



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

14 to 16 statutory learner guidance

14 to 16 learning in the Curriculum for Wales

Draft guidance

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14 to 16 statutory learner guidance

Audience Headteachers in maintained schools and applicable to Pupil Referral Unit (PRU)

Overview The guidance explains the legal requirements for a school's curriculum for 14 to 16-year-old learners under the Curriculum for Wales and looks to support schools in designing a curriculum offer which meets those requirements as well as Welsh Government's priorities for learning and teaching in year 10 and year 11.

Action required As this guidance is issued under section 71 of the Act, it is statutory and therefore its target audience must have regard to it when exercising functions under the Act. This guidance should also be used as a basis for professional discussions and learning within and between schools to support reflection, self-evaluation and improvement. It provides a reference point when reviewing the effectiveness of a school's curriculum for years 10 and 11.

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Mae'r ddogfen yma hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.
This document is also available in Welsh.

Contents

1. Purpose of this section	2
2. Introduction	3
3. Designing a curriculum for 14 to 16 learners	4
4. The 14 to 16 Learner Entitlement	6
5. Components of the Learner Entitlement: further guidance	9
6. Self-evaluation and improvement	18

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1. Purpose of this section

1.1 How to use this guidance

1.1.1 This section of the Curriculum for Wales framework guidance is designed to support head teachers in maintained schools to design and implement an effective curriculum for learners in years 10 and 11 as part of the 3-16 curriculum (curriculum offer). It should be read in conjunction with the rest of the [Curriculum for Wales framework guidance](#). It will support schools in understanding the Welsh Government's priorities for a curriculum offer in years 10 and 11 and our policy in respect of securing learning in each area of learning and experience ('Area').

1.1.2 As this guidance is issued under section 71 of the Act, it is statutory and therefore its target audience must have regard to it when exercising functions under the Act. Throughout the Curriculum for Wales framework guidance, we frequently use the word 'should' when we refer to the advice set out in statutory guidance. The use of that word refers to steps we strongly recommend schools and settings take. It does not purport to set out mandatory requirements. As these recommendations form part of statutory guidance, schools and settings must consider them, but may, with good reason, decide to do something different.

1.1.3 This guidance should also be used as a basis for professional discussions and learning within and between schools to support reflection, self-evaluation and improvement. It provides a reference point when reviewing the effectiveness of a school's curriculum for years 10 and 11. Please see the section on Self-evaluation and Improvement for more detail on the process.

Pupil Referral Units (PRU)

1.1.4 Whilst this guidance is directed at head teachers of maintained schools, there are elements of it which teachers in charge of PRUs may find helpful when designing the curriculum for their PRU. The requirements for PRUs are different to maintained schools. A summary of the requirements for PRUs can be found [here](#). Nonetheless, a teacher in charge of a PRU and its management committee may find the principles for designing a curriculum for 14 to 16 year old learners can be used to support curriculum design for their learners in year 10 and 11 also.

2. Introduction

Under the Curriculum for Wales a school's curriculum must meet the requirements set out in the Act; the [summary of legislation](#) section of the Curriculum for Wales framework sets out these legal requirements.

2.1 Mandatory

2.1.1 In summary, for maintained schools, the head teacher must ensure a curriculum is designed for teaching and learning for all registered learners at the school aged 3 to 16. The curriculum:

- must enable learners to develop in the ways described in the four purposes
- must be suitable for learners of differing ages and stages of learning
- must be broad and balanced
- must make provision for learning and teaching in each area of learning and experience (Area)
- must provide for appropriate progression in accordance with the principles of progression
- must provide for learning and teaching in the mandatory elements of the curriculum including the cross-curricular skills, relationships and sexuality education (RSE) and religion, values and ethics (RVE).

2.1.2 The legal requirements for a curriculum for learners aged 14 to 16 are in part different to those for a curriculum for learners aged 3 to 14. This is to take account of the choices that learners make around some of the courses that they follow in years 10 and 11 which lead to qualifications.

