

GCSE Drama Qualification Outline – Consultation Version



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Introduction

This document provides a high-level overview of the proposed WJEC GCSE Drama 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 construct of the GCSE Drama qualification is based on the Welsh Government subject specific considerations for Expressive Arts¹.

The qualification will:

- through the creative process, allow learners to explore, respond to stimuli and create and reflect on their own work while engaging in rich, authentic experiences.

The following concepts for the GCSE Drama qualification are based on the statements of what matter for Expressive Arts²:

- **exploring** the Expressive Arts is essential to developing artistic skills and knowledge and it enables learners to become curious and creative individuals
- **responding** and **reflecting**, both as artist and audience, is a fundamental part of learning in the Expressive Arts
- **creating** combines skills and knowledge, drawing on the senses, inspiration and imagination.

The GCSE Drama qualification will support the Curriculum for Wales by:

- Supporting the principles of progression³
 - encouraging learners to explore, experience, interpret, create and respond to increasingly complex meaning
 - developing an increased sophistication of conceptual learning
 - more sophisticated use of relevant skills and the ability to transfer existing skills and knowledge into new context.
- Supporting the specific considerations for this area⁴ by giving learners the opportunity to:
 - explore, respond to stimuli and create and reflect on their own work while engaging in rich, authentic experiences

¹ [Expressive Arts: Designing your curriculum - Hwb \(gov.wales\)](#)

² [Expressive Arts: Statements of what matters - Hwb \(gov.wales\)](#)

³ [Expressive Arts: Principles of progression - Hwb \(gov.wales\)](#)

⁴ [Expressive Arts: Designing your curriculum - Hwb \(gov.wales\)](#)

- build understanding of acting, directing, design, technical theatre and arts administration.

Proposed Qualification Structure

Unit 1: Devising

Practical assessment, Reflective Log and Evaluation

40% of qualification

Marked by centre and moderated by WJEC

Unit 2: Performance

Practical assessment and Artistic Intention

30% of qualification

Marked by a visiting examiner

Unit 3: Examination

Written examination

30% of qualification

Digital only examination, marked by WJEC

- We propose the following percentages for the four assessment objectives:

AO1	Demonstrate and apply knowledge and understanding of how drama is developed, designed and performed.	20%
AO2	Develop and apply performance and/or design skills.	40%
AO3	Reflect on, analyse and evaluate their own work and the work of others.	20%
AO4	Create and develop ideas to communicate meaning in theatrical designs and/or performances.	20%

This will be a linear qualification. Unit 1 could be completed any time during the two years and submitted to WJEC in the final year of the course. Both Unit 2 and Unit 3 would be completed in the final year of the course.

This is the proposed breakdown of Assessment Objectives for each unit:

	Unit 1 (40%)	Unit 2 (30%)	Unit 3 (30%)
AO1			20%
AO2	15%	25%	
AO3	10%		10%
AO4	15%	5%	

Unit Information

Unit 1- Devising

The purpose of this unit is to:

- develop an awareness and understanding of a range of theatrical practitioners/companies/genres
- refine learners' awareness and skills regarding the development, amendment and refinement of their own work
- develop learners' application of performance/design skills within a live performance
- reflect on the effectiveness of their own artistic choices and respond to live theatre as a source of influence.

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

- **exploring-** learners will have the opportunity to explore various theatrical viewpoints and experiences. This exploration will be linked to various practitioner/theatre companies' artistic aims and intentions. Exploration can also be linked to a range of theatrical genres
- **responding** and **reflecting-** linked to live and/or pre-recorded/live streamed performances as theatrical influences
- **creating-** learners will have the opportunity to create as part of the process of the final devised performance and could be experienced as performers or designers.

The unit will be assessed via practical non-examination assessment, a reflective log and an evaluation, submitted in the final year of the course as part of the summer series. The non-examination assessment must be submitted digitally. The mix of tasks for this unit will target AO2, AO3 and AO4. AO2 and AO4 will have a higher weighting, followed by AO3. The stimuli for the non-examination assessment will be set by WJEC. The unit will be marked by the centre and moderated by WJEC. Learners will have choice and flexibility in the selection of the stimulus for this unit. It is envisaged that the stimuli will be available at least a year in advance of the submission date. The practical assessment will be conducted under high level of control, the reflective log under low level of control and the evaluation under high level of control. The performance time is likely to be as follows:

- Group of two actors: 5-10 minutes
- Group of three actors: 7-12 minutes
- Group of four actors: 9-14 minutes
- Group of five actors: 11-16 minutes.

Each actor must interact with other performers and/or the audience for a minimum of five minutes.

