



# **QUALIFICATIONS 23/24**

**Your guide to exams and assessments**



# Contents

**SECTION**

**PAGE**

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

# Introduction

**If you're studying qualifications this year, exams and assessments will take place as planned.**

Exams will run in the summer for GCSEs, AS and A levels, and for some vocational qualifications. Practical and other non-examination assessments will also be carried out.

The information in this guide will help you understand how your exams and assessments will work this year. There is a list of key dates, information about how your qualifications will be graded, plus other helpful info and support.

## Have Your Say

Every year, we're keen to hear feedback from learners who have taken exams and assessments. We will be launching this year's survey on 7 May and we'll share it on our social media channels so you can find it easily. It's quick and easy to complete and gives us important information that we can use for future exam series.



# Our role

**You may not have heard of Qualifications Wales before. We regulate all non-degree qualifications in Wales. It's our job to make sure that qualifications meet your needs.**

We also promote confidence in the qualifications system in Wales, to make sure that your qualifications are valued and will support you to take the next step in your education or employment.

We oversee the setting of appropriate standards to support public confidence in the following qualifications:

- GCSE
- AS level
- A level
- Skills Challenge Certificate
- Advanced Skills Baccalaureate Wales
- Vocational Qualifications.

We work closely with Welsh Government and awarding bodies to regulate qualifications in Wales.



# Key dates for GCSEs, AS, A levels, Skills Challenge Certificate and Advanced Skills Baccalaureate Wales 2024

**NOW-  
APRIL**

Continue studying for your qualifications and complete non-examination assessments in some subjects

**MAY-  
JUNE**

Sit your exams

**MAY-  
JULY**

Exam papers will be marked and graded by the awarding bodies

**THURS  
15  
AUG**

Results day for AS, A level, Advanced Skills Challenge Certificate and Advanced Skills Baccalaureate Wales

**THURS  
22  
AUG**

Results day for GCSE and National/Foundation Skills Challenge Certificate



# Key dates for vocational qualifications 2024

**NOW-  
JULY**

Continue studying for your qualifications

**NOW-  
JULY**

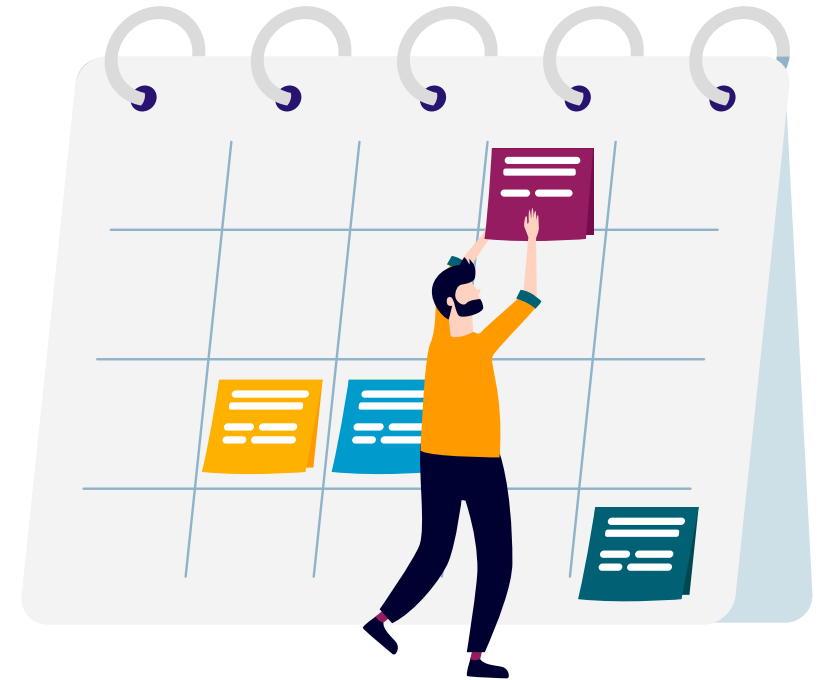
Continue to sit your assessments and exams  
(if your qualification has formal exams)

**JUNE-  
JULY**

Grades awarded

**JUNE-  
AUG**

Receive your results



# How will I be assessed this year?

## GCSE, AS and A level qualifications:

Most GCSEs, AS and A levels were designed to be assessed totally or partly by exams. That is why exams are the fairest way to assess these qualifications. Everyone will have the same papers, at the same time and in the same way.