2.1.3 The difference for years 10 and 11 (ages 14 to 16) as distinct from learners ages 3 to 14 is that, whilst learning and teaching must be secured in each Area, this does not require learning within each statement of what matters. All Areas, however, need to form part of the curriculum for learners in years 10 and 11. [Summary of legislation - Hwb \(gov.wales\)](#)

2.1.4 Schools will also have designed their 3 to 16 curriculum having regard to the statutory careers and work-related experiences (CWRE) guidance. As learners move into years 10 and 11, CWRE will become more focused on preparing them for post-16 next steps.

3. Designing a curriculum for 14 to 16 learners

3.1 Under the Curriculum for Wales the [four purposes](#) represent the starting point and aspiration for a school's curriculum and all learners should be progressing and developing in ways described by those purposes.

3.2 The Curriculum for Wales is designed to support a coherent continuum of progression from 3-16. The statements of what matters Code and progression Code, alongside the Curriculum for Wales framework guidance which all schools must consider, are designed to apply to curriculum design, learning and teaching across this continuum. Of course, as learners reach year 10, they will begin to specialise in certain aspects of learning and follow some 'courses of study that lead to qualifications (qualifications)¹. Whilst the learning undertaken during those courses of study will be informed by the requirements of the qualifications, all learning under the Curriculum for Wales should continue to be aligned with the Curriculum for Wales framework and in accordance with the progression Code.

3.3 Therefore, curriculum design, teaching and learning should be based on learner progress along the 3 to 16 continuum, with a school's curriculum for learners in years 10 and 11 forming a continuous part of the 3 to 16 curriculum journey. In years 10 and 11, progression will be supported by learning that happens as learners follow qualifications as well as through the wider learning and experiences that the school provides.

3.4 GCSE qualifications have been reformed in recognition of the Curriculum for Wales. Learners who have been learning under the Curriculum for Wales should, wherever possible, be studying for reformed qualifications. This means that learners who will begin year 10 in September 2025 should be choosing from the new made-for-Wales GCSE offer rather than any legacy qualifications. From September 2027, all learners should be making their qualification choices from the National 14 to 16 Qualifications offer (as well as any qualifications that may be designated for 14 to 16-year-olds under Qualifications Wales's revised designation policy). It is acknowledged that, outside of the GCSE offer, schools will continue to offer learners existing qualifications that are designated as eligible for use on publicly-funded courses for 14 to 16-year-olds until the full range of National 14 to 16 Qualifications is available from September 2027.

Principles of learning for 14 to 16

3.5 All learning and teaching undertaken within years 10 and 11 should be planned and designed in accordance with the Curriculum for Wales framework. We strongly advise schools to apply the principles of curriculum design under the Curriculum for Wales to any learning experiences provided in years 10 and 11, including any learning that is part of a qualification. Key to this will be high-quality teaching and informed pedagogical decisions (supported by the [12 pedagogical principles](#)) and, as such, these learning experiences should feel like a continuous part of the learner's 3 to 16 journey.

3.6 Practitioners should continue to consider the 'how' and the 'why' of learning when designing their curriculum and choosing their pedagogical approaches, ensuring that

¹ A course of education or training that leads to a form of qualification or set of forms of qualifications approved under Part 4 of the Qualifications Wales Act 2015 or designated under Part 5 of that Act or is designated by the Welsh Ministers under section 34(8) of that Act.

learning experiences are engaging and relevant to their learners. The principles of progression offer a framework for part of this thought process. Schools and practitioners are advised to ask themselves, for example:

- What is the purpose of this learning? Why is this learning important to learners? How will we establish the needs of our learners and plan effectively for their progression?
- What should learners understand and how can we deepen that understanding?
- What prerequisite knowledge is required? What is the necessary breadth and depth of that knowledge?
- Which skills need to be refined to develop this understanding and how can learners develop increased sophistication?
- How can learners be given opportunities to apply that learning within a range of authentic contexts? What elements are transferable to other units, subjects or contexts? What other connections can be made?
- How can individuals become more effective as learners during this learning? What are their specific needs and how can they be challenged/supported?

