

**GUIDE TO POLICY AND
FUNDING EXPECTATIONS
FOR NUMERACY AND
LITERACY QUALIFICATIONS
(INCLUDING ESOL)
IN WALES**

VERSION 2 – FEBRUARY 2015

1 Overview

This guide summarises and explores some of the key implications of the following Welsh Government ministerial statement, particularly where these relate to numeracy and literacy:

1. **Qualified for Life: delivering a national qualifications system for Wales in 2015.**

Issued 9 July 2014.

Qualified for Life sets out the Welsh Government's plans for establishing Qualifications Wales as a new independent regulator, as well as outlining changes to AS/A Levels, GCSE and the Welsh Bac. It also includes further detail about how the Essential Skills Wales qualifications will be strengthened and refocused.

For further information about the Qualified for Life reforms, visit: **www.qualifiedforlife.org.uk**.

City & Guilds is working closely with the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) on the re-development of Essential Skills. We will be offering the new qualifications when they are introduced for first teaching (in place of the current ESW and wider Key Skills qualifications) from September 2015.

2. **English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Policy for Wales**

Issued 23 June 2014

This document sets out the Welsh Government's policy and vision for ESOL provision in Wales, including expectations for providers/practitioners and funding expectations.

Please note this document relates only to policy and funding rules in **Wales.**

Centres in **England** should consult the separate City & Guilds guide to maths and English policy and funding in England, which signposts relevant information from the Skills Funding Agency, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) and Department for Education (DfE).

Centres in **Northern Ireland** should refer to the Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) Essential Skills strategy (**www.delni.gov.uk/essential-skills**).

2 Qualified for Life: changes to AS/A Levels, GCSE and Welsh Bac

AS and A levels

New AS and A levels are being developed in a number of subjects, including mathematics and English/Welsh for teaching from 2015. These will continue to be 'coupled' qualifications (unlike the proposed changes to AS and A levels in England) with the AS continuing to count towards the final A level, albeit with changes to the weighting between AS and A level and limits on the number of re-sits.

WJEC will be the **only** awarding organisation offering the revised AS and A levels in Wales.

GCSE

GCSEs in Wales will retain the current grading structure (A*-G) with both 'modular' (unit-based) and 'linear' (end-assessed) qualifications permitted. Literacy and numeracy are said to be personal priorities for the minister, and the reforms include new GCSEs in:

- English Language
- Welsh Language
- English Literature
- Welsh Literature
- Mathematics
- Mathematics – Numeracy.

The new language and numeracy GCSEs are intended to focus on the 'functional' literacy and numeracy skills that will equip young people for further learning, for work and for life. They will require critical thinking and analytical skills and will include real world examples and application. Again, WJEC will be the **only** awarding organisation offering the revised GCSEs in Wales.

Welsh Baccalaureate

The Welsh Bac has been redesigned, and 'universal adoption' will be encouraged across all types of 14-19 provision (performance measures will be revised to reflect this from 2018). It will continue to combine subject qualifications with a broader range of skills to help learners prepare for employment or further study.

The new Welsh Bac has a renewed focus on developing essential skills, although this will **no longer** require learners to achieve Essential Skills Wales qualifications. Instead, learners will complete a series of 'Challenges' and an Individual Project, as well as GCSEs in maths and English/Welsh that will enable them to develop each of the following essential skill areas:

- Literacy
- Numeracy
- Digital Literacy
- Critical Thinking and Problem Solving
- Planning and Organisation
- Creativity and Innovation
- Personal Effectiveness.

Again, WJEC will be the **only** awarding organisation offering the new Welsh Bac.

3 Qualified for Life: changes to Essential Skills qualifications

Most of the current Essential Skills Wales (ESW) qualifications will be replaced from September 2015 by new qualifications in:

- **Essential Communication Skills***
available at levels 1-3, with a two-part end-assessment: controlled task and external test
- **Essential Application of Number Skills***
available at levels 1-3, with a two-part end-assessment: controlled task and external test
- **Essential Digital Literacy Skills**
available at Entry 1 to Level 3, with a controlled task end-assessment.

