film.

Purpose and aims

As with all expressive arts subjects, we have reviewed the aims of GCSE Digital Media and Film and strengthened them to ensure learners are given opportunities to explore the cross-curricular theme of human rights and diversity, including Black, Asian, and minority ethnic perspectives, identity, culture, and contributions.

Content

The content will include a broad range of digital media and film products, including products created in or inspired by Wales, and by a diverse range of producers, to support learners to develop their understanding of cynefin.
Where appropriate, the content will also enable learners to explore sustainability in relation to digital media and film.

Following feedback, we have reviewed and revised the content in some areas to provide more explanation and clarification as to the intended focus.

**Assessment**

The proposed **GCSE Digital Media and Film** qualification will include a combination of external exams and non-exam assessment (NEA). In line with the consultation proposal, 70% of the assessment will be NEA, while 30% will be assessed through external exam. This balance is intended to provide a variety of assessment opportunities and ensure accessibility for a wide range of learners. It also supports relevant, authentic, and engaging assessment for this practical and creative subject.

The NEA will be internally marked by schools and externally moderated by the awarding body. This approach will ensure consistency and accuracy in the marking process.

The 30% examined element will be made available as a digital-only exam. It will be on-screen, and a digital resource will be available throughout the duration of the exam. This reflects views shared with us in the consultation about the benefits of digital assessment for this subject. As we proceed with this, we will consider the range of views shared with us about ensuring digital assessment is manageable for schools.

In line with the consultation proposals, assessment of **GCSE Digital Media and Film** will not be tiered. All learners will be able to access the full range of marks available.

**GCSE Digital Media and Film** will be a linear qualification. This means that learners will have sufficient time to develop their skills, knowledge, and understanding throughout the duration of the two-year course. This decision was made to ensure that learners have ample opportunity to fully explore and develop their creative abilities.
**Summary of responses**

**To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed design of GCSE Digital Media and Film supports the Curriculum for Wales?**

15 responses

93% **agreed** that the proposed design of GCSE Digital Media and Film would support Curriculum for Wales, whilst 7% **disagreed**.

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<th>Strongly agree</th>
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<td>27%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>7%</td>
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- Feedback on this proposal was generally supportive. The most common reason for agreeing that the proposal supports the Curriculum for Wales is that it is designed to reflect key aspects of the curriculum, including the four purposes and the statements of what matter for the Expressive Arts Area of Learning and Experience.
- Respondents agreed with the emphasis on the modern media and film landscape, recognising the opportunities presented by this new qualification. In particular, respondents referred to the focus on the creative process and the ability for pupils to create content.
- The inclusion of content made in Wales was welcomed. Most respondents felt that the proposed weightings for NEA (70%) and external exams (30%) are appropriate and support accessibility for learners. However, some noted that additional detail within the qualification specification would be needed in order to make a more informed judgement.

**To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed purposes and aims of GCSE Digital Media and Film?**

15 responses

80% **agreed** with the proposed purpose and aims of GCSE Film and Digital Media, whilst 20% **disagreed**.

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- Although a high percentage of respondents agreed with the proposal, most did not explain their reasons.
- Respondents who chose to give feedback emphasised the importance of active involvement and ongoing learning to achieve the qualification purpose and aims.
- They also noted that digital media has become increasingly relevant in today's world and presents an opportunity for students to engage with new subject matter.
- The opportunities to engage with digital media and film are seen to support innovative and contemporary approaches to learning.
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed content (knowledge, understanding, skills and experiences) for GCSE Digital Media and Film?

15 responses

73% agreed with the proposed content (knowledge, understanding, skills and experiences) for GCSE Film and Digital Media, whilst 0% disagreed. 27% neither agreed nor disagreed.

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• Respondents were generally supportive of the proposal, noting that the content is highly relevant, current, and reflects the aims of Curriculum for Wales.
• Respondents observed that the proposed qualification has clear overlaps with existing qualifications, which could make planning easier for teachers.
• Some respondents felt that further detail is required to make informed comments regarding the proposed content. Where respondents provided examples to support their view, they included the relevance of representation in relation to health and wellbeing, diversity and inclusion, and expectations for learners to evaluate a broad range of contexts and considerations for how they impact their own work.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed assessment arrangements, including the role of digital technology, for GCSE Film and Digital Media?

13 responses

77% agreed with the proposed assessment arrangements, including the role of digital technology, for GCSE Film and Digital Media whilst 15% disagreed.

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<tr>
<td>31%</td>
<td>46%</td>
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• Respondents were generally positive about the proposed balance of NEA (70%) and exam (30%).
• Some respondents raised concerns about schools having the necessary IT resources to facilitate completing the NEA and sitting the digital exam.
• Some respondents were concerned about the inconsistency of access to digital resources across schools and felt that careful planning was needed to ensure that all learners had access to the necessary resources.
• Despite these concerns, respondents were broadly positive about the inclusion of on-screen assessments, noting that this is a valid and engaging assessment approach.
• Respondents were also positive about the opportunities for learners to submit evidence for NEA digitally.
To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposal for GCSE Film and Digital Media meets the reasonable needs of learners in Wales?
Please consider factors such as accessibility, manageability, wellbeing, and progression onto post-16 pathways.

14 responses

71% agreed that the proposal for GCSE Film and Digital Media meets the reasonable needs of learners in Wales, whilst 14% disagreed.

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• Respondents were generally positive about this proposal.
• Many stated that the qualification meets the reasonable needs of learners in Wales, with one respondent expressing the view that it should be considered an essential subject due to its relevance to young people’s lives.
• The majority of respondents agreed that the content of the proposed qualification is relevant and accessible for learners and that the assessment methods are accessible and engaging.

To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed GCSE Film and Digital Media is manageable for teachers to deliver?
Please consider factors such as the size of the qualification, resources, and the proposed approach to assessment.

15 responses

60% agreed that the proposed GCSE Film and Digital Media are manageable for teachers to deliver, whilst 13% disagreed.

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• One of the key concerns that respondents expressed was the need for access to up-to-date training materials for teachers to deliver the qualification effectively.
• Respondents emphasised that resources, including time, funding, and equipment, are crucial to ensuring high-quality learning outcomes for learners.
• Some noted the importance of vocational training and upskilling for teachers to equip them with the necessary skills and knowledge to support learners effectively.
• Some respondents expressed concerns about the 70% NEA and the potential pressure it may place on teachers.
• Appropriate resourcing of the qualification’s delivery was deemed essential to ensure successful implementation.
Overall, to what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposal for GCSE Film and Digital Media?

14 responses

79% agreed with our proposal for GCSE in Film and Digital Media, whilst 14% disagreed.

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<th>21%</th>
<th>57%</th>
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<td>Agree</td>
<td>Neither agree nor disagree</td>
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- The majority of respondents generally agreed with the proposed GCSE Film and Digital Media qualification.
- Some made it clear that they needed some additional information before making a final judgement.
- Some respondents expressed concerns about negative perceptions associated with the proposed title. This is due to connotations relating to the current GCSE Film and Media Studies.
- Generally, respondents expressed satisfaction with the proposed balance between exam and NEA.
Consultation outcomes: design requirements for GCSE Drama

Introduction

We consulted on design proposals for a new GCSE Drama between 4 October and 14 December 2022. You can read the full design proposal here.

We received 28 responses to the consultation, and we have carefully analysed all of them. As part of our commitment to co-creation of new qualifications, we shared the feedback with our subject-level working group. Together, we considered how the proposed design could be amended and refined to address the points raised.

Summary of decisions

We have now agreed the final design requirements (known as approval criteria) for these qualifications. These set out the requirements that awarding bodies must follow when developing these new GCSEs.

You can read the approval criteria for the new GCSE Drama here.

In finalising these criteria, we have made the following design decisions to address points raised in the consultation and further co-creation activity.

Purpose and aims

As with all expressive arts subjects, we have reviewed the aims of GCSE Drama and strengthened them to ensure learners are given opportunities to explore the cross-curricular theme of human rights and diversity, including Black, Asian, and minority ethnic perspectives, identity, culture and contributions.

Content

We have revised the content to ensure opportunities for learners to understand how the representation of diverse groups and individuals affects and impacts health and wellbeing, diversity, and inclusion.

The content will include a range of set texts, including works created in or inspired by Wales and written by a diverse range of writers, to support learners to develop their understanding of cynefin.

We have provided more clarification in terms of the breadth of content that needs to be covered to effectively prepare learners for the examination, and the degree of
choice and flexibility that will be given to schools in the selection of set texts for study.

We removed the requirement to experience at least one professional performance and/or workshop in person, in response to concerns over the socio-economic and geographical barriers for some learners. The qualification will now require that learners are given opportunities to experience drama either in person or onscreen.

**Assessment**

**GCSE Drama** will be a linear qualification. This means that learners will have sufficient time to develop their skills, knowledge, and understanding throughout the duration of the two-year course. This will ensure that learners have ample opportunity to fully explore and develop their creative abilities.

The proportion of examination and non-examination assessment (NEA) reflects the consultation proposal. 70% of **GCSE Drama** will be assessed through and 30% by examination. The high proportion of NEA gives schools flexibility to timetable other assessments in the final year of the course.

We originally proposed that the arrangements for externally marking the 30% performance unit would be prescribed by the awarding body. The performance unit will now be externally marked by a visiting examiner. This reflects feedback that assessing a dance in person is more valid and reliable than remote assessment. It also minimises the risk that the quality of recordings or other technical equipment could affect marking.

The 30% examined element will be made available as a digital-only examination. This means that it will be on-screen, and a digital resource will be available throughout the duration of the examination. It will include, and require learners to review and respond to, recordings of prepared and unprepared dramatic performances. In proceeding with this, we will consider the range of views shared with us about ensuring digital assessment is manageable for schools.

We added a requirement to ensure appropriate breadth and diversity of assessed works across the lifetime of the qualification. This is to ensure that an appropriate range of set and unprepared works are included in the examination.

We added requirements to give greater clarity about the minimum requirements for the reflective log and its weighting as part of the devising unit.

In line with the consultation proposals, assessment of **GCSE Drama** will not be tiered. All learners will be able to access the full range of marks available.
### Summary of responses

**To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed design of GCSE Drama supports the Curriculum for Wales?**  
27 responses

78% agreed that the proposed design of GCSE Drama would support the Curriculum for Wales, whilst 11% disagreed.

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- Respondents supported the proposal because it has clear links to the four purposes and the ethos of the new curriculum.
- Respondents valued the clear focus on the creative process and opportunities for cross-curricular learning.
- Some expressed reservations that the proposal is too similar to previous specifications.

**To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed purposes and aims of GCSE Drama?**  
27 responses

93% agreed with the proposed purpose and aims of GCSE Drama, whilst 7% disagreed.

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- Respondents felt that the purpose and aims are comprehensive and appropriate for GCSE Drama.
- They liked the emphasis on the creative process and considered the proposal to be achievable and ambitious.
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed content (knowledge, understanding, skills and experiences) for GCSE Drama?

27 responses

70% agreed with the proposed content (knowledge, understanding, skills and experiences) for GCSE Drama, whilst 7% disagreed.

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- Respondents who supported the proposal liked the focus on interpreting, performing/designing and devising, with the option to perform or design for both NEA units.
- They considered the proposal to be sufficiently broad to enable schools to develop their own curriculum.
- Experiencing a range of roles in collaborative performance, including director, designer, and actor, are seen as valuable for a wide range of learners.
- Some respondents thought that direction or scriptwriting should be directly assessed, not only experienced.
- Respondents agreed with the inclusion of set works, to support depth of study. Some expressed reservations that the breadth of works to be studied could compromise depth of knowledge and understanding.
**To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed assessment arrangements, including the role of digital technology, for GCSE Drama?**

28 responses

71% **agreed** with the proposed assessment arrangements, including the role of digital technology, for GCSE Drama whilst 11% **disagreed**.

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• Respondents supported the balance of practical NEA (70%) and external examination (30%) which was felt to be more accessible and engaging for learners.

• There was support for teachers marking the devising unit, and the external assessment of the performance unit.

• Some thought that performing and devising should carry equal weighting.

• Respondents supported the assessment of prepared and unprepared works in the examination, to support the application of analytical and evaluative skills to a range of texts.

• Some requested further guidance on the breadth of teaching needed to adequately prepare learners. Others were concerned that assessing unprepared works would disadvantage learners from poorer socio-economic backgrounds, with limited access to theatre outside school.

• Respondents supported the move to digital assessment that allows learners to watch and respond to recorded performances. Some said this would be more accessible for learners from deprived backgrounds or with additional learning needs.

• Others were concerned about the impact of digital poverty on learners with limited access to digital devices at home. Some highlighted the need for clear guidance for schools in case of technical problems during the examination, and that the risks of digital assessment would need careful consideration.

• Respondents broadly supported proposals for the reflective log, as long as the majority of NEA marks related to the design, performance or work devised.

• Respondents mentioned the need for more clarity on the format and required content of the reflective log.
To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposal for GCSE Drama meets the reasonable needs of learners in Wales?

Please consider factors such as accessibility, manageability, wellbeing, and progression onto post-16 pathways.

27 responses

81% agreed that the proposal for GCSE Drama meets the reasonable needs of learners in Wales, whilst 11% disagreed.

- Respondents said that the proposal would prepare learners well for A level and other post-16 courses. They felt it will support the development of important skills through practical and theoretical assessments.
- Some respondents noted that the increased weighting for NEA would support manageability and learner wellbeing.
- Some respondents expressed reservations about the need for learners to attend live theatre or workshops, expressing concern that this will be less accessible for those from socio-economically deprived backgrounds.
- Some said the proposals are too similar to the current GCSE.

To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed GCSE Drama is manageable for teachers to deliver?

Please consider factors such as the size of the qualification, resources, and the proposed approach to assessment.

27 responses

74% agreed that the proposed GCSE Drama is manageable for teachers to deliver, whilst 11% disagreed.

- In agreeing that the proposed GCSE Drama is manageable, respondents pointed to the similarity of the proposal to the existing GCSE.
- They flagged the need for good quality teacher training and teaching materials to support manageability.
- Respondents noted the need for appropriate drama provision for pre-14 learners to ensure that learners are supported to progress successfully to the GCSE.
Overall, to what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposal for GCSE Drama?

27 responses

78% **agreed** with our proposal for **GCSE in Drama**, whilst 7% **disagreed**.

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- Respondents supported the more practical focus of the proposals, agreeing that this is balanced appropriately with theoretical aspects.
- Some respondents felt the proposals would meet the requirements of the Curriculum for Wales, including enabling learners to explore themes that reflect the four purposes.
- Some felt there was greater scope for multidisciplinary approaches across the expressive arts.
Consultation outcomes: design requirements for GCSE Music

Introduction

We consulted on design proposals for a new GCSE Music between 4 October and 14 December 2022. You can read the full design proposal here.

We received 34 responses to the consultation, and we have carefully analysed all of them. As part of our commitment to co-creation of new qualifications, we shared the feedback with our subject-level working group. Together, we considered how the proposed design could be amended and refined to address the points raised.

Summary of decisions

We have now agreed the final design requirements (known as approval criteria) for these qualifications. These set out the requirements that awarding bodies must follow when developing these new GCSEs.

You can read the approval criteria for the new GCSE Music here.

In finalising these approval criteria, we have made the following design decisions to address points raised in the consultation and further co-creation activity.

Purpose and aims

As with all expressive arts subjects, we have reviewed the aims of GCSE Music and strengthened them to ensure learners are given opportunities to explore the cross-curricular theme of human rights and diversity, including Black, Asian, and minority ethnic perspectives, identity, culture, and contributions.

Content

We have revised the content to ensure opportunities for learners to understand how the representation of diverse groups and individuals affects and impacts health and wellbeing, diversity, and inclusion.

The content will include a range of set extracts, including works created in or inspired by Wales and music written by a diverse range of composers, to support learners to develop their understanding of cynefin.

We have provided more clarification in terms of the breadth of content that needs to be covered to effectively prepare learners for the exam, and the degree of choice and flexibility that will be given to schools in the selection of set extracts for study. All
learners must experience recording and producing music using current technology as part of the GCSE, and can choose to perform or compose using technology, but the GCSE will not directly assess the process of recording or production. We have recently asked for views on a proposal to introduce a pre-vocational qualification in recording and production techniques as part of our consultation on the Full 14-16 Qualification Offer. This mirrors the availability of graded qualifications for musicians who want to study vocals or instruments in more depth.

We removed the requirement to experience at least one professional performance and/or workshop in person, in response to concerns over the socio-economic and geographical barriers for some learners. The qualification will now require that learners are given opportunities to experience music either in person or onscreen.

**Assessment**

**GCSE Music** will be a linear qualification. This means that learners will have sufficient time to develop their skills, knowledge, and understanding throughout the duration of the two-year course. This decision was made to ensure that learners have ample opportunity to fully explore and develop their creative abilities.

The proportion of exam and non-examination assessment (NEA) reflects the consultation proposal. 65% of **GCSE Music** will be assessed through NEA and 35% by exam. The high proportion of internally assessed NEA gives schools flexibility to timetable assessments in the final year of the course and reflects the importance of the skills of performing and composing.

The performance and composition of music is currently worth 60% of the qualification. We have increased this to 65% by removing supplementary written tasks, to focus on core musical skills and promote accessibility.

We were asked by some respondents whether there was an opportunity to increase the weighting of the practical NEA even further. We have decided against this to manage the impact of socio-economic disparities in access to private music tuition. This gives some learners a significant advantage in performance. We strongly support Welsh Government’s efforts to improve equality of access to music tuition through the National Music Service Wales.

The NEA must support an open choice of instrument, voice, or digital technology, and allow learners to perform and compose in the style(s)/genre(s) of their choosing. This will ensure learners who perform using technology and/or instruments from beyond the western classical tradition are not disadvantaged.

The 35% examined element will be made available as a digital-only exam. This means that it will be onscreen, and a digital resource will be available throughout the
duration of the exam. It will include, and require learners to review and respond to, recordings of prepared and unprepared music. This will make the exam accessible for a wider range of learners. In proceeding with this, we will consider the range of views shared with us about ensuring digital assessment is manageable for schools.

The higher exam weighting replaces the programme note in the current GCSE, which is seen to favour western classical musicians. The digital exam will represent a broader range of music, and be more engaging, manageable, and accessible than the programme note.

We have added requirements to give greater clarity about the minimum requirements for the reflective log and its weighting as part of the composing unit.

In line with the consultation proposals, assessment of **GCSE Music** will not be tiered. All learners will be able to access the full range of marks available.
Summary of responses

To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed design of GCSE Music supports the Curriculum for Wales?
33 responses

67% agreed that the proposed design of GCSE Music would support the Curriculum for Wales, whilst 12% disagreed.

- The most common reason for supporting the proposal was because it appropriately supports and reflects the four purposes of the Curriculum for Wales, and the statements of what matter for the expressive arts area of the Curriculum. Respondents felt the proposed design focuses on appropriate aspects of the subject.
- Some respondents noted that the breadth of proposed content is appropriate and gives flexibility for schools to develop their own curricula.
- Others noted the need for curriculum guidance on what digital competency means at different stages to promote consistency between schools.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed purposes and aims of GCSE Music?
33 responses

85% agreed with the proposed purpose and aims of GCSE Music, whilst 6% disagreed.

- Respondents felt that the purpose and aims are clearly linked to those expressed in the Curriculum for Wales.
- Some noted the inclusion of music technology as a strength. Others would prefer more extensive coverage of music technology as an option within the GCSE or a separate qualification.
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed content (knowledge, understanding, skills and experiences) for GCSE Music?

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64% agreed with the proposed content (knowledge, understanding, skills and experiences) for GCSE Music, whilst 15% disagreed.

- Respondents reported that the content covers appropriate skills of performing, composing, and appraising, allowing for a wide range of local and global music to be studied.
- Respondents felt the proposals give schools autonomy to develop their own curriculums.
- Respondents said the content would prepare learners well for future study and give them meaningful opportunities for self-expression.
- Some respondents thought that practical skills of performing and composing deserve greater focus and weighting.
- Some want greater coverage of music technology skills such as recording and production.
- Others want more references to the study of diverse and representative musicians and expressed concern about the accessibility of the content for global musicians.
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed assessment arrangements, including the role of digital technology, for GCSE Music?

31 responses

65% agreed with the proposed assessment arrangements, including the role of digital technology, for GCSE Music whilst 19% disagreed.

- Some respondents felt the assessment arrangements are too focused on practical skills, and that the high weighting of NEA marked by teachers would put pressure on them and undermine skills learners need for progression.
- Some respondents agreed with the balance of NEA and written exams, noting that the NEA weighting makes the GCSE accessible for a wide range of learners. They expressed support for the internal assessment of non-exam assessments.
- One view noted that the removal of written tasks from the NEA would help learners to focus on practical skills and improve accessibility of the NEA assessments.
- Other respondents suggested a higher weighting for the performance unit and practical NEA, because performing and composing are engaging for learners.
- Some respondents expressed concern about the increased weighting of the exam assessment.
- Others appreciated the importance of appraisal skills and thought that a digital exam would make the exam more accessible to a wide range of learners.
- In general, respondents expressed broad support for introducing a digital element of the exam. Many respondents told us that this would make the exam more accessible and allow learners to give more considered responses, supporting accessibility for learners with less previous musical experience, from disadvantaged backgrounds or additional learning needs.
- Some felt that digital exams could support more innovative and accessible ways of assessing more challenging content such as musical notation/dictation.
- Some respondents expressed reservations about the availability of digital resources in schools, noting the need for careful change management around this.
To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposal for GCSE Music meets the reasonable needs of learners in Wales?

Please consider factors such as accessibility, manageability, wellbeing, and progression onto post-16 pathways.

33 responses

58% agreed the proposal for GCSE Music meets the reasonable needs of learners in Wales, whilst 12% disagreed.

- Broadly, respondents believed that the proposal would support progression to a range of Level 3 qualifications or to industry.
- Some respondents noted that the degree of choice in composition and performance units will meet the needs of different learners.
- Others highlighted the benefits of a digital exam, which would make it more accessible to a wide range of learners.
- Respondents who disagreed with the proposal were concerned that the increased weighting of the exam would limit accessibility and undermine learner wellbeing.
- Some respondents expressed concern that the proposal might be less accessible for technology-based musicians.
- Respondents highlighted the need for clarity in the minimum requirements for the reflective log and how it would be rewarded.
To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed GCSE Music is manageable for teachers to deliver?

Please consider factors such as the size of the qualification, resources, and the proposed approach to assessment.

32 responses

56% agreed that the proposed GCSE Music is manageable for teachers to deliver, whilst 22% disagreed.

• Some respondents noted the similarity between the proposal and the existing GCSE, therefore suggesting that the new qualification would be manageable to deliver.
• Some respondents expressed concerns about the support that will be available in terms of teaching resources, access to instruments, instrumental/ vocal tuition, and music technology. Others were reassured that the proposal has been designed with the development of the National Music Service in mind.
• Several respondents said they needed more detail on content, assessment tasks and the timing of assessments before they can express an informed view.
• Other respondents said that timely availability of Welsh-medium resources was necessary to support manageability.
• Some expressed a need for more support from local education authorities and/or Consortia if schools are to identify their own content.
• Respondents who disagreed expressed concerns about the administrative burden of uploading evidence for moderation of internally assessed NEA.
• Some believed the volume of content, including the additional experiences and two composition tasks, is not manageable in the available teaching hours.
Overall, to what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposal for GCSE Music?

33 responses

55% **agreed** with our proposal for **GCSE Music**, whilst 15% **disagreed**.

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- Respondents who agreed with the proposal said that it will give learners appropriate opportunities to develop suitable knowledge and skills. They believed the proposal will promote standards that support progression and portability.
- Some respondents emphasised their support for the balance of NEA and exam assessment.
- Respondents who neither agreed nor disagreed generally wanted more information on content and assessment tasks before drawing firm conclusions.
- Respondents who disagreed were disappointed that the proposal bears similarities to the current GCSE.
- Some expressed concern that a bias towards the western classical tradition would persist.
- Other respondents referred to concerns about the increased weighting of the exam and its accessibility.
Consultation outcomes: design requirements for GCSE Business

Introduction

We consulted on a design proposal for a new GCSE Business between 4 October and 14 December 2022. You can read the full design proposal here.

We received 68 responses to the consultation, and we have carefully analysed all of them. As part of our commitment to co-creation of new qualifications, we shared the feedback with our subject-level working group. Together, we considered how the proposed design could be amended and refined to address the points raised.

Summary of decisions

We have now agreed the final design requirements - known as approval criteria - for these qualifications. These set out the requirements that awarding bodies must follow when developing these new GCSEs.

You can read the approval criteria for GCSE Business here.

In finalising the approval criteria, we have made the following design decisions to address points raised in the consultation and further co-creation activity.

Content

Content has been reviewed to ensure that:

- the fundamentals of business are clearly included
- the level of change is appropriate and relevant for teachers and learners
- key concepts from the Curriculum for Wales (such as business and society, sustainability, and ethics) have led to a re-imagined GCSE in Business
- the cross-cutting themes of human rights and diversity; local, national, and wider world; sustainability, and cynefin have been strengthened
- there is exploration of a range of perspectives including those of Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups and other groups traditionally underrepresented in business such as women, disabled people and those who are socio-economically disadvantaged.
**Assessment**

The proportion of exam and non-exam assessment (NEA) differs slightly from the consultation proposal of 50% assessed via an exam and 50% assessed via NEA in line with the assessment proposal for history, geography, and social studies.

The proportion of the qualification that will now be assessed by exam is 60%, while 40% of the qualification will be assessed by NEA. This proportion of exam and NEA is now the same across all humanities subjects, to take account of parity, manageability for teachers and learners, and learner choice.

The NEA will comprise two separate assessments; one marked by teachers and moderated by the awarding body, and the other set and marked by the awarding body. This will help ensure that these assessments are manageable for schools.

To address concerns about manageability and learner wellbeing, including parity across humanities subjects, one exam unit will be available during the summer of Year 10.

We have considered how digital technology could enhance the assessment experience in this qualification. We have required the awarding body to enable NEA tasks to be submitted digitally. We will also require the awarding body to introduce the option of sitting exams onscreen within the first five years of delivering this qualification. These requirements are reflected across all humanities GCSEs.

The qualification will not be tiered, but **GCSE Business** will be unitised in line with a common approach across all subjects in humanities.

The focus and weighting of assessment objectives for this qualification are coherent with those across all GCSEs within the humanities area, whilst also including an element of subject specificity.
Summary of responses

To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed design of Business supports the Curriculum for Wales?
67 responses

46% agreed that the proposed design of GCSE Business supports the Curriculum for Wales, whilst 39% disagreed.

- Respondents who agreed that GCSE Business supports the Curriculum for Wales welcomed the connections between the statements of what matters and real business concepts such as enterprise, innovation, sustainability, and ethics. They welcomed the role of enterprise and technology in local, national, and wider world contexts, and the impact on the environment and ethical considerations.

- Some respondents who disagreed did not believe that GCSE Business should be part of the humanities area of learning and experience.

- Some respondents who disagreed felt that the curriculum purpose of related to ambitious and capable learners could not be achieved by removing financial mechanisms within the business environment, and that too much emphasis had been placed on certain types of business. Some felt that learners would be less likely to be enterprising in comparison to the current qualification.

- Others welcomed the interconnections between society and business and its link to the concept of cynefin, which reflects the Curriculum for Wales guidance.

- Some reported that the development of learners’ curiosity about enterprise and innovation alongside knowledge of different business models and economies, reflects the Curriculum for Wales. It was noted that supporting learners to appreciate the complex, pluralistic and diverse nature of society and the development of critical thinking around ethical implications of business is a strength.
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed purposes and aims of GCSE Business?

67 responses

43% agreed that the proposed purposes and aims of GCSE Business, whilst 45% disagreed.

- Respondents who supported the proposal reported that the purpose and aims are suitable and relevant to key issues in business.
- Respondents who disagreed with the purpose and aims of GCSE Business felt that the aims are too demanding.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed content (knowledge, understanding, skills and experiences) for GCSE Business?

66 responses

38% agreed with the proposed content for GCSE Business, whilst 53% disagreed.

- Some respondents stated that the proposed content reduces the emphasis on business fundamentals too much, whilst others felt that the content covers all the main functions of business.
- Some thought that there is too much focus on ethics, environmental awareness and sustainability, whereas others considered that environmental impact and the circular economy needs to be at the forefront.
- Some respondents felt that content around sustainability is accessible for learners, whilst other respondents felt that the topic area is too complex.
- Some felt that there needs to be more focus on social businesses and business-for-good models.
- Some respondents thought that the proposed content allows for a more practical way of implementing business knowledge.
- Some noted that there is too much focus on technology and economics.
- Some respondents thought that the proposed content broadens the GCSE, whereas the current specification is too narrowly focused on south Wales.
- Some felt that the emphasis on diversity is important, and that this could be relevant to entrepreneurship around the world.
### To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed assessment arrangements, including the role of digital technology, for GCSE Business?

67 responses

**37% agreed** with the proposed assessment arrangements for GCSE Business, whilst **43% disagreed**.

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- Some respondents felt that it is better to assess a learner’s knowledge over the course of two years, whereas others thought there should be exams in Year 10 and a Year 10 submission for NEA.
- Some respondents felt that NEA increases disadvantage, but others considered that NEA will help learners with a range of skills and abilities, providing vital skills needed in the world of work. Some respondents believed that this depth of assessment is not provided exams alone.
- Some felt that the inclusion of NEA supports the ethos of the Curriculum for Wales.

### To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposal for GCSE Business meets the reasonable needs of learners in Wales?

Please consider factors such as accessibility, manageability, wellbeing, and progression onto post-16 pathways.

66 responses

**36% agreed** that the proposal for GCSE Business meets the reasonable needs of learners in Wales, whilst **48% disagreed**.

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- Some respondents felt that the proposed GCSE Business is accessible for learners. Some thought that the proposal is too complex, yet others considered the proposal to only be aimed at lower ability learners.
- Some respondents wanted to ensure that GCSE Business enhances employability and supports progression to post-16 qualifications such as A level Business, and/or future careers.
- Some thought that the proposal for GCSE Business is fresh and focuses on issues learners encounter now and in the future. Others reported that learners will not be engaged or inspired by this qualification.
- Some respondents reported that NEA will help learners' wellbeing, but others think that NEA will have a negative impact on wellbeing.
To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed GCSE in Business is manageable for teachers to deliver?
Please consider factors such as the size of the qualification, resources, and the proposed approach to assessment.

66 responses

23% agreed that the proposed GCSE Business is manageable for teachers to deliver, whilst 61% disagreed.

- Some respondents considered that NEA increases teachers’ workload, particularly if they’re required to mark a significant proportion of NEA.
- Respondents believed that the awarding body should mark some of the NEA, yet some NEA would be more appropriately marked by teachers.
- Some considered that the proposal is more manageable for teachers than the current qualification.
- Some respondents highlighted the importance of teacher resources being available prior to the teaching of this GCSE, noting that teachers will need updated training.
- Some felt that this proposal does not align with the current teaching climate and that the current qualification provides a better teaching experience.

Overall, to what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposal for GCSE Business?

66 responses

29% agreed with our proposal for GCSE Business, whilst 55% disagreed.