We will set minimum requirements for each design option e.g lighting design, sound design, set design and costume design that will be comparable with the current specification.

Unit 2- Performance

The purpose of this unit is to:

- **refine learners' awareness and skills regarding the development, amendment and refinement of their own text-based performance/design by focusing on their own artistic intentions**
- **develop learners' application of performance/design skills within a live performance.**

This unit will be based on the following concepts:

- **exploring-** learners will have the opportunity to explore various theatrical viewpoints and experiences by selecting their own performance text. Exploration could also be linked to a range of theatrical genres, to various practitioner/theatre companies' artistic aims and intentions and through the means of live theatre, as a possible source of influence for performance or design ideas
- **creating-** linked to the process of creating the final text-based performance and could be experienced as performers or designers.

The unit will be assessed via practical non-examination assessment and presentation of artistic intentions in a non-prescribed format. This unit must be taken in the final year of the course. The mix of tasks for this unit will target AO2 and AO4. AO2 will have the higher weighting in this assessment, followed by AO4. The non-examination assessment will be externally marked by a visiting examiner. Learners will have choice and flexibility in the selection of their performance text for this unit, however learners must not perform an extract or extracts from the set text(s) chosen by the centre. The practical performance will be conducted under high level of control and the artistic intentions will be completed under low level of control. The performance time is likely to be as follows:

- Group of two actors: 5-10 minutes
- Group of three actors: 7-12 minutes
- Group of four actors: 9-14 minutes

We will set minimum requirements for design option e.g lighting design, sound design, set design and costume design that will be comparable with the current specification. The artistic intentions must be submitted digitally to WJEC.

Unit 3 - Digital Examination

The purpose of this unit is to:

- **demonstrate and apply knowledge and understanding of how drama is developed, designed and performed through the context of prepared and unprepared texts**
- **develop learners' creative skills as an actor, designer and director through the context of prepared and unprepared texts.**

This unit will be based on the following concepts:

- **exploring**- learners will have the opportunity to explore various theatrical viewpoints and experiences. This exploration will be linked to their chosen set text as well as a range of theatrical productions. Learners should have the opportunity for theatrical exploration as an actor, designer and director
- **responding** to and **reflecting** on the set text- linked to live and/or pre-recorded/live streamed performances as possible theatrical influences. Within the study of the unprepared text, pre-recorded/live streamed performances will form the basis of the assessment.

The unit will be assessed via a digital examination available in the summer series of the final year of study, with a mix of question types that will target AO1 and AO3. AO1 will have the higher weighting, followed by AO3. There will be a choice of set texts and unprepared work(s) set by WJEC. We propose that the unprepared work is released in the March of the final year of study, and an extract of this unprepared work is shown during the digital examination. The set texts will include works: of contrasting styles/genres; from contrasting periods; created in or inspired by Wales; written by a diverse range of writers including those from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds. The duration of the examination is likely to be approximately 1 hour 30 minutes, but this will need further exploration regarding permitting learners to replay extracts to answer the questions which is relevant to manageability for both learners and centres. Some questions will incorporate visual examples.

Consideration of manageability, engagement, validity and reliability

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 70% of the qualification to be assessed by non-examination assessment that is set by WJEC and undertaken on dates set by WJEC. This poses some potential manageability challenges for centres and learners which we propose to minimise by spreading the workload and assessment for centres and learners. As the Approval Criteria state that the qualification must be linear, there are some limitations here, but we propose making the Unit 1 assessment available to learners in the first year of study for submission to WJEC in the summer series of the final year of study. Unit 2 will be available to learners in the Spring term of the final year of study, allowing learners to be assessed after undertaking the teaching and learning for the relevant unit. 40% of the non-examination assessment will be marked by the centre and moderated by WJEC, and 30% of the non-examination assessment will be marked by a visiting examiner which could aid manageability, although we recognise that centres will need to be flexible about when the visits take place. This poses some potential manageability challenges which we propose to minimise by spreading the workload and assessment for centres and learners. As the Approval Criteria state that the qualification must be linear, there are some limitations here, but we propose making the unit 1 assessment available to learners in the first year of study,

however it will be submitted for assessment to WJEC in the summer series of the final year of study.

Although we acknowledge that it has an impact on manageability, we have concluded that a high level of control is considered crucial for elements of both non-examination assessments to secure the requirement of the Approval Criteria that learners realise their artistic intentions in live performance and apply a range of performance and/or design skills to demonstrate control. There will be elements of the non-examination assessments that are conducted under low level control (Unit 1 reflective log and Unit 2 artistic intentions). We believe that a low level of control for these elements will help with manageability for centres and provide an authentic way to satisfy Approval Criteria requirements for learners to apply understanding of the creative process and critically evaluate.

