

# Welsh Baccalaureate Funding

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 12 Ionawr 2026  
Petitions Committee | 12 January 2026

**Reference:** RS25/12648

## Introduction

**Petition Number:** P-06-1540

**Petition title:** Remove The Manipulative Funding System Forcing Students To Do Welsh Baccalaureate

**Text of petition:** Ioan Armstrong & Sam Bartlett: We are A-level students at Coleg Sir Gâr, Graig Campus, Llanelli who are starting this petition as a platform for student choice against the forced Welsh Baccalaureate qualification.

Despite claims from the Welsh Government that the qualification isn't compulsory, we discovered a manipulative funding scheme through a FOI Request showing colleges receive £1000+ per student in additional funding through forcing Welsh Baccalaureate onto students.

FOI Request: £3606/student for 3 AS/A Levels without WBQ, £4620/student for 3 AS/A Levels + WBQ.

Senedd Research: "Welsh Bacc is time consuming and students don't see the value of the qualification".

Children's Commissioner for Wales: Criticised the Welsh Government's "target of universal adoption". Making WBQ universal is NOT in the best interests of all young learners.

Further and Higher Education (Governance and Information) (Wales) Act 2014: Ensures quality & accountability in further education, but is undermined due to



funding pressures, and an unclear stance on WBQ being a non-compulsory qualification.

Tertiary Education and Research (Wales) Act 2022: Clear legal expectation that institutions deliver education as high-quality as possible. Undermined by colleges being financially punished if students aren't signed up to do WBQ.

WalesOnline have published an article on our campaign.

The text provided above is submitted by the petitioner. The petitions team make every effort to ensure it preserves their authentic voice. This text has not been verified for accuracy, or errors, and may contain unverified opinions or assertions.

Mae'r testun uchod yn cael ei gyflwyno gan y deisebydd. Mae'r tîm deisebau yn gwneud pob ymdrech i sicrhau ei fod yn cadw ei lais dilys. Nid yw'r testun hwn wedi'i wirio am gywirdeb, neu wallau, a gall gynnwys barn neu honiadau heb eu gwirio.

# 1. Background

A [Review of Qualifications for 14-19 year-olds in Wales](#) in 2015 meant the new Welsh BaccaLaureate was introduced for teaching with a policy of 'universal adoption'. This policy of universal adoption meant the Welsh BaccaLaureate was available to all schools and Further Education (FE) colleges to offer to learners but that it was not compulsory for all learners to study it.

In recent years, a number of changes have been made to the qualification. This includes the Welsh BaccaLaureate, as an aggregated qualification, no longer being available to learners. The last awarding of the Welsh BaccaLaureate will be Summer 2026.

The Welsh Government's [guidance](#) states that in September 2023, the Advanced Welsh BaccaLaureate was replaced by the Advanced Skills BaccaLaureate Wales which will be awarded from Summer 2025.

However, the Skills Challenge Certificate (SCC) (which was required for those undertaking the Welsh BaccaLaureate) remains as a standalone graded qualification (at GCSE level) and will continue to be available for learners starting Year 10 in September 2025 and September 2026. The SCC will then be replaced by the Skills Suite (as part of the full 14 to 16 qualifications offer) from September 2027.

The Welsh Government's guidance specifies that the SCC is not compulsory as there are no statutory requirements for learners to undertake any qualification. However, the Welsh Government does suggest the SCC should be offered to all Year 10 learners in schools as it ensures learners have 'access to a broad and balanced curriculum' and 'opportunities to develop their practical skills in real-life situations, ensuring a well-rounded and adaptable skill set'.

Despite wanting all Year 10 learners to be offered the SCC, the Welsh Government acknowledges the SCC may not be the right choice for some learners and therefore schools should be providing opportunities that are in the best interests of their learners and when deciding whether an individual learner can be "exempt from taking the SCC we [the Welsh Government] expect schools to use their professional judgement".

Similarly, the Welsh Government states:

*The Advanced Skills BaccaLaureate Wales should be offered to all learners aged 16 to 19 on a 2-year course. It will normally be*

*taken alongside other Level 3 qualifications, such as a combination of A levels and (or) vocational qualifications.*

As with the SCC, the Welsh Government states there are no statutory requirements for learners to undertake any qualification and they expect schools and colleges to use professional judgement, giving due consideration to each young person's needs, wellbeing and ability to reach their full potential.

