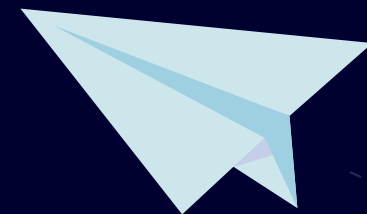




2022 qualifications



Your guide to exams and assessments

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1 Introduction

If you're studying for qualifications this year, exams and assessments will be taking place as planned.

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

We know you have faced disruption to your education over the last two years which has been very difficult. That's why we've made changes to how you will be assessed this year, to make it as fair as possible given the disruption you have experienced.

The changes are different for each qualification and will help you focus your time when it comes to preparing for your exams and assessments

Your school or college will know what changes have been made for the qualifications you're studying.



2

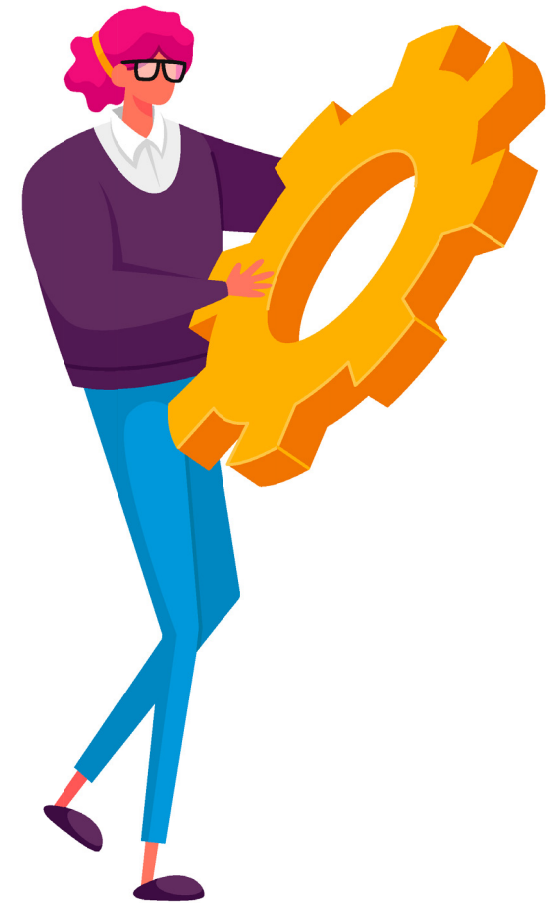
Our role

If you haven't heard of Qualifications Wales before, we make sure that qualifications meet the needs of learners and promote confidence in the qualifications system.

We set standards and maintain confidence in the following qualifications:

- GCSE
- AS level
- A level
- Welsh Baccalaureate Skills Challenge Certificate
- vocational qualifications

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



3

What happens next?

The key dates for the remainder of this academic year for GCSEs, AS and A levels, Welsh Baccalaureate Skills Challenge Certificates are:

Now – April 2022	May - June 2022	May - July 2022	Thursday 18th August	Thursday 25th August
You will continue to study for your qualifications.	You will sit your exams.	Your exam papers will be marked and graded by the awarding bodies.	AS, A level and Advanced Skills Challenge Certificate Results Day.	GCSE and National/ Foundation Skills Challenge Certificate Results Day.

The key dates for vocational qualifications are:

Now – July 2022	March - July 2022	June - July 2022	July - August 2022
You will continue to study for your qualifications.	You will continue to sit your assessments and exams (if your qualification has formal exams).	Your grades will be awarded.	You will receive your results.

4

What changes have been made to GCSE, AS and A level exams this year?

We know that your studies have been affected by the pandemic. That's why changes have been made to exams and assessments to give you extra support. WJEC has made changes to this year's qualifications following a consultation with schools, colleges, learners and parents, and exams will be graded more generously this year.

The changes will vary for each qualification, but may include:

Changes to coursework	Streamlined assessment content	Advance information	Removal of a whole unit	Unit options
Non-exam assessment may be adjusted to increase the chance of learners being able to complete it.	There may be less content or fewer topics, so that learners can focus revision time on less material.	Information on what will be assessed may be provided before the assessment takes place.	For some qualifications, a whole unit of assessment may be removed.	For some qualifications, there may be an option to select from a choice of units.

You can find more information about these changes on [WJEC's website](#).

5

What changes have been made to vocational qualifications this year?

Vocational qualifications (VQs) are more diverse in the way they're assessed. Awarding bodies have made changes to the way vocational qualifications will be assessed this year.

Your school or college will know what changes are in place for the qualifications you're studying.

If your vocational qualification is assessed by exam, these will go ahead as planned. As for GCSE, AS and A level qualifications, if the exam series is cancelled, similar contingency arrangements will be put in place.



6 How will qualifications be assessed?

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 any non-examination assessments have been marked.

