

## **INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF QUALIFICATIONS IN WALES INTERIM REPORT – RECOMMENDATIONS FOR 2021 AND WHAT THESE MEAN FOR LEARNERS**

### **Our Recommendations to the Minister for Education:**

We are recommending that qualifications in 2021 are awarded through assessments undertaken in Schools and Colleges. The assessments would be subject to robust, external moderation to ensure consistency across Wales. This would apply across GCSEs, AS levels, A Levels, Skills Challenge Certificate and approved vocational qualifications designed for Wales.

These centre-based assessment methods need to be developed quickly by the qualifications bodies, working with learners and the staff of schools and colleges. Decisions must put learners first and reflect the challenging circumstances in which learning has taken place during 2020 and 2021. Decisions must be communicated clearly to all involved.

We are also recommending that the Welsh Government sets up a Delivery Board to oversee this work.

### **What would this mean for learners if our recommendations are accepted?**

- There would be no exam series in Wales in summer 2021
- Qualifications would be awarded based on assessments done in schools and colleges
- Teachers and lecturers would come together with those bodies responsible for qualifications in Wales to make sure that the assessment methods used were fair
- It is likely that a variety of agreed tasks and activities agreed nationally for each subject would inform the assessment process
- Schools and colleges would work together to make sure that results were comparable across Wales
- Teachers and lecturers would receive extra training on assessment processes to support them in being fair to all learners
- Learners would have a voice on the Delivery Board that oversaw the work that needs to be done for 2021
- Learners' wellbeing would be supported by removing the anxiety that every task might be used to inform their final grade and the uncertainty that planned exams might be cancelled at a late stage
- Extra time for learning would replace the weeks spent on revision and exam preparation
- Universities and employers could have confidence that the grades awarded in Wales in 2021 would be based on a strong assessment process with the benefit of extra learning time

### **Our reasons for making these recommendations:**

Covid-19 has disrupted learning since March 2020. Individual learners' opportunities to learn have been affected differently by Covid-19. Learners' ability to get online to access digital education also varies. This disruption to learning is creating anxiety and uncertainty.

We strongly believe that these uneven learning experiences mean that it is not possible to put on a public exam series in summer 2021 that will be fair to all learners. We think that learners' progress and potential can be best reflected in robust centre assessments.

We have reached our recommendations after consulting widely. We have listened to the bodies responsible for qualifications in Wales, to the teaching profession across Wales and organisations

that work closely with them. Importantly, we have listened to learners and their parents and carers across Wales.

We believe that centre-based assessments are the best way forward. There is still work to be done to make sure that those assessments can be done fairly and in a way that will stand up to scrutiny. Bringing together those in schools and colleges and those in the qualifications bodies to work on this is the best way to create a system that everyone can trust.