

Level 1/2 Vocational Awards Frequently Asked Questions

Answers to questions asked during the recent Vocational Award launch events are provided below. Some questions have been reworded or combined to avoid duplication. The questions have been structured to provide answers to general questions first followed by subject specific questions.

*If you have a question that isn't answered here, please email: qualifications@wjec.co.uk and don't forget to sign up for our **subject specific updates** [here](#).*

Development

Who was consulted in the development of the qualifications?

The consultation for the WJEC Level 1/2 Vocational Awards was launched on the 7th May and ended on the 30th June 2020. We had responses from a variety of stakeholders that commented on whether each qualification would prepare learners for future study and for future employment.

Respondents had the opportunity to put themselves forward as reviewers. For each subject we employed three reviewers per unit who were selected based on geographical spread, type of educational institution and subject expertise. Reviewers for each unit were sent copies of the draft specification. They were asked to independently comment on the proposed content from the viewpoint of a teacher delivering the course and the viewpoint of a learner undertaking the course. Their comments were collated and used to amend the unit content accordingly. This specification content was then used as the basis for the first draft of the SAMs. Reviewers for each unit were sent copies of the draft SAMs along with the finalised unit content from the specification. Again, they were asked to independently comment on the proposed content from the viewpoint of a teacher delivering the course and the viewpoint of a learner undertaking the course.

Have these qualifications been designed to be used instead of GCSEs or A levels?

Our Vocational Awards are Level 1/2 qualifications and are designed to be taken alongside, or as an alternative to, GCSEs.

Does 'draft' specification mean it could change?

We're finalising the Specifications now and we don't anticipate them changing but they will remain 'draft' until they have been Designated by QW.

I understand that the specifications mentioned are for KS4 - will there be a KS5 award offered for pupils too?

We hope to develop Level three qualifications for Wales soon.

Planning

We run a three-year KS4; when will the Specifications be shared so that we can plan teaching from this September?

The draft Specifications will be published in the summer 2021. We'll notify centres through our social media channels and email bulletins but do please check the [website](#) from August 2021. Please note, the final specifications will be published along with the approved qualifications in autumn 2021.

Can the course be delivered within one year?

The qualifications have been designed to be delivered over two years but teachers can adapt the delivery to fit approaches within their centre.

Will the current KS4 qualifications still be available once these new qualifications are launched?

No, the current suite of Vocational Awards is being withdrawn. The final assessment opportunity for the current suite is Summer 2023 with a resit opportunity for the external examination in January 2024.

Please note that whilst Global Business Communication was not covered as part of these launch events, a new Specification for these qualifications will also be available for first teaching from September 2022.

How many guided learning hours does each course have?

The qualifications are 120 Guided Learning Hours which is the same as a GCSE. We've produced a Delivery Guide for each qualification which contains suggested course outlines which breaks down the 120 hours. It will be up to each teacher and centre how the qualifications are delivered but this should provide a good starting point for planning.

If learners are starting their course this academic year and will take exams in 2023, which specification will they be assessed on?

The current specification.

Will there be subject specific meetings like the launch events?

Yes. We'll be running subject specific events in the autumn term and will be advertising these on the [WJEC](#) website.

Save the date for the following events:

- Engineering: 30th September
- Events: 29th September
- Hospitality and Catering: 22nd September
- ICT: 22nd September
- Performing Arts: 30th September
- Retail Business: 22nd September
- Sport and Coaching Principles: 21st September

Has the launch event been recorded? Will we have access to this recording?

Yes, the recording is available [here](#).

Is this slide deck available please?

Yes, the PowerPoint from our launch event is available [here](#).

What about Construction? Is it not going to run anymore?

Our existing Constructing the Built Environment Vocational Award will continue to be available in Wales, however, Designing the Built Environment and Planning and Maintaining the Built Environment are being withdrawn. Construction has not been included in this development as we need to undertake some further work with centres in Wales to establish what changes are needed given the introduction of the new GCSE Built Environment.

Assessment

If learners gain a low grade in the exam, can this be ‘pushed up’ through achievement in other units?

Yes. Our new Vocational Awards are mark based, so if learners don’t perform particularly well in one unit, this can be compensated by better performance in the other unit(s).

Will the grade the learner achieves in the internal unit still be restricted to the lowest grade achieved for an individual assessment criterion?

No. In our new Vocational Awards, internal assessments are mark-based and compensatory. A learner’s grade in the internal unit(s) will be determined on the basis of their holistic performance from across the assessment.

Can Year 11 learners sit the exam in January and resit in the June?

Although learners can sit the exam in January, the new terminal rule means that learners must sit the external assessment in the **series** in which they cash-in (complete the qualification).

They could have a practice attempt in January, but it is only the result achieved at the time they cash-in that will contribute towards the final grade (even if the mark is lower than the result achieved before). However, if learners are entered for the external assessment in January, and pass the examination, they can be entered for a late cash-in provided they have also completed and entered all their internal units.