Note, the text of the petition as well as the [WalesOnline](#) article referred to within the petition outlines the petitioners' acknowledgement that the Welsh Government have previously stated the Welsh Baccalaureate is not compulsory.

Instead, the petitioners claim that the Welsh Government effectively makes the Welsh Baccalaureate compulsory due to a "manipulative funding scheme", as per the text of the petition. The petitioners outline information from a Freedom of Information request which they suggest evidences this:

*FOI Request: £3606/student for 3 AS/A Levels without WBQ,  
£4620/student for 3 AS/A Levels + WBQ.*

**This example is not an exact comparison between learners studying the Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification and those who do not.** The example provided by the petitioners compares a learner studying for 3 AS/ A levels with a learner studying 3 AS/ A levels as well as the Welsh Baccalaureate qualification (meaning the learner is studying for 4 qualifications). **See Section 2 below for a closer comparison provided by the Cabinet Secretary for Education.**

In relation to the text of this petition, the [WalesOnline](#) article highlighted that the petitioners were informed through this Freedom of Information request that Coleg Sir Gar received more than £360,000 annually for running the Welsh Baccalaureate.

While Welsh Government has stated there are no statutory requirements for learners to undertake any qualification, there are a number of institutions which require participation in the Advanced Skills Baccalaureate Wales or suggest all learners will undertake the qualification. These include:

- [Cardiff and Vale College](#)
- [Coleg Cambria](#)
- [Coleg Gwent](#)
- [Coleg y Cymoedd](#)

- St. Davids's Catholic Sixth Form College

In addition to Further Education colleges making the qualification compulsory to study, a previous research briefing regarding a petition in 2020 noted that some individual schools have made it compulsory for their students.

## 2. Welsh Government action

The Welsh Government's response to this petition states:

*There is no bespoke funding for the Advanced Skills BaccaLaureate Wales (ASBW), and schools and colleges are not financially incentivised to promote uptake of the course...this means that schools and colleges receive the same level of funding for learners studying 3 A levels and the ASBW, as they do for a learner studying 4 A levels.*

This explanation from the Cabinet Secretary for Education provides a closer comparison of a learner studying the qualification compared to a learner without the qualification than that provided within the text of the petition.

Further, the Cabinet Secretary for Education highlighted the Welsh Government is currently developing statutory guidance for the funding and regulatory body, Medr, on 16-19 Local Curricula. It is suggested this guidance will emphasise the importance of students having access to a wide range of courses of study in their post-16 education and will describe the role of the Advanced Skills BaccaLaureate within local curricula.

A Freedom of Information request was previously submitted to the Welsh Government in February 2025 regarding funding given to the University of Wales Trinity Saint David, Coleg Sir Gâr/ Coleg Ceredigion in relation to the endorsement of the Advanced Skills BaccaLaureate Wales as a compulsory option in admission to A levels at the college. The Welsh Government suggested it did not hold the information being requested but this may lie with Medr.

## 3. Welsh Parliament action

In April 2019, the Children, Young People and Education (CYPE) Committee published a report of its inquiry on the status of the Welsh BaccaLaureate qualification. The report highlighted concerns surrounding confusion on whether

the Welsh Baccalaureate was compulsory in addition to the Welsh Government's universal adoption policy.

Specifically, some stakeholders such as Undeb Cenedlaethol Athrawon Cymru reported concerns about inconsistencies in delivering the universal adoption policy citing an example where although the Welsh Government expects universal adoption, it does not itself support it. The Association of College and School Leaders Cymru said:

*We have come across cases of parents who have contacted the Welsh Government and demanded to know why the Welsh Bacc was compulsory, to be told by the Welsh Government officials, 'It's not. [...] And that really cuts the ground under the feet of heads who are trying to do something they think is a really important part of the Welsh education scene.*

In response to the CYPE Committee's report, the Welsh Government accepted a recommendation on providing more guidance on the Welsh Baccalaureate.

Though this recommendation was accepted in 2019, the term 'universal adoption' no longer appears in the guidance for the Welsh Baccalaureate, Skills Challenge Certificate and Advanced Skills Baccalaureate Wales. However, the term is used within the Welsh Government's Integrated Impact Assessment on the 'Delivery of the Skills Challenge Certificate as part of the Welsh Baccalaureate' (also from 2019).

