
Ymateb i Ymgynghoriad / Consultation Response

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Dyddiad / Date:	27.03.26
Pwnc / Subject:	AS and A Level Qualifications: Cymraeg Language and Literature

Background information about Estyn

Estyn is the Office of His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales. As a Crown body, we are independent of the Welsh Government.

Our principal aim is to raise the standards and quality education and training in Wales. This is primarily set out in the Learning and Skills Act 2000¹ and the Education Act 2005. In exercising its functions, we must give regard to the:

- Quality of education and training in Wales;
- Extent to which education and training meets the needs of learners;
- Educational standards achieved by those receiving education and training in Wales;
- Quality of leadership and management of those education and training providers, including whether the financial resources made available to those providing education and training are managed efficiently and used in a way which provides value for money;
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of learners; and,
- Contribution made to the well-being of learners.

Our remit includes (but is not exclusive to) nurseries and non-maintained settings, primary, secondary, special and all age schools, independent schools, pupil referrals units, further education, adult community learning, local government education services, work-based learning, and initial teacher training.

¹ This act to be replaced by the Tertiary Education and Research (Wales) Act 2022 when the quality provisions are commenced.

We may give advice to the Welsh Parliament on any matter connected to education and training in Wales. To achieve excellence for learners, we have set three strategic objectives:

- Provide accountability to service users on the quality and standards of education and training in Wales;
- Inform the development of national policy by the Welsh Government;
- Build capacity for improvement of the education and training system in Wales.

This response is not confidential.

Guidance for completing the consultation (if you have any questions please contact the AD responsible)

Response

Introduction

- We support the attempt to build on, and strengthen, the current AS and A Level qualifications. Pupils' enthusiasm and satisfaction in the Welsh language are crucial and necessary to reach the aim of a million Welsh speakers by 2050.
- The qualification appears to meet the demand for pupils to be able to communicate in a number of purposeful situations and contexts.
- The qualifications offer practical opportunities to use the language correctly in a variety of registers. However, the suitability of the nature of these tasks should be considered, along with the level of challenge. Exemplar materials for units 2, 4 and 5 would also be of great benefit for teachers to forward-plan skilfully.
- A variety of assessment methods are proposed which provide an effective balance between oral and written skills, combining external examinations and non-examination assessments.

Consultation questions

1.(a) Tell us if you are responding to this survey as:

Other (please state): Estyn inspection body

1.(b) Tell us the name of your school or the name of the body in question:

Estyn

1.(c) Tell us your role:

Other (please state): His Majesty's Inspectors

Unit-specific questions

Unit 1

2. To what extent do you agree that the purpose of the proposed unit meets the purpose of the qualification?

Agree strongly

3. To what extent do you agree that the purpose of the proposed unit is relevant and appealing to learners?

Agree strongly

4. To what extent do you agree that the focus of the unit is appropriate?

Agree strongly

5. To what extent do you agree that the proposed assessment method is appropriate?

Agree strongly

Unit-specific questions

Unit 2

2. To what extent do you agree that the purpose of the proposed unit meets the purpose of the qualification?

Agree

3. To what extent do you agree that the purpose of the proposed unit is relevant and appealing to learners?

Partly agree

4. To what extent do you agree that the focus of the unit is appropriate?

Partly agree

5. To what extent do you agree that the proposed assessment method is appropriate?

Agree

Unit-specific questions

Unit 3

2. To what extent do you agree that the purpose of the proposed unit meets the purpose of the qualification?

Agree strongly

3. To what extent do you agree that the purpose of the proposed unit is relevant and appealing to learners?

Agree strongly

4. To what extent do you agree that the focus of the unit is appropriate?

Agree strongly

5. To what extent do you agree that the proposed assessment method is appropriate?

Agree strongly

Unit-specific questions

Unit 4

2. To what extent do you agree that the purpose of the proposed unit meets the purpose of the qualification?

Agree

3. To what extent do you agree that the purpose of the proposed unit is relevant and appealing to learners?

Agree

4. To what extent do you agree that the focus of the unit is appropriate?

Agree

5. To what extent do you agree that the proposed assessment method is appropriate?

Agree

Unit-specific questions

Unit 5

2. To what extent do you agree that the purpose of the proposed unit meets the purpose of the qualification?

Agree

3. To what extent do you agree that the purpose of the proposed unit is relevant and appealing to learners?

Agree

4. To what extent do you agree that the focus of the unit is appropriate?

Agree

5. To what extent do you agree that the proposed assessment method is appropriate?

Agree

General Questions

6. To what extent do you agree that the proposed qualification will support the Approval Criteria for AS/A Level Cymraeg Language and Literature?