Vocational qualifications:

Awarding bodies have information about the arrangements for vocational qualifications on their websites. Ofqual has also published [guidance](#) on vocational qualifications for schools and colleges for this academic year, with useful information for learners.



7

What are the arrangements for the Essential Skills Wales qualification?

Assessments for Essential Skills Wales will go ahead.

Full details about the changes (or adaptations, as they're known) for the qualifications can be found on the [Qualifications Wales website](#). If you're unable to attend your assessment, talk to your school or college about re-scheduling.



8 What are the arrangements for the new Wales-only vocational qualification in *Health and Social Care* or *Childcare*?

City & Guilds and WJEC have put arrangements in place for learners completing the new approved qualifications in *Health and Social Care* and *Childcare*. These arrangements help to reduce the impact of disruption to teaching and assessment caused by the pandemic.

Full details about the changes to the new Wales-only qualifications in *Health and Social Care* and *Childcare* can be found on the [Health and Care Learning Wales website](#).



9

What are the arrangements for the established Wales or Wales and Northern Ireland qualification in *Health and Social Care* or *Childcare*?

The awarding bodies offering *Health and Social Care* and *Childcare* qualifications for Wales and Northern Ireland have agreed consistent changes for learners this year.

The changes, including a list of the relevant qualifications, can be found on the [Qualifications Wales website](#). If your qualification is not included in this document, or if you would like to find out more about the adaptations, then please contact your school or college or awarding body.



10 What are the arrangements for private candidates?

If you're a private candidate, you must register with a school or college. Once registered, your school or college will enter you for your exams. If you need reasonable adjustments, you should discuss this with the school or college before asking them to make your entry.

You might have already found a school or college willing to enter you for a qualification and you may have been assessed throughout the year. If exams are cancelled for any reason, the school or college can use these assessments as evidence to produce a centre determined grade.

However, if you're unable to do this, we are currently considering how these assessments could be taken over a shorter period before the end of the academic year. We will inform private candidates of this if exams are cancelled.



11 How will qualifications be graded this year?

Once your exams and non-examination assessments have been marked, your awarding body will award your grades. We want the grading process to be as fair as possible to all learners, so WJEC will be more generous when awarding grades to reflect the disruption to teaching and learning that you have experienced.

This summer, the approach in Wales will be the same as in other parts of the UK, so that all learners are treated the same. This means that for GCSE, AS and A levels, this year's results will broadly reflect a midway point between the results in 2021 and 2019. Other awarding bodies are likely to take a similar approach when grading vocational qualifications.

It's important that you have qualifications that are of equal value to those taken by learners from other parts of the UK so that you can move on to college, employment or university.

Next year, we will aim to return to results that are in line with those in pre-pandemic years. We feel this is the best balance between the needs of learners sitting qualifications this year as well as fairness to learners who sat qualifications before the pandemic and those who will sit qualifications in the future.



12 What happens if exams cannot go ahead this summer?

At present, we expect all exams to take place as planned and that they will only be cancelled in exceptional circumstances. But, if the exams are cancelled, there is a backup plan in place and your school or college will award your grades based on your work in assessments you have completed.

The process would be like the one that was used last year – you would get Centre Determined Grades. Your school or college will tell you what assessments they will use.



13

What happens if I need to isolate 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 differently this year. There should be enough time between exams if you need to isolate because of COVID-19. If you miss one of the papers for a qualification, you will have your grade awarded using the paper you have taken.



14 What should I do if I am worried about my exams?

For many of you, this year will be the first time you're taking formal exams and assessments, so we know you may be a bit nervous. We know you and other learners may have concerns with the return to exams and we are planning a range of communications to support you in the coming months.

There are a wide range of resources available for learners. Find the latest information about assessment arrangements on the [Qualifications Wales website](#).

WJEC has a range of revision guides, blended learning resources and resources for Year 11 learners in subjects such as English Language/Literature, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Mathematics and Welsh. There is also information about how exams work, how to approach exam questions and tips for looking after your wellbeing. Visit the [WJEC website](#) for more information.

Welsh Government has resources available for learners in Years 11 and 13 who are considering their next steps in education, apprenticeships or employment, available on their [website](#).

Careers Wales also has lots of useful information about qualifications and training, available on their [website](#).

Finally, **The Children's Commissioner for Wales** has lots of helpful information about support services for young people, including mental health and emotional support, available on their [website](#).

15 Further help and support

We know it's a tough time for learners, parents, carers, schools and colleges. We want to make sure you have access to the support and assistance you need. We have a help and support section on our website, and links to additional support below.



Welsh Government portal offering many free and confidential helplines and services.



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.



WJEC has a dedicated web page where you can get all the support you need. You can access wellbeing advice, plus handy revision tips.

For more information visit

www.qualificationswales.org

