

GCSE Food and Nutrition Qualification Outline – Consultation Version



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Introduction

This document provides an overview of the proposed WJEC GCSE Food and Nutrition qualification.

It is based on Qualifications Wales's Approval Criteria (key sections are included in Appendix 1). Our qualification **must** meet these requirements.

The qualification outline will provide a guide for the development of the Specification and Sample Assessment Materials (SAMs).

Qualification Overview

The GCSE Food and Nutrition qualification will support the Curriculum for Wales by:

- Supporting the statements of what matters by giving learners the opportunity to:
 - understand the factors that affect physical health and well-being that promote healthy bodies and healthy minds. This includes health-promoting behaviours such as following a balanced diet
 - develop the confidence, motivation, physical competence, knowledge and understanding that can help them lead healthy and active lifestyles which promote good physical health and well-being by studying nutrition and good health
 - enable learners to develop the critical-thinking skills necessary to consider their decision-making in terms of possible implications when preparing food, including risks, for themselves and others
 - engage critically with these social influences within their own culture that influence diet and health choices.

- Supporting the principles of progression by encouraging learners to:
 - deepen learning in a wide range of concepts within the statements of what matters across a wide range of topics and aspects of food and nutrition
 - develop their independence and agency in matters relating to nutrition and good health: resulting in a growing responsibility for their own health and well-being
 - putting what they have learned about food and nutrition into a practical context, developing conceptual knowledge
 - develop practical skills such as food preparation and cooking that also support learners in their health and well-being.

The construct of GCSE Food and Nutrition qualification is based on the Welsh Government subject specific considerations for Food and Nutrition¹. The qualification will:

- provide opportunities for learners to understand the journey from 'field to fork', explore the economic, ethical and environmental influences of food availability and consider sustainability, production and processing of food
- provide opportunities for learners to make healthy and informed food choices for themselves and others, make links between diet, nutrition, health and well-being,

¹ <https://hwb.gov.wales/curriculum-for-wales/health-and-well-being/designing-your-curriculum/>

explore the influences of diet and health choices and explore the function and nutritional benefits of food and drinks on the human body

- provide opportunities for learners to develop an understanding of the functional properties of food within the body and the ingredients used within a recipe
- equip learners with the skills to effectively and safely prepare, process, store, cook and serve food, modify existing recipes and develop their own dishes, analyse and evaluate a range of food and dishes made by themselves and others, explore the sensory qualities of ingredients within a recipe
- provide opportunities for learners to appreciate how food connects us to the world around us, explore the contributions and cuisines of Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities and individuals, explore a range of ingredients, and cooking methods and techniques, from local, national, and international cuisines, and socio-cultural influences on food availability.

Proposed Qualification Structure

Unit 1: Digital-Only Exam
Digital examination
40% of qualification
Unit 2: Food Investigation
Non-examination assessment
20% of qualification
Marked by the centre and moderated by WJEC
Unit 3: Food and Nutrition in Action
Non-examination assessment
40% of qualification
Marked by the centre and moderated by WJEC

This will be a linear qualification.

There is no hierarchy implied by the order in which the units are presented. Therefore, the order does not imply a prescribed teaching order.

