
Ymateb i Ymgynghoriad / Consultation Response

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Pwnc / Subject:	Response regarding AS and A Level Core Cymraeg qualifications

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.

Response

Introduction

- 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. The qualification appears to be suitable to enable pupils to communicate effectively in meaningful situations and contexts.
- The new qualifications support learners to move gradually along the Welsh language skills continuum.
- An emphasis on the oral aspect in the assessment of Core Cymraeg aligns with the weighting in the new GCSE and places more importance on developing communication skills, making the qualification more accessible to a wider range of pupils. However, with an emphasis on the oral, an increase to 50% rather than 40% would be more appropriate.
- Having the oral examinations conducted by external examiners is vital as it raises the status of the subject and gives pupils an opportunity to communicate with an unfamiliar person. This ensures consistent standards and provides valuable experiences for learners.
- We agree that the AS and A Level Core Cymraeg qualifications should include opportunities to study an appropriate range of literary and non-literary texts from different periods. Perhaps there could be some flexibility here and a short novel could also be added to the list to ensure that the subject sparks interest.
- Despite the strengths of Unit 2, it is important that Section B is not just an examination to track knowledge of the history of the Welsh language.
- It would also be good to ensure that Unit 5 does not overemphasise linguistic and grammatical exercises. An assessment method is needed that allows pupils to demonstrate their linguistic skills in a more meaningful manner and not a lengthy list of linguistic and grammatical exercises.
- The assessment objectives compare favourably with qualifications in other subjects.

Consultation questions

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

Other (please state): A school inspection body

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

Estyn

(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?

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 3

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 4

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 5

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

Partly 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?

Partly 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 Core Cymraeg?

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.

- In the AS and A Level Core Cymraeg qualifications, we agree that learners' oracy skills should be assessed across the AS and A2 units and that the oral assessments should include opportunities to demonstrate knowledge and understanding in a variety of contexts, including literary and non-literary contexts. This element makes the subject more appealing to a wider range of pupils.
- However, we feel that the total of the oral assessments (across AS and A Level) should contribute 50% of the marks towards the entire qualification rather than 45% as proposed. This will emphasise the importance of the oral element and will align with the weighting in the new GCSE Core Cymraeg.
- We agree that the AS and A Level Core Cymraeg qualifications should include opportunities to study an appropriate range of literary and non-literary texts from different periods. As short stories and poetry have been included in the new GCSE Welsh – is there perhaps more scope for variety here in the sixth form and could a short novel possibly be included? Studying all kinds of texts would also give confidence to study the subject further.
- We agree that the AS and A Level Core Cymraeg qualifications should enable learners to develop their knowledge and skills for life, learning and work, now and in the future. We agree that the learning contexts should develop learners' understanding and enjoyment of the Welsh language and culture, in addition to appreciating their own Welshness. More importantly, we believe that increasing the number of Welsh speakers in the workplace is crucial.

- However, care must be taken than Section B of Unit 2 does not become an examination that solely tracks pupils' knowledge of the history of the Welsh language.
- Care also needs to be taken that Unit 5 does not overemphasise linguistic and grammatical exercises, as this can tire pupils, reduce their confidence and cause them to lose interest.
- The assessment objectives for the 5 units are clear and manageable.
- 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 agree that it is important to continue to include external written examinations across the AS and A2 units.

11. Do you have any recommendations for poetry and/or short stories for Unit 3?

It would be worth considering a few first language GCSE poems for this unit to help with the linguistic continuum.

It would also be good to consider winning stories or poems from the Urdd Eisteddfod over the years, as they have been written by young writers and poets under the age of 25.

Commissioning new authors and poets would also give the qualification a fresh and contemporary look.