- Respondents who disagree with the proposal believe that there is too much unnecessary change in relation to the current qualification. They commented that the proposal risks dumbing down the subject and disadvantaging learners in Wales, while others thought that the proposal has aspects that are too complex for learners.
- Respondents who agreed with the proposal felt that it is forward-thinking and accessible for learners, with positive views around the introduction of NEA.
Consultation outcomes: design requirements for GCSE Geography

Introduction

We consulted on a design proposal for a new GCSE Geography between 4 October and 14 December 2022. You can read the full design proposal here.

We received 83 responses to the consultation, and we have carefully analysed all of them. As part of our commitment to co-creation of new qualifications, we shared the feedback with our subject-level working group. Together, we considered how the proposed design could be amended and refined to address the points raised.

Summary of decisions

We have now agreed the final design requirements (known as approval criteria) for these qualifications. These set out the requirements that awarding bodies must follow when developing these new GCSEs.

You can read the approval criteria for GCSE Geography here.

In finalising the approval criteria, we have made the following design decisions to address points raised in the consultation and further co-creation activity.

Content

Content has been reviewed and revised to provide opportunity for learners to study migration, integration, and segregation, which strengthened the cross-cutting theme of human rights and diversity.

The cross-cutting themes of cynefin and local, national, and international contexts have also been strengthened by clarifying and strengthening the expectations around engaging with out of classroom learning in contrasting environments.

Assessment

The proportion of examination and non-examination assessment for this subject has changed from the consultation proposal. We had proposed that 50% of the qualification would be assessed by exam and 50% would through non-examination assessment, which was in line with our proposals for history, social studies, and business.
The proportion of the qualification that will now be assessed by examination is 60%, while 40% will be assessed by non-examination assessment. This proportion of exam and non-examination assessment is now the same across all humanities subjects. This will ensure coherence across the humanities subjects and support manageability for teachers and learners, and learner choice.

The non-examination element will comprise two separate assessments, with one marked by teachers and moderated by the awarding body and the other set and marked by the awarding body. This will help ensure that these assessments are manageable for schools.

The qualification will not be tiered. GCSE Geography will be unitised, in an approach that will be common across all humanities subjects. This means that instead of having to wait until the end of Year 11 learners will be able to complete some assessment units before the end of the course.

To address concerns about manageability and learner wellbeing, including parity across the humanities subjects, one examination unit will be made available during the summer of Year 10 for the first cohort of learners taking the qualification.

We have been considering how digital technology could enhance the assessment experience in this qualification. We require the awarding body to enable non-examination assessment (NEA) tasks to be submitted digitally. We will also require the awarding body to introduce the option of sitting exams onscreen within the first five years of delivering this qualification. These requirements are reflected across all humanities GCSEs.

The focus and weighting of assessment objectives for this qualification are coherent with those across all GCSEs within the humanities area. However, they also include an element of subject specificity to ensure that they are appropriately tailored to this subject.
### Summary of responses

**To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed design of Geography supports the Curriculum for Wales?**

80 responses

66% **agreed** that the proposed design of **GCSE Geography** supports the Curriculum for Wales, whilst 14% **disagreed**.

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- Respondents who agreed that the proposal for **GCSE Geography** supports the Curriculum for Wales felt that there are strong links to the four purposes and statements of what matters, whilst maintaining unique geographical content and skills.
- Some respondents thought that **GCSE Geography** would not support the Curriculum for Wales. Some reported concerns that the Curriculum for Wales should not apply to **GCSE Geography**. Others felt that the proposal links more to earlier stages of learning in schools, rather than GCSE level. For example, some concern was reported around the focus on cynefin, which they felt would be covered in detail prior to Year 10 and 11.
- Some considered there to be too much emphasis on the concept of cynefin.
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed purposes and aims of GCSE Geography?

81 responses

72% agreed that the proposed purposes and aims of GCSE Geography, whilst 19% disagreed.

- Respondents who agreed with the proposed purposes and aims felt they reflect a more modern qualification.
- Some respondents felt that the proposed purposes and aims demonstrate a well-rounded GCSE in Geography.
- Some respondents welcomed that the purposes and aims build on conceptual understanding of learning from the Curriculum for Wales.
- Some respondents felt that the purposes and aims are more relevant to learners’ everyday lives than those in the existing qualification.
- Respondents who disagreed with the proposed purposes and aims felt that they do not provide learners with the opportunity to broaden their understanding of real-life contexts and places they have never been to.
- Some respondents felt that the purposes and aims includes terminology which is meaningless.
- Some respondents were concerned that the purposes and aims suggest that the subject is being politicised and will be taught from a narrow perspective.
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed content (knowledge, understanding, skills and experiences) for GCSE Geography?

81 responses

65% agreed with the proposed content for GCSE Geography, whilst 11% disagreed.

- Some respondents who agree with the proposed content felt that it reflects the changing nature of geography and brings a more contemporary focus to the subject.
- Some respondents welcomed that both physical and human geography are included within the content, alongside sustainability.
- Some respondents who disagreed with the proposed content believed that it was ‘woke’.
- Some respondents agreed with including Black, Asian and minority ethnic perspectives, but highlighted the potential for repetition across the other humanities subjects.
- Some respondents welcomed that diversity and culture are part of the content, as well as physical geography.
- There was some concern reported about a focus on local geography; some respondents felt this is too inward looking.
- Some respondents felt that geographical practice should include numerical skills, as well as map analysis.
- Some welcomed the emphasis on enquiry skills.
- Some felt that the content proposals are similar to the current GCSE.
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed assessment arrangements, including the role of digital technology, for GCSE Geography?

81 responses

37% agreed with the proposed assessment arrangements for GCSE Geography, whilst 42% disagreed.

- Respondents who agreed with the assessment proposals welcomed the split between examination and NEA assessment, reporting that this allows the qualification to be more equitable for learners.
- Some respondents welcomed the flexibility of providing opportunities for assessment in Year 10.
- Respondents who disagreed with the assessment proposals thought there is little change to the current GCSE.
- Some respondents felt there is too much emphasis on NEA assessment.
- Some welcomed the proposed enquiry project, whilst others had concerns about having two NEA assessment tasks.
- Some respondents agreed with a unitised approach to assessment, and other respondents suggested there should be a tiered approach to allow for the qualification to be seen as more inclusive.
- Respondents were concerned about the impact on teacher workload if teachers are required to mark the NEA assessment tasks.
- In respect of digital technology, some respondents reported that this should not be seen as a priority for GCSE Geography.
- Some respondents appreciate the use of digital technology but were concerned about fairness and accessibility for certain groups of learners.
- Other respondents were concerned about the availability of resources to enable digital technology to form part of the qualification.
- Some respondents would welcome a greater emphasis on digital skills to ensure learners who progress to A level and degree level courses are not disadvantaged.
- Some respondents considered the assessment proposals to be unrealistic.
To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposal for GCSE Geography meets the reasonable needs of learners in Wales?
Please consider factors such as accessibility, manageability, wellbeing and progression onto post-16 pathways.

79 responses

49% agreed that the proposal for GCSE Geography meets the reasonable needs of learners in Wales, whilst 22% disagreed.

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- Some respondents who agreed with the proposal felt that it supports progression to A level, with others reporting that the proposal will open up career opportunities.
- Some respondents felt that the proposal for GCSE Geography would not be accessible for learners who are eligible for free school meals.
- Some respondents were unsure whether the proposal for GCSE Geography is more engaging than the current qualification, with other respondents reporting that learners would be disengaged.
- Some respondents were concerned that the proposal was not going to be accessible to the full range of learners.
- Some respondents felt that changes to content and assessment arrangements would have a detrimental effect on learner wellbeing.
- There was some concern that the proposed fieldwork element could be divisive, whilst some respondents felt that the fieldwork enquiry element will help progression to further geographical study and could help engage learners to a greater extent.
To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed GCSE in Geography is manageable for teachers to deliver?
Please consider factors such as the size of the qualification, resources and the proposed approach to assessment.

79 responses

19% agreed that the proposed GCSE in Geography is manageable for teachers to deliver, whilst 42% disagreed.

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- Some respondents were concerned that the proposed NEA will have manageability concerns for teachers, reporting that workloads will increase.
- Some respondents felt that if teachers are required to mark the NEA, the subject would be difficult to deliver.
- There was some concern that if there is a high level of content, this would also impact on how manageable the proposal is to deliver within the guided learning hours.
- Some respondents had practical concerns around the fieldwork component, for example in terms of transport and accessibility to particular surroundings. Other respondents thought that the locality for fieldwork is appropriate and made the subject more accessible.
- Some respondents welcomed the opportunity of delivering the fieldwork component, although this was on the basis that the size of the fieldwork requirement is not too large.
- Some respondents felt that the proposed GCSE Geography is manageable for teachers to deliver given the flexibility of having exam assessment in Year 10.
**Overall, to what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposal for GCSE Geography?**

81 responses

42% agreed with our proposal for **GCSE Geography**, whilst 22% disagreed.

- Respondents who agreed with the proposal felt that it will support the development of geographical skills and the introduction of an enquiry project was welcomed.
- Respondents who disagreed with the proposal for **GCSE Geography** had concerns about the assessment arrangements, particularly the extent of NEA and how this will impact on teacher workload, especially if assessments are marked in schools.
- Some reported concerns around how engaging the subject would be for learners.
- Some respondents thought that learners will be disadvantaged in comparison with learners taking geography at GCSE in England, although respondents did not elaborate further on the reasons why.
Consultation outcomes: design requirements for GCSE History

Introduction

We consulted on a design proposal for a new GCSE History between 4 October and 14 December 2022. You can read the full design proposal on which we consulted here.

We received 120 responses to the consultation, and we have carefully analysed all of them. As part of our commitment to co-creation of new qualifications, we shared the feedback with our subject-level working group. Together, we considered how the proposed design could be amended and refined to address the points raised.

Summary of decisions

We have now agreed the final design requirements (known as approval criteria) for these qualifications. These set out the requirements that awarding bodies must follow when developing these new GCSEs.

You can read the approval criteria for GCSE History here.

In finalising the approval criteria, we have made the following design decisions to address points raised in the consultation and further co-creation activity.

Content

Content has been reviewed and revised to make it clearer that learners will study three different historical eras: medieval, early modern, and modern.

The cross-cutting themes of human rights and diversity have been strengthened to make it explicit that learners will need to consider Empire and colonialism.

The cross-cutting themes of local, national, and international contexts and cynefin have also been strengthened. We have also made it clearer that Welsh history will be studied alongside European and World history.

Assessment

The proportion of examination and non-examination assessment (NEA) for this subject has changed from the consultation proposal. We had proposed that 50% of the qualification would be assessed by exam and 50% would be assessed through NEA; this was in line with our proposals for social studies, geography, and business.
The proportion of the qualification that will now be assessed by examination is 60%, while 40% will be assessed by NEA. This proportion of examination and NEA is now the same across all humanities subjects. This will secure coherence across the humanities subjects and support manageability for teachers and learners, and learner choice.

The NEA will comprise two separate assessments, with one marked by teachers and moderated by the awarding body and the other set and marked by the awarding body. This will help ensure that these assessments are manageable for schools.

The qualification will not be tiered. **GCSE History** will be unitised, in an approach that will be common across all subjects in humanities. This means that instead of having to wait until the end of Year 11 learners will be able to complete some assessment units before the end of the course.

To address concerns about manageability and learner wellbeing, including parity across the humanities subjects, one exam unit will be made available during the summer of Year 10 for the first cohort of learners taking the qualification.

We have been considering how digital technology could enhance the assessment experience in this qualification. We require the awarding body to enable NEA tasks to be submitted digitally. We will also require the awarding body to introduce the option of onscreen examinations within the first five years of delivering this qualification. These requirements are reflected across all humanities GCSEs.

The focus and weighting of assessment objectives for this qualification are coherent with those across all GCSEs within the humanities area. However, they also include an element of subject specificity to ensure that they are appropriately tailored to this subject.
Summary of responses

**To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed design of History supports the Curriculum for Wales?**
119 responses

66% **agreed** that the proposed design of GCSE History supports the Curriculum for Wales, whilst 19% **disagreed**.

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<td>10%</td>
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- Respondents who agreed that the proposal for GCSE History felt that it makes connections to the Curriculum for Wales, reflecting the relevant ‘Statements of What Matters’.
- Respondents welcomed the reference to developing learners’ confidence and skills to think like a historian.
- Respondents welcomed the reference to the concept of cynefin and the opportunities provided to study Black, Asian and minority ethnic history and contributions within Welsh history.
- Some respondents felt there was a risk that the subject could become politicised.
- Some respondents felt that teaching history as a distinct subject did not support the ethos of the Curriculum.
- Some respondents thought that a focus on Welsh history made the subject too narrow.
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed purposes and aims of GCSE History?
117 responses

65% agreed that the proposed purposes and aims of GCSE History, whilst 20% disagreed.

- Respondents who agreed with the proposed purposes and aims felt they were clear and accurate.
- Some respondents felt that the purpose and aims of the qualification were similar to the those that underpin the current GCSE History.
- Some respondents considered that the purpose and aims have more of a focus on inclusivity within the qualification, and greater focus on local history than the current qualification.
- Respondents who disagreed with the proposed purpose and aims felt that they would lead to a superficial study of history.
- Respondents who disagreed with the proposed purpose and aims thought that they focus too much on Welsh history and were too heavily influenced by a political agenda.
**To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed content (knowledge, understanding, skills and experiences) for GCSE History?**

117 responses

56% **agreed** with the proposed content for GCSE History, whilst 21% **disagreed**.

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<td>9%</td>
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- Some respondents welcomed the balance between knowledge and understanding; and skills development.
- Some respondents welcomed the separation of content into two depth studies and a breadth study and felt there was a good range of time spans.
- Some respondents welcomed the inclusion of interpretations as well as source analysis and felt this was good preparation for A level.
- Some respondents liked the focus on Welsh history, and seeing the nation through the context of the wider world which they considered has been missing up until now.
- Other respondents felt that there was too much focus on Welsh history and that this was too narrow and would fail to engage learners and could lead to insularity.
- Some respondents were of the view that a focus on Black, Asian and minority ethnic experiences and contributions was essential.
- Some respondents welcomed the reference to schools having a degree of choice and flexibility within the qualification, whilst others felt that any choice would be limited in practice.
- Some respondents thought there was a high level of content.
- Respondents felt the skills the qualification will develop are suitable for the qualification and age range.
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed assessment arrangements, including the role of digital technology, for GCSE History?

118 responses

36% agreed with the proposed assessment arrangements for GCSE History, whilst 46% disagreed.

- Respondents who agreed with the assessment proposals welcomed the split between exams and NEA.
- Some respondents welcomed the NEA proposal and the availability of some assessment in Year 10, adding that this would make the qualification more accessible.
- Some respondents felt that the extent of NEA would detrimentally impact teacher workload, particularly if NEA is marked in schools.
- Some respondents raised a concern that NEA is not accessible for private candidates and that NEA could disadvantage other groups of learners.
- Some respondents felt that the proportion of content to be assessed via NEA was too much and would lead to unfairness.
- In respect of the role of digital technology within the assessment, concern was raised by some respondents about the availability of resources in schools for learners. Some respondents welcomed the use of digital technology but wanted to ensure fairness for all learners.
- Others felt that digital technology did not have a role to play in GCSE History, with some considering this to be unnecessary and tokenistic.
- Some respondents felt that the assessment arrangements were burdensome for learners.
To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposal for GCSE History meets the reasonable needs of learners in Wales?
Please consider factors such as accessibility, manageability, wellbeing and progression onto post-16 pathways.

119 responses

38% agreed that the proposal for GCSE History meets the reasonable needs of learners in Wales, whilst 25% disagreed.

- Some respondents felt that learners’ wellbeing and the accessibility of the qualification is improved by including diversity in the subject content.
- Some respondents felt that the proposal provides a suitable pathway to progress to A level History. Other respondents wanted reassurance that the proposal would offer sufficient rigour to prepare learners for post-16 education.
- Some respondents were concerned that if the depth study is interpreted in a narrow way, it could affect the popularity of the subject from a learner perspective.
- There was some concern that the NEA could detrimentally impact learner wellbeing, although some respondents felt that NEA made the subject more accessible for learners.
- Some respondents thought that learners’ wellbeing will be improved by the exam and NEA split.
- Some respondents felt that the proportion of NEA could make the subject less manageable for learners.
- Respondents wanted to ensure that the qualification would be accessible for the full ability range of learners.
To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed GCSE History is manageable for teachers to deliver?

Please consider factors such as the size of the qualification, resources and the proposed approach to assessment.

119 responses

27% agreed that the proposed GCSE History is manageable for teachers to deliver, whilst 41% disagreed.

- Some respondents felt that the NEA requirements will have a detrimental impact on how manageable the proposal is for teachers to deliver, particularly if teachers are required to mark the NEA tasks.
- Some respondents were concerned that the volume of content will make the subject difficult to deliver for teachers.
- Respondents reported that resources will need to be provided to teachers in good time to allow for the subject to be delivered in a manageable way.
- Some respondents believed that the proposal is manageable for teachers to deliver, with some respondents feeling that the volume of content had not increased from the existing qualification.
- Some respondents were concerned that the focus on local history and the enquiry project would make it difficult for teachers to plan and deliver.
**Overall, to what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposal for GCSE History?**

118 responses

38% **agreed** with our proposal for **GCSE History**, whilst 39% **disagreed**.

- Respondents who agreed with the proposal for **GCSE History** felt that learners would benefit from the subject being more accessible and inclusive.
- Respondents who disagreed with the proposal had concerns about the assessment arrangements.
- Some respondents were concerned with some elements of content, particularly around what was perceived to be too much emphasis on Welsh history.
- Some respondents thought that the proposal would increase teacher workload and were concerned about the availability of resources in time for first teaching of the qualification.
Consultation outcomes: design requirements for GCSE Religious Studies

Introduction

We consulted on a design proposal for a new GCSE Religious Studies between 4 October and 14 December 2022. You can read the full design proposal on which we consulted here.

We received 107 responses to the consultation, and we have carefully analysed all of them. As part of our commitment to co-creation of new qualifications, we shared the feedback with our subject-level working group. Together, we considered how the proposed design could be amended and refined to address the points raised.

Summary of decisions

We have now agreed the final design requirements (known as approval criteria) for these qualifications. These set out the requirements that awarding bodies must follow when developing these new GCSEs.

You can read the approval criteria for GCSE Religious Studies here.

In finalising the approval criteria, we have made the following design decisions to address points raised in the consultation and further co-creation activity.

Title

Following our consultation in 2021 on the range of GCSE qualifications, we decided to develop a GCSE in religious studies. While we discussed the title of this consultation with stakeholders during our co-creation activity, we did not ask for views specifically on the title of GCSE Religious Studies when consulting on the proposed design of the new qualification. However, some respondents to the consultation asked whether consideration had been given to renaming the qualification as GCSE Religion, Values and Ethics.

Having considered this feedback and following further discussions with stakeholders, we have decided that the title of this will be GCSE Religious Studies. This reflects the need to maintain a clear distinction between the GCSE qualification and the statutory religion, values and ethics (RVE) as set out in the Curriculum for Wales.
Framework. It is important to note that **GCSE Religious Studies** is intended to support and reflect the statutory RVE guidance and not to directly assess it.

When exploring possible alternatives to **GCSE Religious Studies** as a title, some of those we spoke to raised concerns that changing the name of the qualification could undermine its identity as a discrete subject discipline within the humanities area of the Curriculum for Wales (the Curriculum). Changing the name of the qualification to ‘GCSE Religion, Values and Ethics’ could similarly cause confusion between the subject itself and the broader statutory guidance which applies to the whole of the humanities area. During co-creation we heard concerns about how some schools use the existing full and short course GCSEs in religious studies to meet the current statutory guidance, and the negative impact this can have on learner engagement and teacher workload. Changing the title of the GCSE to match the new statutory RVE guidance would not address these concerns.

A further consideration was the potential impact that a new title may have in terms of supporting progression to AS and A Level Religious Studies courses.

**Content**

We have reviewed the content to clarify that there is a specific route though the qualification for Catholic schools.

To ensure that the content fully reflects a pluralistic approach, all learners will study Christianity (or Catholic Christianity), a choice of one other religion, and humanism. Specifications will also include opportunities to learn about other non-religious philosophical convictions.

The cross-cutting themes of human rights and diversity, local, national and international contexts (including sustainability), and **cynefin** have been strengthened within the content.

**Assessment**

The proportion of examination and non-examination assessment (NEA) for this subject has changed from the consultation proposal. We had proposed that 70% of the qualification would be assessed by examination and 30% would be assessed through NEA. This was different to the assessment proposals for other humanities subjects.

The proportion of the qualification that will now be assessed by examination is 60%, while 40% will be assessed by NEA. This proportion of examination and NEA is now the same across all humanities subjects. This will secure coherence across the humanities and support manageability for teachers and learners, and learner choice.
The NEA will comprise two separate assessments, with one marked by teachers and moderated by the awarding body and the other set and marked by the awarding body. This will help ensure that these assessments are manageable for schools.

The qualification will not be tiered. **GCSE Religious Studies** will be unitised in an approach that will be common across all humanities subjects. This means that instead of having to wait until the end of Year 11 learners will be able to complete some assessment units before the end of the course.

To address concerns about manageability and learner wellbeing, including parity across the humanities subjects, one examination unit will be made available during the summer of Year 10 for the first cohort of learners taking the qualification.

We have been considering how digital technology could enhance the assessment experience in this qualification. We require the awarding body to enable NEA tasks to be submitted digitally. We will also require the awarding body to introduce the option of sitting exams onscreen within the first five years of delivering this qualification. These requirements are reflected across all humanities GCSEs.

The focus and weighting of assessment objectives for this qualification are coherent with those across all GCSEs within the humanities area. However, they also include an element of subject specificity to ensure that they are appropriately tailored to this subject.

**Short course**

Consistent with the approach taken in other subjects there will be no short course in religious studies.

In response to consultation feedback that highlighted potential difficulties schools may face in complying with the statutory RVE guidance in the absence of a short course, we included a proposal within our consultation of the Full 14-16 Qualifications Offer (which closed on 14th June 2023) around the need for a standalone Foundation qualification that relates more closely to the RVE guidance, and which offers a more flexible form of assessment than the GCSE.
Summary of responses

**To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed design of Religious Studies supports the Curriculum for Wales?**

104 responses

42% **agreed** that the proposed design of **GCSE Religious Studies** supports the Curriculum for Wales, whilst 40% **disagreed**.

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- Respondents who agreed felt that the proposal for **GCSE Religious Studies** supports the ‘four purposes’ and the ‘statements of what matters’ within the humanities area of the Curriculum.
- Respondents also thought that the high-level content and scheme of assessment, in particular the NEA element, reflects the Curriculum.
- Some respondents were pleased to see local, Welsh and wider world contexts reflected in the proposal, and the reference to cynefin.
- Some respondents felt that it was a strength for the cross-cutting theme of human rights and diversity to be reflected in this subject and across all the humanities as a common theme.
- Respondents who disagreed, provided reasons that relate to other questions in the consultation – these are included below under the relevant question.

**To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed purposes and aims of GCSE Religious Studies?**

104 responses

64% **agreed** that the proposed purposes and aims of **GCSE Religious Studies**, whilst 18% **disagreed**.

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- Respondents who agreed with the proposed purposes and aims felt they were clear and concise.
- Respondents were of the view that the purposes and aims reflect the Curriculum and the statutory RVE guidance.
- Some respondents welcomed the reference to the GCSE not being the only vehicle for schools to implement the RVE guidance.
- Some respondents felt that the purposes and aims were broadly similar to the current qualification.
**To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed content (knowledge, understanding, skills and experiences) for GCSE Religious Studies?**

103 responses

38% **agreed** with the proposed content for **GCSE Religious Studies**, whilst 31% **disagreed**.

![Agreement Levels](image)

- Some respondents considered the volume of content to be large.
- Some respondents requested reassurance that there would still be a separate route through the qualification for Catholic schools.
- Some respondents were concerned that the focus on Christianity would not increase interest in the subject.
- Some respondents were concerned that humanism was the only specific example of a non-religious conviction mentioned in the proposal.
- Some respondents were concerned about the risk of cross-over and overlap between this qualification and GCSE Social Studies.
- Some respondents were of the view that the proposed content seemed too prescribed.
- Respondents wanted to ensure that diversity and Black, Asian and minority ethnic representation was reflected throughout the qualification.
- Some respondents thought that it was important to treat non-religious philosophical convictions as equal to religions within the qualification.
- Some respondents liked the structure of content through themes whilst other respondents were concerned that the thematic study of religions would not lead to the systematic study of religion.
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed assessment arrangements, including the role of digital technology, for GCSE Religious Studies

101 responses

19% **agreed** with the proposed assessment arrangements for GCSE Religious Studies, whilst 57% **disagreed**.

- Some respondents were concerned that not providing Learners with the opportunity of taking a Year 10 examination put learners at a disadvantage. Linked to this some respondents felt that having assessment in Year 10 was valuable for learners.
- Some respondents were concerned that having all exam assessment at the end of Year 11 was too onerous, whilst other respondents welcomed this and were of the view that it gave learners more time to develop knowledge and skills.
- Respondents felt it was important that assessment arrangements for **GCSE Religious Studies** were the same as the other humanities subjects.
- Some respondents wanted a higher proportion of NEA so that the qualification was consistent with the other humanities subjects.
- Some respondents felt that NEA was a good opportunity for learners to engage with lived religions and faith and belief in action.
- Some respondents felt that the proposal to include a research project was innovative and allows learners to have more of a role in determining the focus of their assessment. Respondents felt that the enquiry element reflects the Curriculum.
- Some respondents were of the view that the level of assessment is unmanageable when a whole cohort is entered in **GCSE Religious Studies**.
- Some respondents were concerned that the proposed thematic examination paper and the enquiry project would lead to a values-based approach to assessment.
- Some respondents felt that if the proposed ‘Religion and Belief’ examination paper and the thematic examination paper has equal weighting, it would lead to the downgrading of religious content in favour of alternative views.
- Respondents thought that digital competency can be woven into religious studies, as with any other subject.
- Respondents were concerned about the absence of a short course and the impact this would have on schools’ ability to comply with the statutory RVE guidance. Respondents felt it was important to make provision for a qualification that supports the RVE guidance.
Some respondents agreed that GCSE Religious Studies should be an untiered qualification, whilst other respondents thought that GCSE Religious Studies should be tiered to make it more accessible for learners.

Some respondents thought it would be innovative for exam assessment to include an open book approach.

To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposal for GCSE Religious Studies meets the reasonable needs of learners in Wales?

Please consider factors such as accessibility, manageability, wellbeing and progression onto post-16 pathways.

103 responses

24% agreed that the proposal for GCSE Religious Studies meets the reasonable needs of learners in Wales, whilst 44% disagreed.

Some respondents felt that the proposal supports progression as well as enabling skills to be developed that will facilitate learners to become global citizens.

Some respondents were concerned whether the proposal for GCSE Religious Studies would allow for progression to A Level Religious Studies.

Some respondents considered that the proposal for GCSE Religious Studies provides a sufficient degree of rigour for high-achieving learners, whilst other respondents held the opposite view stating that there was a lack of academic rigour. Some suggested that the subject had been dumbed down.

Some respondents felt that the qualification is less accessible because the short course has been removed.

Some respondents thought that the introduction of NEA increased the accessibility of the subject for learners as it removes the stress of being assessed entirely by exam.
To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed GCSE in Religious Studies is manageable for teachers to deliver?

*Please consider factors such as the size of the qualification, resources and the proposed approach to assessment.*

100 responses

18% agreed that the proposed GCSE Religious Studies is manageable for teachers to deliver, whilst 58% disagreed.

- Some respondents felt that the qualification would be unmanageable if teachers are required to mark the NEA. Respondents thought that it was necessary for the awarding body to mark NEA.
- Some respondents were of the view that this proposal is unmanageable for teachers to deliver within the teaching time allocated to the subject.
- Some respondents felt there were significant manageability concerns, particularly for centres which have whole cohort entry.
- Respondents felt it was important for bilingual resources to be made available from the start of the qualification.

Overall, to what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposal for GCSE Religious Studies?

103 responses

26% agreed with our proposal for GCSE Religious Studies, whilst 51% disagreed.

- Some respondents were concerned that the proposal was not ambitious enough.
- Some respondents who disagreed with the proposal for GCSE Religious Studies did so on the basis of the assessment arrangements and the perceived lack of parity in assessment with other humanities subjects.
Consultation outcomes: design requirements for GCSE Social Studies

Introduction

We consulted on a design proposal for a new GCSE Social Studies between 4 October and 14 December 2022. You can read the full design proposal here.

We received 31 responses to the consultation, and we have carefully analysed all of them. As part of our commitment to co-creation of new qualifications, we shared the feedback with our subject-level working group. Together, we considered how the proposed design could be amended and refined to address the points raised.

Summary of decisions

We have now agreed the final design requirements (known as approval criteria) for these qualifications. These set out the requirements that awarding bodies must follow when developing these new GCSEs.

You can read the approval criteria for GCSE Social Studies here.

Now we have finalised the design requirements for GCSE Social Studies, we will consider whether 9-1 GCSEs in other, related subjects such as citizenship, law and sociology will continue to be available. We will confirm our decisions on this by December 2024.

In finalising the approval criteria, we have made the following design decisions to address points raised in the consultation and further co-creation activity.

Content

We have reviewed and revised the content to ensure that the complimentary disciplines of politics, sociology, law and citizenship have an appropriate and relevant level of attention, and that GCSE Social Studies is a distinctive subject discipline.

The cross-cutting themes of human rights and diversity - local, national and wider world including sustainability and cynefin - have been strengthened.

We have also reviewed and revised the required content and experiences to support the religion, values and ethics guidance where appropriate.
**Assessment**

The proportion of exam and non-exam assessment (NEA) for this subject has changed from the consultation proposal. We had proposed that 50% of the qualification would be assessed by exam and 50% would be assessed through NEA; this was in line with our proposals for history, geography, and business.

The proportion of the qualification that will now be assessed by exam is 60%, while 40% will be assessed by NEA. This proportion of exam and NEA is now the same across all humanities subjects. This will secure coherence across the humanities subjects and support manageability for teachers and learners, and learner choice.

The NEA will comprise two separate assessments, with one marked by teachers and moderated by the awarding body and the other set and marked by the awarding body. This will help ensure that these assessments are manageable for schools.

The qualification will not be tiered. **GCSE Social Studies** will be unitised in an approach that will be common across all subjects in humanities. This means that instead of having to wait until the end of Year 11 learners will be able to complete some assessment units before the end of the course.

To address concerns about manageability and learner wellbeing, including parity across the humanities subjects, one exam unit will be made available during the summer of Year 10 for the first cohort of learners taking the qualification.

We have been considering how digital technology could enhance the assessment experience in this qualification. We have required the awarding body to enable NEA tasks to be submitted digitally. We will also require the awarding body to introduce the option of sitting exams onscreen within the first five years of delivering this qualification. These requirements are reflected across all humanities GCSEs.

