

VCSE

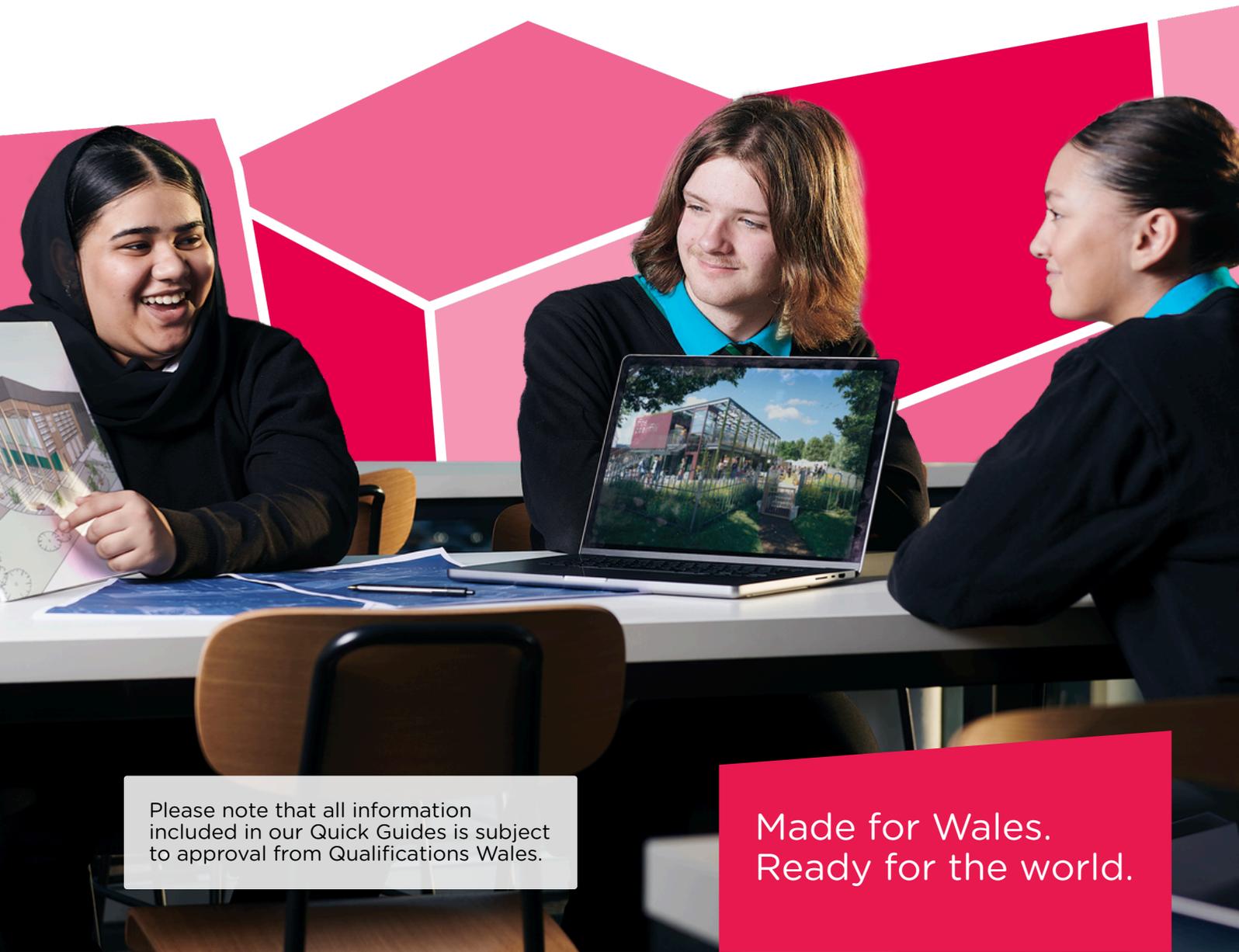


Level 1 / Level 2 VCSE

Built Environment

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 Built Environment

The Built Environment sector shapes the spaces where we live and work, influencing construction, design, and sustainability.

This qualification introduces learners to its scope, key processes, and diverse roles, alongside frameworks such as legislation, planning, and risk assessment.

Through practical activities, learners will develop and evaluate skills in three trades such as brickwork, plumbing, or woodwork, building confidence and transferable skills as they prepare for further study, apprenticeships, or careers in this essential and evolving industry.

Who is this qualification for?

The Level 1/2 VCSE Built Environment 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 suits learners interested in practical, skills-based subjects, and careers in the construction industry.

It offers a structured pathway to understanding the diverse nature of the built environment and the career opportunities the sector offers. It provides an excellent foundation for further study, that in turn, supports progression to employment.

What does the qualification cover?

Unit	Focus
<p>1. Introduction to the Built Environment (24 GLH)</p> <p>1.1 Understanding the sector</p> <p>1.2 The built environment lifecycle</p> <p>1.3 Trades and employment</p>	<p>In this unit, learners will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• be introduced to what the sector covers in terms of its scope and the major activities, considerations and processes• focus on the different types of roles found within the sector and ways to gain an entry level job.
<p>2. The Built Environment in Focus (24 GLH)</p> <p>2.1 Understanding key built environment frameworks</p> <p>2.2 The built environment in Wales</p> <p>2.3 Building considerations</p>	<p>In this unit, learners will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• explore the wider frameworks and considerations that shape the built environment sector from key legislation, regulations and stakeholders to planning and risk assessments• consider the specifics of building in Wales to develop an understanding of its built environment.

Unit	Focus
<p>3. Skills Development and Demonstration (72 GLH)</p> <p>3.1 Trade skills</p> <p>3.2 Preparing for a skills demonstration</p> <p>3.3 Demonstrating skills</p> <p>3.4 Review of skills demonstration</p>	<p>In this unit, learners will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develop, apply and evaluate practical skills from three different trade areas within the built environment sector • gain a broader understanding of sector expectations and transferable skills valued by employers. <p>Learners will choose to develop and demonstrate skills in three trades from the following list:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • brickwork • electrical • heritage construction • painting and decorating • plastering • plumbing • roofing • tiling • woodwork.

Summary of Assessment

Unit	Type
1	<p>WJEC marked Sector Test</p> <p>1 hour - 50 marks - 20% of Qualification</p> <p>The test has two sections of 25 marks each.</p> <p>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 candidates for an on-screen or paper version.</p>
2	<p>WJEC marked non-examination assessment</p> <p>6 hours 30 minutes - 50 marks - 20% of Qualification</p> <p>Learners will complete a series of tasks based on an externally set case study, focused on a Welsh building project.</p>

Unit	Type
3	<p data-bbox="344 309 1182 349">Centre marked non-examination assessment</p> <p data-bbox="344 412 1142 452">14 hours - 90 marks - 60% of Qualification</p> <p data-bbox="344 515 1378 658">Learners will complete construction activities and tasks based on an externally set brief that can be adapted by centres.</p> <p data-bbox="344 721 1394 815">Learners will demonstrate their skills across three trades and evaluate the demonstration of their 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



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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