Do students still have to pass the exam?

No. The qualifications are compensatory so they can still achieve the qualification if they fail the exam. If a candidate fails to achieve a mark for any one task within an assessment, they can still pass provided they achieve the minimum number of marks that is needed to pass that assessment overall. So, for example, if the minimum mark required to achieve a Level 1 Pass is 12 then it doesn’t matter where those 12 marks come from.

Will there be a retake opportunity for students across all new vocational courses?

Yes. After a learner has achieved a qualification result, they can retake the externally assessed unit and internally assessed units again in a later series to improve their qualification result.

Learners can retake the exam without needing to retake the internally assessed units; however, learners cannot retake the internally assessed units only to improve their result. In order to meet the terminal assessment requirements, learners retaking any internal unit(s) they must also retake the exam at the same time and it is **only** the attempt in the series in which the candidate is cashing in the qualification which can be used in calculating the final overall grade.

Can students sit the exam in January and June and cash the best one in?

No, it is the mark achieved in the exam in the series that candidates cash-in that counts towards the overall grade.

Will the controlled assessment still have to be completed in a specified number of hours?

Yes. Each internally assessed controlled assessment specifies the maximum amount of time the learner should be given to complete the assessment. This is to ensure that all learners taking a specific qualification are permitted to the same amount of time on their assessments.

As part of the development process for our new suite of Vocational Awards, we have worked with teachers to determine the appropriate number of hours which should be allocated to individual tasks and to the assessment as a whole.

Will each qualification be split 60% CA and 40% external examination?

Yes.

Can the internal assessment be submitted at a different time to the external exam?

Yes, this can be submitted in January and May of year 10 and year 11.

Can the internal assessment be submitted a year before the external assessment?

Yes, the internal assessments can be submitted in the January or June of the first year of study.

How many pupils will be sampled for internal and external units?

The same rules apply for the internal assessments, which will be outlined in our Administration Guide. **All** students will be assessed by our examiners for external units.

Grading

What is the average point score for this qualification?

The points scores will be assigned by Welsh Government on Designation however we have expanded the grade scale to 8 grades and we therefore anticipate that points scores will align with GCSE A*-G.

Will the grade the learner achieves in the internal unit still be restricted to the lowest grade achieved for an individual assessment criterion?

No. In our new Vocational Awards, internal assessments are mark-based, compensatory and now not based on assessment criteria. A learner's grade in the internal unit(s) will be determined on the basis of their holistic performance from across the assessment.

Resources

Will we need to buy new textbooks?

Depending on the subject, your current textbooks could still be relevant as a lot of the current content will be included in the new qualifications. We will also be developing brand new textbooks for each qualification.

Are the text books going to be digital so that they can be accessed via Google Classroom/ Teams?

This is currently under discussion within our organisation?

Where would I find the library of teaching resources and the candidate pack?

All resources will be on the subject specific webpage and the candidate packs will be available to download from the Secure Website.

Subject Specific Questions

Engineering

What product will we be making in Engineering? Will we have more products to design for Unit One?

The assignment brief for Unit 1 will change each year so learners will make a different product depending on what brief is set. However, we are mindful that not all centres have access to the same equipment, tools and materials, and so in designing the assessment, we have incorporated flexibility that allows centres to make choices about the materials that can be used to produce the engineering product. Therefore, although the product itself will be prescribed by the brief each year, centres will be able to facilitate their learners' production of it in a way that is manageable and cost effective for centres year after year.

Hospitality and Catering

When you mentioned that the internal assessment would be 'more practical based', what do you mean?

In the new qualification, there is more emphasis on the preparation and cooking skills and techniques. The techniques are categorised in the specification as basic, medium and complex.

Will this new course completely change in content from the Hospitality and Catering Specification which I am currently teaching to my Year 10s and will the changes apply to them?

The new specification is for first assessment in 2024. Learners currently in Year 10 who will be completing their qualification in Summer 2022 and those entering Year 10 in September and completing their qualification in Summer 2023 will complete the current Specification.

How many food practical assessment are there?

There is one practical assessment in this qualification.

ICT

Will the Project Life Cycle will be included in the Internal assessment for ICT?

The controlled assessment for ICT covers:

- Planning, creating, modifying and using databases
- Planning, creating, modifying and using spreadsheets
- Planning, creating and modifying an automated document
- Planning, creating, manipulating and storing images

The tasks include testing and evaluating, so in that sense, yes the tasks follow the project life cycle, although we do not specifically state this within the specification.

Performing Arts

Is the Performing Arts course Drama, Dance or Music based or can you opt for specialised units?

The Performing Arts specifications allows learners to specialise in one area of the performing arts, or to select different specialisms for each unit.

In Unit 1, learners can choose from:

- drama
- music
- music technology
- musical theatre

In Unit 2, learners can choose from:

- devised drama
- choreography
- composition
- composition using technology
- costume design
- lighting design
- sound design
- make-up and hair design
- set design.