The focus and weighting of assessment objectives for this qualification are coherent with those across all GCSEs within the humanities area, whilst also including an element of subject specificity.
Summary of responses

To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed design of Social Studies supports the Curriculum for Wales?
31 responses

65% agreed that the proposed design of GCSE Social Studies supports the Curriculum for Wales, whilst 29% disagreed.

- Respondents felt that the proposal is described in accordance with the Curriculum for Wales.
- Respondents felt that the proposed design of GCSE Social Studies fits well with the key purposes of the Curriculum.
- Other respondents felt that elements of the humanities statements of what matters relating to how societies are characterised, are missing from the proposal.
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed purposes and aims of GCSE Social Studies?

30 responses

63% agreed that the proposed purposes and aims of GCSE Social Studies, whilst 27% disagreed.

- Respondents who supported the proposal reported that the purpose and aims are clear and appropriate, providing a framework for the development of an interesting specification.
- Some respondents noted that GCSE Social Studies provides a great opportunity for learners in Wales to develop a better appreciation of how society works and to develop skills to engage and become active members of it.
- Respondents welcomed the focus on supporting learners to become ethical, informed, and responsible citizens of Wales and the world, by feeling empowered to influence change and embodying social agency.
- Respondents felt that the purpose and aims clearly show how GCSE Social Studies connects to the vision and content of the Curriculum for Wales.
- Others were concerned that GCSE Social Studies would negatively impact GCSE sociology and learners who wish to pursue a career in sociology.
- Some raised a concern that the proposed purpose and aims are similar to those of GCSE religious studies.
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed content (knowledge, understanding, skills and experiences) for GCSE Social Studies?

30 responses

47% agreed with the proposed content for GCSE Social Studies, whilst 33% disagreed.

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- Respondents who agreed felt that the proposed content is interesting and comprehensive.
- Some liked the focus on conceptual learning and approaching social issues from a local, national and global perspective, with some positive responses to the references to social and economic inequality, and the clear link to contemporary social issues.
- Others felt that the proposed content is appropriate, with some areas having more teaching potential.
- Respondents thought that the experiences suggested within the proposal would deepen learning.
- Some respondents were concerned that there is no, or not enough, sociology content, with too much focus on areas such as government and politics. By contrast others considered it essential for democracy and active citizenship to be a key focus.
- Some welcomed the opportunity to explore the work of social change-makers as part of the experiences proposed.
- The respondents who felt that there was sociology content missing, explained that it is necessary to not only be able to identify social issues, but also to explain them by examining sociological theories.
- Other respondents raised a concern that GCSE Social Studies would replace GCSE sociology, and that this would be detrimental to learners in Wales.
- Some thought that GCSE Social Studies should cover several different disciplines within the social sciences such as sociology, as well as law, psychology, criminology, and that the proposed design does not make it clear that these areas will be covered.
- Some queried the prominence of technology as a topic within the qualification.
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed assessment arrangements, including the role of digital technology, for GCSE Social Studies?

30 responses

50% agreed with the proposed assessment arrangements for GCSE Social Studies, whilst 27% disagreed.

- Respondents felt that the proposed breakdown of assessment arrangements is appropriate to the subject.
- Respondent did not feel that a tiered approach would be appropriate. Some respondents explained their view that a tiered approach can dishearten learners or put unnecessary pressure on them.
- Respondents felt that in terms of assessment arrangements, it is important that there is parity between the humanities GCSE subjects. Respondents considered it appropriate for assessment arrangements for GCSE Social Studies to include NEA for a range of reasons, including a view that the assessment would be more accessible for those learners who struggle with exams.
- Some respondents considered that the social enquiry project is an important part of the NEA, providing an opportunity for learners to engage with local and national real-world issues, and support behaviour change.
- There was a particular concern reported about the manageability for teachers if they are required to mark the NEA.
- Some respondents suggested that one of the NEA tasks in each subject should be marked by the awarding body, to ease the burden on teachers.
- Some respondents thought that it is important for learners to sit the exam papers at the end of the course to allow them to develop and enhance their skills, whilst others felt that it is important for assessments to be taken throughout the two-year course as opposed to everything being done at the end of the two years.
- Respondents suggested that assessment should be in the form of two separate exams which should be made available to be sat at the end of Year 10 if it was appropriate for learners.
- Respondents wanted teachers to have flexibility to decide what assessments should be taken when and in what order, and for learners’ wellbeing to be considered so that they do not feel overwhelmed with all assessments taking place in Year 11.
In relation to the role of digital technology, respondents felt that it is important but there was concern expressed around the availability of resources within schools.
To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposal for GCSE Social Studies meets the reasonable needs of learners in Wales?
Please consider factors such as accessibility, manageability, wellbeing and progression onto post-16 pathways.
28 responses

39% agreed that the proposal for GCSE Social Studies meets the reasonable needs of learners in Wales, whilst 39% disagreed.

- Some respondents queried whether the content topics would be engaging and intellectually stimulating for learners, with some expressing concern in relation to the manageability for learners of the assessment arrangements.
- Others thought that the proposal for GCSE Social Studies is manageable and accessible for learners, which some felt would meet the needs of the next generation. Some suggested that the social enquiry project provides flexibility for learners to engage with a diverse range of issues that would benefit them and their communities.
- Respondents expressed mixed views in relation to progression to post-16 pathways. Some respondents felt that GCSE Social Studies has the capacity to develop skills relevant for many post-16 qualifications. Others felt that GCSE Social Studies will struggle to prepare learners for A levels within social sciences.
To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed GCSE in Social Studies is manageable for teachers to deliver?

Please consider factors such as the size of the qualification, resources and the proposed approach to assessment.

29 responses

45% agreed that the proposed GCSE in Social Studies is manageable for teachers to deliver, whilst 21% disagreed.

- Respondents considered that teachers would find GCSE Social Studies manageable, on the basis that resources are ready before first teaching begins.
- Respondents considered the subject to be manageable for teachers, especially if the assessment arrangements are staggered throughout the two-year course.
- Some respondents thought that the social enquiry project would cause an increase in teacher workload to start with, but felt it would become easier in subsequent years, as resources in respect of this element of NEA are developed.
- Some respondents found it difficult to express an opinion as they wanted more detail around the proposal for the design of GCSE Social Studies, with some suggesting that the manageability of the GCSE was dependent on the specification developed by the awarding body.

Overall, to what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposal for GCSE Social Studies?

29 responses

52% agreed with our proposal for GCSE Social Studies, whilst 38% disagreed.

- Some respondents expressed excitement about the proposed GCSE Social Studies, suggesting it can be fascinating and engaging by incorporating content from several disciplines that learners would enjoy studying.
- Other respondents expressed concern that this GCSE would replace GCSE sociology, which they feel is a popular subject in Wales.
Consultation outcomes: design requirements for GCSE Food and Nutrition

Introduction

We consulted on design proposals for a new GCSE Food and Nutrition qualification between 4 October and 14 December 2022. You can read the full design proposal here.

We received 50 responses to the consultation, and we've carefully analysed all of them. As part of our commitment to the co-creation of new qualifications, we shared the feedback with our subject-level working group. Together, we considered how the proposed design could be amended and refined to address the points raised.

Summary of decisions

We have now agreed the final design requirements (known as approval criteria) for these qualifications. These set out the requirements that awarding bodies must follow when developing these new GCSEs.

You can read the approval criteria for the new GCSE Food and Nutrition here.

In finalising these approval criteria, we have made the following design decisions to address points raised in the consultation and further co-creation activity.

Purpose and aims

We have reviewed the aims of GCSE Food and Nutrition and strengthened them to ensure that learners are given opportunities to explore the cross-cutting theme of human rights and diversity, including the contributions and cuisines of Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities and individuals.

Beyond this, the purpose and aims reflect the consultation proposal with minor amendments to ensure clarity and appropriate links with the content and assessment.

Content

The content for GCSE Food and Nutrition largely reflects the consultation proposal with minor amendments.
In line with the additional aim regarding human rights and diversity, we have revised the content to ensure opportunities for learners to explore cuisines from different cultures and countries, as well as a range of influences on diet and health outcomes.

We received feedback that the inclusion of food science in this qualification could deter some learners from taking the subject or make it too difficult. We have reviewed this decision through our co-creation activity and decided that the content should include some food science. This will support learners in developing their skills in the preparing, cooking and presenting of food. It also signifies a key difference between this GCSE and other related vocational qualifications.

Assessment

**GCSE Food and Nutrition** will be a linear qualification. This means that learners will have sufficient time to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding throughout the duration of the two-year course. The exam will be sat at the end of the course so learners will be able to draw on their experience of applying the relevant knowledge and understanding in the non-examination assessment (NEA) when responding to exam questions.

The proposed assessment arrangements reflect the consultation proposal. 60% of the qualification will be assessed through NEA, and 40% will be assessed through a digital exam. This balance will offer learners a variety of assessment opportunities and support accessibility for a wide range of learners. This proportion of exam and NEA is consistent across all subjects within the health and wellbeing area of the curriculum. The NEA tasks will be set by the awarding body, marked by the school, and moderated by the awarding body.

In line with the consultation proposals, the exam for **GCSE Food and Nutrition** will only be available digitally. This will build upon the current provision, where exams are available both digitally and in paper format, supporting engagement for learners and enabling a wider variety of question types to be used. This may include the use of stimulus images and videos in the assessment.

We received feedback that the food investigation in the current qualification creates food waste and is costly for centres and learners. To mitigate against this, we are requiring the awarding body to consider how food waste and cost can be limited when designing this assessment for the new GCSE. At this stage, we anticipate that this will include consideration of whether any of the practical activities can be completed in groups or be led by the teacher.

In line with the consultation proposals, **GCSE Food and Nutrition** will not be tiered. All learners will be able to access the full range of marks available.
Summary of responses

| To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed design of GCSE Food and Nutrition supports the Curriculum for Wales? |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 21% | 9% | 47% | 13% | 11% |

30% agreed that the proposed design of GCSE Food and Nutrition would support the Curriculum, whilst 47% neither agreed nor disagreed and 24% disagreed.

- Respondents who agreed with the proposal felt that the purpose and aims aligned with and supported both the four purposes of the Curriculum for Wales and ‘statements of what matters’ for the health and wellbeing area of the Curriculum.
- Respondents indicated that the balance between knowledge and understanding, skills and experiences was appropriate and would enable learners to build on their prior learning.
- Respondents felt that the proposed design would support the development of integral skills. They particularly noted that learners would have the opportunity to think critically and be creative in their practical learning and assessments.
- Respondents felt that the balance between exam and NEA was appropriate for this practical subject. They felt that the variety of assessments would support the breadth of learning and enable learners to make more informed choices about food and nutrition.
- Respondents said that the proposal would also support learners to make informed choices about the food they cook and eat, which they felt would enable them to become more independent and effectively support them as they progress into their adult lives.
- There was a concern that the proposed ‘food investigation’ would not align with the ethos of the Curriculum for Wales as it is currently a costly exercise which is not accessible to all learners.
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed purposes and aims of GCSE Food and Nutrition?

47 responses

72% agreed with the proposed purposes and aims of GCSE Food and Nutrition, whilst 10% disagreed.

- Respondents who supported the proposed purpose and aims felt that they were clear and aligned well to the proposed content and assessment arrangements.
- Respondents who agreed with the proposed purpose and aims noted that they cover a range of themes and sub-themes that are broad, yet specific enough to encourage learners to explore a range of knowledge, skills and understanding in relation to food and nutrition.
- A minority of respondents felt that the proposed purpose and aims did not adequately align with the proposed content.
- One respondent felt that the proposed purpose and aims are not significantly different enough from the current Level 1/2 qualification in Hospitality and Catering.
65% agreed with the proposed content for **GCSE Food and Nutrition**, whilst 16% disagreed.

- Respondents who supported the proposed content felt that it was relevant to the subject area and welcomed key topics such as food provenance, food science and diet and nutrition.
- Respondents felt that the proposed content would enable learners to effectively understand the interaction between themselves and others in making food and nutritional choices and reinforce the importance of a balanced diet.
- Respondents felt that the proposed content reflected what learners would need to know and understand before they would be able to progress into further and higher education and employment.
- A few respondents suggested that the inclusion of ‘food science’ in the content could help distinguish this qualification from the Level 1/2 vocational qualification in hospitality and catering.
- To counter this view, some respondents indicated that the inclusion of ‘food science’ is too complex for a ‘practical’ GCSE and too difficult for 14 to 16-year-old learners. They felt this content was more aligned to A level science qualifications.
- One respondent felt that the proposed content was too similar to the content in the current Level 1/2 Hospitality and Catering qualification.
- Some respondents were concerned that there was too much proposed content, which they felt would disadvantage learners. It was reported that too much theoretical content could prevent learners from having the necessary time to develop their culinary skills.
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed assessment arrangements, including the role of digital technology, for GCSE Food and Nutrition?

47 responses

57% agreed with the proposed assessment arrangements for GCSE Food and Nutrition, whilst 23% disagreed.

- Respondents were concerned that a digital-only exam would be unmanageable for schools because IT infrastructures are not adequate or reliable.
- Respondents suggested that some schools do not have the IT facilities and equipment to support a number of learners completing digital exams at the same time and broadband connectivity is not reliable enough in certain locations across the country.
- Some respondents indicated that they would prefer the option of digital exams alongside the traditional paper method. They felt that this would alleviate pressure on schools.
- One respondent suggested that digital-only exams would not align with the current methods of teaching and learning within this subject area. They queried whether an on-screen assessment would better assess a learner’s knowledge than a traditional paper exam could.
- Respondents highlighted that the cost of ingredients and food waste is an issue within the ‘food investigation’ in the current qualification.
- Respondents were largely positive about the balance between exam and NEA and felt that this would help support the learners that opt to take this GCSE.
To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposal for GCSE Food and Nutrition meets the reasonable needs of learners in Wales?

Please consider factors such as accessibility, manageability, wellbeing and progression onto post-16 pathways.

46 responses

50% agreed that the proposal for GCSE Food and Nutrition meets the reasonable needs of learners in Wales, whilst 18% disagreed.

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- Respondents who were supportive of the proposal did not tend to provide a specific rationale for their decisions.
- Some respondents noted that there is no clear progression from this GCSE into a recognised A-Level qualification in the same subject area.
- Some respondents were concerned that the cost of ingredients would deter some learners from choosing the GCSE.
- Some respondents were concerned that there would be too much theory content and too much weighting given to the exam in what is a practical GCSE.

To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed GCSE in Food and Nutrition is manageable for teachers to deliver?

Please consider factors such as the size of the qualification, resources and the proposed approach to assessment.

47 responses

53% agreed that the proposed GCSE Food and Nutrition is manageable for teachers to deliver, whilst 23% disagreed.

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- Respondents who agreed with the proposal indicated that although there were no significant changes from the current specification, it did positively build on what is already in place.
- Respondents were keen to note that there is a lack of teacher expertise in this subject. These respondents expressed concerns that specific culinary skills and knowledge of food science and provenance is frequently being taught by non-specialists. They also indicated that there are continually declining numbers of teachers training in this subject area.
- Some respondents noted a concern regarding the quality and availability of the necessary resources, equipment and facilities to deliver this qualification. They also said that this varies significantly across schools.
Overall, to what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposal for GCSE Food and Nutrition?

46 responses

65% agreed with the proposal for GCSE Food and Nutrition, whilst 19% disagreed.

- Most written comments to this question repeated what has already been discussed in the feedback above.
- Respondents felt that the proposal would allow for learners to gain valuable experiences which align with the ethos of the Curriculum and would enhance the learning of knowledge and skills in this subject area. For example, foraging for food in woodlands, visiting food manufacturers and volunteering on community allotments are all experiences that are authentic and support the learning and teaching in this GCSE.
Consultation outcomes: design requirements for GCSE Health and Social Care, and Childcare

Introduction

We consulted on design proposals for a new GCSE Health and Social Care, and Childcare qualification between 4 October and 14 December 2022. You can read the full design proposal here.

We received 30 responses to the consultation, and we’ve carefully analysed all of them. As part of our commitment to the co-creation of new qualifications, we shared the feedback with our subject-level working group. Together, we considered how the proposed design could be amended and refined to address the points raised.

Summary of decisions

We have now agreed the final design requirements (known as approval criteria) for these qualifications. These set out the requirements that awarding bodies must follow when developing these new GCSEs.

You can read the approval criteria for the new GCSE Health and Social Care, and Childcare here.

In finalising these approval criteria, we have made the following design decisions to address points raised in the consultation and our further co-creation activity.

Qualification size

In the consultation we sought feedback on whether we should develop a double award in GCSE Health and Social Care, and Childcare to sit alongside the single award. We have now decided that we will only develop a single award in this subject.

The number of learners who currently enter the double award is reasonably low with 260 entries made in summer 2022 and 180 entries made in summer 2023. In comparison, there were 4,770 entries for the single award GCSE in health and social care, and childcare in summer 2022, and 4,600 entries in summer 2023.

A single award is consistent with the size of the other qualifications within the health and wellbeing area of the curriculum, as well as with other similar subjects, such as those within the expressive arts and humanities areas. This decision therefore helps ensure coherence across the suite of new Made-for-Wales GCSEs.

A single award **GCSE Health and Social Care, and Childcare** will provide learners with the necessary knowledge, skills and understanding to progress onto a related level 3 qualification in this subject area. A single award will give learners an opportunity to study an additional subject, while still giving them the option of focusing on either adult health and social care, or childcare.

In the consultation we heard concerns that learners may have reduced opportunities to study childcare in a single award qualification, compared to a double award. To mitigate against this, we reviewed the structure of the proposed single award and have now agreed that the qualification will comprise of the following three units:

- **Unit 1** – this will be a theory-based unit that will give learners an opportunity to develop knowledge and understanding of key principles in both health and social care, and childcare
- **Unit 2** - this will be assessed through non-exam assessment (NEA) which will give learners an opportunity to build on and apply the knowledge, skills and understanding they developed in Unit 1 in relation to adult health and social care
- **Unit 3** - this will be assessed through non-exam assessment and will give learners an opportunity to build on and apply the knowledge, skills and understanding they developed in Unit 1 in relation to childcare

**Purpose and aims**

We have reviewed the aims of the proposed single award qualification and made some amendments to ensure that the qualification supports learners to develop knowledge, skills and understanding of both health and social care, and childcare, in equal measure.

As part of this work, we have removed the aims that were centred around analysing and evaluating relevant data and information, communicating principles and information to a specified audience, and identifying relevant progression and career pathways. We do not feel that it is vital for learners aged 14–16 to be assessed in these areas and removing them from the content enables us to include more topics that are specific to childcare.

We have included opportunities for learners to explore careers in this subject area within the experiences section of the approval criteria so that learners still get the benefit of this learning but without needing to be assessed in it.
We have introduced two new aims to reflect the increased focus on understanding key conditions and illnesses in adulthood and childhood, and the importance of exploring the Curriculum for Wales cross-cutting theme of human rights and diversity within this qualification.

We have also added a requirement for the qualification to support learning that aligns where appropriate with the Curriculum for Wales Relationships and Sexuality Code.

**Content**

As with the aims, we have also reviewed and revised the proposed content to ensure that learners can study both health and social care, and childcare, in equal measure. We have removed the content requirements that were aligned with the aims that we have omitted. This included aspects such as analysing and interpreting relevant data and numerical information, and qualitative verbal sources.

As a result, we have been able to include more childcare topics, such as play and play work, and the development of children.

In line with the new aim, we have strengthened the requirement for content in relation to human rights and diversity, particularly in relation to the impact on access to service provision, as well as Black, Asian and minority ethnic perspectives, experiences and contributions in the sector.

We have also reviewed and strengthened the experiences section to ensure learners can explore career opportunities and develop collaboration and teamwork skills by working with and learning from others, without needing to be assessed on them.

**Assessment**

This qualification has been designed so that unit one provides learners with knowledge and understanding of the key principles in health and social care, and childcare. In units two (adult health and social care) and three (childcare) learners will build on and apply the knowledge and understanding from unit 1. As a result, **GCSE Health and Social Care, and Childcare** will be a unitised qualification. This means that learners will be able to complete the exam for unit one in Year 10, if they wish to do so.

In line with the consultation proposals, 60% of the qualification will be assessed through NEA with 40% assessed through an examination.

We have now confirmed that the NEA must comprise of two tasks; one in adult health and social care, and one in childcare. These assessment arrangements will offer learners a variety of assessment opportunities and support accessibility for a
wide range of learners. This proportion of exam and NEA is consistent across all subjects within the health and wellbeing area of the curriculum. The NEA tasks will be set by the awarding body, marked by the centre, and moderated by the awarding body.

The exam for **GCSE Health and Social Care, and Childcare** must be available digitally, but can also be provided in paper format. This reflects current practice for this qualification and will provide centres with the flexibility to choose an assessment format that best aligns with their approach to teaching and learning.

In line with the consultation proposals, **GCSE Health and Social Care, and Childcare** will not be tiered. All learners will be able to access the full range of marks available.
# Summary of consultation responses

## To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed design of GCSE Health and Social Care, and Childcare supports the Curriculum for Wales?

26 responses

Overall, 69% agreed that the proposed design of GCSE Health and Social Care, and Childcare would support the Curriculum for Wales, whilst 4% disagreed.

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- Most respondents suggested that the proposed design would support and align with the Curriculum for Wales. They felt that it reflected the relevant Statements of What Matter and would enable learners to build their knowledge, skills and understanding in this subject.
- Respondents welcomed the opportunities for learners to explore future career pathways within the sector.
- Some respondents felt that a double award qualification would provide the scope to include more relevant content, such as on health and health promotion, which they suggested would better support and align with the Curriculum.

## To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed purposes and aims of GCSE Health and Social Care, and Childcare?

27 responses

Overall, 74% agreed with the proposed purpose and aims of GCSE Health and Social Care, and Childcare, whilst 11% disagreed.

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- Respondents who supported the proposal felt that the proposed purpose and aims were clear and aligned to the proposed content and assessment arrangements.
- Respondents felt that the proposed purpose and aims would allow learners to acquire a range of knowledge and skills, and to use their conceptual understanding of these to transfer learning into new contexts.
- Respondents welcomed the opportunities for learners to gain an understanding of specific job roles within the sector.
- Some respondents were concerned that there was too much focus on health and social care, and not enough focus on childcare.
- A minority of respondents stated that the aims are too similar to the current GCSE.
- One respondent was keen to see the purpose and aims identify opportunities for work experience and on the job training which they felt would better prepare learners to be adult or child carers.
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed content (knowledge, understanding, skills and experiences) for GCSE Health and Social Care, and Childcare?

26 responses

Overall, 50% agreed with the proposed content (knowledge, understanding, skills and experiences) for GCSE Health and Social Care, and Childcare, whilst 19% disagreed.

- Respondents who supported the proposal reported that the content was relevant to real life and would provide learners with an opportunity to develop the necessary knowledge and skills.
- The opportunity for learners to undertake some outdoor learning was suggested.
- Some respondents were concerned that the proposal included too much content for a single award qualification, or that it would be too challenging for some learners.
- Some respondents were concerned that the content was too focused on health and social care, with content on childcare lacking.
- Others felt that there was too much focus on theoretical knowledge, and not enough on practical skill development.
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed assessment arrangements, including the role of digital technology, for GCSE Health and Social Care, and Childcare?

26 responses

Overall, 54% agreed with the proposed assessment arrangements, including the role of digital technology, for GCSE Health and Social Care, and Childcare, whilst 31% disagreed.

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<td>23%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>12%</td>
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- Respondents who agreed with the assessment proposals welcomed the balance between exams and NEA.
- Some respondents particularly welcomed the NEA proposal and the availability of some assessment in Year 10. They felt that this would make the qualification more accessible.
- Some respondents felt that the assessment arrangements better supported their higher ability learners and disadvantaged the lower ability.
- Some respondents felt that the increasing impact of digital technology on young peoples’ lives supported the proposal for digital assessment.
- Respondents were concerned that a digital exam would be unmanageable for some centres.
- It was noted that some centres do not have adequate IT infrastructure to support digital exams for a number of learners at the same time and that in some locations the ICT network is not reliable enough to support digital exams.
- Respondents felt that having digital exams available alongside the traditional paper method would alleviate pressure on school systems that could not deliver digital-only exams.
To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposal for GCSE Health and Social Care, and Childcare meets the reasonable needs of learners in Wales?
Please consider factors such as accessibility, manageability, wellbeing and progression onto post-16 pathways.
25 responses

Overall, 64% agreed that the proposal for GCSE Health and Social Care, and Childcare meets the reasonable needs of learners in Wales, whilst 16% disagreed.

20% 44% 20% 12% 4%
- Strongly agree  Agree  Neither agree nor disagree  Disagree  Strongly disagree

- Some respondents felt that the proposal provides a suitable pathway to progress onto relevant A level and vocational qualifications. Other respondents wanted reassurance that the proposal would offer sufficient rigour to prepare learners for post-16 education.
- Respondents reported that the timing of the exam and the NEA is important in ensuring that a learner’s wellbeing is considered and supported throughout the qualification. One respondent specifically stated that learners should be able to sit the exam at the end of Year 10 to alleviate exam pressure and exam burden at the end of the course.
- Some respondents were concerned that the proportion of NEA could cause some manageability issues for learners.
- Respondents wanted to ensure that the qualification would be accessible for the full ability range of learners.
- A few respondents reported that the qualification must explicitly focus on supporting all learners from across all geographical areas of Wales to ensure comparability of opportunity.

To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed GCSE in Health and Social Care, and Childcare is manageable for teachers to deliver?
Please consider factors such as the size of the qualification, resources and the proposed approach to assessment.
26 responses

Overall, 46% agreed that the proposed GCSE in Health and Social Care, and Childcare is manageable for teachers to deliver, whilst 19% disagreed.

23% 23% 35% 15% 4%
- Strongly agree  Agree  Neither agree nor disagree  Disagree  Strongly disagree

- A number of respondents indicated that GCSE Health and Social Care, and Childcare wasn’t the only subject they taught. They highlighted manageability concerns around planning and preparing for this qualification at the same time as teaching other qualifications.
- Respondents said that a well-planned and thorough course of professional development would be appreciated.
### Overall, to what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposal for GCSE Health and Social Care, and Childcare?

26 responses

Overall, 57% **agreed** with our proposal for GCSE Health and Social Care, and Childcare, whilst 8% **disagreed**.

- Written comments provided by respondents to this question relate to specific aspects of the proposals and have already been discussed in the appropriate sections of this report.

### Overall, to what extent do you agree or disagree with having a Double Award in Health and Social Care, and Childcare?

25 responses

Overall, 48% **agreed** with having a **Double Award in GCSE Health and Social Care, and Childcare**, whilst 20% **disagreed**.

- Respondents who supported the proposal suggested that the double award would be advantageous because it would:
  - support progression for higher ability learners
  - ensure the breadth of content is covered adequately
- One concern raised by respondents was that the double award would ‘take up two options’, which they felt would contradict the Curriculum’s aim of supporting a breadth of learning across all areas.

### Overall, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed purpose and aims, content and assessment for GCSE Health and Social Care, and Childcare (Double Award)?

23 responses

Overall, 52% **agreed** with the proposed purpose and aims, content and assessment for GCSE Health and Social Care, and Childcare (Double Award), whilst 17% **disagreed**.

- One respondent felt that the double award GCSE would provide learners with the time to study the subject in depth. They noted that it would draw upon contemporary themes and issues that shape health and social care and childcare provision in Wales and felt that it would offer learners the chance to better understand what working in the sector would be like.
- Respondents felt that a double award would need to be significantly different from the proposed single award.
Consultation outcomes: design requirements for GCSE Physical Education and Health

Introduction

We consulted on design proposals for a new GCSE in Health and Physical Education between 4 October and 14 December 2022. You can read the full design proposal here.

We received 119 responses to the consultation, and we’ve carefully analysed all of them. As part of our commitment to the co-creation of new qualifications, we shared the feedback with our subject-level working group. Together, we considered how the proposed design could be amended and refined to address the points raised.

Summary of decisions

We have now agreed the final design requirements (known as approval criteria) for these qualifications. These set out the requirements that awarding bodies must follow when developing these new GCSEs.

You can read the approval criteria for the new GCSE Physical Education and Health here.

In finalising these approval criteria, we have made the following design decisions to address points raised in the consultation and further co-creation activity.

Title

We have decided that this qualification will be called GCSE Physical Education and Health. This qualification is designed to support learners to develop knowledge, skills and understanding of physical education, including the impact of physical activity on lifelong health and wellbeing. Positioning ‘physical education’ at the beginning of the title reflects the fact that this is the primary construct being assessed within the qualification. It is also a term that is well understood by a range of stakeholders including learners, practitioners, universities, and employers.

The inclusion of ‘health’ in the title helps to signal the alignment of the qualification with the Curriculum for Wales and reflects the aims and content requirements for this new GCSE.
**Purpose and aims**

We have reviewed the aims of *GCSE Physical Education and Health* and strengthened them to ensure learners are given opportunities to explore the cross-curricular theme of human rights and diversity, including Black, Asian, and minority ethnic perspectives, identity, culture, contributions and experiences.

We have also added a requirement for the qualification to support learning that aligns where appropriate with the [Curriculum for Wales Relationships and Sexuality Code](https://wales.gov.uk/topics/relationships-sexuality/curriculum/). Beyond these changes, the purpose and aims reflect the consultation proposal with minor amendments to ensure clarity and appropriate links with the content and assessment.

**Content**

The content for *GCSE Physical Education and Health* largely reflects the consultation proposal with minor amendments.

We have strengthened the content requirements in relation to human rights and diversity to ensure that learners are given opportunities to consider the relevant influences on access to and participation in sports and physical activities, and inclusion within sporting events.

**Assessment**

*GCSE Physical Education and Health* will be a linear qualification. This means that learners will have sufficient time to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding throughout the duration of the two-year course. The exam will be sat at the end of the course so learners will be able to draw on their experience of applying the relevant knowledge and understanding in the non-examination (NEA) assessment when responding to exam questions.

The proportion of examination (40%) and NEA (60%) reflects the consultation proposal. This balance will offer learners a variety of assessment opportunities and support accessibility for a wide range of learners. This proportion of exam and NEA is consistent across all subjects within the health and wellbeing area of the Curriculum. The NEA tasks will be set by the awarding body, marked by the centre, and moderated by the awarding body.

We received feedback that the three proposed pathways in the NEA (promoting and delivering physical activity and sports participation events, coaching and personal training activities, and performance in sport and physical activity) could be difficult for centres to manage. We also heard concerns about the comparability of each of
the pathways and the extent to which the promoting and delivering events pathway would align with the construct of physical education.

As a result, we have revised the assessment arrangements for the NEA. Learners will have to:

- perform in two sports or physical activities selected from an approved list - this will account for 40% of the qualification, to which each sport or physical activity will contribute equally
- choose either a coaching or personal training task to complete in which they must provide coaching or personal training to others - this assessment will account for 20% of the qualification

We are confident that these arrangements address the concerns raised in the consultation, whilst retaining an element of choice for learners and including an opportunity for learners to develop their coaching skills. Both factors were positively received in the consultation.

We have also removed the requirement for learners to perform in both an individual and a team sport. This is intended to provide more choice for learners.

We will shortly be engaging with stakeholders to develop the approved list of sports and physical activities for this qualification. We will publish this list in late 2023.