3.7 Particularly within years 10 and 11, learners' experiences can often be influenced by assessment, especially as part of a qualification. Schools should ensure that the statutory [Supporting learner progression - assessment guidance](#) section of the Curriculum for Wales framework continues to form the basis of their assessment arrangements along the whole of the 3-16 continuum.

3.8 It is important to note that assessment designed to support individual learners on an ongoing, day-to-day basis and that is used to identify, capture and reflect on individual learner progress over time can contribute significantly to the mental, emotional and social well-being of all learners.

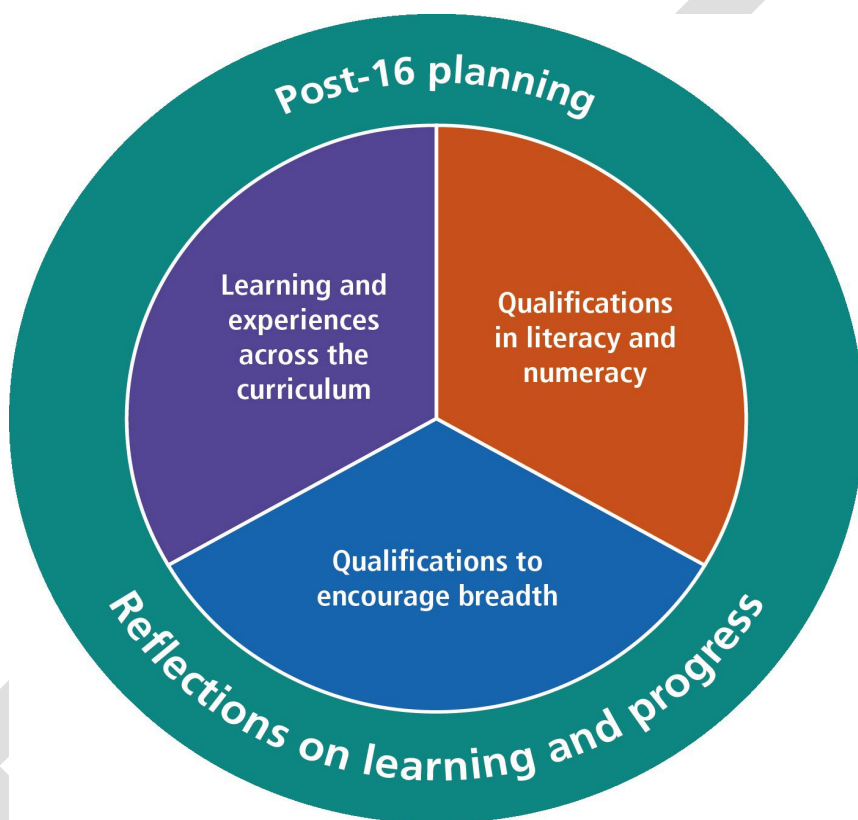
3.9 Some practical advice for schools on this can be found in [Learner wellbeing and assessment: mutual support systems](#). It encourages practitioners to plan assessment in ways that enhance opportunities to foster learner well-being through a focus on developing their affiliation, autonomy and agency. Ensuring a whole-school approach of this nature can encourage practitioners to consider the way they design their curriculum and assessment, particularly when dealing with external specifications for qualifications.

