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Dear colleague,

Following on from our last correspondence on 13 March [2024](#), please find the latest update on National 14-16 Qualifications. Reflecting the principles of progression and the four purposes of Curriculum for Wales, these qualifications will equip young people with skills for life, learning and work, helping them to become qualified for the future.

Stakeholder views continue to inform our thinking and decision making and we have two live consultations that we'd like you to see.

Consultation on National 14-16 Qualifications in built environment, engineering and health and social care, and childcare

This week we published our consultation on National 14-16 Qualifications in built environment, engineering and health and social care, and childcare and are seeking your views on whether the qualifications should be offered as VCSEs or as GCSEs.

As part of our Made-for-Wales GCSE consultation we previously confirmed that there would be GCSE qualifications in built environment, engineering, health and social care and, childcare.

Since then, we have developed the National 14-16 Qualifications offer further, including the creation of a new VCSE brand and are now seeking your views on the whether these subjects, might be better designed as VCSEs.

Find out more by reading our [consultation document](#) and [integrated impact assessment](#) and [completing the short survey](#).

Our consultation will run for just under eight weeks, closing on Monday 10 June 2024.

Consultation on proposed approach to designating 14-16 qualifications consultation

As new approved [National 14-16 Qualifications](#) begin to be introduced from 2025, they will replace the majority of other publicly funded pre-16 qualifications currently available. We will therefore only designate qualifications for 14-16-year-olds in limited exceptional circumstances.

Our consultation includes a question that will be of particular interest to you and your colleagues, as it asks for examples of qualifications that you consider essential to

learners which do not meet our guiding [principles](#) and therefore will not be included within the new National 14-16 Qualifications.

Have your say and help inform our decisions by completing the [consultation survey here](#). The consultation will close on Tuesday 14 May 2024.

Welsh Government consultation

Alongside our consultations, Welsh Government is also looking for [views on draft guidance on 14 to 16 learning under the Curriculum for Wales](#).

They are consulting on draft guidance:

- explaining the legal requirements for a school's curriculum for 14 to 16-year-old learners under the Curriculum for Wales.
- supporting schools in designing a curriculum offer which meets those requirements.
- Welsh Government's priorities for learning and teaching in year 10 and year 11.

This consultation closes on Wednesday 8 May 2024.

In other news we have since published the following:

Approval criteria for a new Made-for-Wales GCSE Integrated Science (Single Award)

This single award GCSE will sit alongside a new Made-for-Wales GCSE The Sciences (Double Award), which has been designed to be the main science qualification taken by the majority of 14 to 16-year-olds in Wales. Find out more by [clicking here](#).

BMX racing, skateboarding and shooting added to approved list of sport and physical activities

The updated list has been designed to include an engaging and inclusive range of appropriate individual and team sports and physical activities for learners to choose from. [Read the full news story here](#).

When will learners start taking these qualifications?

The full range of [National 14-16 Qualifications](#) will be available by September 2027, and will include GCSEs, VCSEs (Vocational Certificate of Secondary Education), Foundation qualifications, Skills for Work and Skills for Life qualifications, and a Personal Project qualification.

National 14-16 Qualifications will be phased in over three years, starting with GCSEs in two phases in 2025 and 2026. GCSE British Sign Language, VCSEs, skills qualifications and Foundation qualifications will then be introduced in 2027, and schools, teachers and learners will be supported through the transition.

What happens next?

We continue to involve practitioners and stakeholders in our work on the National 14-16 Qualifications offer, with further engagement and a consultation on GCSE British Sign Language consultation planned for later in 2024. We will be working closely, throughout this year and in 2025, with awarding bodies as they develop VCSEs, Skills Suite and Foundation qualifications. These qualifications will be approved by September 2026, giving schools a full academic year to prepare for first teaching in September 2027.

A package of teaching and learning resources will be made available to support the transition, and all information on the National 14-16 Qualifications can be accessed via our [Have Your Say portal](#).

Find out more

Further details and publications are also available on the [Qualifications Wales website](#).

If you have any questions about the National 14-16 Qualifications, then please get in touch and [post your questions on the Q&A space](#).

Thank you once again for your support and we will continue to keep you informed and involved as we move forward on the National 14-16 Qualifications journey.

Yours sincerely,



Cassy Taylor

Executive Director Qualifications Policy and Reform