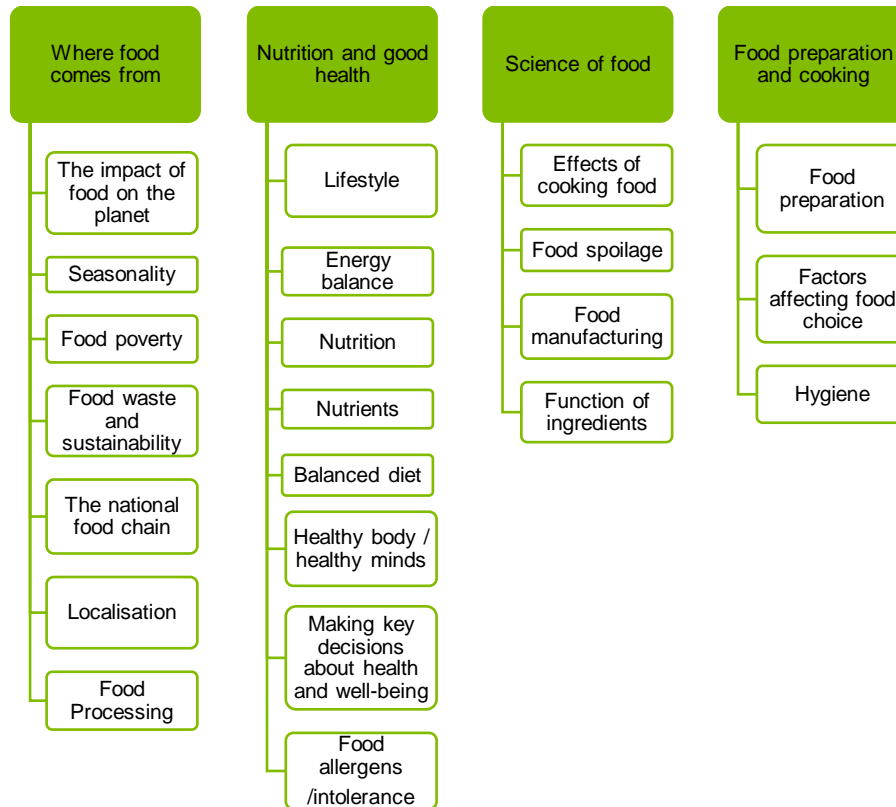
Unit Information

Unit 1 - Digital-Only Exam

The purpose of this unit is to:

- **develop learner knowledge and understanding of food and nutrition and food preparing and cooking.**

This unit will be based on the following concepts and possible content.



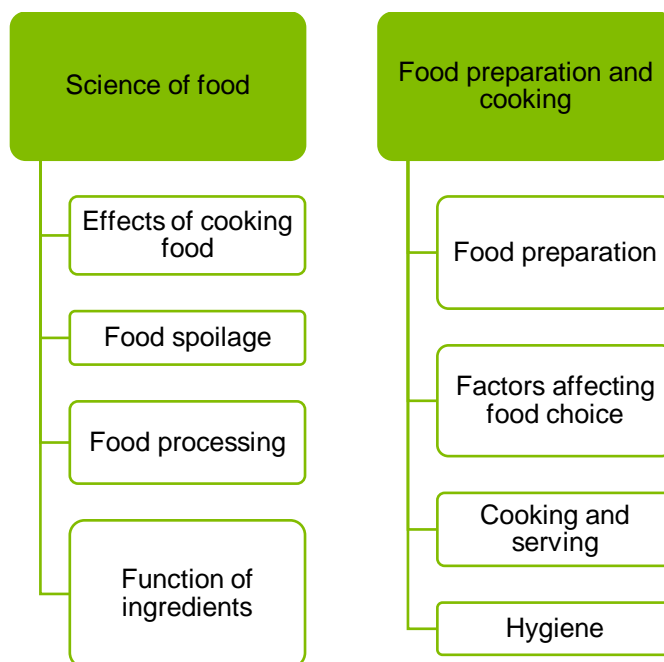
Unit 1 will be marked via an examination available in the summer series, first available in 2027. It will include a mix of question types that will target AO1, AO2 and AO3. AO1 and AO2 will have equal and the highest weightings, followed by AO3. The duration of the examination is likely to be 1 hour and 30 minutes. There will be no optionality or tiering. This will be a digital-only exam.

Unit 2 - Food Investigation

The purpose of this unit is to:

- **apply knowledge and understanding of the working characteristics, function and chemical properties of ingredients in a recipe.**

This unit will be based on the following concepts and possible content:



This unit will take the form of non-examination assessment. Tasks will be released in September of the second year of study for submission in the summer series; tasks will first be available in September 2026 for submission in summer 2027. This unit will target AO2 and AO3; AO2 is to receive the highest weighting because of the application of the knowledge and understanding element of the non-examination assessment.

