

VCSE



Level 1 / Level 2 VCSE

# Performing Arts

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](http://www.wjec.co.uk/wave3)

# About the VCSE in Performing Arts

The performing arts industry is central to Wales's cultural landscape, offering two pathways - performance and production - across diverse disciplines.

This qualification helps learners understand the sector's scope, job roles, and career opportunities. Through practical activities, they will explore professional and devised work while developing skills in performance, production, or both.

Assessments showcase their abilities and deepen knowledge, building confidence and proficiency as they prepare for further study, apprenticeships, or careers in this vibrant, creative industry.

## Who is this qualification for?

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

It offers a structured pathway to understanding the diverse nature of the performing arts industry and the career opportunities on offer. It suits those interested in creative, skills-based subjects and provides an excellent foundation for further study, that in turn, supports progression to employment.

# What does the qualification cover?

Unit	Focus
<b>1. Introduction to the Performing Arts Industry (24 GLH)</b>	<p>In this unit, learners will develop their knowledge and understanding of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• the importance of the performing arts industry in Wales</li><li>• a range of artforms and roles</li><li>• the types of jobs, their roles and responsibilities</li><li>• key features of working in the industry.</li></ul>
<b>2. Getting Work* (24 GLH)</b>	<p>In this unit, learners will explore:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• how to find work within the performing arts industry</li><li>• the importance of professional work</li><li>• the skills needed to break into the industry</li><li>• how to apply their skills in response to an employment brief.</li></ul>

Unit	Focus
<b>3. Creative Showcase*</b> <b>(72 GLH)</b>	<p>In Unit 3 learners will focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• devising work in response to a brief</li> <li>• developing a range of skills to enable them to interpret the requirements of a brief, generate and develop ideas, work with others and prepare for performance or prepare designs</li> <li>• learning how to reflect on this process to help them with the future development of such skills.</li> </ul>

\*For Units 2 and 3, learners select one discipline from the 12 listed below:

Performance Disciplines	Production Disciplines
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• acting</li> <li>• dance</li> <li>• music</li> <li>• music technology</li> <li>• physical theatre</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• costume design</li> <li>• lighting design</li> <li>• make-up and hair design</li> <li>• puppetry design</li> <li>• set design</li> <li>• sound design</li> <li>• stage management</li> </ul>

NB: learners can choose the same or different disciplines for Units 2 and 3

# Summary of Assessment

Unit	Type
1	<p><b>WJEC marked Sector Test</b></p> <p><b>1 hour - 50 marks - 20% of Qualification</b></p> <p>The test has two sections of 25 marks each. Section A includes a range of objective question types, such as multiple choice, multiple response, fill-in-the-blank, drag-and-drop, and hot spot questions.</p> <p>Section B includes a range of short answer question types.</p> <p>Centres can choose to enter learners for an on-screen or paper version.</p>
2	<p><b>WJEC marked non-examination assessment</b></p> <p><b>4 hours - 50 marks - 20% of Qualification</b></p> <p>Learners will complete two tasks based on an externally set brief.</p> <p>The brief will focus on a specific job opportunity. Learners will respond by creating an individual portfolio and an audition piece or an individual portfolio and a production portfolio.</p>

# Summary of Assessment

Unit	Type
3	<p data-bbox="346 479 1182 517"><b>Centre marked non-examination assessment</b></p> <p data-bbox="346 584 1139 622"><b>12 hours - 90 marks - 60% of Qualification</b></p> <p data-bbox="346 689 1385 779">Learners will complete two tasks based on an externally set brief.</p> <p data-bbox="346 846 1362 936">Learners will select a brief from a choice of six and will either:</p> <ul data-bbox="371 1003 1369 1196" style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="371 1003 1350 1041">• create and perform a devised piece (performance)</li><li data-bbox="371 1055 1262 1144">• create production designs for a devised piece (production)</li><li data-bbox="371 1158 1369 1196">• stage manage a devised performance (production).</li></ul> <p data-bbox="346 1263 1249 1352">All learners will be required to evaluate their role and skills.</p>

“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](mailto: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](http://www.wjec.co.uk/wave3)



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