

CYPE(5)-30-19 - Paper to note 5

Sent by email to:
Lynne Neagle AM
Children, Young People and Education Committee
National Assembly for Wales



24 October 2019

Dear Lynne

Discontinuation of the Foundation (Post-16) and National (Post-16) Skills Challenge Certificate (SCC) qualifications

I am writing to let you know that Qualifications Wales has decided, in agreement with WJEC and Welsh Government, that two of the four available Skills Challenge Certificate (SCC) qualifications will be discontinued next year.

As a reminder, the four SCC qualifications currently available are:

SCC qualification	When and where studied (typically)
Foundation/National SCC	Alongside GCSEs, by learners in years 10 and 11 in schools.
Foundation (Post-16) SCC	Alongside other level 1 qualifications by post-16 learners in sixth forms and colleges.
National (Post-16) SCC	Alongside other level 2 qualifications by post-16 learners in sixth forms and colleges.
Advanced SCC	Alongside A levels and other level 3 qualifications in sixth forms and colleges.

The two qualifications being discontinued are the Foundation (Post-16) SCC and the National (Post-16) SCC.

We will continue to work with stakeholders to develop proposals for improving the design of the remaining two Skills Challenge Certificate qualifications. We will consult on proposed changes to these qualifications in 2020.

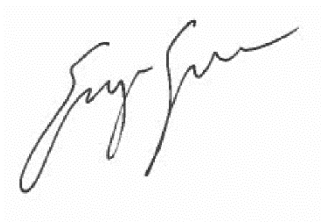
We do not consider that discontinuing the Post-16 SCC qualifications will put the reasonable needs of learners at risk. Learners who do not achieve one or more component of the Foundation / National SCC qualification in school may, if they so wish, retake components of that qualification in post-16 settings.

Reducing the number of different SCC qualifications will make it simpler to raise awareness and explain the benefits of the remaining two SCC qualifications and the overall Welsh Bacc.

We are communicating this decision today via a blog (attached) on our website. We are also writing to key stakeholders to inform them of the decision.

I hope you find this information helpful. If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me (emyr.george@qualificationswales.org).

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Emyr George', is centered below the text 'Yours sincerely'.

Emyr George

Director Qualifications Policy and Reform

SCC blog - autumn 2019

Future Skills Set for a Boost

Over recent months we've been working with stakeholders to consider how we can improve the Advanced and Foundation/National Skills Challenge Certificate (SCC) qualifications. We've also been thinking about the range of Skills Challenge Certificates (the qualifications at the heart of the Welsh Baccalaureate) that are available.

Something many people aren't aware of is there are currently four different Skills Challenge Certificate qualifications available. This can make it harder to explain what the Welsh Bacc is and how the Skills Challenge Certificate fits into it, especially as the SCC is only one of a number of qualifications that make up a Welsh Bacc award.

The four SCC qualifications currently available are:

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Foundation/National SCC	Alongside GCSEs, by learners in years 10 and 11 in schools.
Foundation (Post-16) SCC	Alongside other level 1 qualifications by post-16 learners in sixth forms and colleges.
National (Post-16) SCC	Alongside other level 2 qualifications by post-16 learners in sixth forms and colleges.
Advanced SCC	Alongside A levels and other level 3 qualifications in sixth forms and colleges.

There is a big difference in the numbers of learners that take each of these four qualifications. For example, the Advanced SCC is taken by around 12,000 learners each year, that's about three quarters of all the learners studying A levels and other level 3 qualifications in colleges and sixth forms. The Foundation/National SCC is taken by more than double the number taking the Advanced, with nearly all Year 11 learners in Wales completing the qualification in schools. That's why we are taking the time and effort to make them as good as they can be.

On the other hand, the Foundation (Post-16) SCC and National (Post-16) SCC are taken by very few learners. There may be many reasons for this, but one could be because learners are now able to re-sit components of the key stage 4 version when in post-16 settings.

We have decided, with agreement from WJEC and Welsh Government, that the Foundation (Post-16) SCC and the National (Post-16) SCC will be discontinued next

year (from 31 August 2020). This means that the learners who started on their courses for these qualifications in September this year will be the last cohort to take these two qualifications. We have written to key stakeholders to notify them of this decision.

Reducing the number of Skills Challenge Certificate qualifications from four to two will help make the overall Welsh Bacc simpler to understand and to explain. And it will also allow us to focus our efforts to strengthen the design of the Advanced and Foundation/National Skills Challenge Certificate qualifications.

We are making steady progress on developing ideas for possible changes. This year we will continue to work in collaboration with practitioners and wider stakeholders to further test our thinking. We will consult on proposals for possible changes in 2020. As always, we'll continue to keep you posted through our regular blog.