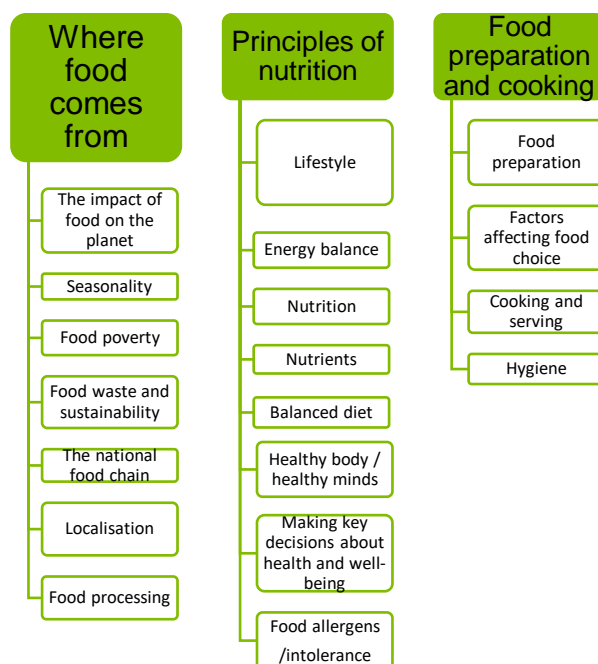
The non-examination assessment will take the form of a food investigation. Two tasks will be released by WJEC each series; learners can choose which task they undertake. Centres will mark the non-examination assessment and it will be moderated by the WJEC. It is likely that there will be a low level of control at the investigation stage and a high level of control during the formal assessment stage. The time allowed for the assessment is yet to be determined but is likely to be 10 hours, including research and investigation time. There will be no optionality in this unit, however, learners will choose from two tasks. The non-examination assessment **must** be submitted digitally.

Unit 3 - Food and Nutrition in Action

The purpose of this unit is to:

- **plan, prepare, cook and present food using appropriate skills and techniques.**

This unit will be based on the following concepts and possible content:



This unit will take the form of a non-examination assessment. Tasks will be released in September of the second year of study for submission in the summer series; tasks will first be available in September 2026 for submission in summer 2027. This unit will target AO3 and AO4; AO4 is to receive the highest weighting because of the practical element of the non-examination assessment.

The non-examination assessment will be a food preparation activity. Two tasks will be released by WJEC each series; learners can choose which task they undertake. It is likely that there will be a low level of control because of the skills-based nature of the task. Centres will mark the non-examination assessment and it will be moderated by the WJEC. The time allowed for the assessment is likely to be 15 hours, including planning and preparation time. The non-examination assessment **must** be submitted digitally.

Consideration of Manageability, Engagement, Validity and Reliability (MERV)

In developing this proposed qualification outline, we have considered manageability, engagement, reliability and validity, and how to balance these considerations in the context of the requirements of the Approval Criteria.

The Approval Criteria require 40% of the qualification to be assessed via a digital-only examination. To ensure this manageability, we are liaising with Qualifications Wales and Welsh Government about centre capacity to deliver the on-screen assessment.

The Approval Criteria require 60% of the qualification to be assessed by non-examination assessment, with both non-examination assessments needing to be set by WJEC, internally marked by the centre, and externally moderated by the awarding body. The qualification is linear, so all non-examination assessment must be submitted in the summer series of the final year. This poses some potential manageability challenges. We propose to minimise manageability challenges by releasing tasks for both non-examination assessment units in September of 2027, allowing centres the flexibility to choose the order of the non-examination assessments they wish to undertake, and spread the assessments at a time that suits them, within the final academic year of study; due to the nature of the tasks, we do not feel it's appropriate to release the tasks at the start of the first year of study, as this could lead to a narrowing of teaching and learning.