Agree

7. To what extent do you agree that the proposed qualification will support the findings of the AS and A Levels in Cymraeg Decisions Report by Qualifications Wales?

Agree

8. To what extent do you agree that the proposed qualification will be manageable for learners?

Agree

9. To what extent do you agree that the proposed qualification will be manageable for centres (e.g. schools)?

Agree

10. Please provide any additional comments you would like to make about the qualification outline.

- There is a clear effort to build on the strengths of the current AS and A Level qualifications. Pupils' enthusiasm and satisfaction are key to realising the aim of a million Welsh speakers by 2050.
- We appreciate focusing on one subject rather than two in Unit 1. However, we feel that a variety of experiences is beneficial to pupils, particularly those who want to study further in the field once they have finished school; we therefore feel that studying a play is a good experience as it is no longer compulsory on the new GCSE course from September 2026. We agree that studying a play also encourages pupils to attend theatre performances and opens doors and engages interest in wider culture.
- Unit 2, which is an external examination, gives pupils an opportunity to explore the Welsh language, past and present, with a focus on historical, political, social and cultural factors. While this offers more flexibility and choice within the qualification and includes opportunities for learners to choose personal focuses and interests, we hope this will provide pupils with satisfaction when studying their legacy and heritage. It is crucial that there are sufficient exemplar materials available for teachers so that they can understand the requirements relating to this unit in full.
- We agree that the current means of assessing grammar does not meet learners' needs. We feel that, although linguistic accuracy is important, there is a need to change the way in which it is assessed as it does not actually enable pupils to demonstrate their linguistic ability. We acknowledge the challenges faced by learners when preparing for this assessment. We also recommend that clear guidelines should be provided for teachers on

how to integrate the assessment of grammatical skills with the development of natural communication, so that assessments are more relevant and meaningful to real life.

- We welcome the need for the oral element (Unit 1 and Unit 3) to be 40%. This aligns with the weighting of the new GCSE examinations and reflects the importance of pupils developing their communication skills, while making it a more accessible qualification for a wider audience of pupils. To ensure consistency, it would be beneficial to provide standard training for external examiners and to ensure that the same expectations are applied across centres.
- We agree strongly that the oral examinations should be conducted by external examiners. In doing so, it gives status to the subject and gives pupils responsibility and an opportunity to communicate with a person they do not already know. We believe that pupils benefit greatly from opportunities such as this and it is very important to keep the examination face to face. The use of external examiners also ensures consistency in standards and fair opportunities for all pupils.
- We welcome the fact that the synoptic element remains in Unit 3 during the group discussion to ensure that pupils are able to base the work on their personal interests.
- We see an attempt in Unit 4 to move with the times so that the subject is appealing to pupils, but studying prose from the middle ages and the 'Hengerdd' is just as important – again, in order to prepare for courses beyond school and to ensure that the A Level qualification in Cymraeg is seen as an academic subject that can link with other classical subjects. We feel that a balance between old and new is crucial. Ensuring additional flexibility in the choice of subjects, for example including opportunities to study short stories or contemporary items – would also support teachers to provide a more personal and appealing curriculum for their learners. Exemplar materials would also be of great benefit in supporting teachers with their preparations.
- We agree that a non-examination assessment should be based on poetry to ensure that it is not a memory test of knowledge and quotations. It is also a progression from the new GCSE.
- We agree with the various means of assessing pupils, which is an effective balance between oral and written and a combination of external examinations and non-examination assessments.

11. Do you have any recommendation for potential post-1990 set novels for Unit 3?

Carafanio by Guto Dafydd