

VCSE



# Level 1 / Level 2 VCSE

## Retail and Customer Service

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 Retail and Customer Service

Retail and customer service are major contributors to the Welsh economy, providing employment and supporting communities.

This qualification supports learners to explore the sector, investigate career pathways and develop knowledge, understanding and skills essential to both customer service and retailing.

Learners explore modern retail developments such as social media marketing, influencer promotion and online shopping, whilst developing essential skills such as communication, problem-solving, teamwork and digital competence.

## Who is this qualification for?

Our Level 1/2 VCSE Retail and Customer Service 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 retail and customer service industries and career opportunities the sector offers.

It provides an excellent foundation for further study in retailing, customer service and business, that in turn, supports progression to employment.

# What does the qualification cover?

| Unit   | Focus  |
|--|--|
| <b>1. Introduction to the Retail and Customer Service Sector</b><br><br>(24 GLH) | In this unit, learners will explore: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• types of retail</li><li>• key business operations and supply chain management</li><li>• job roles in retail and customer service in Wales</li><li>• inclusivity and bilingual communication</li><li>• responsible, innovative and sustainable retail practices.</li></ul> |
| <b>2. Developing Customer Service Skills</b><br><br>(24 GLH)                     | In this unit, learners will develop: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• understanding of customer services principles</li><li>• skills in communicating positively and creating a good impression</li><li>• using technology to support customer interaction</li><li>• handling complaints, queries and adapting to customers' needs.</li></ul>   |
| <b>3. Customer-focused Product Promotion</b><br><br>(72 GLH)                     | In this unit, learners will learn about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• the marketing mix (7Ps)</li><li>• developing a retail business concept</li><li>• branding</li><li>• planning and designing promotional materials</li><li>• delivering a professional pitch.</li></ul>   |

# 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>3 hours - 60 marks - 20% of Qualification</b></p> <p>This assessment will have three sections of 20 marks each.</p> <p>Each section will feature a different customer service scenario and include a 5 mark and a 15 mark question, requiring learners to demonstrate their knowledge, understanding and skills.</p> <p>Learners who successfully complete this unit may also be awarded a standalone Certificate in Customer Service.</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="346 580 1139 618"><b>19 hours - 90 marks - 60% of Qualification</b></p> <p data-bbox="346 685 1394 826">Learners will investigate the marketing mix of a chosen, existing retail business, which may be online or physical. This task targets AO3 and is worth 15 marks.</p> <p data-bbox="346 893 1299 1034">Learners will then develop their own retail business concept as a competitor to the business they researched.</p> <p data-bbox="346 1102 1382 1294">Learners will plan the branding and design promotional materials for their concept, which could include mock-ups or fully created materials, such as a TV commercial, brochure, or influencer post.</p> <p data-bbox="346 1361 1374 1503">Finally, learners will plan and deliver a pitch about their retail business concept and promotional materials to mock investors.</p> <p data-bbox="346 1570 1378 1659">These four tasks target AO4 and are worth 75 marks of the overall assessment.</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)



Made for Wales.  
Ready for the world.