The exam for GCSE Physical Education and Health will only be available digitally. This means that it will be taken onscreen, and a digital resource will be available throughout the duration of the examination. It will include, and require learners to respond to, recordings of physical activities and sports performances. This will build upon the approach in the current physical education qualification by allowing learners greater control of, and access to, audio-visual stimulus materials that will be linked to what they have studied.

In line with the consultation proposals, GCSE Physical Education and Health will not be tiered. All learners will be able to access the full range of marks available.
Summary of consultation responses

**To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed qualification title of GCSE Health and Physical Education?**
116 responses

Overall, 45% agreed with the proposed qualification title of GCSE Health and Physical Education, whilst 44% disagreed.

- 16% Strongly agree
- 29% Agree
- 12% Neither agree nor disagree
- 22% Disagree
- 22% Strongly disagree

- Respondents who supported the inclusion of health in the title felt that it reflects a positive change to align with, and support, the Curriculum for Wales.
- Some respondents also suggested that the title would reflect the fact that the teaching and learning of health and physical activity is integral to the qualification.
- It was also suggested that the inclusion of health in the title could attract new and different cohorts of learners to choose the qualification.
- Conversely, other respondents indicated that physical education is a traditional GCSE subject, which has a clear identity and is well understood by all stakeholders. These respondents felt that the title of GCSE Physical Education would better appeal to those learners that tend to excel in the practical element of the subject.
- Some respondents felt that the inclusion of ‘health’ in the title was more aligned with the title of the health and wellbeing area of the curriculum, than with the individual GCSE subject. They felt that GCSE Physical Education would imply that health related content would be included.

**To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed design of GCSE Health and Physical Education supports the Curriculum for Wales?**
116 responses

Overall, 66% agreed that the proposed design of GCSE Health and Physical Education would support the Curriculum for Wales, whilst 12% disagreed.

- 19% Strongly agree
- 47% Agree
- 22% Neither agree nor disagree
- 9% Disagree
- 3% Strongly disagree

- The majority of respondents felt that the proposal supported and aligned with the Curriculum for Wales. They felt that it would enable learners to develop the required knowledge, skills and experiences for future study and employment. They also welcomed that learners could follow specific interests within the subject area and wider area of the curriculum.
- Some respondents felt that the proposal would reduce the emphasis on performance sports and reinforce the importance physical activity has on promoting healthy lifestyles.
- One respondent suggested that the proposal aligns with what is being taught in years 7-9.
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed purposes and aims of GCSE Health and Physical Education?
115 responses

Overall, 70% agreed with the proposed purpose and aims of GCSE Health and Physical Education, whilst 11% disagreed.

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<td>14%</td>
<td>56%</td>
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- Respondents who supported the proposal felt that the proposed purpose and aims were clear, relevant and meaningful, and aligned well to the proposed content and assessment arrangements.
- Respondents who supported the proposal welcomed the clear emphasis on learning about physical and emotional health and wellbeing, as well as developing skills in performance sport.
- A minority of respondents specifically stated that they supported the fact that the proposed aims were similar to the current GCSE, whilst a few others felt that this was a missed opportunity for change.
- One respondent was concerned that the proposal was too focused on health and wellbeing. Whilst recognising that this supports the Curriculum for Wales, they felt it did not focus enough on sport and performance.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed content (knowledge, understanding, skills and experiences) for GCSE Health and Physical Education?
112 responses

Overall, 61% agreed with the proposed content for GCSE Health and Physical Education, whilst 15% disagreed.

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- Respondents who supported the proposal felt that the broad range of content would effectively support progression for learners into post 16 courses.
- Some respondents were concerned that the proposed theoretical content may be too large as the exam assessing it would only account for 40% of the qualification grade.
- Respondents appreciated the element of choice provided by the three pathways but expressed concerns about how schools would be able to manage the delivery of three different options.
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed assessment arrangements, including the role of digital technology, for GCSE Health and Physical Education?

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<td>12%</td>
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Overall, 41% agreed with the proposed assessment arrangements for GCSE Health and Physical Education, whilst 36% disagreed.

- Respondents who supported digital assessment noted that digital technology reflects how the modern world communicates and is increasingly utilised by young people. They also felt that it is an important tool in most performance sports and physical activities (for example the use of heart rate monitors).
- One respondent supported digital assessment as it would create opportunities for learners to analyse video, as opposed to static photographs, in the exam.
- Respondents who did not agree with the proposal cited issues of equality of opportunity and fairness. The concern was that there is a broad range of accessible digital technologies for learners and centres, which can vary considerably in their proficiency. Added to this, access to adequate resources and facilities also varies across centres.
- One respondent was concerned that the introduction of any new digital technology is time-consuming and likely to have a limited shelf life before another newer product is introduced to the market.
- Respondents were largely positive about the balance of exam and non-exam assessment in the qualification. They felt that the increase in the weighting of NEA from the current qualification better reflects the practical nature of the subject and would better support the cohort of learners that generally opt to take this GCSE.
- Some respondents suggested that the proposal to increase the percentage of NEA from the current qualification would not support progression onto A level and could disadvantage some learners.
- Some respondents were concerned that learners would not be able to be assessed in both sports performance and coaching within the pathways proposed for the NEA.
- One respondent specifically indicated that creating three different routes would require three different assessment arrangements, which they felt could cause issues of comparability.
To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposal for GCSE Health and Physical Education meets the reasonable needs of learners in Wales?

Please consider factors such as accessibility, manageability, wellbeing and progression onto post-16 pathways.

115 responses

Overall, 52% agreed that the proposal for GCSE Health and Physical Education meets the reasonable needs of learners in Wales, whilst 24% disagreed.

• Respondents who supported the proposal indicated that the inclusion of pathways in the NEA could make the GCSE more accessible to a wider cohort of learners. They appreciated the opportunities it would provide for learners that are not interested in performance sport.

• Other respondents were concerned that the proposed pathways could disadvantage cohorts of learners that would want to learn about coaching as well as performance sport. They felt that having to choose one pathway would be detrimental to progression onto A level and higher education.

• Respondents were concerned that not all centres would be able to offer all three pathways, which they felt could disadvantage some learners.
To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed GCSE in Health and Physical Education is manageable for teachers to deliver?

Please consider factors such as the size of the qualification, resources and the proposed approach to assessment.

114 responses

Overall, 39% agreed that the proposed GCSE in Health and Physical Education is manageable for teachers to deliver, whilst 40% disagreed.

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- Some respondents felt that the GCSE would be manageable if resources were made readily available in advance of implementation of the qualification.
- One respondent said that a well-planned and thorough course of professional development would be necessary for teachers to be confident in delivering the new health related content.
- Many respondents expressed concerns about the manageability of the three pathways that were proposed for the NEA. They felt that delivering each of the three distinct pathways would put pressure on already stretched resources and facilities.
- Some specifically mentioned that they were unsure how they would be able to staff the delivery of three pathways as they would need three different teachers available to teach learners at the same time.
- Respondents also felt that the three proposed pathways were significantly different in their construct. They were concerned that teachers who are not trained to teach PE would be able to lead on the delivery of one of the pathways, which they suggested could undermine the training that physical education teachers undertake.
- Some respondents were concerned that the percentage increase in NEA would lead to an increase in planning and monitoring time needed for teachers, which they said is already problematic in overcrowded timetables.
Overall, to what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposal for GCSE Health and Physical Education?
116 responses

Overall, 55% agreed with the proposal for GCSE Health and Physical Education, whilst 29% disagreed.

- Whilst some respondents appreciated the intention behind the proposal to include three pathways, there was a clear concern that it would be unmanageable to deliver all three because of teacher capacity, lack of resources and limited facilities.
- There was a concern about learners being assessed in both an individual and team sport. It was felt that providing learners with a choice would be a fairer approach to assessing the skills and knowledge that have been developed over the course of the qualification.
Consultation outcomes: GCSE British Sign Language

Introduction

We consulted on design proposals for new GCSEs in 26 subjects between 4 October and 14 December 2022. At the same time, we asked for views on the possibility of producing a new GCSE British Sign Language (BSL) for Wales. You can read the details of this here.

We received 13 responses to the consultation, all of which were positive. We've carefully analysed all these responses, and as part of our commitment to co-creating new qualifications, we have formed a subject-level working group to help us co-create a new GCSE British Sign Language qualification.

Next Steps

• Qualifications Wales will develop a Made-for-Wales GCSE aimed at learners who are learning British Sign Language for the first time.
• The development of minimum qualification requirements for this subject is now underway.
• We have established a subject level working group, which consists of advisers and practitioners who are knowledgeable and skilled in the subject area.
• As with all new Made-for-Wales GCSEs, this qualification will be designed to reflect the ethos and aims of the Curriculum for Wales.
• We are currently considering the design features of this new qualification, including its purpose and aims and the essential knowledge, skills and experiences that it will cover.
• The group will also consider how the qualification could be assessed, including whether digital technology could help enhance teaching, learning and assessment.
• It will also look at whether and how cross-curricular themes, skills and experience could be included in the qualification.
• We will consult on a more detailed design proposal later this year.
Summary of responses

We asked respondents to share any initial thoughts or ideas about our proposal for GCSE British Sign Language

- Every respondent was positive about the possibility of a GCSE British Sign Language being available to schools in Wales.
- Respondents felt that it was important for equality, inclusivity, and community cohesion.
- Some respondents noted the need for any qualification created to reflect specific Welsh differences, for example Welsh Sign Language and Welsh fingerspelling.
Consultation outcomes: design requirements for GCSE Cymraeg Language and Literature and GCSE English Language and Literature

Introduction

We consulted on a design proposal for a new GCSE Cymraeg Language and Literature and a new GCSE English Language and Literature between 4 October and 14 December 2022. You can read the full design proposal on which we consulted for GCSE Cymraeg Language and Literature here, and for GCSE English Language and Literature here.

GCSE Cymraeg Language and Literature will be designed primarily for learners in Welsh-medium and bilingual settings. Learners in English-medium settings will be able to take the new GCSE Core Cymraeg, for which we have published separate approval criteria. We discuss our decisions on GCSE Cymraeg Core in a separate subject-level decisions report.

We received 83 responses to the consultation for GCSE Cymraeg Language and Literature, and 249 responses to the consultation for GCSE English Language and Literature. We have carefully analysed all of them. As part of our commitment to co-create new qualifications, we shared the feedback with our subject-level working groups. Together, we considered how the proposed design could be amended and refined to address the points raised.

Summary of decisions

The design proposal for a new GCSE English Language and Literature was amongst the proposals that received the highest number of consultation responses. The proposals GCSE Cymraeg Language and Literature and GCSE English Language and Literature were both met with a high level of disagreement.
Most of the written responses from those disagreeing with the proposals focused on our earlier decisions ([published in October 2021](#)) to replace separate language and literature GCSEs in Cymraeg and English with new combined qualifications, rather than on the specific design features put forward in the proposals for these new qualifications.

**Qualification size**

In the consultation, we proposed that the new combined GCSE Cymraeg Language and Literature and GCSE English Language and Literature should each be broadly equivalent in size to 1.5 GCSEs, and deliverable within 180-200 guided learning hours.

We received a range of views on the proposed size of these new GCSEs. Respondents who expressed strong disagreement did so in large part due to the perceived negative impacts of creating qualifications of this size.

Below is a summary of the main concerns raised:

- the new GCSE offer should be accessible to the same range of learners that currently undertake GCSEs in language and/or literature - a larger integrated GCSE might not be accessible for the full range of GCSE learners
- offering qualifications of this size could lead to a reduction in teaching hours which could impact the status of these subjects - it could also impact the volume of content that can be taught within the GCSE
- reduced teaching hours in these subjects could negatively impact the teaching and learning of literacy
- as a cross-curricular skill, this could have more wide-reaching consequences on how learners progress across their other chosen subjects
- employers, further education, higher education and the wider public might not understand the value of a qualification that is worth 1.5 GCSEs
- learners would be studying 50% more content than they would for a single GCSE - but would only gain a single GCSE grade for successfully completing the qualification
- the amount of content proposed was closer in size to what learners studying two GCSEs would cover - rather than the proposed size of 1.5 GCSEs
Integrating language and literature

We received mixed views on our approach of creating integrated language and literature qualifications. Those who agreed recognised the benefits of ensuring that all GCSE learners will have the opportunity to study and experience literature, and how integrating language and literature in Cymraeg supports progression to the already integrated A Level and university courses.

Those who disagreed with an integrated approach to language and literature raised the following concerns:

- the view that language and literature are separate, distinct disciplines
- concern regarding the impact on the coverage of literature within an integrated qualification
- concern regarding the impact on essential language skills within an integrated qualification, and how this could impact learners who need to gain or resit a GCSE in Cymraeg or English language to support progress to training or employment
- some learners who currently perform better in either language or literature could be disadvantaged by an integrated qualification

We have fully considered and explored these concerns. After careful analysis of the consultation responses and further engagement with stakeholders, we remain confident that an integrated GCSE in language and literature is the best way to achieve alignment with the Curriculum for Wales (the Curriculum).

Creating integrated GCSEs in language and literature for Cymraeg and English ensures that all four of the ‘statements of what matters’ for the languages, literacy and communication area of the Curriculum can be treated holistically. This approach reflects the Curriculum guidance which states that ‘learning about and through literature should be seen as contributing to all aspects of learning about language’.

Decision to create two sizes of GCSE for Cymraeg and English

In response to the level of disagreement expressed in the consultation, we looked again at the choice of GCSEs that should be available for Cymraeg and English to support the Curriculum and meet the needs of all learners.
Working closely with many different contributors, we identified and evaluated the different options available. To inform this work, we sought further input from many of our dedicated stakeholder reference groups.

We worked with Cymraeg and English practitioners on our subject level working groups and secured technical input from WJEC and assessment experts.

When considering how best to proceed with reforms for the **GCSE Cymraeg Language and Literature** and **GCSE English Language and Literature** qualification offer, our priorities have been to:

- align with the Curriculum and enable all learners taking a GCSE in Cymraeg and/or English to engage with all four ‘statements of what matters’ in the languages, literacy and communication area holistically until the age of 16
- respond to concerns raised by respondents in the consultation, including:
  - that the offer remains accessible to the same range of learners that currently take a GCSE in Cymraeg and/or English
  - the need for the offer to be well understood by further and higher education and also by employers, to enable learners to progress to the next stage of their lives

Based on the findings from this further engagement and evaluation, we have made the following decisions:

- we will create an integrated GCSE Cymraeg Language and Literature Double Award and an integrated GCSE English Language and Literature Double Award
- we will also create an integrated single award **GCSE Cymraeg Language and Literature** and an integrated single award **GCSE English Language and Literature**

These decisions align with the Curriculum guidance in this area, providing all learners with the opportunity to study and take qualifications that treat language and literature holistically. They avoid confusion about the perceived value of a 1.5 GCSE grade and allow learners to gain grades that more fairly reflect the amount of content they have studied.

Creating double award GCSEs in Cymraeg and English could help schools to provide similar teaching hours as they currently do for these subjects, addressing concerns
about the impact of reduced teaching time on learners’ progression and attainment in these subjects.

The single award offers an alternative, more accessible route for learners who may benefit from focusing on a smaller volume of content over the duration of the course. Securing appropriate teaching time will also support Cymraeg and English teachers as they adapt to a more integrated way of teaching and learning.

**Expectations for the new Cymraeg and English GCSE offer**

We recognise that introducing a double and single award in Cymraeg and English offers schools and learners more choice in terms of the qualifications that can be taken, and how learners are assessed and demonstrate progress in these subjects. Schools will need clear guidance on how to structure the choices of qualifications they give to learners. In making these decisions, our expectations for the new GCSE offer in Cymraeg and English are as follows:

- both double and single awards are intended to be delivered across a two-year course
- the double award should be treated as the most common and most suitable route for a significant majority of learners
- reflecting their status as mandatory curriculum components, we expect that all learners will spend a similar number of hours learning Cymraeg and English in Years 10 and 11 - irrespective of which qualifications they are taking
- the single award GCSEs are intended for those learners who can access a GCSE qualification, but for whom the volume of the content in the double award would present a potentially significant barrier to achievement
- single awards will offer post-16 learners who are resitting their GCSEs a more manageable option for achieving their target grade

We will work with our partners including Welsh Government and Estyn to ensure that advice and guidance will be available for schools, learners, parents, and post-16 learning providers on the double and single award options for GCSE Cymraeg Language and Literature and GCSE English Language and Literature. This will aim to ensure that decisions and choices are made in the best interests of each learner.
Design requirements

We have now agreed the final design requirements (known as approval criteria) for these qualifications. These set out the requirements that awarding bodies must follow when developing these new GCSEs.

You can read the approval criteria for GCSE Cymraeg Language and Literature here, and for GCSE English Language and Literature here.

In finalising the approval criteria, we have made the following design decisions for GCSE Cymraeg Language and Literature and GCSE English Language and Literature to address points raised in the consultation and further co-creation activity.

Purpose and aims

While both the double and single award qualifications will develop the same range of skills, the double award will provide a broader learning experience in language and literature, for example in the breadth of literary texts studied.

Both the double and single award qualifications will develop language and communication skills to support general progression to post-16 learning and employment. The double award will fully support progression to AS and A level study in Cymraeg and English. While the single award will also provide sufficient skill development for learners to progress to Cymraeg and English at AS and A level, this will be in relation to a narrower body of content, so learners taking these qualifications will be less fully prepared for AS and A level study than those taking the double award.

Content

Learners taking GCSE Cymraeg Language and Literature and/or GCSE English Language and Literature will be assessed on a range of skills and knowledge relating to language and literature.

Learners taking a double award will study three full texts, a broad range of poetry and a broad range of non-fiction texts. This is in line with the number of full texts studied for GCSE English Literature in other UK jurisdictions.

Learners taking a single award will study two full texts, a range of poetry and a range of non-fiction texts.
Assessment

After reflecting on the wide-ranging opinions expressed in relation the proportion of non-examination assessment (NEA) in these GCSEs, both double and single award will have 40% NEA. The awarding body is responsible for ensuring that the number of NEA tasks in the double and single award is manageable for centres to deliver.

60% of the double and single award will be assessed through exams.

The qualifications will be unitised to allow a double award and a single award to include some common units. This approach will enable teachers to decide during the course of study whether learners take a double award or a single award, and to make this decision based on evidence of performance in a Year 10 assessment, allowing learners more time to mature.

Learners resitting a qualification will be able to use outcomes from common units to contribute to either a double award or a single award.

Qualifications Wales will confirm requirements for post-16 learners once the awarding body has developed the detailed design for these qualifications.

In line with the consultation proposal, assessment of GCSE Cymraeg Language and Literature and GCSE English Language and Literature will not be tiered. The awarding body will design assessments that are accessible to the full range of learners taking the qualification.

There will not be a requirement for specific assessments to be digitally assessed, but learners should have the opportunity to make use of digital technology during the course of these qualifications.

Grading

Learners who successfully complete the double award qualification will receive two grades on a scale from A*A* to GG. This will reflect the size of the qualification and signal to stakeholders the breadth of work that learners have completed.

Learners who successfully complete the single award qualification will receive one grade on a scale from A* to G.
GCSE Cymraeg Language and Literature

In addition to the design decisions outlined above, we have made the following design decisions specifically for GCSE Cymraeg Language and Literature to address points raised in the consultation and further co-creation activity.

**Purpose and aims**

The qualification will be designed to promote a positive and relevant experience of Cymraeg and Welsh cultures. This reflects comments made by respondents to align the aims of this GCSE with those of GCSE Core Cymraeg and the Level 2 Award in Additional Core Cymraeg, providing a consistent experience for GCSE learners across all language settings.

**Content**

Both the double and single awards will cover a variety of writing, including works by a variety of authors and from a variety of perspectives reflecting the diverse nature of Welsh citizenship and its cultures, including Black, Asian and minority ethnic perspectives.

**Assessment**

The NEA for both double and single awards will be structured as follows:

- 30% of each award will be assessed through speaking and listening NEA. This reflects the importance of creating confident users of Cymraeg, in line with Welsh Government’s Cymraeg 2050 strategy.
- 10% of each award will be assessed through reading and writing NEA.
**GCSE English Language and Literature**

In addition to the design decisions outlined above, we have made the following design decisions specifically for GCSE English Language and Literature to address points raised in the consultation and further co-creation activity.

**Content**

In response to comments made by consultation respondents, learners taking the double award will be required to study a play by Shakespeare.

Both awards will cover a variety of writing, including writing that explores themes of Wales and Welshness; writing by authors representing a global perspective; writing by Black, Asian and minority ethnic authors, and writing from a range of periods including living authors.

**Assessment**

The NEA for both double and single awards will be structured as follows:

- 20% of each award will be assessed through speaking and listening NEA
- 20% of each award will be assessed through reading and writing NEA
Summary of consultation responses for GCSE Cymraeg Language and Literature

To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed design of GCSE Cymraeg Language and Literature supports the Curriculum for Wales?

75 responses

44% agreed that the proposed design of GCSE Cymraeg Language and Literature would support the Curriculum for Wales, whilst 39% disagreed.

- Respondents expressed mixed views about how integrating language and literature into one qualification worth 1.5 GCSE supports the Curriculum for Wales.
- Those who agreed noted that the design proposal supports the four purposes through reflecting the ‘statements of what matters’ and other elements of this area of the Curriculum. Respondents who supported the new, holistic approach to learning language and literature noted that the proposal gives language and literature equal status, and that literature will enrich learner experience and promote creativity.
- Respondents who disagreed believed that the proposal dilutes the study of literature, which goes against the Curriculum’s aims. They also noted that the content assigned to the qualification will limit centre flexibility to deliver the Curriculum in a way that meets the needs of their learners.
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed purposes and aims of GCSE Cymraeg Language and Literature?

74 responses

45% agreed with the proposed purpose and aims of GCSE Cymraeg Language and Literature, whilst 39% disagreed.

- Respondents who agreed with the purpose and aims believed that the wording successfully evolves from the current GCSEs and aligns with the expectations of the Curriculum. They noted that integrating language and literature will open up exciting possibilities to fulfil the purpose and aims. There was also a suggestion that the aims should also refer to pride, enthusiasm and enjoyment of Cymraeg.

- Some respondents queried whether the proposal for an integrated qualification worth 1.5 GCSEs would be able to achieve these aims. Others also queried whether the purpose and aims has a sufficient emphasis on literature.

- Respondents who disagreed with the purpose and aims believed that they demonstrated insufficient change from the current qualification offer.
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed content (knowledge, understanding, skills and experiences) for GCSE Cymraeg Language and Literature?

73 responses

34% agreed with the proposed content of GCSE Cymraeg Language and Literature, whilst 49% disagreed.

- Respondents agreed with a range of elements of the proposed content. These included:
  - that engagement with literature will strengthen learners’ understanding of language
  - opportunities for centres to select texts that are appropriate for the local area and curriculum of the school
  - a general agreement with the skills proposed
  - that the combination of texts will allow for inclusion of diverse perspectives
  - the emphasis on developing creativity and imagination

- Respondents disagreed with other elements of the proposed content. These included:
  - concern that a smaller qualification would limit what can be done in terms of literature analysis
  - that integration limits time to develop literacy skills

- Respondents expressed mixed views about the range of texts proposed for the qualification. Some noted that the current GCSE is too heavy in its text requirements, and that the proposed range of texts continues to be too heavy for the full range of GCSE learners. Others noted that the proposal doesn’t allow learners to study enough literature to progress to A level in Cymraeg.

- Respondents made some suggestions about what else should be included as part of the content for this qualification, noting how it could also be valuable to include examples of Cymraeg speaking communities in other parts of the World.

- Respondents also offered reflections on the current GCSEs, including:
  - that there is currently too much focus on comparing texts
- The texts currently studied have too much focus on heavy themes such as death.
- The current literature requirements are too heavy.
- Whether the current text requirements, such as the requirement for learners to study a written text alongside a visual text, is necessary for the new qualification.

- Respondents provided feedback on the volume of proposed content. Some felt that there’s too much content for a qualification equivalent in size to 1.5 GCSEs, whilst others noted having too much literature will mean that there will be less time to focus on language skills.
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed assessment arrangements, including the role of digital technology, for GCSE Cymraeg Language and Literature?

75 responses

32% agreed with the proposed assessment arrangements for GCSE Cymraeg Language and Literature, whilst 47% disagreed.

- The most common concern raised by respondents in relation to assessment arrangements related to the proposed timing of assessment. Respondents disagreed with the proposal for all assessments to take place at the end of Year 11 for a number of reasons:
  - the qualification is too heavy to require all assessment at the end of Year 11
  - impact of heavy assessment burden within a small timeframe on learner wellbeing
  - it would be unfair for learners to only have one opportunity to take assessments at the end of Year 11 and, should these arrangements take place, this would have an impact on the number of learners needing to resit the qualification post-16
  - difficult to sustain motivation for two years without assessment
- Respondents expressed mixed views about the proposed balance of examination and non-examination assessment (NEA). Those who agreed thought it was a fair balance of weightings. Those who disagreed did so for a range of reasons, with some believing that exams are a fairer mode of assessment, and others believing that there is too much focus on exams.
- Respondents made comments in relation to how the NEA weighting has been split into assessment through speaking and listening methods (30%) and reading and writing methods (10%). Most respondents agreed with the 30% weighting on speaking and listening due to the importance of this weighting for developing confident speakers of Cymraeg. One respondent felt that, given the substantial weighting given to speaking and listening, that NEA through reading and writing should also have a higher weighting.
- Some respondents felt that it isn’t necessary for speaking and listening to have a substantial NEA weighting in GCSE Cymraeg Language and
Literature, as learners taking this qualification are in Welsh-medium settings and already frequently use Cymraeg.

- When considering whether digital technology should play a role in the assessment of the new GCSE Cymraeg Language and Literature, respondents were mainly concerned about the lack of digital resources in schools, and the inconsistency in digital access between schools. Respondents questioned whether assessments using digital technology would disadvantage learners, as they should test understanding of language, not understanding of technology. There was also some concern that learners don’t perform their best on computers, and that digital assessment could negatively impact on learner grades should they make typing errors.
- Respondents who agreed with having an element of digital within the assessment thought it would reflect the modern world and improve learners' IT skills.
To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposal for GCSE Cymraeg Language and Literature meets the reasonable needs of learners in Wales?

Please consider factors such as accessibility, manageability, wellbeing and progress onto post-16 pathways

74 responses

28% agreed that the proposed design of GCSE Cymraeg Language and Literature meets the reasonable needs of learners in Wales, whilst 51% disagreed.

- The most frequent concern among respondents related to the accessibility of the proposed qualification to the range of learners taking GCSEs in Cymraeg. There was some concern that the proposed 1.5 GCSE qualification would have too much content for some learners to cover, whilst not being challenging enough for high achieving learners.

- There was a concern that, should the GCSE not be accessible to the range of learners, some would be entered for an Entry Level award instead. Respondents also felt that having a qualification the size of 1.5 GCSEs, and only awarding one grade upon successful completion, would not be understood by employers.

- Respondents also noted that integrating language and literature disadvantages some learners who perform better in one of the current GCSEs (language or literature) than the other. Another concern raised by some respondents was the proposal to make the qualification untiered, as some expressed concern that this would be difficult for some learners to access.

- Respondents acknowledged that the integrated qualification would provide a natural progression to the already integrated A level and university courses in Cymraeg. However, respondents felt that the reduced size of the qualification could risk a reduction in teaching time and less content being covered, resulting in learners being less prepared for AS level.

- Learner wellbeing was a key concern for respondents. The pressure of NEA tasks, the volume of content to cover within 1.5 GCSE worth of teaching hours, and the proposed assessment timing for the qualification were all considered to potentially have a negative impact on learner wellbeing.
Respondents also highlighted the need for the qualification to be engaging for learners, to ensure that learners choose to continue with their study of Cymraeg after completing the GCSE.

**To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed GCSE in Cymraeg Language and Literature is manageable for teachers to deliver?**

*Please consider factors such as the size of the qualification, resources and the proposed approach to assessment.*

73 responses

22% agreed that the proposed design of **GCSE Cymraeg Language and Literature** would be manageable for teachers to deliver, whilst 47% disagreed.

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- The potential impact of the proposal on teaching hours for Cymraeg was a significant concern for respondents. They felt there could be increased pressure to teach the required content while also developing important language skills within a potentially reduced number of teaching hours. Respondents also noted that reducing Cymraeg teaching hours could impact on other subjects, as this subject provides the foundation for learners to communicate in Cymraeg in all GCSEs.

- When considering the manageability of delivering the qualification, respondents noted that they would need more information about the number and nature of NEA tasks to understand if it’s manageable to deliver, as a great increase in number of NEA tasks would impact teacher workload. Some respondents expressed concern that forcing teachers to teach literature to learners that should only be doing language will increase work pressure and stress.

- Respondents noted a need for teachers to receive training and support when preparing to deliver the new GCSE. They noted that the awarding body will also need to provide resources to support the introduction of new texts.
Overall, to what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposal for GCSE Cymraeg Language and Literature?

73 responses

16% agreed with our proposal for GCSE Cymraeg Language and Literature, whilst 67% disagreed.

- Of the respondents who disagreed with the proposal, most of those who provided written comments expressed disagreement with the decision made in October 2021 to create an integrated GCSE Cymraeg Language and Literature, equivalent in size to 1.5 GCSEs – rather than disagreement with the design proposal for the qualification itself.

- Respondents who agreed with the integration of language and literature acknowledged the opportunity for all learners to study literature. Those who disagreed noted that learners currently perform better in one qualification than the other, and that learners need time to develop these skills separately. Respondents also noted that literature does not suit all learners, and that forcing them to study literature could impact on their engagement with the subject.

- Respondents gave a number of reasons for their disagreement with the new proposed size of the GCSE. These included the need to maintain the status of the subject, to protect teaching hours, and to ensure that the qualification is well understood across jurisdictions. It was also noted that it would not be manageable for post-16 providers to deliver a bigger GCSE within the same timetable and with the same staff.

- Respondents felt that reducing the potential number of qualifications a learner can gain in Cymraeg goes against the Welsh Government’s Cymraeg 2050 strategy to create a million Cymraeg speakers.

- Respondents queried why there was a difference in the NEA weightings for GCSE Cymraeg and GCSE English, but it was not clear whether there would be a preference to increase the weighting of speaking and listening in English, or to reduce it in Cymraeg.

- Other comments in response to this question summarised points already addressed in previous questions. These are discussed in the findings for the questions above.
Summary of consultation responses for GCSE English Language and Literature

To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed design of GCSE English Language and Literature supports the Curriculum for Wales?

242 responses

30% agreed that the proposed design of GCSE English Language and Literature would support the Curriculum for Wales, whilst 54% disagreed.

- Respondents expressed mixed views about how integrating language and literature into one qualification worth 1.5 GCSE supports the Curriculum.
- Those who agreed believed that a holistic approach supports the skills developed in the Curriculum and acknowledged that all learners require both language and literature to fulfil all four ‘statements of what matters’ in this area. Respondents also noted that the focus on Wales and Welshness and a diverse, global perspective in this qualification supports the Curriculum.
- Respondents who disagreed did so for several reasons, including:
  - the proposal undermines the importance placed on literature within the Statements of what matters in this Area
  - integrating language and literature alongside reducing the size of the qualification could minimise the range and breadth of what is taught in the subject
  - reduction in the size of English qualifications conflicts with the curriculum’s emphasis on creating strong communicators
  - literature makes an important contribution to developing a learner’s sense of identity, and fulfilling the four purposes of creating ethical, informed citizens
  - the potential impact of reducing the size of English qualifications on the cross curricular skill of literacy
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed purposes and aims of GCSE English Language and Literature?