One non-examination assessment (Unit 2) will feature a task that requires learners to apply knowledge and understanding of the working characteristics, function and chemical properties of ingredients in a recipe. We foresee some potential manageability issues as centres (and/or learners) may have varying access to equipment and ingredients. We will make this a key consideration when developing the qualification as we aim to reduce the impact of this and ensure equity for centres (and learners). We would foresee this non-examination assessment featuring a low level of control, at the investigation stage, to enable learners to undertake an authentic enquiry experience assessment, which should aid manageability. We have considered the manageability impact of 10 hours for this non-examination assessment; due to the practical, experimental and investigatory nature of the assessment, integral to the subject, we consider the time to be necessary and appropriate for centres and learners at GCSE level. We will advise centres to spread this out over several sessions to assist with manageability.

The other non-examination assessment (Unit 3) requires learners to plan, prepare, cook and present food using appropriate skills and techniques. This could pose some potential manageability issues due to the increased cost of ingredients in the current financial climate; we will make this a key consideration when developing the qualification as we aim to reduce the impact of this and ensure equity for learners. We would foresee this non-examination assessment featuring a low level of control due to the practical nature of the task, which should aid manageability. We have considered the manageability impact of 15 hours for this non-examination assessment; due to the practical nature of the assessment and the planning, preparation and cooking times involved in cooking several dishes, integral to the subject, we believe the time is necessary and appropriate for centres and learners at GCSE level. We will advise centres to spread this out over several sessions to assist with manageability.

We believe that our proposed qualification should provide opportunities for centres to develop an engaging programme of study for its learners, in line with the expectations of the Curriculum for Wales. Unit 1 will cover a broad introduction to Food and Nutrition, allowing learners to study various areas in relation to Food and Nutrition. Unit 2 and Unit 3 will engage learners by being assessed in a varied, relevant and meaningful contexts. With both non-examination assessments, there will be flexibility for learners to select from two tasks in relation to their preference.

We believe that the non-examination assessments we propose for Units 2 and 3 are a valid approach to assessing the purpose and content because they allow learners' skills to be assessed in appropriate contexts. To ensure the reliability of the non-examination assessments, we will ensure each unit will target the same assessment objective weightings each series. For both non-examination assessment units, marking criteria will be developed and teachers will be provided with a package of support to ensure consistent application of the marking criteria across centres and over time. For Unit 2, we will provide guidance on what notes learners are able to use when responding to the assessment tasks and it is likely that a high level of control will be used at the formal assessment stage to ensure reliability. We will moderate a sample of centre work to provide further assurance of reliability. As learners are able to select from a choice of two tasks for both Unit 2 and Unit 3 non-examination assessments, we will ensure that tasks are standardised to assess the same skills with common marking criteria and a standard approach.

We believe that the purpose and content of Unit 1 can be validly assessed by examination, and a mix of question types can help us maximise validity. When we develop assessments, we will ensure that all tasks target the relevant construct, that there is an appropriate balance of content covered over time and that there is alignment between assessment items and learning outcomes. Where appropriate we will use data available to us on how an assessment has functioned. To ensure reliability, we will make sure that the examined units target the same assessment objective weightings and have a consistent level of demand each series. Marking criteria will be developed and assessors will be trained on how to apply them consistently.

We will continue to consider the balance of manageability, engagement, reliability and validity, at each stage of qualification development.

Appendix 1

Key information from Approval Criteria

The following information has come directly from Qualifications Wales' [GCSE Food and Nutrition - Approval Criteria](#) - our qualification must meet these requirements.

Purpose

1. GCSE Food and Nutrition must:

- 1.1 be designed primarily for Learners between the ages of 14 and 16
- 1.2 build on the conceptual understanding Learners have developed through their learning from ages 3-14
- 1.3 support teaching and learning by providing appropriately broad, demanding, relevant and engaging content and assessment that relates to and supports the Curriculum for Wales, including its four purposes
- 1.4 allow Learners to develop a strong foundation of knowledge, skills and understanding which supports progression to post-16 study and prepares them for life, learning and work
- 1.5 provide meaningful, fair, and accurate information on Learner achievement within a subject that highlights what Learners know, understand, and can do

