

VCSE



Level 1 / Level 2 VCSE

Hospitality and Catering

Teaching from September 2027

Quick Guide



Please note that all information included in our Quick Guides is subject to approval from Qualifications Wales.

Made for Wales.
Ready for the world.

Empowering learners, supporting teachers

As Wales' largest awarding body, we have over 75 years of experience in delivering trusted, high-quality qualifications that support learners, educators, and employers across Wales.

We provide a wide range of bilingual qualifications that are accessible, engaging, and designed to meet the needs of today's learners.

Our qualifications are backed by expert subject teams, high quality resources, and responsive, specialist support. Our work is guided and shaped through close collaboration with schools, colleges, regional consortia, sector experts and Qualifications Wales.

As the only awarding body offering qualifications in every suite of the 14-16 National Qualifications offer, we are proud to play a key role in supporting the Welsh Government's ambition to make education in Wales a source of national pride, and we remain committed to helping every learner achieve their potential and progress with confidence.



VCSEs: Engaging, practical, and built for progression

Our Level 1/2 Vocational Certificate of Secondary Education (VCSE) qualifications are designed to inspire and support learners aged 14–16, offering a two-year programme that is accessible, engaging, and rooted in real-world learning. With a strong emphasis on practical activities and hands-on experience, these qualifications help learners build confidence, develop essential skills, and achieve meaningful success.

VCSEs are unitised, allowing learners to complete some assessments in Year 10 and others in Year 11. This flexible approach supports steady progress, reduces assessment pressure, and enables learners to demonstrate achievement throughout the course.

For our VCSEs, external assessments, normally worth 40% of the overall qualification, are designed to assess foundational knowledge and can be completed near the start of the course, giving learners more time to focus on developing higher-level skills. This structure adds rigour and credibility to the qualification while helping to reduce teacher workload.

The compensatory nature of our VCSEs recognises learners' strengths across different units. High achievement in one area can offset lower performance in another, promoting a more inclusive and supportive assessment experience.

With content that is relevant, motivating, and tailored to learners' needs, WJEC VCSEs provide a solid foundation for progression to further study at Levels 1 to 3. Whether learners continue in the subject or not, they will gain valuable knowledge, practical skills, and a sense of accomplishment that prepares them for life, learning, and work.

See our full range of VCSEs: www.wjec.co.uk/wave3

About the VCSE in Hospitality and Catering

This qualification provides practical skills and industry knowledge for one of Wales's largest employment sectors within the visitor economy.

With mandatory units on industry roles and food safety, plus a practical option to cook and prepare dishes or run a hospitality event, it blends knowledge with hands-on experience.

It also includes the Level 2 Certificate in Food Safety, Hygiene, and Allergens, boosting employability and meeting industry standards for safe, inclusive catering.

Who is this qualification for?

Our Level 1/2 VCSE Hospitality and Catering qualification, which is designed to sit alongside GCSEs, offers a hands-on vocational experience that broadens learning for 14 to 16-year-old learners in schools.

It's ideal for those interested in careers in food service, catering, or event management, and for learners who prefer vocational, real-world tasks over purely academic study. With mandatory units on food safety and industry roles, plus practical options, it suits schools looking to engage learners and prepare them for employment or further study.

What does the qualification cover?

Unit	Focus
1. Introduction to the Hospitality and Catering Industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• hospitality and catering industry provision• different types of customers and their needs• hospitality and catering provision to meet specific requirements• working in the hospitality and catering industry• effective workplace communication skills• the impact of effective working skills on hospitality and catering providers, customers and staff.
2. Food Safety, Hygiene, and Allergens	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• health and safety in hospitality and catering provision• the importance of correct food storage and food handling• preventative control measures of food-induced ill health• health and safety legislation• food safety• the Environmental Health Officer (EHO).

3. Catering in action

- catering for customers
- dish selection
- factors of menu planning
- production planning
- hygiene practices and procedures
- preparation, knife skills and techniques
- cooking skills and techniques
- organoleptic properties of the dishes
- evaluating performance and food outcomes.

4. Hospitality in action

- hospitality event proposals
- resource requirements
- factors contributing to the success of hospitality events
- roles and responsibilities of individuals in teams
- planning hospitality event activities
- principles of customer service
- preparation and presentation of food and beverages
- service
- evaluating a hospitality event.

Summary of Assessment

Unit	Focus	Duration	Marks	% of Qualification
1	Mandatory non-examination assessment (WJEC marked)	2 hours	45	15%
2	Mandatory digital examination	1 hour	30	15%
3	Optional non-examination assessment (centre marked)	12 hours	105	70%
4	Optional non-examination assessment (centre marked)	12 hours	105	70%

“Our VCSE qualifications bring learning to life. Through practical, real-world experiences and flexible, inclusive assessment, they empower young people to build confidence, develop essential skills and achieve success — laying strong foundations for progression, future learning and the world of work.

Our dedicated subject teams are here to guide you every step of the way, supported by tailored resources and professional learning opportunities, empowering you to confidently deliver these exciting new qualifications.”

Sarah Harris

Assistant Director
(Vocational Qualifications)



Need more support?

Our Regional Representative **Sophie Dobbs** is available to support your centre to deliver these exciting new qualifications:

“ I work closely with schools and colleges across Wales, helping them understand the new Wave 3 qualifications that are coming as part of National 14-16 Qualifications reform in September 2027.

I'm here to support centres at every stage of the journey — from early conversations and planning, right through to delivery.

Before starting at WJEC I spent 17 years in secondary education. Having that experience, and a clear understanding of the practical challenges senior leaders face around staffing, timetabling, resources and budgets, means I'm well placed to support centres strategically and practically through the Wave 3 transition.”

Get in touch with Sophie:

wave3@wjec.co.uk



The final wave of new National 14-16 Qualifications for Wales is almost here, with first teaching beginning September 2027.

We're building upon everything we've learned from co-creating our Made-for-Wales GCSEs, engaging with over 100 centres and 60+ employers to develop an inclusive, broad and balanced range of new qualifications that will enable different ways of learning and skills development.

Discover a range of inclusive new qualifications with WJEC, Wales' most established exam board:

- **Personal Project**
- **Skills Suite (Skills for Life and Skills for Work)**
- **Foundation (General and Work Related)**
- **VCSE (Vocational Certificate of Secondary Education)**

Learn more: www.wjec.co.uk/wave3



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