242 responses

38% **agreed** with the proposed purpose and aims of GCSE English Language and Literature, whilst 48% **disagreed**.

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- Respondents provided positive feedback on the proposed purpose and aims, noting that they are purposeful and reflect the holistic approach of the Curriculum. It was also noted that the purpose and aims cover what practitioners expect learners to focus on in English between 14 and 16.
- The most common query from respondents who agreed with the purpose and aims in principle was whether the proposal for an integrated qualification worth 1.5 GCSE would be able to achieve these aims. Respondents noted that this would be difficult to deliver within reduced teaching hours, or that they would rather that these aims would be fulfilled through separate qualifications.
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed content (knowledge, understanding, skills and experiences) for GCSE English Language and Literature?
238 responses

34% agreed with the proposed content of GCSE English Language and Literature, whilst 47% disagreed.

• Respondents agreed with a range of elements of the proposed content. These included:
  • the inclusion of contemporary texts, texts by Welsh authors and a combination of texts that reflect a diverse society
  • freedom for teachers to select texts
  • the opportunity for learners to draft and refine work
  • considering the reliability and validity of sources and evidence, which are important and relevant for learners
  • the content is appropriate and in keeping with knowledge and skills familiar to teachers

• Respondents disagreed with other elements of the proposed content. These included:
  • prescribing how many poems should be studied instead of giving schools flexibility
  • some respondents felt that there is too much emphasis on Welsh literature, and how this might limit the range of literature that learners can study
  • too little emphasis on high quality literature
  • the perception that the qualification has too much focus on language skills at detriment of literature

• Respondents also made some suggestions about what else should be included as part of the content for this qualification. These included:
  • the need to consider varied perspectives within texts
  • the need to include non-literary writing and communication, such as email writing and understanding information
  • some felt that oracy should have a greater focus than 20%, and that there should be opportunity to study spoken language to inform the use of spoken language
• the need to include digital texts, as well as visual medium to ensure that the qualification is relevant to learners
• the need to require the study of Shakespeare to ensure that learners are prepared to progress to further study

There was a concern that integrating language and literature into a qualification the size of 1.5 GCSEs would have a negative impact on the study of literature, including how a proposed reduction in literature content could impact on learner preparedness for further study.

• The potential for reduced number of teaching hours also concerned respondents, who worried that this would impact how texts can be taught and how the proposal might negatively impact how much learners will be reading.

• Respondents expressed mixed views about the volume of proposed content. Some felt that there’s too much content for 1.5 GCSE, whilst others noted that there is a need for a broader coverage of content within the qualification. Others noted that they like the content but believe it was closer in size to two GCSEs.
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed assessment arrangements, including the role of digital technology, for GCSE English Language and Literature?

240 responses

28% agreed with the proposed assessment arrangements for GCSE English Language and Literature, whilst 43% disagreed.

- Respondents expressed mixed views about the proposed balance of examination and non-examination.

- Respondents who disagreed with the proposed weighting did so for a number of reasons. Some respondents believed that the proposal had too much NEA and not enough exams, and that exams would be a fairer assessment of all learners. Others were of the view that 60% of assessment by exam is too much and that this would disproportionally disadvantage some learners.

- Respondents also had varying views on the weighting of NEA through speaking and listening. Some noted that oracy is an important and valued skill that should have higher importance within the new GCSE, whilst others did not believe that oracy should be included in the GCSE.

- When considering whether digital technology should play a role in the assessment of the new GCSE English Language and Literature, respondents were mainly concerned about the lack of digital resources in schools, and the inconsistency in digital access between schools. It was felt that introducing digital requirements when schools are not ready for it will disadvantage some learners more than others. Respondents believed that introducing digital technology would be positive and relevant to learners, but funding is needed to enable this.

- Some respondents liked the idea of ensuring that learners have had the opportunity to mature before taking any assessments. Most respondents were concerned with the proposal to hold all assessments at the end of the course. A range of reasons were given for this, including that this approach would put too much pressure and unnecessary stress on learners, and limit opportunities for resitting units that are vital for some learners.

- These respondents suggested that spreading assessments over the two-year course would be beneficial for learners.
To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposal for GCSE English Language and Literature meets the reasonable needs of learners in Wales?
Please consider factors such as accessibility, manageability, wellbeing and progression onto post-16 pathways

239 responses

18% **agreed** that the proposed design of GCSE English Language and Literature meets the reasonable needs of learners in Wales, whilst 70% **disagreed**.

- Some respondents who agreed with the proposal felt that it would allow learners to develop the necessary language and literature skills to progress to further study.
- The most common concern among respondents was the potential impact that the proposal could have on learner progression.
- Respondents felt that having a qualification the size of 1.5 GCSE, and only awarding one grade upon successful completion, would not be understood by employers. As a result, respondents felt that completing content in less breadth and depth would leave learners underprepared for A level and university study. In turn, respondents raised a potential impact on the take up of literature post-16.
- Respondents felt that the proposal would disadvantage learners in comparison to their counterparts in other UK jurisdictions, as learners would receive one grade for an integrated GCSE in English in comparison to the two grades awarded for GCSE English Language and GCSE English Literature in England and Northern Ireland. There were concerns that this would make it more difficult for learners taking the new GCSEs to compete for university places and employment outside of Wales.
- Respondents queried whether the proposed qualification would be accessible to the range of learners taking GCSEs in English. There was some concern that the proposed 1.5 GCSE qualification would be too big for some learners to cover, whilst not being challenging enough for high achieving learners. Respondents also noted that integrating language and literature disadvantages some learners who perform better in one of the current GCSEs (language or literature) than the other.
• Another concern raised by some respondents was the proposal to make the qualification untiered, as some expressed concern that this would be difficult for some learners to access.
• Respondents also shared their concern regarding the impact of a linear approach to assessment on learner wellbeing.

To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed GCSE in English Language and Literature is manageable for teachers to deliver?

Please consider factors such as the size of the qualification, resources and the proposed approach to assessment.

240 responses

20% agreed that the proposed design of GCSE English Language and Literature would be manageable for teachers to deliver, whilst 52% disagreed.

4% Strongly agree  16% Agree  28% Neither agree nor disagree  24% Disagree  28% Strongly disagree

• Respondents raised concern about the impact of having 40% teacher-assessed NEA on teacher workload and teacher wellbeing. Some respondents noted that teachers will need training to support their marking and moderating of the new NEA tasks. The majority noted that this would be too much burden on teachers as well as being administratively heavy.

• The potential impact of the proposal on teaching hours for English was a significant concern for respondents. They felt there would be significant pressure to teach the proposed content within a potentially reduced number teaching hours. The high weighting of teacher-assessed NEA and the potential reduction in teaching hours together compounded these concerns for respondents.

• Respondents noted the need for time and support for teachers to prepare for the introduction of the new qualification, including the need for sample materials, resources and funding to enable successful introduction of the qualification and new texts.
Overall, to what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposal for GCSE English Language and Literature?

240 responses

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<td>Strongly agree</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
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17% agreed with our proposal for GCSE English Language and Literature, whilst 73% disagreed.

- Of the respondents who disagreed with the proposal, most of those who provided written comments expressed disagreement with the decision made in October 2021 to create an integrated GCSE English Language and Literature, equivalent in size to 1.5 GCSEs – rather than disagreement with the design proposal for the qualification itself.

- Respondents who are of the view that language and literature are distinct subjects noted that they should be taught and assessed separately. Respondents disagreed with the proposed size of the qualification, noting that the reduction of teaching hours would devalue the status of English as a subject. It was also noted that it would not be manageable for post-16 providers to deliver a bigger GCSE.

- Several respondents who disagreed with the introduction of an integrated GCSE in English Language and Literature worth 1.5 GCSEs did not give a clear reason why they disagreed, including whether they disagreed with the integrated element, the qualification size, or both.

- Respondents queried why there was a difference in the NEA weightings for GCSE English and GCSE Cymraeg, but it was not clear whether there would be a preference to increase the weighting of speaking and listening in English, or to reduce it in Cymraeg.

- Other comments in response to this question summarised points already addressed in previous questions. These are discussed in the findings for the questions above.
Consultation outcomes: design requirements for GCSE Core Cymraeg

Introduction

We consulted on a design proposal for a new GCSE Core Cymraeg between 4 October and 14 December 2022. You can read the full design proposal on which we consulted [here](#).

We received 54 responses to the consultation, and we have carefully analysed all of them. As part of our commitment to co-creation of new qualifications, we shared the feedback with our subject-level working group. Together, we considered how the proposed design could be amended and refined to address the points raised.

Summary of decisions

The GCSE Core Cymraeg qualification is part of a set of three qualifications [announced in March 2022](#) to support the Curriculum for Wales and reflect Welsh Government’s policy intentions for a single language continuum for teaching and learning Welsh.

All three qualifications will have a strong focus on speaking and listening, as well as supporting learners to experience Welsh literature and develop an appreciation of wider Welsh culture. This focus on learners becoming confident users of Cymraeg supports Welsh Government’s Welsh language strategy, Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh speakers.

We are creating two new qualifications for learners in English-medium schools. GCSE Core Cymraeg will replace and remove the concept and terminology of ‘Welsh second language’, encouraging all learners in Wales to see themselves as Welsh speakers who are continually growing their ability and confidence in Cymraeg as they progress along the Welsh language skills continuum. The new GCSE Core Cymraeg will have consistent expectations to GCSE Welsh Second Language in terms of its level of challenge and its focus on spontaneous conversation.

The Level 2 Award in Additional Core Cymraeg will serve those learners who are making good progress in their study of the Welsh language in English-medium settings. This will provide additional stretch and challenge to support these learners
to progress more quickly along the Welsh language skills continuum while ensuring that the **GCSE Core Cymraeg** is inclusive and accessible.

GCSE Cymraeg Language and Literature will be taken by learners in Welsh medium and bilingual schools. All three of these qualifications support learners on the lifelong Welsh language skills continuum.

We have now agreed the final design requirements - known as approval criteria - for these qualifications. These set out the requirements that awarding bodies must follow when developing these new GCSEs.

You can read the approval criteria for **GCSE Core Cymraeg** [here](#).

In finalising the approval criteria, we have made the following design decisions to address points raised in the consultation and further co-creation activity.

**Title**

Having carefully considered the responses to the consultation, we will continue with the proposed title of **GCSE Core Cymraeg**. This qualification will replace the current GCSE Welsh Second Language, reflecting our commitment to removing the term Welsh Second Language for Cymraeg in English medium settings and supporting the concept of a language continuum for the teaching and learning of Cymraeg.

**Purpose and aims**

The new qualification will build on the progress made in the existing **GCSE Welsh Second Language**, with consistent expectations in terms of its level of challenge and its focus on spontaneous conversation. The qualification will enable the development of confident users of Cymraeg.
Content

In line with the consultation proposal, the qualification should generate opportunities for learners to make appropriate use of digital technology when completing the qualification.

Experiences

As part of GCSE Core Cymraeg, learners will be given the opportunity to explore the diverse nature of Welsh citizenship and its cultures, including Black, Asian and minority ethnic perspectives.

Assessment

GCSE Core Cymraeg will be a linear qualification. This means that learners will have sufficient time to develop their skills, knowledge, and understanding throughout the duration of the two-year course. This will ensure that learners have ample opportunity to fully explore and develop their linguistic abilities.

50% of the qualification will be assessed through non-examination assessment (NEA) using speaking and listening methods and will take place on dates set by the awarding body.

Each NEA must take place during the final year of the course, and before the summer series. This balances the need for assessments to be taken when learners have sufficiently developed their language skills against the potential manageability challenge of assessing everything at the end of the course.

The remaining 50% of the qualification will be exam assessments. Due to the high weighting given to speaking and listening, we deemed that having an additional NEA for reading and writing would be unmanageable for centres to deliver.

There will not be a requirement for specific assessments to be digitally assessed.

In line with the consultation proposal, assessment of GCSE Core Cymraeg will not be tiered.
### Summary of consultation responses

**To what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposed qualification title of GCSE Core Cymraeg?**

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<tr>
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50 responses

52% of respondents agreed with the proposed title of GCSE Core Cymraeg, whilst 24% disagreed.

- Respondents who supported the proposed qualification title agreed with our commitment to remove the term Welsh Second Language for Cymraeg in English medium settings to support the concept of a language continuum for the teaching and learning of Cymraeg.
- Respondents noted that it lessens the perception of a divide between first and second language qualifications.
- Respondents felt that the term ‘Core’ highlights the importance of Cymraeg as a subject and helps to give it comparable status with English, Mathematics and Science. Others felt the term ‘Core’ is problematic as it fails to demonstrate the level of Cymraeg skills that learners taking this qualification will gain.
- Some respondents offered alternative suggestions:
  - TGAU Cymraeg Sylfaenol
  - TGAU Cymraeg Cyfoes
  - TGAU Cymraeg Heddiw
  - TGAU Byw’r Gymraeg / TGAU Cymraeg Byw
  - GCSE Foundation Welsh
  - GCSE Contemporary Welsh
  - GCSE Welsh Today
  - GCSE Living the Welsh language

**To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed design of GCSE Core Cymraeg supports the Curriculum for Wales?**

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52 responses

62% agreed that the proposed design of GCSE Core Cymraeg would support the Curriculum for Wales, whilst 21% disagreed.

- Respondents who agreed with our proposal noted that the design aligns with the statements of what matters for the Languages, Literacy and Communication Area of Learning and Experience.
- Others noted that the qualification’s alignment with the Curriculum for Wales ensures that the GCSE demonstrates learner progression. Some respondents thought that there are elements that could better support the introduction of the Curriculum for Wales, such as the introduction of written NEA assessment and more explicit inclusion of Welsh literature.
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed purposes and aims of GCSE Core Cymraeg?
52 responses

69% agreed with the proposed purpose and aims of GCSE Core Cymraeg, whilst 17% disagreed.

- Respondents agreed that the proposed purpose and aims are relevant to the Curriculum for Wales, and that the qualification will prepare learners to use Cymraeg outside the classroom.
- One respondent also noted that they like the idea that the GCSE builds on the conceptual understanding of Cymraeg. Other respondents felt that the proposed content does not sufficiently demonstrate how the qualification will meet the qualification aims.
- One respondent noted that the removal of the term 'Second Language' also needs to be applied to the A level qualification for continuity.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed content (knowledge, understanding, skills and experiences) for GCSE Core Cymraeg?
50 responses

74% agreed with the proposed content of GCSE Core Cymraeg, whilst 12% disagreed.

- Respondents supported the introduction of a range of elements within the proposed content for GCSE Core Cymraeg. These include exploring the theme of Wales and Welshness and the inclusion of Welsh culture.
- Respondents also agreed with the way the proposed content attempts to ensure continuity and build on the content of the current GCSE, particularly in relation to communication skills through speaking and listening. Other respondents expressed some concerns about the content of the current GCSE.
- One respondent noted that listening to fluent Cymraeg speakers can be more challenging for learners in some areas than others, and that this should be addressed when the new qualification is designed.
Respondents agreed with the proposed assessment weighting, noting that making speaking and listening worth 50% of the qualification supports Welsh Government’s Cymraeg 2050 ambitions of having a million Welsh speakers.

Respondents noted a common concern in relation to the proposed assessment timings.

Respondents disagreed with the proposal to hold all assessments at the end of the course for a number of reasons, including concerns for learner wellbeing and manageability for teachers. This was a particular concern for centers that only have one teacher in the department.

Some respondents liked the opportunity to introduce a digital element to the qualification. However, most respondents expressed concern should there be any requirement to use digital technology within assessments, due to inconsistency of access to technology across Wales.

Respondents queried whether there could be an opportunity for written NEA assessment within the qualification. These respondents believed it would reduce the number of exams and be more accessible to the range of learners taking the GCSE.

Some respondents suggested creating tiered exam papers as a solution for increasing access.

Respondents agreed that the continued inclusion of skills such as spontaneous conversation would prepare learners well for progression to post-16 pathways, including oracy elements of A level.

Respondents raised concerns about the proposal in relation to holding all assessments at the end of the course. This was due to the burden on learners completing the qualification and potential impact on wellbeing.

Respondents suggested that tiering could be a way of improving access to the exam papers.

Some respondents noted that they needed to see more detail about the qualification before sharing views on how the proposal meets the reasonable needs of learners.
To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed GCSE in Core Cymraeg is manageable for teachers to deliver?

Please consider factors such as the size of the qualification, resources and the proposed approach to assessment.

50 responses

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34% agreed that the proposed design of GCSE Core Cymraeg would be manageable for teachers to deliver, whilst 38% disagreed.

- Some respondents noted the consistency between the current qualification and the proposed qualification in relation to the proportion of NEA for teachers to deliver and assess. As a result, some respondents saw this as being manageable for teachers.
- Most respondents gave a range of reasons why they thought the proposed qualification would not be manageable for teachers to deliver. These included the inconsistent number of teaching hours given to English medium schools to teach Cymraeg, and challenges relating to teacher recruitment.
- Respondents noted that it is difficult to recruit enough teachers to deliver the current qualification, and as a result, it is very challenging for teachers to deliver NEA in two tight assessment windows taking place in close succession, during the summer term of Year 11.
- Respondents identified a need for teaching resources and training to support the introduction of the new qualification to increase manageability for teachers.
Overall, to what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposal for GCSE Core Cymraeg?

50 responses

42% agreed with our proposal for GCSE Core Cymraeg, whilst 18% disagreed.

- Respondents who supported the proposal recognised how it builds on the current GCSE qualification, and how it provides opportunities to use Cymraeg in contexts that are relevant to the learner.
- Respondents agreed with the proposed content, in particular the emphasis on speaking and listening.
- Respondents felt that moving away from ‘Second Language’ and giving the GCSE a new title is beneficial for the status of Cymraeg as a school subject.
- Other respondents expressed concern with the proposed assessment timing and its impact on the manageability of the whole qualification.
- A range of other comments were made in relation to the overall proposal, including respondents suggesting that there has been insufficient change between the current qualification and the proposal.
- Some respondents commented that they would require further detail about the qualification content and assessment to come to a view on the proposals.

Throughout the survey, some respondents commented on elements that are outside the scope of these decisions. These comments related to government policy and curriculum expectations, including the compulsory teaching of Cymraeg to all learners in Wales and whether the teaching of subjects such as English should be prioritised over the teaching of Cymraeg.
Consultation outcomes: design requirements for international languages GCSEs

Introduction

We consulted on design proposals for new international language GCSEs in French, German and Spanish between 4 October and 14 December 2022. You can read the full design proposal on which we consulted here.

We received 70 responses to the consultation, and we have carefully analysed all of them. As part of our commitment to the co-creation of new qualifications, we shared the feedback with our subject-level working group. Together, we considered how the proposed design could be amended and refined to address the points raised.

Summary of decisions

We have now agreed the final design requirements (known as approval criteria) for these qualifications. These set out the requirements that awarding bodies must follow when developing these new GCSEs.

You can read the approval criteria for the new international languages GCSEs here:

- GCSE French
- GCSE German
- GCSE Spanish

In finalising these approval criteria, we have made the following design decisions to address points raised in the consultation and further co-creation activity.

Content

There is flexibility for the awarding body to define the themes and sub-themes that will be used to organise the linguistic content in the specifications for these qualifications. This is to help ensure that the amount of content included in the final specifications is appropriate and manageable.

The awarding body must explain how and why they have decided on which themes to include, specifying how these will reflect the Curriculum for Wales and be manageable for schools and learners.
Experiences

As part of GCSE French, GCSE German and GCSE Spanish, learners will be given opportunities to explore the cross-curricular themes of human rights and diversity, including Black, Asian and minority ethnic perspectives, identity, culture, and contributions.

Assessment

The proportion of examination and non-examination assessment (NEA) reflects the consultation proposal. Between 45% and 50% of these qualifications will be assessed through NEA, with between 50% and 55% assessed by exam. This balance will offer learners more variety of assessment opportunities and support accessibility for a wider range of learners.

NEA will consist of a speaking and listening assessment (30%) and a reading and writing element (15-20%). These assessments will take place in the final year of the course.

All NEA will be externally marked by the awarding body. This will help ensure that these assessments are manageable for schools. This will also help to ensure that these assessments are easier for private candidates to access.

GCSE French, GCSE German and GCSE Spanish will all be linear qualifications. This is because these subjects are predominantly skills-based, where learners revisit their learning throughout the course. The linguistic content for these subjects will be transferable across units, allowing learners to use their knowledge across multiple assessments.

In line with the consultation proposals, assessment of international languages GCSEs will not be tiered.

To address concerns about fairness and manageability, learners will not have access to dictionaries when taking their assessments. However, the specification will allow learners to develop the ability to use dictionaries, including online dictionaries, as part of their learning experiences.

We have been considering how digital technology may be able to enhance the assessment experience in these subjects. We have carefully reviewed the responses to the consultation regarding manageability of increased assessment on-line. We will continue to explore the potential to include this during the lifetime of the qualifications. However, we recognise that this will require careful consideration and planning.
Summary of responses

To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed design of GCSEs in French, German and Spanish supports the Curriculum for Wales?

68 responses

66% of respondents agreed that the proposed design of GCSEs in French, German and Spanish would support the Curriculum for Wales, whilst 13% of respondents disagreed.

- The most common reason why respondents agreed that the proposal supported the Curriculum for Wales was that it reflected key aspects of the curriculum, including the four purposes and the statements of what matter for the languages, literacy and communication area of the Curriculum for Wales.
- We also proposed a number of themes around which learners could develop knowledge and understanding of linguistic content, some respondents noted that the suggested themes were relevant to the Curriculum.
- Additionally, respondents felt that the experiences we included in support of the curriculum aims were a positive addition.
- In the proposal we explained that the qualification would include a combination of examination and NEA.
- Overall, respondents expressed mixed views about the relevant weightings given to these.
- Some felt that the increase in NEA from the current qualification would benefit learners, noting that it could be more accessible and help to reduce some of the pressure associated with exams.
- Others considered that a greater emphasis on exams was fairer and more manageable, for example, time spent on preparing for and sitting NEA could potentially impact upon time allocated to teaching and learning.
- Some respondents were concerned that the proposal could lead to a significant volume of content to cover and queried how manageable this would be for learners and teachers.
**To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed purposes and aims of GCSEs in French, German and Spanish?**

67 responses

79% of respondents agreed with the proposed purpose and aims of GCSEs in French, German and Spanish, whilst 6% of respondents disagreed.

- Respondents felt that the purpose and aims proposed were appropriate.
- Respondents did not generally give a reason, though some respondents felt they supported the Curriculum for Wales or that there was little change from current expectations.
- Some respondents commented on the appropriateness of the proposed content, stressing the importance of a strong emphasis on oral communication and grammar.

**To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed content (knowledge, understanding, skills and experiences) for GCSEs in French, German and Spanish?**

68 responses

59% of respondents agreed with the proposed content (knowledge, understanding, skills and experiences) for GCSEs in French, German and Spanish, whilst 21% of respondents disagreed.

- Respondents who supported the proposal reported that the content appeared relevant and accessible for learners.
- Other respondents who were supportive of the proposal said the experiences were adventurous, exciting and reflected the aims of the Curriculum.
- Some respondents were concerned that there had been little change to the content, while others felt that topics like work experience were not relevant or engaging for learners in this age group.
- A particular concern was raised about the potential volume of content that would likely feature in the final specifications and how manageable this would be for learners and teachers.
- Respondents referenced the number of sub-topics in existing specifications and expressed concern about this being a continuing issue.
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed assessment arrangements, including the role of digital technology, for GCSEs in French, German and Spanish?

67 responses

51% agreed with the proposed assessment arrangements, including the role of digital technology, for GCSEs in French, German and Spanish, whilst 19% of respondents disagreed.

- Respondents were concerned about the inconsistency of access to digital resources across schools, and whilst respondents could see the long-term benefits of more digital technology, they felt it needed careful planning.
- Respondents expressed mixed views about assessment weightings; some thought more NEA would benefit learners and some considered more emphasis on exams fairer and more manageable.
- Respondents also mentioned the level of internal marking and expressed concerns about the burden on teachers.
- There were also mixed views about when assessments should happen, with some acknowledging that learners are not fully ready for assessment until the end of the course whilst others noting the burden of all assessments being taken at the end of Year 11.
- The proposal not to tier international languages GCSEs was seen as positive by respondents, though some noted that careful consideration would be needed when designing assessments.
To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposal for GCSEs in French, German and Spanish meets the reasonable needs of learners in Wales?
Please consider factors such as accessibility, manageability, wellbeing and progression onto post-16 pathways.

67 responses

54% of respondents agreed the proposal for GCSEs in French, German and Spanish meets the reasonable needs of learners in Wales, whilst 22% of respondents disagreed.

- Many respondents, whilst supportive of the proposals, were also concerned about continuing high levels of content and the impact this would have on learners. In conjunction with this, respondents considered how inaccessible examinations are for learners.
- Progression and the relationship with A level was an important topic for respondents, with some expressing concern about potential changes to assessment impacting Welsh learners’ capacity to access A level and how they might compare with their peers across the UK.
- Connected to the point above, the increased proportion of NEA was seen as a benefit for some learners, by increasing accessibility.

To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed GCSEs in French, German and Spanish are manageable for teachers to deliver?
Please consider factors such as the size of the qualification, resources and the proposed approach to assessment.

68 responses

31% of respondents agreed that the proposed GCSEs in French, German and Spanish are manageable for teachers to deliver, whilst 31% of respondents disagreed. 38% neither agreed nor disagreed.

- The most common concern raised was the potentially large volume of content suggested by the proposed themes.
- Respondents noted the current difficulty of teaching the high number of topics included in existing specifications to an appropriate level of depth.
- Coupled with this, respondents felt that the increased level of NEA preparation, planning and marking would be challenging for teachers.
- Respondents questioned what support will be available in terms of teaching resources and training.
- Several respondents said they needed more detail on content and assessment tasks to give a full answer.
Overall, to what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposal for GCSEs in French, German and Spanish?

67 responses

57% of respondents agreed with our proposal for GCSEs in French, German and Spanish, whilst 18% of respondents disagreed.

- Respondents that generally agreed or disagreed with the proposals did not always give a specific reason.
- Where an explanation was given, respondents tended to reference matters relating to manageability and relevance of content.
- Some respondents said that the proposals seemed promising, but that they would need to see more details before giving a full answer.
- As already noted, there were mixed views on the increase in NEA but generally respondents were hopeful that these changes would improve accessibility and help to increase uptake.
- Respondents who referenced the lack of tiering felt this was a positive development.
Consultation outcomes: design requirements for Level 2 Award in Additional Core Cymraeg

Introduction

We consulted on a design proposal for a new Level 2 Award in Additional Core Cymraeg between 4 October and 14 December. You can read the full design proposal on which we consulted here.

We received 19 responses to the consultation, and we have carefully analysed all of them. As part of our commitment to co-creation of new qualifications, we shared the feedback with our subject-level working group. Together, we considered how the proposed design could be amended and refined to address the points raised.

Summary of decisions

The Level 2 Award in Additional Core Cymraeg qualification is part of a set of three qualifications we announced in January 2022 to support the Curriculum for Wales and reflect Welsh Government’s policy intentions for a single language continuum for teaching and learning Welsh. All three qualifications will have a strong focus on speaking and listening, as well as supporting learners to experience Welsh literature and develop an appreciation of wider Welsh culture. This focus on learners becoming confident users of Cymraeg supports Welsh Government’s Welsh language strategy, Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh speakers.

We are creating two new qualifications for learners in English-medium schools. GCSE Core Cymraeg will replace and remove the concept and terminology of ‘Welsh second language’, encouraging all learners in Wales to see themselves as Welsh speakers who are continually growing their ability and confidence in Cymraeg as they progress along the Welsh language skills continuum.

The Level 2 Award in Additional Core Cymraeg will serve those learners who are making good progress in their study of the Welsh language in English-medium settings. This will provide additional stretch and challenge to support these learners to progress more quickly along the Welsh language skills continuum while ensuring that the GCSE Core Cymraeg is inclusive and accessible.
GCSE Cymraeg Language and Literature will be taken by learners in Welsh medium and bilingual schools. All three of these qualifications support learners on the lifelong Welsh language skills continuum.

We have now agreed the final design requirements - known as approval criteria - for these qualifications. These set out the requirements that awarding bodies must follow when developing these new qualifications.

You can read the approval criteria for **Level 2 Award in Additional Core Cymraeg** here.

In finalising the approval criteria, we have made the following design decisions to address points raised in the consultation and further co-creation activity.

**Title**

Having carefully considered the responses to the consultation, we will continue with the proposed title of **Level 2 Additional Core Cymraeg**.

**Purpose and Aims**

This Level 2 qualification will build on the content and skill development of the main GCSE Core Cymraeg. It will be designed to give schools the choice of whether to teach it within the lesson time they allocate for the GCSE, or to timetable it separately.

**Content**

The content will provide opportunities for learners to build on the skills and knowledge developed in GCSE Core Cymraeg, including understanding of language and grammar. It will be designed to offer an element of choice and flexibility for centres and learners to choose content of local relevance.
**Assessment**

The qualification will be unitised. One unit will be assessed through speaking and listening. This unit will require a learner to engage in discussion with an external examiner digitally through use of video conferencing.

One unit will be assessed through reading and writing, with learners responding to the topic *Cymraeg and me*. This is a broader topic than the one that we originally consulted on, which was *Cymraeg in my area*, following feedback from consultation respondents.

The speaking and listening exam will be available in January and the summer to support manageability for schools and learners.

**Grading**

Learners will gain a pass, merit, or distinction grade for successful completion of the [Level 2 Additional Core Cymraeg](#) qualification. It is possible for learners to take one unit, and receive unit certification with a pass, merit or distinction grade for successful completion of that unit.
Summary of responses

To what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposed qualification title of Level 2 Award in Additional Core Cymraeg?
16 responses

50% agreed with the proposed title of Level 2 Award in Additional Core Cymraeg, whilst 19% disagreed.

- Respondents recognised how the proposed title for this new qualification aligns with the new GCSE Core Cymraeg for learners in English medium settings.
- Alternative titles were offered including having a title that emphasises how the qualification creates speakers of Cymraeg. Other suggestions included titles such as GCSE Foundation Cymraeg and Level 2 Intermediate Cymraeg to demonstrate progression along the Welsh language skills continuum.

To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed design of Level 2 Award in Additional Core Cymraeg supports the Curriculum for Wales?
17 responses

65% agreed that the proposed design of Level 2 Award in Additional Core Cymraeg would support the Curriculum for Wales, whilst 24% disagreed.

- Those who agree with our proposal do so for a number of reasons. This includes that the qualification is a positive step towards supporting the Welsh language continuum and will in turn support the Welsh Government’s aim to reach a million Cymraeg speakers by 2050.
- Respondents also noted that the additional qualification supports the Curriculum’s progression steps and the concept that progression happens by stage not age. Some respondents requested further detail to understand how the qualification will link to and build on the GCSE qualification.
**To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed purposes and aims of Level 2 Award in Additional Core Cymraeg?**

15 responses

73% **agreed** with the proposed purpose and aims of **Level 2 Award in Additional Core Cymraeg**, whilst 13% **disagreed**.