Aims

2. GCSE **Food and Nutrition** must:

- 2.1 allow Learners to explore a range of knowledge, skills and understanding in relation to food and nutrition
- 2.2 provide opportunities for Learners to be assessed in a variety of relevant and meaningful contexts

3. The GCSE **Food and Nutrition** qualification must support Learners to:

- 3.1 understand the journey of food - from 'field to fork'
- 3.2 make healthy and informed food choices for themselves and others
- 3.3 explain the function, nutritional benefits and sensory qualities of ingredients within a recipe
- 3.4 explain the function and nutritional benefits of food and drinks in the human body
- 3.5 describe the links between diet, nutrition, health and well-being
- 3.6 explore the economic, environmental, ethical, and socio-cultural influences on food availability, production processes, diet, and health choices

- 3.7 effectively and safely prepare, process, store, cook and serve food which contains a variety of food commodities
- 3.8 explore a range of ingredients, and cooking methods and techniques, from local, national, and international cuisines
- 3.9 modify existing recipes and develop their own ideas for dishes
- 3.10 explore the cross-cutting curriculum theme of human rights and diversity including the contributions and cuisines of Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities and individuals
- 3.11 gain an appreciation of how food connects us to the world around us
- 3.12 analyse and evaluate a range of food and dishes made by themselves and others

Assessment Objectives

The assessment of the knowledge, understanding and skills required in the qualification must target the following assessment objectives in line with the indicated weightings, within a tolerance of +/- 5 percentage points

AO1	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of: - food and nutrition - preparing, cooking and presenting food	15%
AO2	Apply knowledge and understanding of: - food and nutrition - preparing, cooking and presenting food	30%
AO3	Analyse and evaluate different aspects of: - food and nutrition - preparing, cooking and presenting food, (including food and dishes made by themselves and others)	20%
AO4	Plan, prepare, cook, and present dishes, using appropriate skills and techniques.	35%

Scheme of assessment

12. The GCSE **Food and Nutrition** qualification must be linear.

13. The GCSE **Food and Nutrition** qualification must show the proportion of marks (weighted and/or raw) allocated to each assessment objective and to each Component.

14. The GCSE **Food and Nutrition** specification must include the following assessment arrangements:

14.1 a digital-only examination that:

14.1.1 assesses a Learner's knowledge and understanding of food and nutrition

14.1.2 accounts for 40% of the qualification

14.1.3 is set and marked by the awarding body

14.1.4 includes item types which are enhanced by the digital testing

14.2 a **Food and Nutrition** in Action task that:

14.2.1 assesses how Learners can apply their knowledge, understanding and skills effectively to plan, prepare, cook and present food

- 14.2.2 accounts for 40% of the qualification
- 14.2.3 enables Learners to choose from a range of briefs set by the awarding body
- 14.2.4 is marked by the Centre and Moderated by the awarding body

14.3 the **Food and Nutrition** in Action task must require Learners to:

- 14.3.1 research and investigate the chosen task
- 14.3.2 plan the task
- 14.3.3 prepare, cook and present a menu of three dishes and accompaniments within a single session using a range of food preparation and cooking strategies and techniques
- 14.3.4 evaluate the selection, preparation, cooking and presentation of the three dishes and accompaniments

14.4 a Food Investigation that assesses how Learners can apply knowledge, understanding and skills effectively to:

- 14.4.1 investigate the working characteristics, function and chemical properties of ingredients through practical experimentation
- 14.4.2 use the investigation findings to achieve a particular result when preparing and cooking food

14.5 the Food Investigation must:

- 14.5.1 account for 20% of the qualification
- 14.5.2 be set by the awarding body, marked by the Centre and moderated by the awarding body
- 14.5.3 require Learners to research, investigate, analyse and evaluate the task

15. The GCSE **Food and Nutrition** qualification must utilise digital technology in order for Learners to submit evidence of work in the non-examination assessments.

16. The awarding body must specify its rules regarding re-sits and re-submissions for GCSE Food and Nutrition in accordance with the GCSE Conditions of Recognition.