During the CYPE Committee inquiry, when asked to clarify the Welsh Government's position on universal adoption, the then Minister for Education, Kirsty Williams said that all institutions are expected to be in a position to deliver the Welsh Baccalaureate as it should be an entitlement to all Welsh students and it should be considered "the norm" to take it. However, she recognised the need for flexibility in the system, suggesting there should be evidence as to why any learner is not studying the Welsh Baccalaureate.

The Committee's report also highlighted that some stakeholders cited other skills-based training which was potentially preferable to the Welsh Baccalaureate. The then Chair of Colegau Cymru and Chief Executive Officer of Group Llandrillo Menai added that funding drives behaviours:

*...although we always try and put the learner first, funding does drive behaviours, and the Welsh Bacc is fundable; Career Ready isn't. So, yes, there are options out there, but because we're so*

*focussed on qualifications and we will only fund qualifications, that drives certain behaviours.*

More recently, in Plenary on 25 October 2023, when discussing the Advanced Skills Baccalaureate Wales, Jeremy Miles (then Minister for Education and the Welsh Language) stated that the qualification “will be taken by the majority of 16-18 year-old A-level learners”.

The Welsh Baccalaureate has also appeared as the subject of written questions to the Cabinet Secretary for Education. In January 2025, Andrew RT Davies submitted a written question asking how many Russell Group universities recognise the Welsh Baccalaureate. In response, the Cabinet Secretary for Education stated all Russell Group universities value the integral skills that learners develop through the Advanced Skills Baccalaureate Wales though the qualifications that universities include and accept within their offers differ by course and by institution, and will not include the Advanced Skills Baccalaureate Wales in all cases.

The Petitions Committee has considered a number of petitions relating to the Welsh Baccalaureate in recent years:

- Remove compulsory Welsh Bac for students looking to go to University (2020)
  - The petition was closed as part of a review of all petitions currently under consideration at the Petitions Committee’s final meeting of the Fifth Senedd, in light of the upcoming election and the consideration given to this issue to date.
- Make Welsh universities consider the Welsh Baccalaureate as an A Level (2020)
  - In light of the Minister for Education’s position that it is for universities to establish the entry requirements for their courses, and noting the work underway respond to recommendations made previously by the CYPE Committee, the Committee agreed that there is little further that the Committee could achieve. The Committee agreed to close the petition and thank the petitioner for raising the issue.
- Remove the compulsory aspect of Welsh Baccalaureate (2019)

- The Committee considered correspondence from the WJEC and agreed to close the petition in light of the removal of the specific exercise referred to in the petition, the scrutiny of the Welsh BaccaLaureate very recently carried out by the CYPE Committee, and the Minister's commitment to publish updated guidance on the BaccaLaureate and its delivery.
- Remove the Welsh BaccaLaureate Qualification (2016)
  - The committee considered correspondence on the petitions and agreed to close the petition given that it is not possible to identify how to take the petition forward in the absence of contact with the petitioner, and given the categorical commitment to the Welsh BaccaLaureate previously communicated by the Welsh Government.

In addition to these petitions, there have been a number of rejected petitions relating to the Welsh BaccaLaureate over recent years:

- Welsh BaccaLaureate Subject for Higher Education Pupils and how it should be Non-Compulsory (2024) [Rejected as there was already a petition about this issue]
- Allow Welsh BaccaLaureate to be an optional course for further education students (2024) [Rejected due to not collecting enough signatures]
- Make Welsh BaccaLaureate to be an optional course for further education students (2024) [Rejected due to the petition being covered by Government or Senedd action already]
- Remove the Welsh BaccaLaureate qualification from all secondary and higher education schools (2022) [Rejected due to not collecting enough signatures]
- Abolish the compulsory advanced welsh baccaLaureate (2021) [Rejected as the Petitions Committee had considered a petition on this issue within the previous year]
- Get rid of Welsh baccaLaureate as a compulsory subject (2021) [Rejected as the Petitions Committee had considered a petition on this issue within the previous year]

- Stop the Welsh Baccalaureate A-level from being compulsory in Welsh 6<sup>th</sup> form colleges (2021) [Rejected as the Petitions Committee had considered a petition on this issue within the previous year]

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this briefing is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.