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- Respondents who supported the proposed purpose and aims believed that they positively build on the learning outlined in the GCSE Core Cymraeg, and that they demonstrate how learners will be able to progress further along the lifelong Welsh language skills continuum. Having an additional option for learners in English medium settings with an interest in Cymraeg is also seen as a positive step.
- Other respondents requested further information about who is the qualification aimed at, as well as how it relates to GCSE Cymraeg Language and Literature, which will be taken by learners in Welsh medium and bilingual schools.

**To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed content (knowledge, understanding, skills and experiences) for Level 2 Award in Additional Core Cymraeg?**

16 responses

69% **agreed** with the proposed content of **Level 2 Award in Additional Core Cymraeg**, whilst 19% **disagreed**.

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- Respondents who supported the proposed content stated their agreement with the focus on oracy and written communication, and noted that the content appears to be appropriate, relevant and engaging to young people.
- One respondent queried whether having the topic *Cymraeg in my area* would be limiting for learners.
- Others noted that they would need further information about the qualification content before sharing their opinion.
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed assessment arrangements, including the role of digital technology, for Level 2 Award in Additional Core Cymraeg?

15 responses

47% **agreed** with the proposed assessment arrangements for **Level 2 Award in Additional Core Cymraeg**, whilst 27% **disagreed**.

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- Respondents who supported the proposed assessment arrangements agreed with the importance of including digital technology. These respondents also noted that teachers would need support to deliver these assessments.
- Other respondents shared concerns in relation to unequal access to digital technology in schools, and the time it would take to deliver the assessments for this qualification alongside the GCSE Core Cymraeg.
- Some comments in response to this question reflected on the challenges of delivering the speaking and listening assessments for the current GCSE Welsh Second Language and noted the need for a change in approach to enable the assessment of an additional Level 2 qualification.
- Others noted that they would need further detail to respond fully to the proposal.

To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposal for Level 2 Award in Additional Core Cymraeg meets the reasonable needs of learners in Wales? Please consider factors such as accessibility, manageability, wellbeing and progression onto post-16 pathways.

17 responses

47% **agreed** that the proposed design of **Level 2 Award in Additional Core Cymraeg** meets the reasonable needs of learners in Wales, whilst 35% **disagreed**.

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- The most common reason why respondents supported the proposal was because the new qualification will provide better preparation for learners in English medium schools to progress to A level and beyond.
- Other respondents raised that the qualification should not be seen as a requirement for progression to A level as this could create an additional barrier and burden for GCSE learners. They also noted the risk that it could be seen as a “higher tier” for academic learners in English medium settings if no additional time is given for teaching the new qualification.
To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed Level 2 Award in Additional Core Cymraeg is manageable for teachers to deliver? Please consider factors such as the size of the qualification, resources and the proposed approach to assessment.

16 responses

38% agreed that the proposed design of Level 2 Award in Additional Core Cymraeg would be manageable for teachers to deliver, whilst 38% disagreed.

- The most common reason why respondents felt that the Level 2 Award in additional Core Cymraeg would not be manageable for teachers to deliver was due to not having more time in addition to the teaching hours allocated to GCSE Core Cymraeg to deliver the qualification.
- Respondents also expressed concern about the difficulties faced when trying to recruit Cymraeg teachers in English medium schools and having enough teachers to enable the teaching of an additional qualification for GCSE learners.
- Other respondents noted that they would need more information and guidance before deciding whether it would be manageable for teachers to deliver.

Overall, to what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposal for Level 2 Award in Additional Core Cymraeg?

16 responses

44% agreed with our proposal for Level 2 Award in Additional Core Cymraeg, whilst 19% disagreed.

- Respondents who agreed with the proposal saw the introduction of this new qualification as an opportunity for learners who are ready to progress further along the Welsh language skills continuum to enhance their use of Cymraeg.
- Other respondents supported the principle of introducing a new Cymraeg qualification for learners in English medium settings. However, others expressed concern about how this could be successfully introduced in schools alongside the GCSE. It was noted that there was a need to provide guidance for schools to ensure success of the qualification.
- One respondent highlighted that the new qualification should not be seen as an alternative to the GCSE Core Cymraeg.
- Throughout the survey, some respondents commented on elements that are outside the scope of these decisions. These comments related to government policy and curriculum expectations, including the compulsory teaching of Cymraeg to all learners in Wales and whether the teaching of subjects such as English should be prioritised over the teaching of Cymraeg.
Consultation outcomes: design requirements for GCSE Mathematics and Numeracy

Introduction

We consulted on design proposals for a new GCSE Mathematics and Numeracy between 4 October and 14 December 2022. You can read the full design proposal here.

We received 184 responses to the consultation, and we have carefully analysed all of them. As part of our commitment to co-creation of new qualifications, we shared the feedback with our subject-level working group. Together, we considered how the proposed design could be amended and refined to address the points raised.

Summary of decisions

We have now agreed the final design requirements (known as approval criteria) for these qualifications. These set out the requirements that awarding bodies must follow when developing these new GCSEs.

You can read the approval criteria for the new GCSE Mathematics and Numeracy here.

Qualification size

Having carefully considered concerns raised around the volume of content, the size of the qualification, and teaching hours, we have decided that the qualification should be a double award. This is to ensure that learners have sufficient time to study the content in depth and to enable them to appropriately develop their mathematical and numerical skills.

Learners completing this double award GCSE will be awarded a double grade, which will appear as two letters on their certificates. In light of this decision, we carefully considered whether to create a single award in GCSE Mathematics and Numeracy qualification as an alternative to the double award.

However, we have decided against this because it is not possible to create a single award qualification that:
- sufficiently covers the Curriculum for Wales guidance for mathematics and numeracy
- is comparable in demand to the double award
- is seen or valued by learning providers and employers as equivalent to the double award GCSE (nor the 9-1 GCSE taken by learners in England) and would not therefore satisfy entry requirements for a wide range of post-16 learning and employment opportunities
- enables progression to post-16 qualifications such as AS and A level Mathematics

The new **GCSE Mathematics and Numeracy** double award qualification will be broadly similar (in terms of the content and demand) to the 9-1 GCSE mathematics qualification in England. Despite the qualifications in England being a single award, it is widely acknowledged to be around the size of two GCSEs. This is reflected in school performance measures where the qualification is double weighted (in part to reflect its size). This approach incentivises schools in England to allocate significantly more teaching time to GCSE mathematics than to other single award GCSEs. This means that in terms of teaching time, the qualifications in Wales and England will be broadly comparable.

In finalising these approval criteria, we have made the following design decisions to address points raised in the consultation and further co-creation activity.

**Content**

Following the consultation, we worked closely with subject experts to agree the content. We looked carefully at whether any content could be removed to reduce the overall size of the qualification and make it more manageable to teach and study. However, it was felt that content aligns with the purpose and aims of the qualification as well as the descriptions of learning in the curriculum.

As the qualification is tiered, not all content will feature in each tier. We have made minor amendments and additions to content to add clarity.

The qualification content will require learners to use and apply their maths in a range of real-life contexts including personal finance, careers and work-related contexts, societal contexts, and scientific, technological and environmental contexts. These contexts will help to make the content relevant, accessible and engaging. They will also support the cross-curricular themes of local, national and international contexts; diversity; and sustainability.

The approval criteria will reflect the proposal to have a unitised structure. The content will be divided into discrete units, this will help make the qualification more
manageable for schools to deliver. The number of units and how the content is linked to units will be determined by the awarding body.

**Assessment**

This qualification will be assessed by exam. While some respondents were keen to see an element of non-examination assessment (NEA), we feel this would not have the same benefits as in other subjects because exams are an effective measure of mathematical knowledge and skills. By contrast, designing NEA that can differentiate mathematical performance reliably and fairly across the full GCSE grade range poses many known challenges.

To provide an appropriate balance between the assessment of procedural mathematics, mathematical reasoning and numerical problem solving the exams will include both contextual and context-free questions. To maximise the variety and range of contexts that are included within the assessments the awarding body will provide a mechanism for crowdsourcing ideas for contexts that can be used in exam questions. This approach will enable a broader range of individuals to contribute relevant, engaging and accessible context ideas for exam questions.

Having a unitised structure will mean that learners will have the opportunity to take some assessment before the end of the course. Given that all assessment in this qualification is by exam, this will help to spread the assessment load and reduce the exam-related pressure for learners.

There will be two tiers of assessment for this qualification - higher and foundation - enabling the C grade to be available for all learners. This is particularly important given that learners will have the choice of taking some exams before the end of the course. We have not specified if mixed tiering (where candidates can be entered for different tiers in different units) will be permitted.

We will ask the awarding body to decide whether to allow this and to provide a rationale to support its approach. Whether mixed tiering will be possible will depend, among other factors, on the number of units included in the qualifications and how content is divided across them.

We noted concerns around the impact of resits in post-16 settings. As a potential mitigation we are exploring the possibility of allowing post-16 learners to carry forward unit level results when resitting the qualification. This would mean they do not have to retake the whole qualification but only particular units in a post-16 setting.
Summary of responses

To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed design of GCSE Mathematics and Numeracy supports the Curriculum for Wales?
179 responses

52% **agreed** that the proposed design of GCSE Mathematics and Numeracy would support the Curriculum for Wales, whilst 21% **disagreed**.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
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<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>15%</td>
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Respondents who agreed the proposed design of **GCSE Mathematics and Numeracy** supports the Curriculum for Wales felt:

- The proposed content aligns to the purposes of the Curriculum for Wales and supports the proficiencies that form the basis of the principles of progression for this subject.
- The inclusion of real-life contexts will help clarify the relevance of the subject and enhance learners' ability to solve real-world problems.
- The content will give teachers more flexibility in how they teach the subject.
- Although the qualification supports the curriculum's four purposes, it may support some learners more than others.

Respondents who disagreed felt:

- There is relatively little change from the current qualifications which is a missed opportunity.
- The qualification design and approach to assessment could do more to support the curriculum's purposes and guidance, including developing learners' creativity and a more positive and resilient attitude.
- Replacing two GCSEs with a qualification the size of 1.5 GCSEs will lead to a reduction in teaching time, which could make it harder for learners to develop the required mathematics and numeracy proficiencies.
- The experiences listed in the design proposal should be directly assessed so that they contribute to the grade for the qualification.
- Some learners may not have made enough progress by the end of Year 9 to access the GCSE.
- Some respondents felt that the concept of 'numeracy' is of limited value.
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed purpose and aims of the GCSE Mathematics and Numeracy?

175 responses

68% agreed that the proposed design of GCSE Mathematics and Numeracy would support the Curriculum for Wales, whilst 10% disagreed.

- Some respondents felt the skills are relevant to learners and clearly link to and support the curriculum.
- Respondents commented that the links to real life situations and other subject areas make mathematics more engaging for learners.
- Some respondents were of the view that there is no notable change and that the current qualifications already support the proposed purpose and aims.
- Other feedback included the view that the qualification needs to provide both support and challenge.
- Some of the respondents that disagreed considered there to be too much focus on mathematics rather than numeracy and that the mode of assessment and volume of content will prevent some of the aims being realised.
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed content for GCSE Mathematics and Numeracy?
177 responses

68% agreed that the proposed design of GCSE Mathematics and Numeracy would support the Curriculum for Wales, whilst 12% disagreed.

- Some respondents considered the content to be well-balanced and valid, and they agreed with the skills proposed.
- Respondents added that it’s good to see a focus on real-life application which makes it relevant to learners and that the contexts and experiences will support application of skills.
- Some respondents thought the proposed content is similar to the current content, while others suggested content to add and remove.
- Some respondents stated there is too much content for a single graded 1.5 sized GCSE and that this will impact the time learners get to explore depth and understanding and develop the required proficiencies.
- Others felt that it includes content that is not relevant, while some suggested there is not enough higher order mathematics, which will impact progression.
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed assessment arrangements, including the role of digital technology, for GCSE Mathematics and Numeracy?

173 responses

49% agreed that the proposed design of GCSE Mathematics and Numeracy would support the Curriculum for Wales, whilst 22% disagreed.

- Many respondents preferred written exam as they felt it maintains integrity, is more engaging for learners, more accessible, allows learners to demonstrate workings, and effectively assesses the required objectives. Respondents commented that coursework has the potential to show little evidence of understanding, as there is the risk that learners would be given too much guidance, meaning that results would be unreliable.
- Others wanted to see the introduction of NEA as they felt written assessment causes anxiety and that exams disadvantage some. Therefore, they considered a combination of exam and NEA approaches to be needed.
- Some respondents identified that this qualification will be an outlier among the new suite of GCSEs by being assessed entirely by exam, and they questioned why a different approach was being taken in maths compared to other subjects.
- Respondents highlighted issues with digital assessment from both a learner perspective and an assessment design perspective. They stated that schools are not ready for digital assessment yet due to lack of resources and insufficient infrastructure.
- Some respondents however expressed a preference for digital assessment as it better reflects living in a digital age and is more relevant and engaging for learners.
- Some respondents liked the unitised proposal as it makes the qualification comparable with other subjects. It also benefits learners in terms of allowing resits of specific units as well as creating opportunities for intervention and support. They were of the view that unitisation removes the ‘all or nothing’ approach to exams.
- Other respondents felt that a unitised approach would lead to teaching units in isolation and consequently connections between different aspects of maths will be missed. Respondents suggested that unitisation might not allow retention of understanding and could lead to disruption in teaching and learning. They thought it would contribute to additional assessment burden and have impact on post-16 learners doing a one-year resit of the qualification.
Which option for tiering do you prefer?
180 responses

54% preferred 2 tiers (Higher Tier A*-D, Foundation Tier C-G) and 37% preferred 3 tiers (Higher Tier A*-C, Intermediate tier B-E, Foundation Tier D-G). Meanwhile, 7% were not sure and 2% had no preference.

- Respondents with a preference for two tiers felt that all learners should have the opportunity to achieve a C grade, regardless of the tier they were entered for.
- Similarly, many respondents commented on the negative impacts of the current situation where learners who are entered for the foundation tier become demotivated as they cannot access a C grade and consequently do not try as hard as they could do.
- Some respondents also considered a two-tier approach to be more manageable for centres to administer.
- Of those respondents who expressed a preference for three tiers, some considered this approach to be more accessible to learners as it provides a narrower focus of content on each tier.
- Several respondents stated that the presence of an intermediate tier is more motivating for some learners who cannot access the higher tier but for whom the foundation tier would be too easy.
- Another argument put forward for having three tiers was the suggestion that having an intermediate tier improves access to the B grade which can help with progression to higher education.
**To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposal for GCSE Mathematics and Numeracy meets the reasonable needs of learners in Wales?**

*Please consider factors such as accessibility, manageability, wellbeing and progression onto post-16 pathways.*

176 responses

55% **agreed** that the proposed design of GCSE Mathematics and Numeracy would support the Curriculum for Wales, whilst 24% **disagreed**.

- Some respondents preferred retaining separate GCSE Mathematics and GCSE Mathematics – Numeracy qualifications, as they felt numeracy is better suited to some learners and maths to others.
- Many respondents commented that the numeracy questions have a higher reading load than the maths questions, which makes them less accessible to those with poor literacy skills. By contrast, other respondents commented that integrating maths and numeracy will make the qualification more accessible for some learners and will suit a wider range of learners.
- Some respondents identified that there has been no visible reduction in content in the proposal for the new qualification, yet learners will receive only one grade, rather than the two separate grades they currently get for GSCE Mathematics and GSCE Mathematics-Numeracy.
- Other respondents questioned the size of the qualification and suggested that it should be either a single or double award rather than a 1.5 GSCE sized qualification.
- Respondents commented on the mode of assessment, with some stating that having the qualification assessed entirely by exam will be stressful to learners and impact on their wellbeing as well as presenting accessibility challenges. In contrast, other respondents welcomed the assessment proposal and felt that exams provide a level playing field for learners.
- Some respondents were concerned that the proposed size of the qualification would impact progression, with some commenting that the proposed size is not comparable to the GCSE maths qualification in England. Others stated that the reduction from two GCSEs in maths to 1.5 GCSEs could lead to a perception that there is a reduced emphasis on maths in the new curriculum. Consequently, they were worried that there could be a potential impact on learners applying to universities and seeking employment.
- Other respondents focused on the needs of high-ability learners and commented that the qualification needs to provide sufficient challenge to learners by including more complex mathematical content to enable progression onto A level.
- In relation to the unitised structure, respondents commented that this supports learner wellbeing through exams being more spread out rather than all at the end.
of the course, thereby allowing learners to build confidence. They felt this provides more opportunities for learners to sit exams and resits if necessary, which reduces the high-stakes nature of the exams as well as reducing the pressure at the end of year 11.
To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed GCSE Mathematics and Numeracy is manageable for teachers to deliver?

Please consider factors such as the size of the qualification, resources and the proposed approach to assessment.

175 responses

47% agreed that the proposed design of GCSE Mathematics and Numeracy would support the Curriculum for Wales, whilst 25% disagreed.

- Respondents raised concern around the amount of content and time available to deliver the qualification. They suggested that there is too much content to teach in the time that would be allocated to 1.5 GCSEs. They highlighted how this would have a detrimental impact on the quality of teaching and learning, for example by encouraging teaching to the test or leading to topics being covered superficially with no opportunity to go into depth. Respondents were concerned that there would be a reduction in teaching time.
- Others were of the view that there would need to be increased contact hours in further education settings to enable effective delivery of resits.
- Respondents noted that manageability was dependent on many factors including the number of hours assigned to teaching maths in schools, the number of tiers in the qualification, and the availability of resources including time for schools to prepare and adapt. Some noted that the extent to which the qualification is manageable for centres to deliver would differ across schools and depend on several factors.
- Respondents identified the following specific resources as central to supporting the successfully delivery of the qualification:
  - planning time
  - training and upskilling
  - lesson plans
  - specifications
  - IT equipment
- In addition to supporting resources, the following factors were identified as key concerns and challenges impacting the qualifications manageability:
  - additional teacher workload, for example in terms of time needed to familiarise themselves with the new qualification
  - the presence of other mathematics and numeracy qualifications alongside the GCSE (Level 2 Additional mathematics and Level 1 Number, Measure and Data) and the challenge of potentially having to deliver these as well as the GCSE
Overall, to what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposal for GCSE Mathematics and Numeracy?

171 responses

48% agreed that the proposed design of GCSE Mathematics and Numeracy would support the Curriculum for Wales, whilst 23% disagreed.

- Respondents reiterated points raised in other questions, which included the size of the qualification, number of grades, and volume of content.
- Some respondents took the opportunity here to comment on the other qualifications proposed within maths and numeracy (Level 1 Number, Measure and Data and Level 2 Additional Mathematics). There were mixed views and support for these qualifications. For example, some respondents queried how those qualifications relate to the GCSE, whilst others were more positive and commented on how they would support more applied mathematics.
- Other respondents stated that they would need more detailed information about the GCSE Maths and Numeracy qualification before they would be in a position to provide comment on the questions asked in the consultation.
Consultation outcomes: design requirements for Level 1 Number, Measure and Data

Introduction

We consulted on design proposals for a new Level 1 Number, Measure and Data qualification between 4 October and 14 December 2022. You can read the full design proposal here.

We received 44 responses to the consultation, and we have carefully analysed all of them. As part of our commitment to co-creation of new qualifications, we shared the feedback with our subject-level working group. Together, we considered how the proposed design could be amended and refined to address the points raised.

Summary of decisions

Since analysing responses and working with our subject-level working group, we have launched our consultation on the Full 14 to 16 Qualifications Offer. As part of this, we propose providing Foundation qualifications within mathematics and numeracy at Entry Level and Level 1, to supplement GCSEs.

As we are currently consulting on Foundation qualifications within this area, we have decided to defer publication of the final design requirements (known as approval criteria) for this qualification until 2024.

This will allow us to further amend any design requirements for the Level 1 Number, Measure and Data qualification based on the outcomes of the consultation for the Full 14 to 16 Qualifications Offer. This will ensure any qualifications developed here contribute to a coherent and inclusive offer.
### Summary of responses

**To what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposed qualification title of Level 1 Number, Measure and Data?**

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<th>Percentage</th>
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<td>47%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>12%</td>
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43 responses

56% agreed with the proposed qualification title of **Level 1 Number, Measure and Data**, whilst 14% disagreed.

- Some respondents felt that including ‘Level 1’ in the title makes the qualification seem too basic, while others thought it makes it clear what level the qualification is.
- Some thought the title reflects the course content.
- Others suggested alternative titles for the qualification.

**To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed design of Level 1 Number, Measure and Data supports the Curriculum for Wales?**

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<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
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42 responses

69% agreed that the proposed design of **Level 1 Number, Measure and Data** would support the Curriculum for Wales, whilst 12% disagreed.

- Some respondents commented that the Curriculum for Wales aims to increase aspirations for all learners, so expecting most learners to sit this qualification will reduce expectations and could limit progress.
- Some respondents noted that the qualification doesn’t cover the full breadth of the statements of what matters for the mathematics and numeracy **Area of Learning and Experience**.
**To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed purposes and aims of Level 1 Number, Measure and Data?**

41 responses

63% **agreed** that the proposed design of **Level 1 Number, Measure and Data** would support the Curriculum for Wales, whilst 17% **disagreed**.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>20%</td>
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- Respondents queried the intended audience for this qualification, questioning whether it should be for most learners and what benefit the qualification would be to those learners already taking a GCSE.
- Some thought it might help build confidence in maths for some learners but wouldn’t be challenging enough for others.
- Some respondents thought the purpose and aims reflect the basic numeracy skills that learners will need for future employment and their day-to-day lives.
- Others were concerned about the currency of this qualification and questioned if it would be valued by employers and further education.

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**To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed content (knowledge, understanding, skills and experiences) for Level 1 Number, Measure and Data?**

41 responses

78% **agreed** that the proposed design of **Level 1 Number, Measure and Data** would support the Curriculum for Wales, whilst 10% **disagreed**.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>22%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>12%</td>
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- Respondents generally agreed with the content, noting a clear emphasis on the maths required for employment which gives all pupils the ability to access and achieve a basic maths qualification covering real-life everyday maths.
- Some respondents provided suggestions for additional content.
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed assessment arrangements, including the role of digital technology, for Level 1 Number, Measure and Data?

41 responses

59% agreed that the proposed design of Level 1 Number, Measure and Data would support the Curriculum for Wales, whilst 17% disagreed.

- Some respondents questioned the validity of assessing mathematics using a digital platform.
- Some were concerned about the levels of security and commented that digital assessment doesn’t favour some learners.
- Respondents felt learners being able to show workings out is important.
- Others were encouraged to see the use of digital assessment, seeing it as a step in the right direction.
- Some respondents welcomed the flexibility of an on-demand test suggesting it would make it more manageable to administer tests.
- Some comments related to grading, querying the proposal to just grade the qualification as pass or fail, whilst others asked how the grading of the qualification would be used in performance measures.
To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposal for Level 1 Number, Measure and Data meets the reasonable needs of learners in Wales? Please consider factors such as accessibility, manageability, wellbeing and progression onto post-16 pathways.

40 responses

45% agreed that the proposed design of Level 1 Number, Measure and Data would support the Curriculum for Wales, whilst 28% disagreed.

- Respondents further questioned the intended audience of this qualification suggesting it shouldn’t be for most learners.
- Some thought it might motivate particular types of learners and help them with their confidence but wouldn’t be challenging enough for other learners.
- Some respondents thought that there was a danger of overloading learners with too many assessments.
- Other respondents felt it would be useful to have practice tests to help familiarise learners with digital assessments in maths.
**To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed Level 1 Number, Measure and Data is manageable for teachers to deliver? Please consider factors such as the size of the qualification, resources and the proposed approach to assessment.**

42 responses

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<tr>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>12%</td>
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</table>

45% **agreed** that the proposed design of **Level 1 Number, Measure and Data** would support the Curriculum for Wales, whilst 17% **disagreed**.

- Some respondents thought it is possible and manageable to deliver the qualification alongside the GCSE. However, some noted more information would be needed to fully understand any manageability issues.
- Respondents felt that a lack of digital facilities could disrupt learners’ attendance of other classes.
- Some drew comparisons to the logistical challenges for the online personalised assessments in reading and numeracy.
- Others felt on-demand timing of assessment will help with any manageability issues.
- Some commented that this qualification will detract from teaching and learning of the GCSE in Mathematics and Numeracy.
Overall, to what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposal for Level 1 Number, Measure and Data?

40 responses

45% agreed that the proposed design of Level 1 Number, Measure and Data would support the Curriculum for Wales, whilst 25% disagreed.

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<th>Strongly agree</th>
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<td>13%</td>
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- Respondents offered alternative structures for the qualification including creating a level 2 qualification, and the option of offering online or paper versions of the exam.
- Others questioned whether it would replace the current entry level qualifications, how it links to Essential Skills Wales and how it will be used by post-16 providers.
- Some felt the qualification wasn’t comparable to other qualifications delivered elsewhere and therefore might have limited portability.
- Other comments included a concern that it will devalue GCSE grades D to G and that there needs to be consideration given to the performance measures associated with this qualification.
Consultation outcomes: design requirements for Level 2 Additional Mathematics

Introduction

We consulted on design proposals for a new Level 2 Additional Mathematics between 4 October and 14 December 2022. You can read the full design proposal here.

We received 43 responses to the consultation, and we have carefully analysed all of them. As part of our commitment to co-creation of new qualifications, we shared the feedback with our subject-level working group. Together, we considered how the proposed design could be amended and refined to address the points raised.

Summary of decisions

We have now agreed the final design requirements (known as approval criteria) for this qualification. These set out the requirements that awarding bodies must follow when developing this new qualification. You can read the approval criteria for the new Level 2 Additional Mathematics qualification here.

In finalising these approval criteria, we have made the following design decisions to address points raised in the consultation and further co-construction activity.

Content

The qualification will contain the six units we consulted on. However, the unit ‘coordinate geometry and trigonometry’ has now been changed to ‘geometry and trigonometry’ to more accurately reflect the intended content for the unit.

We have not prescribed the content for each unit. Instead, the awarding body will decide what the content is for each unit based on the purpose and aims of the qualification and what is deliverable within 20-30 guided learning hours.

Assessment

The approval criteria will reflect the proposal to have a unitised structure with unit certification to allow flexibility and recognise achievement for learners who complete fewer than three units.
There will be two core units for those who want to achieve a **Level 2 Additional Mathematics** qualification. Centres will have choice around which other unit learners take for the full qualification. The two core units will be calculus and algebra. This is in response to concern raised around consistency of standards and levels of demand between learners who choose to do different combination of units.

The two core units, calculus and algebra, will be available in the January exam series.

All units will be available in the summer exam series. This is in response to concerns around the impacts of increasing the number of assessments in the qualification (in comparison to the existing qualification) due to the unitised structure.

This qualification will be assessed entirely by exam and will not be tiered.
### Summary of responses

#### To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed design of Level 2 Additional Mathematics supports the Curriculum for Wales?

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<th>Agreement Level</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither agree nor disagree</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
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65% **agreed** that the proposed design of **Level 2 Additional Mathematics** would support the Curriculum for Wales, whilst 15% **disagreed**.

- Responses to this question contained themes discussed elsewhere in this report, for example around the assessment of the qualification and the proposed units.
- These are noted under the questions that correspond with those themes.

#### To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed purposes and aims of Level 2 Additional Mathematics?

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<th>Agreement Level</th>
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<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
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<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither agree nor disagree</td>
<td>21%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
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</table>

74% **agreed** with the proposed purpose and aims of **Level 2 Additional Mathematics**, whilst 5% **disagreed**.

- Respondents generally agreed with the proposed purpose and aims.
- Respondents provided feedback related to progression, noting the qualification offers challenge which prepares learners for post-16 qualifications.
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the indicative range of proposed units?

39 responses

69% **agreed** with the indicative range of proposed units, whilst 26% **disagreed**.

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<tr>
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<td>28%</td>
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- Respondents were positive about the range of units and specifically welcomed the introduction of applied mathematics units alongside the pure mathematics units.
- Respondents recognised that this would provide progression to a range of post-16 courses, as well as allowing a flexible approach, so that the amount of additional mathematics studied can be tailored to different learners.
- Some respondents felt there was too much choice in the range of units which might mean learners aren’t equally prepared for progression onto post-16 qualifications.
- Some felt there would be variation in availability of units across centres and others noted that some units don’t link to the current AS and A level in mathematics.
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed assessment arrangements, including the role of digital technology, for Level 2 Additional Mathematics?

39 responses

56% agreed with the proposed assessment arrangements, including the role of digital technology, for Level 2 Additional Mathematics, whilst 23% disagreed.

- Some respondents were encouraged by the flexible approach offered with a unitised structure.
- Other respondents noted manageability issues and additional assessment burden on learners.
- Some felt too much variation in the combination of units which learners could potentially take which could cause inconsistency in standards.
- A suggestion was made to provide a core unit to support some consistency in understanding and standards.
- Respondents had mixed views around the duration of assessments.
- Some agreed with the length of the exams not being substantially longer than one hour and felt two windows of assessment makes it more manageable, whereas others considered a linear qualification with all assessment in the summer preferable.
- Some respondents preferred a paper-based exam only approach stating that it is the best way to assess the subject content and allows learners to show their workings.
- Others suggested that an exam only approach would lead to teaching to the test and that they would like to see some form of digital assessment.
To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposal for Level 2 Additional Mathematics meets the reasonable needs of learners in Wales? Please consider factors such as accessibility, manageability, wellbeing and progression onto post-16 pathways.

40 responses

73% agreed that the proposal for **Level 2 Additional Mathematics** meets the reasonable needs of learners in Wales, whilst 15% disagreed.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of responses</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>8%</td>
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- Respondents took opportunity to reiterate their thoughts and answers to other questions. This included views that the qualification provides progression opportunities not only to AS and A level Mathematics but also other courses. However, some respondents noted that some of the proposed units do not relate to the content in the current Maths A level and therefore won’t contribute to progression to this qualification.
- Some respondents suggested the qualification will support accessibility and wellbeing, but some commented that the number of assessments a learner will be taking will increase for some.
To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed Level 2 Additional Mathematics is manageable for teachers to deliver? Please consider factors such as the size of the qualification, resources and the proposed approach to assessment.

39 responses

46% agreed that the proposed Level 2 Additional Mathematics is manageable for teachers to deliver, whilst 23% disagreed.

- Some respondents felt the number of teaching hours per unit is unmanageable.
- Some commented that the current qualification is often taught in lunchtimes or after school.
- Others felt the qualification was an appropriate size.
- Respondents commented that the unitised approach will make it more flexible and more manageable for some, including those who can’t deliver the full qualification currently.
- Others suggested it would make it less manageable for timetabling and difficult for schools to offer the flexibility.
- Respondents requested resources to support the successful delivery of the qualification.

Overall, to what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposal for Level 2 Additional Mathematics?

41 responses

59% agreed with our proposal for Level 2 Additional Mathematics, whilst 20% disagreed.