There will be flexibility in terms of format of the non-examination assessment (Unit 1, reflective log and evaluation, and Unit 2, presentation of artistic intention). This flexibility will aid manageability for centre, allowing them to select the most suitable format or range of formats for their learners in line with the resources they have available.

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. For Unit 1 and Unit 2, there will be a range of stimuli with diverse perspectives that will allow learners to explore a local, national or international perspective. These stimuli will help to engage learners, facilitating the opportunity to create work which is relevant, engaging and creative.

We believe that the choice of performance text and the practical nature of the tasks for the performing component (Unit 2) will help to make the assessment more engaging for learners, allowing learners to demonstrate and apply their skills in meaningful contexts and in line with the expectations of the Curriculum for Wales.

We believe that the non-examination assessment tasks we propose for the devising and performing units (Units 1 and 2) are a valid approach to assessing the purpose and content because they allow students to demonstrate their skills in appropriate contexts. To ensure the reliability of the non-examination assessment for Unit 1, we will ensure the unit will target the same assessment objective weightings each examination series, 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 each series. We will moderate a sample of centre work to provide further assurance of reliability. Similarly for Unit 2, we will ensure the unit will target the same assessment objective weightings each year, marking criteria will be developed and examiners will be trained to ensure consistent application of the marking criteria across centres and each series.

We believe that the purpose and content of Unit 3 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 are liaising with Qualifications Wales and Welsh Government about centre capacity to deliver the on-screen assessment.

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 Drama - Approval Criteria](#) - our qualification must meet these requirements.

Purpose

1. **GCSE Drama** 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 Drama** must:
 - 2.1. allow *Learners* to explore a range of knowledge, skills and understanding in relation to drama
 - 2.2. provide opportunities for *Learners* to be assessed in a variety of relevant and meaningful contexts
3. The **GCSE Drama** qualification must support *Learners* to:
 - 3.1. explore drama created and performed by other people and develop their own talents in drama
 - 3.2. gain understanding of a range of techniques, forms, styles, genres, contexts and means of presenting drama
 - 3.3. develop knowledge, understanding and appreciation of how meaning is communicated in drama
 - 3.4. respond to and reflect on the dramatic work of others, applying knowledge of context to evaluate the effectiveness of ideas and techniques used to communicate meaning
 - 3.5. apply performance and/or design skills to demonstrate control
 - 3.6. develop creative skills to plan, devise and design effective performances and/or designs
 - 3.7. reflect on, refine and evaluate their own work

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 and apply knowledge and understanding of how drama is developed, designed and performed.	15%
AO2	Develop and apply performance and/or design skills.	45%
AO3	Reflect on, analyse and evaluate their own work and the work of others.	15%
AO4	Create and develop ideas to communicate meaning in theatrical designs and/or performances.	25%

Scheme of assessment

- The **GCSE Drama** qualification must be linear.
- The qualification will not be tiered.

The **GCSE Drama** specification must include the following assessment arrangements:

14.1. a total of 30% of the qualification must be assessed by external examination which must:

- 14.2. be set and marked by the awarding body
- 14.3. include questions on the texts set by the awarding body and unprepared work(s)
- 14.4. include questions on unprepared work(s)
- 14.5. be assessed in the final year of the course

15. The external examination must include an element of digital assessment.

16. Over the lifetime of the qualification, the external examination must assess Learners on works:

- 16.1. of contrasting styles/ genres
- 16.2. from contrasting periods/contexts
- 16.3. created in or inspired by Wales
- 16.4. written by a diverse range of writers, including those from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds

17. A total of 70% of the qualification must be assessed through practical non-examination assessment. The non-examination assessment must:

- 17.1. be submitted in the final year of the course
- 17.2. include a performance Unit worth 30% of the qualification
- 17.3. is set and marked by the awarding body
- 17.4. allow Learners to perform in the styles/ genres of their choosing
- 17.5. be externally marked by a visiting examiner
- 17.6. include a devising unit worth 40% of the qualification, which is set by the awarding body, marked by the Centre and moderated by the awarding body
- 17.7. includes moderation requirements for the devising unit prescribed by the awarding body
- 17.8. be able to be submitted digitally, as appropriate

18. Learners must submit a reflective log in a non-prescribed format, which will be compulsory to access the full range of marks. The reflective log must:
 - 18.1. be worth no less than 2% and no more than 5% of the total qualification
 - 18.2. be worth a fixed number of the marks available
 - 18.3. be able to be submitted digitally