The current wider Key Skills will be replaced by a new qualification in **Essential Employability Skills**. This incorporates the four skill areas of Planning and Organisation, Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving, Creativity and Innovation and Personal Effectiveness; assessment of all four will be integrated into a single qualification.

Unlike AS/A levels, GCSE and the Welsh Bac, the new Essential Skills qualifications will continue to be offered by a number of awarding organisations, **including City & Guilds**.

Please note there will be no Essential Skills qualifications at Level 4 in future.

* The current Entry level ESW Communication and ESW Application of Number qualifications will continue in their current form.

4 Qualified for Life: requirements for studying numeracy and literacy

Learners who have not achieved at least GCSE Grade C in English Language or Welsh Language and Mathematics (or, from 2017, Mathematics-Numeracy) by the age of 16 will be expected to continue working towards these qualifications as part of any full time programme of study from 2016.

The Department for Education and Skills (DfES) has asked colleges and schools to start preparing for this change and establishing a baseline for measurement of progress. Colleges Wales (Colegau Cymru) has also been commissioned to deliver CPD support to the existing workforce).

From 2016, colleges should support all learners to prepare for and re-take the relevant GCSEs if they have achieved a D grade (or, for those embarking on two year courses of study, an E grade) during Key Stage 4.

For other learners, it may be more appropriate to work towards other qualifications initially. This might include Essential Skills and/or the Essential Skills for Work and Life units and qualifications (3846).

5 ESOL policy for Wales

The document **English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Policy for Wales**, published in June 2014, sets out the Welsh Government's vision and expectations for ESOL.

Key points from it include:

- Ministerial recognition of ESOL as an essential skill, with the same value as the provision of basic literacy and numeracy
- continued public funding to 'support the delivery of ESOL classes for all up to the level of functionality' (defined as Level 1)
- recognition that ESOL learners vary considerably in terms of their needs and the time taken to show progress
- recognising the particular challenges Welsh place names and signs can pose for some ESOL learners
- the social and economic impact of not being able to speak English, including the relative costs of providing interpretation and translation services
- expecting all current and aspiring ESOL teachers to have ESOL subject specialist qualifications and training, as well as recognising the need to offer professional training opportunities and support on the additional learning needs of ESOL learners, as well as the need to improve ESOL practitioners' job security
- recognising the need to manage costs, given wider pressures on the funding system.

The document also includes commitments to:

- develop a co-investment policy to maximise investment and ensure sustainable/equitable provision for the future;
- encourage providers to help learners to develop social groups for social interaction and skills practise
- continue to support specific initiatives to support ESOL learners in the workplace, and encourage employers to contribute to this provision
- consider the qualification and accreditation needs of learners and continue to promote and fund appropriate qualifications and units of credit.

And an expectation that providers:

- increase and improve the role of ESOL trained classroom assistants
- encourage trained volunteers, to support the development of learners within the classroom
- provide more classroom support for students with additional needs, especially those who have a low level of literacy in their own language
- provide appropriate levels of language support in vocational classes to enable more Bilingual/ESOL learners to access mainstream provision, and address the needs of learners at transition from school to further education
- ensure that class sizes are appropriate and relevant to the needs of the learners
- ensure that learners understand the level at which they have been initially assessed, the level they are advancing towards, and the accreditation they need to progress further;
- offer provision to meet the variety of needs of learners, taking into account: appropriate levels, location, timetables and the educational backgrounds of learners
- improve the opportunities for learners to enrol at appropriate times

- offer provision in a variety of locations, including in community and neighbourhood settings; and work with employers to provide in-work ESOL where possible.

Performance measures

The Welsh Government will also:

- develop guidelines on measuring all progress achieved and distance travelled
- develop methods of capturing data on ESOL
- widen the use of tools to record softer outcomes
- continue to publish data on completion, attainment and success.

As well as expecting providers to

- ensure that assessors are adequately ESOL qualified.

Want to know more?

For more information about City & Guilds' entire range of numeracy/maths and literacy/English products and services, please visit **www.cityandguilds.com/mathsandenglish**.

We'll be updating you regularly via our website and by email. Make sure you and your colleagues don't miss out by ensuring you are signed up to receive maths and English updates in our **Preference Centre**.

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