- Some respondents wanted more detail to answer some questions and queried how the qualification will contribute to performance measures.
- Some respondents drew comparisons with regards to the differences between the Level 2 Additional Mathematics qualification and the Level 2 Additional Core Cymraeg qualification.
Consultation outcomes: design requirements for GCSE Computer Science

Introduction

We consulted on design proposals for a new GCSE Computer Science qualification between 4 October and 14 December 2022. You can read the full design proposal on which we consulted here.

We received 41 responses to the consultation, and we have carefully analysed all of them. As part of our commitment to co-creation of new qualifications, we shared the feedback with our subject-level working group. Together, we considered how the proposed design could be amended and refined to address the points raised.

Summary of decisions

We have now agreed the final design requirements (known as approval criteria) for these qualifications. These set out the requirements that awarding bodies must follow when developing these new GCSEs. You can read the approval criteria for the new GCSE Computer Science here.

In finalising these approval criteria, we have made the following design decisions to address points raised in the consultation and further co-creation activity.

Purpose and aims

The purpose and aims for GCSE Computer Science largely reflect the consultation proposal with minor amendments to ensure clarity and appropriate links with the content and assessment.

Content

The content for GCSE Computer Science is broadly the same as our consultation proposal, with just minor amendments.

We have included a requirement that content relating to the evolution of technologies is integrated within the appropriate key topics outlined in the approval criteria, as opposed to being a standalone topic area about key developments. This will help ensure that technological developments are contextualised within the
content, which we anticipate will make the qualification more engaging and relevant for learners.

We have removed the experience of ‘exploring available pre-written code, combining or recontextualising it to create functional software’ as it was felt that this would significantly overlap with content that is being assessed in the coding assessment.

Assessment

**GCSE Computer Science** will be a unitised qualification. This means that learners will be able to complete each of their assessments in a different exam series. This is intended to help improve assessment manageability for learners.

In line with the consultation proposals, **GCSE Computer Science** will be assessed through two exams; a digital-only exam that will be worth 50% of the qualification and an on-screen coding assessment that will account for the other 50%. The coding assessment will have to be completed at the end of Year 11 so that learners can develop their coding skills throughout the duration of the two-year course.

We have carefully considered feedback about the requirement for a single programming language to be prescribed by the awarding body in the specification. We remain convinced that a single programming language is better than multiple ones for this qualification because it will:

- enable learners to become very familiar with using it, which in turn will strengthen their understanding and skills in programming
- be more manageable for both teachers and learners
- help learners prepare for the qualification as the chosen programming language could be introduced throughout their secondary school careers
- enable the development of more focused resources and could encourage greater collaboration between centres

We have also carefully considered feedback about the design of the coding assessment. We remain committed to the proposed design but felt it would be helpful to take this opportunity to provide clarification about some of the key features of the assessment:

- learners will be able to engage with the pre-release brief for around a year before the assessment
- in this time, they will be able to develop the necessary knowledge, skills and understanding, as well as functional solutions, to be able to succeed
- work undertaken prior to the assessment will not contribute to a learner’s grade. Learners will be able to work collaboratively, access the internet to source code or engage with teachers during this time
• this should help facilitate a collaborative learning experience that is reflective of coding in the real world
• the assessment will not rely on coding from memory - learners will have access to a partial solution during the assessment that they will be required to develop into a workable solution, and they will be familiar with the brief and the programming language, which will help them complete the assessment

In line with the consultation proposals, both the exam and coding assessment will only be available digitally. This means that learners will take these assessments on-screen, making appropriate use of the features this offers. The format of these assessments will ensure that learners have highly valid assessment experiences in this subject and will also align with the approach being taken in other similar qualifications, such as GCSE Digital Technology. These digital assessments will provide consistency with the digital-based delivery of subject content in this qualification, further supporting learner engagement and manageability.

In line with the consultation proposals, **GCSE Computer Science** will not be tiered. All learners will be able to access the full range of marks available.

We will continue to consider feedback around manageability of the qualification as part of our ongoing change management work.
Summary of responses

**To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed design of GCSE Computer Science supports the Curriculum for Wales?**

| 21% Strongly agree | 56% Agree | 21% Neither agree nor disagree | 3% Disagree | 3% Strongly disagree |

77% agreed that the proposed design of GCSE Computer Science would support the Curriculum for Wales, whilst 3% disagreed.

- Respondents generally felt that the proposed design would support the Curriculum for Wales, in particular the four purposes. It was noted that the proposal could enhance lifelong learning and practical skills, equipping students for a digital future.
- While most respondents agreed that the proposed design would support the Curriculum for Wales, some felt that additional detail at a specification level would be needed in order to make a more certain judgement.

**To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed purposes and aims of GCSE Computer Science?**

| 39% Strongly agree | 55% Agree | 3% Neither agree nor disagree | 3% Disagree | 3% Strongly disagree |

95% agreed with the proposed purposes and aims, whilst 3% disagreed.

- Respondents who supported the proposal said that the purposes and aims were in line with their expectations of what GCSE Computer Science should aim to achieve.
- Respondents felt that learners would have the opportunity to develop useful and appropriate knowledge, skills and understanding in the subject, which would help them progress into the workplace or further study. The inclusion of social and ethical considerations was particularly welcomed.
- Some respondents noted that digital skills within the workplace are becoming more vital and felt that this qualification could help address an existing skills gap, particularly around programming.
- There was a concern that the proposals focused too heavily on programming and did not consider areas of future development within the sector.¹

¹It is useful to note that GCSE Digital Technology provides an alternative qualification for learners who wish to study less programming. It also includes content on new and emerging technologies.
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed content (knowledge, understanding, skills, and experiences) for GCSE Computer Science?

39 responses

72% agreed with the proposed content for GCSE Computer Science, whilst 10% disagreed.

- Respondents who supported the proposed content appreciated the focus on the underpinning principles of computer science, and the fundamentals of programming and computing. They also supported the inclusion of software development.
- Respondents welcomed the wide range of authentic contexts as they felt this would effectively prepare learners for progression to further study and employment.
- Respondents were also pleased that the qualification will provide an opportunity for unplugged and collaborative learning experiences as a way of supporting learners to develop their practical programming skills. This was linked to the perception that collaborative learning is vital in real-world computer science environments.
- The inclusion of legal, social, ethical, environmental and professional dimensions was also positively received by respondents. It was felt that this would be particularly relevant when considering recent technological developments within the sector.
- While a significant number of respondents agreed with the proposed content, some caveated this by stating that they would need more detail before they could make a final judgment. It was recognised that this would be available in the specification.
- Some respondents raised concerns around the potential volume of content in the qualification once these requirements have been amplified into a specification. These concerns noted that the existing GCSE Computer Science has too much content, which leads to manageability issues in some centres and makes the qualification difficult for some learners to access.
- Some respondents noted reservations regarding the requirement for a single specified programming language. They felt that focusing on one, rather than a range, could be limiting.
- Some respondents provided specific suggestions for content that they felt could be included or emphasized. These were all discussed as part of our co-creation process and included:
  - the ethical use of ICT
  - links to other curriculum areas
  - high level mathematics
  - machine Learning
  - data analytics
  - Content around ways of working (for example, communicating technical concepts to non-technical people, conflict management, group coding)
  - free and open-source software
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed assessment arrangements, including the role of digital technology, for GCSE Computer Science?

38 responses

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64% agreed that the proposed assessment arrangements, whilst 23% disagreed.

- Respondents were broadly positive about the digital nature of the assessments, which they said were a valid and engaging way to assess a digital based qualification.
- Some respondents were concerned that two digital assessments may be challenging to manage, both for centres and for the awarding body. It was felt that further detail around how the assessments are likely to operate could help allay these concerns.
- Respondents were pleased that the digital examination and coding assessment would contribute equally to the overall grade. Respondents felt that the increased weighting of the practical coding assessment, when compared to the existing specification, better reflects the practical nature of the subject. They also felt that the increase in weighting is more aligned with the likely teaching and learning time required for learners to succeed in this assessment.
- Respondents’ views on the coding assessment were varied. Some felt that it would be both engaging and valid as learners would have the opportunity to use the pre-released brief to help develop their coding skills in the classroom before engaging with a pre-written, partial solution in the assessment. Others expressed concerns that the highly controlled nature of the assessment itself would not be representative of an authentic programming experience. They also felt that teachers would have to devote a significant amount of teaching time to developing learners programming skills in order for them to undertake the assessment.
- Some respondents suggested that the coding assessment should be broken down into a number of tasks that are completed over time.
To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposal for GCSE Computer Science meets the reasonable needs of learners in Wales?

Please consider factors such as accessibility, manageability, wellbeing and progression onto post-16 pathways.

39 responses

75% agreed that the proposed design of GCSE Computer Science would meet the reasonable needs of learners, whilst 8% disagreed.

- Respondents who supported the proposal felt that it would provide learners with the knowledge and skills needed for progression within the subject area.
- A number of respondents reflected on the need to ensure the qualification is engaging and accessible to learners. They felt that the current specification is too challenging for some learners and hoped that this new qualification would be more accessible.
- While recognising that this qualification would meet the needs of learners who are interested in programming, some respondents suggested that there could be scope for an additional digital qualification focusing on software use.²

² It is worth noting that the existing GCSE Digital Technology meets this need and will continue to be available following the implementation of the new suite of qualifications.
### To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed GCSE in Computer Science is manageable for teachers to deliver?

Please consider factors such as the size of the qualification, resources and the proposed approach to assessment.

38 responses

42% **agreed** that the proposed design of **GCSE Computer Science** would be manageable for teachers to deliver whilst 24% **disagreed**.

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- While some respondents agreed that the proposed qualification would be manageable for teachers to deliver, this was often with the caveat that additional detail at a specification level would help them to fully determine whether they would need to access additional training.
- Some respondents highlighted that in some centres, this qualification may be delivered by non-subject specialists who would likely need upskilling to effectively deliver aspects of the specification, particularly around programming and coding.
- Respondents were concerned about the potential hardware and software requirements. It was felt that if additional hardware and software needs to be purchased, some centres may not be able to offer the qualification due to budget constraints.
- Some respondents said that comprehensive teaching and learning resources would be very beneficial in supporting teachers.

### Overall, to what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposal for GCSE Computer Science?

39 responses

64% **agreed** with our proposals for **GCSE Computer Science** overall, whilst 13% **disagreed**.

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- Written comments provided by respondents to this question relate to specific aspects of the proposals and have already been discussed in the appropriate sections of this report.
Consultation outcomes: design requirements for GCSE Design and Technology

Introduction

We consulted on design proposals for a new GCSE Design and Technology qualification between 4 October and 14 December 2022. You can read the full design proposal on which we consulted here.

We received 79 responses to the consultation, and we have carefully analysed all of them. As part of our commitment to the co-creation of new qualifications, we shared the feedback with our subject-level working group. Together, we considered how the proposed design could be amended and refined to address the points raised.

Summary of decisions

We have now agreed the final design requirements (known as approval criteria) for these qualifications. These set out the requirements that awarding bodies must follow when developing these new GCSEs. You can read the approval criteria for the new GCSE Design and Technology here.

In finalising these approval criteria, we have made the following design decisions to address points raised in the consultation and further co-creation activity.

Purpose and aims

The purpose and aims largely reflect the consultation proposal with minor amendments to ensure clarity and appropriate links with the content and assessment.

Content

The content for GCSE Design and Technology largely reflects the consultation proposal with minor amendments. As an example, we have more clearly linked the relevant content requirements with each stage of the design thinking process.

We have introduced a requirement for environmental considerations to be integrated within appropriate topics within the specification. This reflects our commitment to ensuring that these qualifications support the Curriculum for Wales by giving learners opportunities to develop their understanding of sustainable
development, the challenges the environment and society face, and how they can engage with and make a difference on issues supporting sustainable citizenship.

We have also reviewed the experiences section and made minor amendments to ensure that there is no overlap with aspects of the content that will be assessed, and to ensure coherence with the approval criteria for other similar subjects.

Assessment

**GCSE Design and Technology** will be a linear qualification. This means that learners will have sufficient time to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding throughout the duration of the two-year course. This will support learners to fully explore and develop their design skills.

It also means that the exam will be sat at the end of the course so learners will be able to draw on their experience of applying the relevant knowledge and understanding in the non-exam assessment (NEA) when responding to exam questions.

The proportion of exam and NEA reflects the consultation proposal, with 30% of the qualification being assessed via exam and 70% through a practical design project. This balance will offer learners a variety of assessment opportunities and support accessibility for a wide range of learners. The NEA will be set by the awarding body, marked by the school, and moderated by the awarding body.

We are requiring the awarding body to develop a digital-only exam for **GCSE Design and Technology**. A digital exam will allow learners to respond to a wide range of stimulus material related to design thinking or subject-specific processes.

The use of technology in the exam also has a natural link with the subject content. However, we know that the existing **GCSE Design and Technology** exam includes questions that require learners to draw diagrams, which could be difficult to achieve in a digital exam.

We are therefore requiring the awarding body to consider how best to assess these skills when designing the qualification, and to explain and justify its approach as part of the approval process.

In line with the consultation proposals, **GCSE Design and Technology** will not be tiered. All learners will be able to access the full range of marks available.
Summary of responses

To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed design of GCSE Design and Technology supports the Curriculum for Wales?
77 responses
94% agreed that the proposed design of GCSE Design and Technology would support the Curriculum for Wales, whilst 1% disagreed.

- Respondents who agreed felt that the proposals provided significant opportunities for learners to engage with the four purposes of the Curriculum for Wales, with ‘enterprising and creative contributors’ often being cited as the purpose that would likely be best facilitated within this qualification.
- Respondents also highlighted that learners would have the opportunity to develop their problem-solving skills.
- Respondents felt that the proposal would allow for significant flexibility in terms of delivery within centres, which they felt aligned with the ethos of the Curriculum.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed purposes and aims of GCSE Design and Technology?
75 responses
95% agreed with the proposed purpose and aims for GCSE Design and Technology, whilst 1% disagreed.

- Respondents particularly welcomed the focus on the application of knowledge in practical contexts.
- Respondents felt that the purpose and aims would support learners to engage in an iterative design process, which they said would accurately reflect the way in which products are designed in industry.
- Respondents also felt that the focus on an iterative design process would help facilitate learner progression into further education and apprenticeship programmes.
- Respondents were positive about the inclusion of ‘craftsmanship’. It was suggested that the emphasis on the quality of the final product was not as evident in previous iterations of the qualification and respondents were keen for learners to be rewarded for the quality of their designs and products.
- It was also noted that the proposed purpose and aims linked well with the four purposes of the Curriculum.
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed content (knowledge, understanding, skills, and experiences) for GCSE Design and Technology?

77 responses

91% agreed with the proposed content for GCSE Design and Technology, whilst 3% disagreed.

- Respondents welcomed the extent to which the proposed content reflects authentic industry practices and processes. Respondents were particularly pleased that learners would be supported in developing their practical skills by engaging with an iterative design process.
- Respondents felt that the content would provide appropriate breadth and depth across the three endorsed pathways.
- Respondents welcomed the inclusion of what they felt were robust and authentic experiences.
- Whilst many respondents agreed with the proposed content, some caveated this by stating that they would need more detail, in the form of a specification, before making a final judgment.
- Respondents provided some suggestions for specific content which we have considered as part of our co-creation activity. This included a greater emphasis on global impacts of design and manufacturing, and on ethical and sustainable design.
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed assessment arrangements, including the role of digital technology, for GCSE Design and Technology?

76 responses

75% agreed with the proposed assessment arrangements for GCSE Design and Technology, whilst 11% disagreed.

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- Nearly all respondents supported the balance of practical design project (70%) and external exam (30%). Respondents felt that the increased weighting of the design project (when compared to the existing specification) better reflects the skills based, practical nature of the subject. It was also suggested that this would likely translate into more teaching time being focused on the development of practical skills and application of knowledge.
- A few respondents suggested that 60% for the design project and 40% for the exam would be more appropriate. They felt that this balance would still emphasise the importance of the development of practical skills but would also mean that the results of the exam would have a more significant impact on a learner’s overall grade.
- Respondents welcomed the inclusion of a requirement for learners to be able to submit their portfolios for the design project digitally. This was felt to be appropriate as learners may choose to use digital mediums or tools, such as computer aided design or computer aided manufacturing, as part of their design projects or may prefer to produce a digital portfolio for appropriate sections of their work, such as research.
To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposal for GCSE Design and Technology meets the reasonable needs of learners in Wales?
Please consider factors such as accessibility, manageability, wellbeing and progression onto post-16 pathways.

77 responses

84% agreed that the proposed design of GCSE Design and Technology would meet the reasonable needs of learners, whilst 3% disagreed.

- Respondents welcomed the inclusion of the three endorsed pathways and felt that they should meet the needs and interests of a wide range of learners, and support progression into further education and training. However, a few respondents felt that there is scope for additional pathways, such as electronics.
- Some respondents felt that there was less content than in the existing specification, which they said would make it more manageable for centres and learners. However, some respondents raised concerns around the potential volume of content in the qualification once the requirements in the approval criteria have been amplified into a specification.
- Respondents generally felt that the increased weighting of the practical element, (when compared to the existing specification) was positive as it would cater to those learners who are more practically inclined.
- However, it was also suggested that the decreased weighting of the exam may not encourage learners who are more academically inclined to choose this subject.
To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed GCSE in Design and Technology is manageable for teachers to deliver?
Please consider factors such as the size of the qualification, resources and the proposed approach to assessment.
76 responses

82% agreed that the proposed design of GCSE Design and Technology would be manageable for teachers to deliver whilst 5% disagreed.

- Most respondents felt that the qualification would be manageable for centres and teachers.
- Whilst some respondents felt that they could deliver the qualification with the resources already available in their centre, some were concerned that this may not be the case for all centres. They suggested that this could mean that some centres are unable to deliver the qualification in the most effective and engaging way, which they felt could disadvantage some learners.
- Respondents were concerned that it would be challenging for non-specialist teachers to deliver the qualification without appropriate training and resources.

Overall, to what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposal for GCSE Design and Technology?
76 responses

89% agreed with our proposals for GCSE Design and Technology overall, whilst 1% disagreed.

- Overall respondents were very positive about the proposal. They felt that it would effectively meet the needs of learners by catering to their interests and facilitating progression, and be manageable for teachers and centers to deliver.
Consultation outcomes: design requirements for GCSE Engineering

Introduction
We consulted on design proposals for a new GCSE Engineering qualification between 4 October and 14 December 2022. You can read the full design proposal on which we consulted here.

We received 29 responses to the consultation, and we have carefully analysed all of them. As part of our commitment to co-creation of new qualifications, we shared the feedback with our subject-level working group. Together, we considered how the proposed design could be amended and refined to address the points raised.

Summary of decisions
We have now agreed the final design requirements (known as approval criteria) for these qualifications. These set out the requirements that awarding bodies must follow when developing these new GCSEs. You can read the approval criteria for the new GCSE Engineering here.

In finalising these approval criteria, we have made the following design decisions to address points raised in the consultation and further co-creation activity.

Purpose and aims
The purpose and aims largely reflect the consultation proposal with minor amendments to ensure clarity and appropriate links with the content and assessment.

The intention of this GCSE is to provide a foundation of engineering principles, knowledge, and skills, which learners can build upon as they progress in further education or training in engineering. As such, we have not included pathways that would enable learners to specialise in a specific aspect of engineering.

Content
The content for GCSE Engineering largely reflects the consultation proposal, with minor amendments. As an example, we have added a requirement for the awarding body to clearly outline the specific mathematics that will be taught as part of this
qualification in the specification, and to provide the reasons for its inclusion as part of the approval process. This is to ensure that the mathematics being taught is both appropriate and relevant to the subject.

We have also reviewed the experiences section and made minor amendments to ensure clarity and coherence with the requirements for other subjects. As an example, we have included an experience around ‘historical and cultural influences on engineering’. Having this as an experience, as opposed to prescribed content, will help ensure that historical and cultural influences relating to engineering developments are contextualised within the content, without constraining the assessment of the qualification.

**Assessment**

**GCSE Engineering** will be a unitised qualification. This means that learners will be able to take the digital exam and practical assessment in a different exam series. This is intended to help improve assessment manageability for learners.

The digital exam will be available for learners to complete in Year 10, should they wish to do so. The knowledge and understanding that will be assessed in this exam will be required for learners to complete their other assessments, so providing an opportunity to complete this examination first will help prepare learners for both the non-examination assessment (NEA) and the practical assessment.

The proportion of exam and NEA reflects the consultation proposal with 20% of the qualification being assessed through a digital exam, 60% through a portfolio made up of practical tasks, and 20% through a practical assessment. This balance will offer learners a variety of assessment opportunities and support accessibility for a wide range of learners. The NEA will be set by the awarding body, marked by the centre, and moderated by the awarding body. The practical assessment will be set and marked by the awarding body.

The exam for **GCSE Engineering** will only be available digitally. This means that it will be taken on-screen, supporting engagement for learners, and allowing for a diverse range of item types to be used. This may include the use of stimulus images and videos in the assessment, which will be linked to the materials and processes learners will study.

In line with consultation proposals, **GCSE Engineering** will not be tiered. All learners will be able to access the full range of marks available.

We will continue to consider feedback around manageability of the qualification as part of our ongoing change management work.
Summary of responses

**To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed design of GCSE Engineering supports the Curriculum for Wales?**

69% agreed that the proposed design of GCSE Engineering would support the Curriculum for Wales, whilst 12% disagreed.

- Those who agreed felt that the proposed design provided significant opportunities for learners to engage with all four purposes of the Curriculum for Wales - ‘enterprising and creative contributors’ and ‘ambitious capable learners’ were often cited as the purposes that would likely be best facilitated within this qualification.
- Respondents also felt that the qualification would help facilitate the development of problem-solving skills.
- The remaining comments provided by respondents related to other sections of our proposals, primarily regarding assessment arrangements, and have been addressed in the relevant sections of this report.

**To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed purposes and aims of GCSE Engineering?**

77% agreed with the proposed purposes and aims of GCSE Engineering, whilst 12% disagreed.

- Respondents felt that the proposed purposes and aims effectively reflected what learners undertaking an engineering qualification at 14-16 should aim to achieve.
- Respondents welcomed the focus on practical skills and the application of knowledge for a specific purpose as they felt this provided a clear link between the subject and engineering in the workplace.
- Some respondents expressed reservations about a GCSE in engineering and suggested that instead the focus for 14–16-year-olds should be on mathematics and physics, before introducing engineering in further education.
- However, others felt that introducing GCSE Engineering would increase the profile of the subject area and attract more learners with an interest in engineering to study the subject and consider careers in the sector.
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed content (knowledge, understanding, skills, and experiences) for GCSE Engineering?

26 responses

73% agreed with the proposed content for GCSE Engineering, whilst 15% disagreed.

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- Respondents welcomed the focus on practical skills relating to the manufacturing of products and engineering solutions, as opposed to the designing element, which was viewed as more appropriate within GCSE Design and Technology.
- The inclusion of mathematical and scientific aspects of engineering was viewed positively by respondents as they felt this would help make the subject appeal to more academically inclined learners. However, it was stressed that the mathematics or science included within the qualification must be specific to the subject and have a practical application.
- Some respondents felt that the proposed content lacked sufficient breadth of the different types of engineering, with some suggesting that pathways should be introduced for specific specialisms.
- Some respondents questioned the inclusion of a topic around ‘historical and modern influences on engineering’ - they did not feel this was appropriate because the qualification is intended to be practical in nature, and the purpose of the theory content is to underpin the development of skills.
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed assessment arrangements, including the role of digital technology, for GCSE Engineering?

26 responses

77% **agreed** that the proposed assessment arrangements for **GCSE Engineering**, whilst 8% **disagreed**.

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- Nearly all respondents were supportive of the extent to which the exam and each of the practical components would contribute to the overall grade.
- Respondents felt that the focus on practical assessments reflects the skills-based, practical nature of the qualification. It was also felt that this would likely translate into more teaching time being focused on the development of practical skills and application of knowledge, which in turn would have a positive impact on learner engagement.
- Some respondents felt that the focus on the assessment of skills and application of knowledge would help prepare learners for further education and training opportunities, which they said also tend to have a significant practical focus.
- However, other respondents suggested that the weighting of the digital only exam should be significantly higher given the demanding theoretical nature of the subject at a post-16 level, particularly in higher education.
- It was suggested that increasing the percentage weighting of the examination component could help prepare learners for progression into higher education.
To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposal for GCSE Engineering meets the reasonable needs of learners in Wales?
Please consider factors such as accessibility, manageability, wellbeing and progression onto post-16 pathways.
22 responses

77% agreed that the proposed design of GCSE Engineering would meet the reasonable needs of learners, whilst 14% disagreed.

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- Respondents who supported the proposal felt that GCSE Engineering would provide learners with the foundational skills and understanding needed to further their educational and career ambitions within the sector.
- Some respondents queried whether an equivalent AS/A level qualification would be developed. It was suggested that this would be useful as it would provide a direct progression route to post-16 education in the subject.
- Respondents felt that the balance of different assessment arrangements outlined in the proposals would be both manageable and accessible to a wide range of learners.
- It was also suggested that the introduction of this qualification could provide an opportunity to increase awareness of the sector among learners and to address the gender imbalance in STEM\(^1\) subjects.

\(^1\) Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed GCSE in Engineering is manageable for teachers to deliver?

Please consider factors such as the size of the qualification, resources and the proposed approach to assessment.

26 responses

73% agreed that the proposed design of GCSE Engineering would be manageable for teachers to deliver whilst 12% disagreed.

- While the vast majority of respondents felt that the qualification would be manageable for centres and teachers to deliver, some concerns were highlighted.
- It was noted that this subject area would require specialist knowledge in order to deliver effectively. While it was recognised that many of the current cohort of design and technology teachers delivering the existing engineering pathway would be able deliver this qualification, it was felt that there may be a need to engage with higher education to ensure appropriate teacher training programmes are available.
- Respondents noted that the resources and materials available to centres varies and felt that some centres may not be able to effectively deliver all of the content and experiences outlined in the proposals without sufficient monetary investment.
- It was suggested that schools may benefit from establishing effective partnerships with further education institutions to support professional development and access to workshop resources.
- While some respondents welcomed the digital only nature of the exam, they expressed concerns around the manageability for centres, particularly in relation to access to appropriate hardware.

Overall, to what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposal for GCSE Engineering?

26 responses

77% agreed with our proposals for GCSE Engineering overall, whilst 12% disagreed.

- Written comments provided by respondents to this question relate to specific aspects of the proposals and have been discussed in the appropriate sections of this report.
Consultation outcomes: design requirements for GCSE The Sciences (Double Award)

Introduction

We consulted on design proposals for a new GCSE The Sciences (Double Award) qualification between 4 October and 14 December 2022. You can read the full design proposal on which we consulted here.

We received 456 responses to the consultation, and we have carefully analysed all of them. The design proposal for a new GCSE The Sciences (Double Award) qualification received the highest number of responses of all the proposals we consulted on and elicited a high level of disagreement.

The majority of written responses from those disagreeing with the proposals focused on decisions made in 2021 on the range of GCSEs that should be available for 14–16-year-olds in Wales, rather than on the specific design features presented within the proposals for this consultation.

GCSE science qualification offer

Currently, schools in Wales can choose to offer their learners a range of GCSEs in science - GCSE Science (Double Award), GCSE Biology, GCSE Chemistry, GCSE Physics or GCSE Applied Science (Single or Double Award).

Overall, around two-thirds of learners in Wales study the double award GCSE, which is designed to fully support progression onto science AS and A levels.¹

GCSEs in Biology, Chemistry and Physics are commonly referred to as separate science GCSEs. Almost all learners who follow this path take all three qualifications.

Currently, around 1 in 5 centres in Wales do not offer these qualifications.²

In 2021, we consulted on the range of GCSEs that would be available to support the Curriculum for Wales (the Curriculum). Following that consultation, we announced our decision to create a combined, double award GCSE in ‘The Sciences’ to replace

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¹ Based on Qualifications Wales analysis of Welsh Examinations Database from 2018/2019
² Based on Qualifications Wales analysis of Welsh Examinations Database from 2018/2019
the existing suite of GCSE science qualifications. You can read the rationale for this decision in our decisions report here.

**What we heard**

Although the available range of GCSE science qualifications was not the focus of this consultation, a large proportion of responses focused on this aspect of the reforms.

In summary, the main concerns raised were based on the following perceptions:

- there will be a lack of choice for learners because they will no longer be able to choose how much time they spend studying science
- learners with a particular interest in science may have to choose a subject that they are less interested in instead of a third science GCSE
- some learners, who are particularly motivated by the separate science GCSEs, may become disengaged and be less likely to continue studying science at AS and A level
- in many schools, learners taking separate science GCSEs spend more time studying science than those taking the double award – which means that some learners could spend less time studying science than they currently do – so it could impact how prepared they are for AS courses in science
- it may also reduce the number of science teachers required in some schools
- some schools may be more inclined to employ non-discipline specialist teachers to deliver a combined science qualification - which could impact on the quality of teaching and learning
- compared to separate science GCSEs, learners would have one fewer science grade to put towards applications for further study.
- aggregated grades that combine performance across each of the three disciplines may hide stronger performance in one or two of the sciences – which may affect progression opportunities
- learners in Wales may be compared less favourably to applicants from England who have taken separate sciences when applying to university
- some learners may find it difficult to access a double award GCSE as it is bigger than a separate science GCSE or the single applied science GCSE

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3 You can read a more detailed summary of points raised in the summary of responses section later on in this report.
**What we have done**

In light of the concerns raised during the consultation, we looked again at whether to introduce additional qualifications alongside the new GCSE **The Sciences (Double Award)**.

We considered a range of options, including creating new separate GCSEs in biology, chemistry, and physics, creating an additional science qualification at level 2, and creating a new combined single award GCSE.

To refine our thinking, we engaged with a wide range of stakeholders, including colleges, universities, the learned societies,\(^4\) Estyn, WJEC, Welsh Government, our Subject Level Working Group for ‘The Sciences’ and a number of our other specialist stakeholder groups. We met with a number of universities, including Russell Group institutions, to discuss the concerns raised in the consultation about progression to higher education. We were consistently told that no university requires, or has a clear preference for, either a double award or separate science GCSEs. Universities were keen to clarify that they are used to considering both qualifications within their admissions process and that they have to treat each route on equal merit because not all centres (in Wales and in England) offer separate science GCSEs.

Some universities said that they currently take account of the fact that grades for the science double award GCSEs are aggregated as part of their admissions processes.

We worked closely with subject experts to compare the content for the proposed double award GCSE with the current separate science GCSEs, as well as with the current AS and A level qualifications. We are confident that the proposed double award qualification will enable learners to progress onto AS and A level courses in the sciences. We also found some overlap in content across the three separate science GCSEs.

We have also engaged extensively with further education colleges on our proposals. Some colleges felt that learners who have completed separate science GCSEs may be better prepared for AS courses. However, colleges who regularly accept learners from schools who only offer the double award said that this does not create a problem for learners in terms of their readiness and progression on to science AS and A level courses. They felt that it would be appropriate for this to become commonplace across Wales as this would mean that all post-16 learners would be starting from the same position.