- ✓ You will finish any non-examination assessments, if your subject has any of these (you may have already completed some earlier in your course).
- ✓ You will sit your exams in May and June.
- ✓ WJEC will award your grades after your exams and any non-examination assessments have been marked.

## Vocational qualifications:

Vocational qualifications are more diverse in the way that they are assessed. Awarding bodies will have information on their websites about the arrangements for vocational qualifications.

- ✓ You will continue to sit your assessments and exams (if your qualification has formal exams).
- ✓ The awarding bodies will award your grades between June and August.



# Grading qualifications this year

Once your exams and assessments have been marked, your awarding body will award your grades. They will follow the usual processes to make sure that marking is fair and consistent.

As part of our role as the regulator, we will monitor the awarding bodies as they mark your papers and award your grades.

Exams and assessments taken by learners in Wales during the 2023-24 academic year will be graded in line with pre-pandemic arrangements. This means that WJEC will not provide advance information ahead of examinations as they did in 2022-23. Nor will there be a broadly-midway grading policy, as there was in 2022-23. However, we know that the pandemic has had a long-term impact on learning for some, so there will be some statistical protection to avoid results being well below pre-pandemic years, if necessary.

Returning to pre-pandemic arrangements helps us to protect the long-term value of your grades, and aligns with approaches across the rest of the UK, ensuring your qualifications hold the same value as those taken elsewhere in the UK.





# What happens if I am ill or can't sit an exam in the summer?

There may be reasons why you're unable to sit one or more GCSE, AS or A level exam this year.

The exam timetable has been designed to allow some space between each exam in the same qualification this summer. If you are ill, you will need to contact your school or college as soon as possible. They may be able to arrange for you to still sit your exam (for example, by isolating in another room), or they may advise you to stay at home.

WJEC runs a process called special consideration. If you miss one exam paper, and your school or college thinks you are eligible for special consideration, they can make an application for you. In many cases, you can still be awarded your grade, based on how you have done in another exam or assessment for the same qualification.



# What happens after I receive my results?

## GCSE and Foundation / National Skills Challenge Certificate

There are a number of **options** available following the completion of your studies.

If you did not achieve the grades you hoped for, you should seek advice from your school, destination college, provider, or employer.

## A level and Advanced Skills Challenge Certificate

You may decide on **several paths** after finishing your A level and Advanced Skills Challenge Certificate studies.

If you did not achieve the grades you hoped for, then you will need to speak to your school or college, as well as your future destinations employer/provider to consider your options.

If you applied for a degree programme at university through UCAS and received a conditional offer, then depending on your grades, and the decision of the university, you will be accepted or declined for that course.

If you did not secure the grades you hoped for, don't panic! If you would still like to go to university, you can apply for other courses via UCAS Clearing.

**Find out more here.**

## Vocational qualifications

Depending on the level of study of your vocational qualifications, you might consider several options as your next steps. Like those receiving results for GCSE and A Level qualifications, you will need to work with your college, provider, or employer if you did not reach the requirements for the next step of your education or employment.

Find out more by clicking on the links on the following page.

# Support is available

We understand that preparing for exams and assessments can be a tough time for learners, parents, carers, schools and colleges. There is a range of support available.



Head to the Power Up content hub where you'll find revision tips, wellbeing guidance and info to get you through the exam and assessment season.



Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) manages the application process for university applicants. The UCAS website provides a range of useful information to help you every step of the way of your university application.



The Children's Commissioner for Wales has lots of helpful information about support services for young people, including mental health and emotional support.



Careers Wales has lots of useful information about qualifications and training.



Mind Cymru is an established mental health charity that offers a range of wellbeing support. Mind is there for you if you're finding things hard. You can get in contact for confidential advice and support.

# BEST OF LUCK IN YOUR EXAMS AND ASSESSMENTS!



For more information, visit

[www.qualifications.wales](http://www.qualifications.wales)

