

Easy Read



# Qualifications for the future

Making changes to qualifications for young people in Wales

## Response Form

Please tell us what you think by 7<sup>th</sup> February 2020



This document was written by **Qualifications Wales**. It is an easy read version of the questions from **'Qualified for the future'**.

November 2019

# About this response form



These questions are about **qualifications** that 16 year olds take in Wales.



Before you answer the questions, please read the main easy read document: **Qualifications for the future. Making changes to qualifications for young people in Wales.**



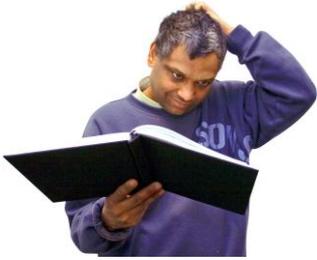
Please try to explain your answers. And give your own thoughts and ideas too.



Please try not to include any private information about other people. Like their name or where they go to school.



You may need support to read and understand this document. Ask someone you know to help you.



Words in **bold blue writing** may be hard to understand. They have been explained on page 23 of the main document.



Where the document says **we**, this means **Qualifications Wales**.



Please send this form back to us by **Friday 7 February 2020 at 5pm**.

You can send it to us:



**By post:**  
Arad Research  
8 Columbus Walk  
Brigantine Place  
Cardiff  
CF10 4SD



**By e-mail:**  
[post@arad.wales](mailto:post@arad.wales)



# How we use the information you give us

We will be looking at your answers in this response form.



We will make sure we follow the law when we use your information.



We will put a report of what people said on our website.



We may be asked to show the public some of your answers. And we may have to give your organisation's name next to your answer. People can ask for this information by law.



But in some situations, we are allowed to say no. Please tell us if you want your answer to be private. And tell us why you want your answer to be private.

# About you

Which of these best describes you?

- Learner
- Parent or carer
- Education professional
- Employer
- Member of the public
- Other (please tell us more):

Trade union, representing teachers, lecturers, support staff and leaders across Wales.

Which age group do you fit into?

- Age 3-11
- Age 12-16
- Age 17-21
- Age 22 or over

If you are answering for an organisation, please name them here:

National Education Union Cymru

Do you want your answer to be kept private?

- Yes  No

**If you want your answer to be kept private, please tell us why:**

Because I only have access to the easy read at the moment.

We may want to contact you to talk about your answers more. If you are happy for us to do this, please tell us:

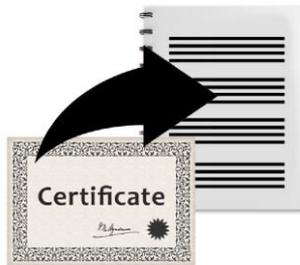
**Your name:** Mary van den Heuvel

**E-mail address:** [mary.vandenHeuvel@neu.org.uk](mailto:mary.vandenHeuvel@neu.org.uk)

**Phone number:** 02920 431 407

# Questions

All the questions are about [qualifications](#) that 16 year olds take.



1. Please read page 11.

**Do you agree that qualifications should support the new curriculum's goals?**

I strongly agree

I agree

I do not agree or disagree

I disagree

I strongly disagree

I don't know

Please tell us a bit more about your answer:

NEU Cymru believes qualifications should clearly fit around the Curriculum 2022. Every young person must be able to show what skills and knowledge they have learnt, and how they can apply them. A range of assessments should be used.



## 2. Please read pages 12 and 13.

Do you agree that **qualifications** should be available in both Welsh and English?

- |                            |                                     |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| I strongly agree           | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| I agree                    | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| I do not agree or disagree | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| I disagree                 | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| I strongly disagree        | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| I don't know               | <input type="checkbox"/>            |

Please tell us a bit more about your answer:

It is critical that learners have access to exams in both English and Welsh languages. The Welsh Government's commitment to have 1 million Welsh speakers by 2050 will not be met unless young people have the opportunity to study through the medium of Welsh. Alongside this, the education profession should have the opportunity to learn and improve their Welsh, to ensure that we keep professionals with experience.

There needs to be clarity as to how learners access choice of English/Welsh papers and whether they are allowed to have sight of both in an exam, even if they only complete one. This would help learners who have learnt through the medium which is not necessarily their first language, and would add to the ethos of capturing what they can do.

### 3. Please read pages 14 and 15.



Do you agree that **qualifications** should:

- Offer something for everyone
- Be clear
- Help young people to carry on studying or get a job?