To further explore the question of how GCSE science pathways may influence learners’ progression to and outcomes in AS science courses, we have analysed data

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\(^4\) The Royal Society of Biology, The Royal Society of Chemistry, The Institute of Physics, The Royal Society and The Association for Science Education.
on learner take up and outcomes in GCSE and AS sciences qualifications using data from the Welsh Examinations Database which is provided to us by Welsh Government. We used data from 2019, which is the last available set of data before the COVID-19 pandemic.

This analysis shows that a similar proportion of learners with high GCSE grades went on to achieve a grade A in AS science subjects, irrespective of whether they took the existing GCSE Science Double Award, or separate science GCSEs.

For example, of those taking WJEC AS Chemistry in schools in 2019, 45.3% of learners who achieved at least two A* grades in separate science GCSEs achieved an A grade in AS chemistry, compared to 60.0% of learners who had previously achieved A*A* in GCSE Science Double Award. Of those taking WJEC AS Physics in schools in 2019, 53.3% of learners who achieved at least two A* grades in separate science GCSEs achieved an A grade in AS Physics, compared to 50.7% of learners who had previously achieved A*A* in GCSE Science Double Award.

The data also shows that learners who enter separate science GCSEs generally have a higher mean GCSE score than learners who enter other science GCSEs. The mean GCSE scores of learners entering the double award science qualification are more evenly spread. This suggests that centres offering separate science GCSEs alongside GCSE Science (Double Award) tended to enter learners that achieve the highest average GCSE scores for the separate sciences.

This aligns with what we have heard anecdotally during our engagement with stakeholders that, in many centres, entry practices are guided by the set or class that a learner is in. It suggests that in reality learners themselves often have minimal choice over which science GCSEs to study.

We have published our analysis of science GCSE and AS entry and progression data in full, which you can read here.

We have involved Welsh Government closely in this work. Welsh Government has confirmed that a common pathway through GCSE science for the significant majority of learners would support the overall aims of the Curriculum because it allows for better integration of the sciences.

**What we have decided**

We have carefully considered all the consultation responses and the outcomes of our discussions with stakeholders. We have decided to continue to develop a new GCSE The Sciences (Double Award) as the main qualification to be taken by the significant majority of learners aged 14-16 in Wales. We are confident that this will be the right pathway for most learners because it:
• supports the Curriculum’s aim of integrating the study of science and developing learners’ scientific enquiry skills, whilst also giving them a strong foundation in each of the disciplines
• readily supports progression on to post-16 and higher education, and employment
• frees up space for learners and schools to study a broader more balanced range of subjects
• will ensure more equity across the offering of GCSE Science qualifications in Wales
• removes the perception that separate science GCSEs are either required, or preferred, for progression onto STEM courses in further or higher education
• simplifies the choices for learners at 14 that could impact on future career pathways, which in turn could increase the number of learners studying STEM at post-16

Although it is for schools to decide how to staff and timetable their science departments, we expect that the relevant aspects of this qualification will be taught by discipline-specialist teachers. Many schools who do not currently offer separate science GCSEs have told us they still use specialist teachers for teaching biology, chemistry, and physics. The qualification has been designed to ensure there are clear units in biology, chemistry, and physics, which we feel will encourage this practice to continue.

As we discuss in the design requirements section below, the new GCSE The Sciences (Double Award) will be markedly different to the current double award GCSE. One key difference is the inclusion of an interdisciplinary unit called Bringing The Sciences Together, which will support learners to make connections across the sciences, and in doing so, help align the qualification with the Curriculum. It will also ensure that teaching, learning and assessment is interdisciplinary for the selected content and taught through relevant themes, which we feel will help learners engage more fully with the sciences as a whole.

We are requiring the awarding body to separately report learner performance in each science discipline. This will be done on a learner’s transcript and based on their exam performance in each of the discrete units for biology, chemistry, and physics. This will enable learners to identify where their strengths lie and provide additional information for colleges and universities when making admission decisions in relation to STEM courses.

We will continue to work closely with stakeholders to ensure that the merits of this more common pathway are well understood and to ensure that universities are prepared for applications from learners who have completed this new qualification.
We have also decided to create a new combined single award GCSE in the sciences. It will offer an alternative, more accessible route for learners who may benefit from focusing on a smaller volume of content over the duration of the course and provide them with an opportunity to achieve a GCSE qualification in the sciences. This new single award will replace the existing GCSE Applied Science (Single Award). The consultation and our subsequent engagement with stakeholders highlighted that some learners thrive when taking the existing GCSE Applied Science (Single Award) qualification and go on to access a range of STEM courses at both level 2 and 3, and progress successfully into related careers. This decision mirrors the approach we are taking for GCSEs in Cymraeg and English and will ensure these learners are not disadvantaged by these reforms.

As is currently the case for the existing GCSE Applied Science (Single Award), we expect the new single award combined science GCSE will be taken by a small proportion of learners in Wales. There were 1,640 entries for GCSE Applied Science (Single award) in summer 2022, which was less than 6% of the cohort. We have no reason to believe that this will significantly change with these reforms. As we have previously noted in this report, the double award GCSE in the sciences should be treated as the most common and most suitable route for a significant majority of learners. The single award will not be designed to readily support progression to science AS and A levels.

Like the double award, the single award is intended to be delivered across a two-year course. Reflecting the fact that we intend this single award qualification to be taken by learners who will benefit from focusing on a smaller volume of content over the duration of the course, we expect that all learners will spend a similar number of hours studying science in Years 10 and 11, irrespective of which qualification they are taking. We will work with our partners, including Welsh Government and Estyn, to ensure that advice and guidance will be available for schools, learners, parents, and post-16 learning providers on the double and single award options in the sciences. This will aim to ensure that decisions and choices are made in the best interests of each learner.

We are currently working with our subject-level working group and other relevant stakeholders to co-create this single award GCSE in the sciences. We will publish our design requirements for this qualification, in the form of approval criteria, in the autumn. Our aim is for this qualification to be available for first teaching from September 2025, alongside the new double award GCSE. We will confirm the timeline for its introduction when we publish the approval criteria.

We have continued to work closely with the learned societies on these changes. They have strongly supported the creation of a single route through the sciences at GCSE
with a new double-award qualification that can provide the advantages of the triple award (separate) sciences route in a more equitable way. However, the learned societies have made clear that they do not support our decision to create a new single-award GCSE alongside the double-award GCSE, as they are concerned that this could lead to a two-tier system. While we appreciate this view, we remain confident that the single-award offers an important alternative for a small proportion of learners to study the sciences at GCSE level and progress successfully on to a range of post-16 STEM pathways.

We have decided not to create an additional level 2 science qualification at this time. We are confident that **GCSE The Sciences (Double Award)** will provide learners with an engaging learning experience that will enable them to progress onto AS and A level science courses, and then onto higher education or employment.
Design requirements for GCSE The Sciences (Double Award)

We carefully analysed all the feedback we received about the proposed design of GCSE The Sciences (Double Award). As part of our commitment to the co-creation of new qualifications, we shared the feedback with our subject-level working group. Together, we considered how the proposed design could be amended and refined to address the points raised. We have now agreed the final design requirements (known as approval criteria) for these qualifications. These set out the requirements that awarding bodies must follow when developing these new GCSEs.

You can read the approval criteria for the new GCSE The Sciences (Double Award) here.

In finalising these approval criteria, we have made the following design decisions to address points raised in the consultation and further co-creation activity.

**Title**

This new qualification will be called GCSE The Sciences (Double Award). We carefully considered the feedback to the consultation, including the suggestions for possible alternative titles, but have decided that this title best reflects the interdisciplinary nature of this qualification and clearly signals that it includes content on each of the three main disciplines of biology, chemistry, and physics. This title also signals that the new qualification will be different to the current GCSE Science (Double Award) qualification and the equivalent 9-1 GCSE Combined Science (Double Award) in England.

The term ‘Double Award’ is included to reflect the size of the qualification and to clearly signal that the qualification is larger than a standard GCSE. This will help to ensure that stakeholders recognise this difference and fairly reward learners for the breadth of content they have studied.

**Purpose and Aims**

The purpose and aims for GCSE The Sciences (Double Award) largely reflect the consultation proposal with minor amendments to ensure clarity and appropriate links with the content and assessment.

To confirm, this new double award GCSE will be the science qualification that will be taken by the significant majority of learners aged 14-16. It will provide learners with an opportunity to develop their knowledge, understanding and skills in a range of sciences, including biology, chemistry, and physics. It will fully support progression to AS and A level study in the sciences.
Content

Feedback to the consultation suggested that the volume of content proposed for the qualification may be too large. A number of these concerns were linked to the perception that the content for the three proposed interdisciplinary themes (climate change and achieving a sustainable future, exploring space, and health and wellbeing through sport and movement) would be in addition to content that is currently covered in the existing double award and separate science GCSEs.

We have reviewed the proposed approach for the interdisciplinary unit. Interdisciplinary teaching, learning and assessment will continue to be a key feature of the qualification, which will be reflected in the standalone unit of assessment called Bringing The Sciences Together. Instead of the three interdisciplinary themes that we consulted on, we will require the awarding body to outline a range of themes that offer an opportunity to bring together some of the content from biology, chemistry, and physics to be taught and assessed in an interdisciplinary way. These example themes will be developed by the awarding body, approved by us, and listed in the specification.

This approach will not require additional content to be included in the qualification. The content to be taught and assessed in an interdisciplinary way will be drawn from the content specified for biology, chemistry, and physics. Providing a range of themes will increase opportunities for interdisciplinary teaching and learning. This will encourage teachers within departments to discuss and agree how they will deliver the content in an interdisciplinary way, in line with the expectations of the Curriculum. This approach will also encourage schools to think about how they teach science in earlier years. The awarding body will publish a teacher guide that will suggest ways in which a more contextualised and interdisciplinary approach to assessment might be approached.

We have worked carefully with subject experts to incorporate any content previously listed under the three proposed themes on which we consulted, and which is necessary for progression, into the relevant biology, chemistry, and physics content. As not all content was necessary for progression, this exercise has helped reduce some of the overall content requirements for the qualification.

We have also worked closely with our subject experts to review the amount of discipline-specific content. This exercise identified that most of the content listed reflects the curriculum guidance and would be necessary for progression onto AS and A levels. We have therefore only made minor amendments to the content requirements in the approval criteria.
However, it is important to note that this work did identify a number of sub-topics that are part of the current double award qualification that will not necessarily need to be included in the new qualification. We therefore expect that when the awarding body develops the specification in line with the approval criteria, there will be clear differences in content between the existing double award qualification and the new one.

Having completed this work, we are confident that the content for **GCSE The Sciences (Double Award)** will:

- reflect the Curriculum for Wales guidance
- be engaging, relevant and manageable for learners and teachers
- allow learners to gain skills, knowledge and understanding in each of the three science disciplines
- give learners the opportunity to understand how the sciences are inter-related
- appropriately prepare learners for progression to A level and other qualifications
- support learners to be scientifically literate on completion of the qualification

We also reviewed the proposed experiences for **GCSE The Sciences (Double Award)** but did not find any need to make significant changes. The expectations set out in the approval criteria largely reflect the consultation proposal, with minor amendments to ensure clarity and consistency.

**Assessment**

**GCSE The Sciences (Double Award)** will be a unitised qualification. This means that learners will be able to complete assessments throughout the course of study. It is intended that this will help reduce the assessment burden and pressure that some learners could feel if they were required to complete all of their exams at the end of Year 11.

In the consultation, we asked for feedback on two options for how the assessment could be structured. We have decided that learners will complete one exam in each of the three main disciplines of biology, chemistry, and physics, as well as an interdisciplinary exam on *Bringing The Sciences Together* and a practical assessment. In line with the consultation proposals, scientific curiosity skills will permeate through all teaching, learning and assessment of this qualification.

Each of the three discipline-specific exams will contribute 25% towards the overall grade. They must all be taken in the final year of study. This means that learners will have an opportunity to develop their knowledge, understanding and skills in every
discipline throughout the duration of the course, which will help support progression to AS and A level study in the sciences.

The practical assessment will contribute 10% towards the overall grade. This assessment will have to be completed during the final year of study to ensure that learners have an opportunity for a range of practical experiences and have sufficient time to develop these skills appropriately.

The remaining assessment will be an interdisciplinary exam on *Bringing The Sciences Together* that will contribute 15% to the overall grade. To help spread assessment over the full two-year course, this assessment will be available for learners to complete in Year 10.

In the consultation, we proposed that the *Bringing The Sciences Together* unit would require learners to complete an investigation and then sit a pre-seen exam. We received feedback that the proposed investigation could be time consuming for centres to facilitate because many learners would need to be carefully guided through it. We also heard concerns that directly relating the investigation to an assessment could lead to learners not having an authentic experience of completing an investigation, and that the proposed pre-seen assessment could be open to malpractice.

We have now decided that the *Bringing The Sciences Together* unit will be assessed through an exam. This will include pre-release materials relating to a theme or set of themes such as those identified within the specification, rather than the proposed investigation and linked pre-seen exam. The awarding body will pre-release the materials one month before the exam. This approach will encourage schools to take a suitably contextualised and interdisciplinary approach to teaching and learning to help prepare learners for this unit of assessment. We feel that pre-release materials will provide teachers with more opportunities and flexibility to deliver content in an interdisciplinary, contextualised way than an investigation would. As the materials will only be released one month in advance, preparatory work will be time-restricted which will support manageability of the qualification.

We appreciate that the qualification is heavily weighted towards traditional examinations. It was a strong preference of many stakeholders that we require the awarding body to report how a learner performs in each of the science disciplines. This means that the extent to which we could move away from exams that assess discipline specific knowledge and understanding was limited to ensure confidence in, and reliability of, those sub-reported grades. We had to balance this with the overall number of assessments that learners would be completing if we introduced more non-examination assessment.
GCSE The Sciences (Double Award) will include two tiers of assessment. This means that learners will sit either a higher or foundation tier exam. This will help ensure that the assessments are accessible for all learners. This is particularly important in a content-driven qualification, such as science, and mirrors the approach we are taking in GCSE Mathematics and Numeracy. The awarding body will decide whether learners will be able to enter a different tier for different exams. It will have to provide a justification for its approach as part of the approvals process.

In line with the consultation proposals, we will not require this qualification to be assessed digitally. We are conscious that science is taken by nearly all learners aged 14-16 and that it could be difficult for centres to manage digital assessment for such a high proportion of the cohort at the same time.

**Grading**

Learners who successfully complete the qualification will receive two grades on a scale from A* and G. This will reflect the size of the qualification and signal to stakeholders the breadth of work that learners have completed.

As discussed above, learners will also receive a grade between A* and G to show how they have performed in each unit.
**Summary of responses**

When considering the summary of responses, it is important to keep in mind that several respondents provided feedback about the GCSE science qualification offer, rather than the specific design proposal for GCSE The Sciences (Double Award). To avoid duplication, we have summarised points raised in relation to the overall science offer within the responses to the final question.

It is likely that views on the overall qualification offer for science also affected how people responded to the closed (Likert scale) questions. Therefore, the summary of written responses for each question may not always align with the levels of agreement as indicated in the quantitative data for that question.

| To what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposed title of GCSE The Sciences (Double Award)? |
| 455 responses |
| Overall, 20% **agreed** with the proposed title of GCSE The Sciences (Double Award), whilst 54% **disagreed**. |

- Respondents expressed mixed views about the title.
- Respondents who supported GCSE The Sciences, such as the learned societies, felt that this title made it clear that each of the sciences is included within the qualification.
- Respondents who did not favour GCSE The Sciences felt that it was less academic than the current title - others described it as ‘clunky’.
- Some respondents suggested that keeping the current title of GCSE Science would be more appropriate. They felt that a new, reformed qualification did not warrant a name change.
- A number of respondents felt that the title was not important or relevant, and felt that the content, assessment and range of qualifications was more deserved of their attention.
- Some respondents provided alternative suggestions for a title. These included GCSE Science, GCSE Sciences, GCSE Natural Sciences and GCSE Core Sciences.
To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed design of GCSE The Sciences (Double Award) supports the Curriculum for Wales?

451 responses

Overall, 25% agreed that the proposed design of GCSE The Sciences (Double Award) would support the Curriculum for Wales, whilst 52% disagreed.

- Respondents who agreed felt that the proposed design of GCSE The Sciences (Double Award) would generally cover the content of the relevant statements of what matter for the science and technology area of the Curriculum.
- Some respondents felt that they did not have enough of an understanding of the Curriculum to be able to respond to this question.
- A few respondents said that whilst the proposed qualification would support the Curriculum, they had concerns because they disagreed with the fundamentals of the curriculum itself. Some of these respondents were concerned that the Curriculum offers too much flexibility for schools to design their own curriculum, which they felt could be an issue for learners moving between schools.
- Others felt that the Curriculum is poorly understood, despite schools providing training sessions for staff.
- Some respondents suggested that there should be more links with other subject areas within the science and technology Area.
- Some respondents felt that only developing a double award GCSE would not align with the Curriculum because it would:
  o reduce the opportunity for ambitious and capable learners to explore science in depth and to further their learning in the subject
  o reduce choice for learners about which science qualifications they take and how much time they spend studying the subject
To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed Purpose and Aims of GCSE The Sciences (Double Award)?

448 responses

Overall, 33% **agreed** with the purpose and aims of **GCSE The Sciences (Double Award)**, whilst 46% **disagreed**.

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- Respondents who agreed with the proposed purpose and aims felt that they were clear, concise and fit for purpose. They also said that they were relevant to life in the 21st Century and would provide learners with a well-rounded education in science.
- Some respondents reiterated their feeling that the purpose and aims reflect the ‘four purposes’ of the Curriculum and the ‘statements of what matter’ in the science and technology area.
- Some respondents welcomed the emphasis on problem-solving as they felt it is a more important skill than knowledge recall.
- Some respondents supported the holistic approach to science and were positive about the way in which the purpose and aims would encourage learners to make connections between the science disciplines.
- Some respondents who disagreed were concerned that the purpose and aims would not meet the needs of all learners in Wales.
- Respondents said that a ‘one-size fits all’ approach would not be appropriate, with some expanding on this to state that one set of purpose and aims for all learners would mean that some learners may struggle to access the qualification and may therefore not be able to develop confidence in science.
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed content (knowledge, understanding, skills and experiences) for GCSE The Sciences (Double Award)?

449 responses

Overall, 26% agreed with the proposed content of GCSE The Sciences (Double Award), whilst 53% disagreed.

- Respondents who supported the proposal felt that it included a good variety of content that would engage learners in science.
- Some respondents particularly welcomed the addition of interdisciplinary content and were keen for learners to be able to understand the links between the different disciplines.
- A number of respondents felt that the volume of content would be too large for a double award and suggested it would be unmanageable to deliver it within the proposed guided learning hours.
- Some respondents were concerned that the amount of content covered would leave too little time for learners to develop skills, such as those in scientific curiosity.
- Concerns about the volume of content were often linked to a perception that the interdisciplinary content is in addition to the content in the current double award, which some respondents noted they find difficult to manage within their timetabled lessons.
- Some respondents felt that the content has been reduced or ‘diluted’ from what learners currently study. This was often linked to the decision to only develop a double award GCSE in science.
- Respondents were concerned that this reduction in content would impact on learners’ preparedness for A level study.
- Some respondents suggested that learners would need to study additional topics, or some of the topics in more depth, if the course were to appropriately prepare them for A level study.
- Some respondents were concerned that the proposed content would not be ‘stretching’ for more able and talented learners, whilst others were concerned that it would be too challenging for less able learners.
- Some respondents felt that the content would not be engaging or relevant to learners. Topics such as electromagnetism, organic chemistry and wellbeing were particularly highlighted.
- Some respondents noted that the proposed content was very similar to the content in the current double award GCSE. Some felt that this was a positive because it would mean that teachers would already be familiar with much of the content and would not need to do a large amount of preparation or revision of resources. Others were more concerned and suggested that it felt like the reform was perhaps ‘change for change’s sake’.
- A few respondents suggested that some of the content would be better placed in other subjects. For example, a few felt that some of the content within the health and wellbeing interdisciplinary theme should be taught within physical education.
Some respondents provided suggestions for additional content. This included more on plants in biology, particle physics, earth science and discoveries from minority ethnic groups and female scientists.

A few respondents felt unable to comment on the content until they have seen a more detailed specification.

We have proposed two options for how the external exams could be structured:

**Option 1:** Separate Biology, Chemistry and Physics exams to be taken by learners at the end of Year 11 (this could enable separate grades for each subject to be reported).

**Option 2:** Three exams, each one featuring a mix of Biology, Chemistry and Physics content, to be taken across Years 10 & 11.

Which of these options do you prefer?

449 responses

Overall, 68% of respondents preferred option 1, whilst 11% showed a preference for option 2.

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Respondents who expressed a preference for option 1 felt that:

- learners would have a better understanding of their performance in each discipline, which was considered to be particularly important for those learners who would go on to study science at A level
- exams at the end of Year 11 would mean that learners would have more time to mature and so would be more likely to reach their potential
- separate exams in each discipline would help learners to understand what was being assessed in each exam, which it was felt would reduce stress for learners and help them focus their revision
- it would help retain the separate identity of each discipline and help learners understand where their preferences or strengths lie
- exams at the end of Year 11 would help reduce the loss of teaching time in Year 10 that is often associated with unitised exams
- it would be more likely that each discipline would be taught by a subject specialist

Respondents who expressed a preference for option 2 felt that:

- completing some exams in Year 10 would be more manageable for learners as the amount of content they need to revise is reduced, and that this would help support learner wellbeing
- completing some exams at the end of Year 10 would give the year a purpose, rather than it being a conduit to Year 11
- exam results are often better for their learners if exams are taken in Years 10 and 11
- only having exams in Year 11 would be a step-back from the current arrangements and would affect learner wellbeing due to the pressure learners would feel in Year 11
• Some respondents said they did not prefer either option. These respondents felt that both options could hinder learners in some way. They said that option 1 would mean a high assessment burden in Year 11 and option 2 may cause confusion for learners due to each paper assessing a mix of the sciences. They were concerned that some learners would not be able to distinguish between the disciplines with this approach. They also felt that option 1 would not align with the integrated nature of the teaching and learning.

• Some respondents suggested that learners should be assessed through discipline-specific exams, but that they should be sat in both Years 10 and 11. This would reflect the current assessment arrangements for the existing double award qualification. They felt that having discipline-specific exams at the end of each year of study would help to reduce the assessment burden and would make assessment more manageable, and learners would be clearer on what content was being assessed in which assessment. These respondents strongly felt that the current assessment arrangements work well and had little desire to change this.
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed assessment arrangements, including the role of digital assessment, for GCSE The Sciences (Double Award)?

444 responses

Overall, 25% **agreed** with the proposed assessment arrangements of **GCSE The Sciences (Double Award)**, whilst 35% **disagreed**.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Respondents who agreed with the assessment arrangements welcomed the balance between examination and non-examination assessment. They felt that the amount that each assessment would contribute to the overall grade was appropriate.
- Some respondents said that the investigation was a welcome addition to the qualification and would help to provide a variety of assessment methods, which they said some learners respond well to.
- A number of respondents expressed concerns about the proposed investigation within the *Bringing The Sciences Together* unit. They were concerned that it would be time consuming to complete and would impact teaching time for other content. They also felt that directly relating it to an assessment would mean that learners would not get an authentic experience of completing an investigation. These concerns were often linked to experiences of completing an investigation in previous iterations of the qualification.
- Some respondents were concerned that some teachers and schools may provide learners with more help with the investigation than others. As a result, they felt that an investigation would not be an appropriate task on which to base an assessment.
- Some respondents were concerned that the pre-seen nature of the assessment would be open to malpractice. They felt that schools would be able to prepare learners in advance of the assessment and provide them with suggestions of responses to the questions.
- Some respondents felt that there is already a discrepancy between practical/coursework marks and exam outcomes and suggested that these assessment arrangements would only exacerbate this issue.
- A number of respondents who disagreed with the proposed assessment arrangements expressed concerns about the possibility of digital assessment:
  - some respondents were concerned that some centres may not have sufficient digital resources to be able to facilitate all learners completing an assessment at the same time
  - others were concerned that learners may find it difficult to respond to some question types, such as those that use formulas and symbols, digitally
  - a few respondents were concerned that learners who lack digital skills could be disadvantaged
  - a few other respondents were concerned about the reliability of digital technology to be used in a high-stakes exams environment
Some respondents felt that the three exams contributing 75% to the overall grade would be too much. They said that this would create an assessment burden and put too much pressure on learners. Some of these respondents noted that they felt the assessment arrangements for the current double award qualification work well and as a result suggested that discipline-specific exams should be taken in both Years 10 and 11. Others suggested that more weighting should be allocated to the practical and interdisciplinary assessments.

To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposal for GCSE The Sciences (Double Award) meets the reasonable needs of learners in Wales? Please consider factors such as accessibility, manageability, wellbeing and progression onto post-16 pathways.

449 responses

Overall, 12% agreed that the proposal for GCSE The Sciences (Double Award) meets the needs of learners in Wales, whilst 75% disagreed.

Respondents who agreed that the proposed design of GCSE The Sciences (Double Award) would meet the needs of learners in Wales felt that learners being able to understand how the sciences are interconnected is a positive move and would benefit learners. They felt that having real-life contexts in the Bringing The Sciences Together unit would engage learners as they would be able to relate their learning to their everyday lives.

Respondents who disagreed tended to focus their feedback on concerns about the range of GCSE science qualifications that would be available to learners. To avoid duplication, these concerns are summarised in response to the final question.

Other respondents who disagreed reiterated their concerns about the volume of content or the perceived unmanageability of the investigation. These concerns have been explored in relation to the relevant questions on content and assessment above.
To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed GCSE in The Sciences (Double Award) is manageable for teachers to deliver? Please consider factors such as the size of the qualification, resources and the proposed approach to assessment.

446 responses

Overall, 20% agreed that the proposal for GCSE The Sciences (Double Award) is manageable for teachers to deliver, whilst 45% disagreed.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Rating</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither agree nor disagree</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
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</table>

- Some respondents felt that the proposed qualification would require an increase in teacher workload, especially with the addition of an investigation.
- Some respondents felt that the delivery of the new content included in the proposal (especially content related to Bringing The Sciences Together and content that was previously only included in separate science GCSEs) would increase teacher workload as there would be more content for them to familiarise themselves with and to teach; they were concerned about the impact that this may have on teacher wellbeing.
- Some respondents were concerned that teachers may have to teach outside of their specialism, which they suggested may negatively impact on teacher recruitment and retention.
- Some respondents felt that the investigation element would be time consuming to teach and oversee, especially as some learners would require extra support to engage with and complete an investigation. They said that this would mean that time to teach the rest of the content would be stretched and they may not be able to deliver all of the content sufficiently.
- Some respondents were concerned that the volume of content overall would mean that teachers would not be able to teach topics in sufficient depth to ensure that learners are fully prepared for AS and A level courses.
Overall, to what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposal for GCSE The Sciences (Double Award)?

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<th>3%</th>
<th>10%</th>
<th>9%</th>
<th>23%</th>
<th>55%</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
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<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
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<td>Neither agree nor disagree</td>
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<td>Disagree</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
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</table>

451 responses

Overall, 13% agreed with the proposal for GCSE The Sciences (Double Award), whilst 78% disagreed.

- Most of the feedback received in response to this question focused on the GCSE science qualification offer. Any comments that were more focused on the design features of the proposed GCSE The Sciences (Double Award) have already been discussed in the relevant questions above.

- Many of those commenting on the overall GCSE science offer expressed concerns about the potential implications of discontinuing separate science GCSEs in Wales. Some respondents also discussed the discontinuation of the applied science GCSEs. It is important to keep in mind that respondents were not specifically asked for their views about the GCSE science offer and therefore, respondents who agreed with the proposed approach were not likely to provide feedback on this.

- Some respondents who indicated that they agreed with the overall proposal noted that they felt the proposed GCSE The Sciences (Double Award) qualification would be appropriate, as long as it was offered alongside additional qualifications.

- A number of concerns related to the potential impact on learner progression to STEM courses in post-16 and at university.

- Respondents felt that separate science GCSEs better prepare learners for A levels. This was often linked to the fact that these learners have more time on their timetable for science so were able to study topics in more depth than those learners who took the double award.

- Respondents were concerned that learners in Wales would be disadvantaged when applying to study STEM subjects at university as they would be compared to learners from other jurisdictions who would have the option of studying separate science. This was often linked to a perception that some universities either require, or prefer, separate science GCSEs for entry onto some courses, such as medicine.

- A few respondents were concerned that learners in Wales would have one fewer science grade to put towards applications for further study, which they felt could disadvantage those who perform particularly strongly in this subject. Similarly, respondents were also concerned that learners who excel in one of the science disciplines, but struggle in another, could be disadvantaged as their performance in their weaker discipline could bring down their overall grade for the double award. Respondents were concerned that this would negatively impact on post-16 options and choices for these learners.

- Respondents also felt that fewer learners may choose to study STEM subjects at post-16 because they would either be less engaged in science, or less clear on which of the disciplines they excel in or enjoy more.

- Other respondents focused their responses on perceptions of choice for learners and centres.
• Some respondents felt that learners should be given the choice of how much time they spend studying science. They felt that this element of choice would align with the ethos of the Curriculum for Wales.
• Similarly, some respondents felt that centres should be able to choose which GCSE science qualifications to offer their learners to ensure that the qualification offer aligns with how they have designed their own curriculum.
• Some respondents were concerned that some learners who live near to the border would choose to attend a school in England where they could study separate science GCSEs, having a potential impact on their school community.
• Similarly, a few respondents were concerned that more learners may choose to attend independent schools, where they might be able to choose to study the 9-1 GCSEs in each of the science disciplines. They were concerned that this could increase societal inequalities in Wales.
• Some respondents discussed the challenges they perceived in creating one qualification to suit the needs of all learners. These respondents doubted whether it would be possible for a double award GCSE to stretch the more able and talented learners, whilst also being accessible to less able learners. There were concerns that this could lead to learners disengaging with science.
• Similarly, some respondents were concerned that learners who currently take the GCSE Applied Science (Single Award) could be disadvantaged because they might be unable to manage the volume of content in the double award. These respondents were concerned that this cohort of learners may be unable to attain a GCSE, which they said would affect their progression opportunities within STEM.
• Some respondents specifically commented on the potential impacts on teachers and concern about the possibility of teacher redundancies.
• They said that because the current double award GCSE is typically delivered in fewer timetabled hours than the separate science GCSEs, there could be a need to reduce the number of science staff within departments. This concern was often associated with challenges facing school budgets.
• Some respondents were also concerned that some teachers may choose to move to England to be able to continue teaching their preferred discipline. These respondents were concerned about the possible impact that this may have on the ability of schools to recruit teachers, particularly in physics.
• Some respondents were concerned that the discontinuation of separate science GCSEs, combined with the more interdisciplinary nature of the proposed double award GCSE, could mean that learners are taught topics by teachers that are not trained in that discipline area. They felt that this could affect the quality of teaching and learning, and the outcomes at GCSE.
• A few respondents were concerned that the status of STEM could be diminished in Wales. They felt that this could affect employment opportunities and the growth of the sector in Wales.
• A few respondents were disappointed that the proposed GCSE science offer did not align with the offer in other subjects, such as those within the humanities area of the Curriculum. These respondents questioned why we were developing new GCSEs in each of the humanities subjects, but not in each science discipline.