

QUALIFIED FOR LIFE

WHAT IS HAPPENING TO THE WELSH BACCALAUREATE?

The Welsh Baccalaureate is changing. Sitting at the heart of the Welsh qualifications system, the new and improved Welsh Baccalaureate seeks to inspire learners and challenge them to fulfil their potential. It has been designed to help 14 to 19-year-olds to develop the skills required for higher education, employment and life.

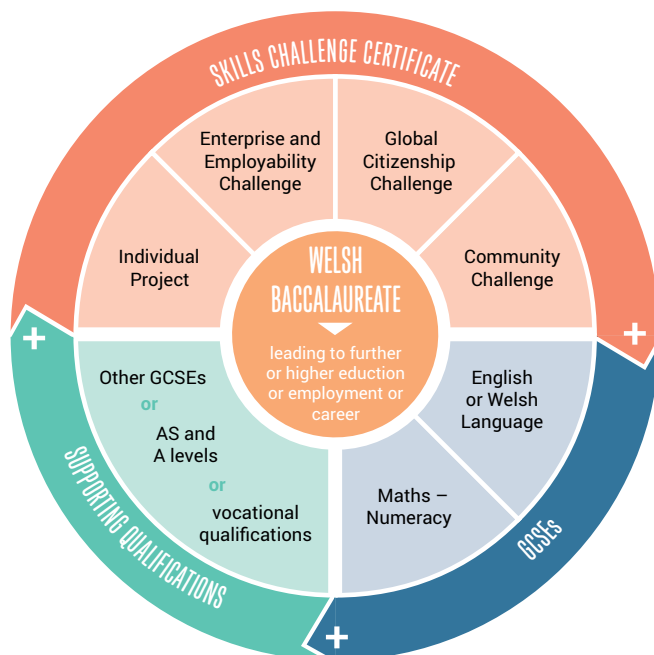
It's a flexible, inclusive qualification that underpins learners' choices of GCSE, AS, and A level and vocational qualifications.

The new Welsh Baccalaureate will be rigorously assessed. It will be graded, ensuring that hard work and high performance are better rewarded and better recognised by higher education and employers.

The Welsh Baccalaureate is primarily about the development and assessment of essential skills such as literacy, numeracy, digital literacy, critical thinking and problem solving, planning and organisation, creativity and innovation and personal effectiveness.

Separate Essential Skills and Wider Key Skills qualifications will not be required for the new Welsh Baccalaureate.

WELSH BACCALAUREATE KEY REQUIREMENTS



WHAT ARE THE REQUIREMENTS?

As shown in the diagram, to achieve the Welsh Baccalaureate, learners will need to complete:

1. Skills Challenge certificate**• Individual Project**

This is an independent, research-based assignment on an individually selected subject. Learners demonstrate the knowledge and skills to produce a written investigation or an artefact/product supported by written research.

• Enterprise and Employability Challenge

For learners to develop enterprising skills and attributes and enhance employability.

• Global Citizenship Challenge

For learners to understand and respond appropriately to a global issue.

• Community Challenge

For learners to identify, develop and participate in opportunities that will benefit the community.

2. GCSEs

GCSE English Language or Welsh Language and GCSE Mathematics – Numeracy.

3. Supporting qualifications

For example, other GCSEs; A levels/AS qualifications; vocational qualifications (see www.wjec.co.uk for specific requirements for each level).

“From our perspective, we expect students who come to Oxford to be independent thinkers, highly motivated for the subjects that they’re planning to study, and also be prepared to be flexible. I truly believe that the new qualifications from Wales, especially the refocused and strengthened Welsh Baccalaureate, will help develop students in that direction.”

Dr Samina Khan, Acting Director of Undergraduate Admissions and Outreach, Oxford University

WHO WILL TAKE THE WELSH BACCALAUREATE?

The Welsh Government is encouraging all centres to adopt the new Welsh Baccalaureate from September 2015 for all learners working at Levels 1, 2 or 3 at Key Stage 4 and post-16. It is not a statutory requirement but, for reporting from 2018, achievement of the Welsh Baccalaureate will be one of the Key Stage 4 school performance measures used by the Welsh Government, replacing the current threshold measures such as the familiar Level 2 inclusive measure. At post-16, the funding system will support the adoption of the Welsh Baccalaureate and schools and colleges have been asked to ensure increasing take-up each year.

The Welsh Baccalaureate will have qualifications at three levels. At Key Stage 4, all learners will follow the same programme of learning. Their level will be determined by assessment.

QUALIFICATION TITLE	LEVEL	GRADES AVAILABLE	WHEN IT IS USED
Foundation Welsh Baccalaureate	Level 1	Pass* and Pass	Different versions for use at Key Stage 4 or post-16.
National Welsh Baccalaureate	Level 2	A*, A, B and C	Different versions for use at Key Stage 4 or post-16.
Advanced Welsh Baccalaureate	Level 3	A*, A, B, C, D and E	Used post-16 only.

HOW WILL THE NEW WELSH BACCALAUREATE HELP PROGRESSION TO HIGHER EDUCATION?

The current Welsh Baccalaureate is widely recognised and accepted by universities in the UK as an entry qualification. Thousands of learners have had the current Welsh Baccalaureate accepted as a contribution to their entry requirements. The introduction of grading at Advanced level for teaching from 2013 has strengthened this position for university entry from 2015, helping admissions tutors to make appropriate offers. The further, more radical changes being introduced for teaching from September 2015 will develop and assess the skills that universities tell us young people need for learning, work and life.

Following an extensive programme of visits to universities, feedback is very positive: universities like the Individual Project and the emphasis on skills. By passing the Advanced Welsh Baccalaureate, learners will be gaining a qualification that is the same size as an A level and graded in the same way (A* to E). UCAS expect to allocate the same tariff points for university entry as for an A level – the number of points allocated to each grade will match the points for the equivalent A level grade.

Learners planning to study at university, and those advising them, should check with individual institutions for up-to-date information on entry requirements for each course.

HOW DOES THE NEW WELSH BACCALAUREATE FIT INTO THE CURRICULUM?

It is for centres to determine how they deliver the Welsh Baccalaureate within their school or college. The flexibility of the qualification allows this to be done in many different ways.

The new specifications are available on the WJEC website. Advice and support will be available from WJEC and regional consortia.

The Advanced Welsh Baccalaureate is equivalent to one A level. The Foundation/National Welsh Baccalaureate is equivalent to one GCSE.

“The Welsh Baccalaureate does present a real opportunity to sit at the core of the Welsh qualifications systems as something that inspires learners to improve their employability skills, be better prepared for life in general and to fulfil their potential.”

Scott Waddington, Chief Executive Officer, SA Brain

FURTHER INFORMATION

Design principles for the new Welsh Baccalaureate can be found on the Qualifications Wales website:

www.qualificationswales.org

The specifications can be found on the WJEC site:

www.wjec.co.uk