



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Covid-19 Resilience Plan for the post-16 sector

Advice for teachers and lecturers delivering A Levels
and Advanced Welsh Baccalaureate Qualifications
from September 2020

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UNDER EWROPEAID
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Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Cronfa Gymdeithasol Ewrop
European Social Fund

Introduction

The Covid-19 [Resilience Plan](#) for the post-16 sector was published on 20 May. It sets out how we will work collaboratively with the post-16 sector during the Covid-19 pandemic, ensuring continuity of learning; the stability of providers; and the wellbeing of our learners and workforce.

The plan is organised into three phases: **Rescue, Review and Renew**. We are currently in the **Review** stage in terms of thinking, planning and delivery for autumn term 2020 and will move into the **Renew** stage from September.

This supplementary advice supports a collaborative approach to tackling the challenges the post-16 sector is facing alongside recognising opportunities for developing new ways of working.

Who is this advice aimed at?

This advice has been developed by our stakeholders - including providers, Estyn, WJEC and Qualifications Wales - and is aimed at supporting the teaching, learning and assessment of A level and the Advanced Welsh Baccalaureate qualifications in school and college settings from September. It supports learners' progression; continuity of learning and onward progression to higher education and training opportunities.

A separate [guide](#) for A level learners has been produced which signposts learners to useful resources. This guide and its motivational statements aims to support and engage learners. The principles can be applied equally to all our ambitious young people whether undertaking A levels, Advanced Welsh Baccalaureate, or level 3 vocational and work based learning qualifications. Providers may wish to share this guidance with their 2020 cohort in September.

AS, A level and Advanced Welsh Baccalaureate teaching, learning and assessment from September 2020

This advice is intended to provide additional advice for providers on teaching for AS, A levels and the Advanced Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification in light of the Covid-19 pandemic and the associated disruption to normal teaching. It can also be applied to the components of level 3 vocational courses that are normally considered to be classroom based. It supplements, and is complementary to the general guidance for blended learning in [schools](#) and in [post-16 providers](#) and the guidance for the return to face-to-face learning for [schools](#) and [post-16](#) providers. The Welsh Government is providing [additional funding](#) for schools and colleges to increase teaching support for these learners and to help this cohort with the transition to sixth form/post-16 learning and further guidance will follow.

Helping AS, A level and Advanced Welsh Baccalaureate learners to meet their aspirations and achieve their full learning potential

AS, A level and Advanced Welsh Baccalaureate cohorts will include learners with a wide range of characteristics, attitudes and abilities. Many of these learners hope to progress to higher education or training where the ability to learn remotely and work independently is becoming increasingly important.

The points below apply in varying degrees to learners of different ages and abilities studying programmes of different types. They are given prominence within this guidance as they have particular relevance to learners undertaking AS, A level and Advanced Welsh Baccalaureate studies. Providers should aim to:

- Maintain high expectations of the standard of learner work, and engagement with distance learning as well as face-to-face and independent learning activities.
- Provide sufficient opportunities for learner contribution and interaction as part of any synchronous and asynchronous remote learning.
- Where appropriate, set specific independent or peer work for completion before and after engagement with live lessons.
- Make use of relevant opportunities for remote collaborative peer working. This will enable learners to gain a different perspective on

their work as well as benefitting from the process of assessing their peers' work.

- Where practicable, provide learners with a degree of choice in the way they learn and the activities they undertake.
- Encourage and nurture learners' academic curiosity by planning additional opportunities, particularly for high ability learners, to stretch their knowledge, understanding and skills. These could complement any dedicated [Seren activities](#).
- Take advantage of the scalability and reach of online learning; for example, by involving guest speakers such as experts and employers, or by teaching and learning collaboratively with other providers.
- Ensure learners take sufficient ownership of their learning and responsibility for their progress.
- Gather learners' opinions on the effectiveness of learning, teaching and assessment activities, and use these to refine lessons and assessments.

This cohort will require more support than those of the past

Current AS, A level and Advanced Welsh Baccalaureate learners have suffered disruption to their learning and to the support and stability that schools and colleges provide. They are relatively inexperienced and their individual vulnerabilities may have been amplified by circumstances surrounding lockdown. As well as existing vulnerabilities, they may have additional anxieties around their ability to re-engage with their learning and progress to higher education, training or employment in the way they had intended. They may also have concerns around contracting the Covid-19 virus, or additional challenges related to their family and personal lives.

Providers should aim to:

- Be sensitive to individual learning needs and learner [mental health and wellbeing](#). Provide and promote a range of support to help learners with their wellbeing and learning needs. This could be from teachers themselves or from specialist staff, with engagement via remote means as well as in school/college.
- Be proactive in anticipating further individual learner support needs that may be a consequence of the break in learning. This will encompass a wide range of factors for example, from technical

challenges in being able to work remotely, to reduced engagement with the Welsh language as part of daily life.

- Set and maintain high expectations of learner engagement, whether with live teaching or independent learning activities.
- Help learners to develop behaviours and academic skills that will enable them to learn independently in an effective way. These should include techniques for working remotely and responding positively to challenges.
- Establish clear protocols and etiquette requirements for engagement with any online learning.
- Encourage learners to form productive working relationships with peers who can support and challenge them remotely as well as in the classroom.
- Establish and maintain stable routines, including the timetable and broad format of teaching sessions. Teachers should communicate work expectations clearly and set fixed deadlines.
- Secure a suitable degree of consistency in routines and expectations between different subjects and teachers, so that the learner experience is stable and relatively consistent across their programmes of study.
- Plan for engaging learning that involves a range of diverse tasks and assessments. Utilise any high quality interactive activities available to break up remote or independent learning phases.
- Help motivate learners, for example, by including exciting activities, interesting context and embedding career references.
- Plan learning that takes into account the modifications to assessments for this cohort announced by the WJEC.
- Consider the value of small, seminar style sessions to complement and reinforce any independent learning activities where appropriate.
- Have oversight of learners' personal lesson notes (electronic and/or paper based) and provide useful timely feedback on submitted assignments.
- Explore a range of assessment strategies and provide learners with easily accessible feedback from suitably frequent assessments.
- Use 'low-stakes' assessment such as multiple choice questions, discussions and paired work to help identify any gaps in learners' knowledge and skills.

- Form effective strategies to address knowledge and skills gaps, for example via accelerated learning techniques, independent study, and when appropriate, mock examinations with feedback.
- Use the outcomes of assessment to set mutually agreed personalised development targets with learners.
- Reassure learners that Higher education institutions, training providers and employers are aware of the additional challenges that current learners face.

Teaching in the autumn term

The degree of face-to-face teaching will inevitably remain dependent upon the prevalence of the Covid-19 virus. Teachers should do their best to prepare blended learning activities that are designed with remote learning in mind that can be adapted to suit a greater or lesser degree of face-to-face teaching as appropriate. Jisc (the higher education, further education and skills sectors' not-for-profit organisation for digital services and solutions) has prepared guidance for using technology with the aim of [ensuring continuity of learning during enforced absence](#). Guidance on supporting distance learning aimed at [senior leaders in maintained schools](#) has also been published.

Providers and teachers should consider collaborating across different localities, regions and sectors to share the work of planning for learning. This could help reduce teacher workload and maximise the quality of the learning experience.