- |                            |                                     |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| I strongly agree           | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| I agree                    | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| I do not agree or disagree | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| I disagree                 | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| I strongly disagree        | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| I don't know               | <input type="checkbox"/>            |

Please tell us a bit more about your answer.

Young people need an opportunity to show their skills, and should have a wide variety of approaches used as assessment in order to do this.

#### 4. We believe that:



- **Qualifications** should support the new curriculum.
- **Qualifications** should be in Welsh and English.
- **Qualifications** should help all children to do well.

**These are the things we will think about when we make decisions about qualifications.**

**Do you think there is anything else we should think about when we are making our decisions?**

Please write your answer here:

We believe that putting the needs of the individual learner is key. Any type of assessment which allows a learner to showcase their range of skills and knowledge is critical.

Assessments could take a range of approaches, from teacher led assessments to coursework, as well as more formal modular or other exams which will suit some children. A move to more formative assessments are welcome, and we believe would help with the wellbeing of both young people and education professionals.

Leaving school with something that shows what you **can** do is critical.



**5a. Please read pages 16 to 18.**

**Do you agree that we should have new GCSE qualifications for 16-year olds in Wales?**

- |                            |                                     |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| I strongly agree           | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| I agree                    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| I do not agree or disagree | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| I disagree                 | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| I strongly disagree        | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| I don't know               | <input type="checkbox"/>            |

Please tell us a bit more about your answer.

NEU Cymru believes GCSEs should change to support the knowledge and skills learnt by young people who are learning through the new Curriculum.

**5b. Do you have any ideas for how GCSEs could change to support the new curriculum?**

Please see answer 4 above.



## 6. Please read pages 19 to 21.

Do you agree that we should have a qualification that teaches wider skills to 16 year olds?

- |                            |                                     |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| I strongly agree           | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| I agree                    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| I do not agree or disagree | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| I disagree                 | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| I strongly disagree        | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| I don't know               | <input type="checkbox"/>            |

Please tell us a bit more about your answer.

[Pls note this is not well worded for the easy read copy. An exam should not be **teaching** skills.]

We believe that a range of skills should be assessed. Ideally, as stated above, this will focus on the individual learner and what they can do.

Whilst we do believe that a Skills Challenge Certificate is welcome, and will help some learners, we believe there is the opportunity to embed some of this approach across the Curriculum.

It is also critical that this certificate is done by learners as appropriate. If it is recognised by **all** institutions and employers as a valuable qualification, learners will invest time in it. However, should this become an 'extra' many will view it as unnecessary. For example, the Welsh Bacc has not been universally recognised, and therefore can inhibit some children and young people from time which they would otherwise spend on recognised qualifications.

A large amount of resources will need to be invested to train education professionals in this – and any – new qualifications. But also in ensuring that the suite of exams and challenges are equally recognised across Wales, the UK and beyond.

## 7. Is there anything else you would like to say about any of this?

NEU Cymru welcomes the opportunity to respond to this consultation. Our members are in principle supportive of the new Curriculum. However, they do have reservations about its implementation – not least the funding and CPD available to support implementation.

We recognise there is a longer lead-in time to the first pupils undertaking a 'new' series of qualifications. However, there is a limited time to get this right. As of 2022, the Year 7 cohort are implicitly going to be working towards their GCSEs, unless we have a radical, and welcome, change towards summative assessment.

Before 2022 then, it is critical the education workforce has the access to funding and training it needs to ensure that any qualifications are able to showcase the skills and knowledge of young people.

It has been said that the new qualifications should build on the curriculum and not influence its content or delivery. This is welcome in principal, but raises two key points from our members:

1. No two schools are likely to have the same curriculum, as it is supposed to reflect the needs of their learners. Any qualification created to assess the new curriculum must be broad enough to respond to this aspiration while at the same time having sufficient specificity and focus to produce valid, reliable outcomes.
2. The link between qualifications and accountability must be considered. We welcome the WG's plans to move away from a high-stakes accountability system but would not want to see any pressure placed on schools to alter their behaviour following the first suite of new GCSEs – to fit with achieving 'better' results.

This could mean schools adjusting their KS4 schemes of work to address areas and skills that might improve their exam results. Thus qualifications, rather than the needs of learners, would be shaping the curriculum. As we have indicated throughout, qualifications should be designed with a view to reflecting that which students can do, rather than considering just that which can be most easily measured.

This could have an unwelcome impact on the wellbeing of learners and education professionals alike.

**Thank you for your views.**