4. The 14 to 16 Learner Entitlement

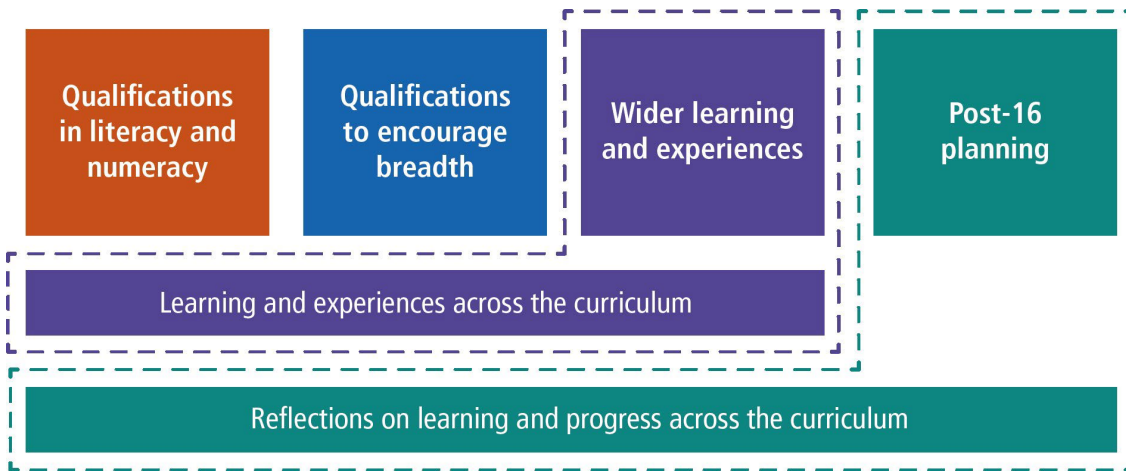
4.1. The key components of 14 to 16 learning under Curriculum for Wales

4.1.1 A school's curriculum offer in years 10 and 11 must provide learners with a broad and balanced profile of learning and experiences designed with reference to the four components of the 14 to 16 Learner Entitlement (below). A school should ensure that all its learners are able to demonstrate and communicate their learning, progress and achievements in respect of all four components when they complete compulsory education at 16. Information and evidence relating to this should be used to inform schools' self-evaluation and improvement processes (see below). For individual learners, their Learner Entitlement will be made up of a variety of different learning, experiences and achievements across these components.

4.2. The 14 to 16 Learner Entitlement (Learner Entitlement)



4.2.1 Schools should organise their curriculum time and resources around the four components of the Learner Entitlement. As illustrated below, the four components are not mutually exclusive; learners will encounter learning and experiences across the curriculum and should be able to draw on all of that as they reflect on their progress and achievements, and plan for post-16 transition. Schools should encourage practitioners to see their contribution to the whole, rather than to view their role in isolation in delivering one aspect of the curriculum. This can be achieved through a focus on effective curriculum design and high-quality teaching.



4.2.2 Reflection and post-16 planning: increasing learner effectiveness – a continued offer of dedicated curriculum time for learners to reflect on their progress and plan for post 16.

4.2.3 We advise that this time should be focused on supporting individuals to develop their effectiveness as learners, where they are given support and challenged to think about their strengths, areas for improvement, goals and ambitions, ensuring that they are motivated and are setting themselves high standards. It will also allow learners to consider, and be supported with, their post-16 next steps. This can provide an opportunity for schools to provide more tailored and specific CWRE within years 10 and 11.

4.2.4 This component should encompass all the learning and experiences that a learner encounters within their 14 to 16 journey; it should allow learners to reflect on their learning and progression across the curriculum as they seek to draw on their strengths and plan for improvements. A more detailed description of this component is provided below.

4.2.5 Qualifications in literacy and numeracy – an offer of appropriate and ambitious qualifications in literacy and numeracy where all learners need to demonstrate their attainment to facilitate successful onward progression.

4.2.6 This component recognises the importance for learners of obtaining qualifications in literacy and numeracy for their post-16 transitions.

4.2.7 Qualifications to encourage breadth – an offer of a wider set of qualifications from which learners can choose, as they begin to specialise, which support progress in learning and future career pathways but that also maintain a breadth of learning.

4.2.8 Schools should look to offer a broad and balanced menu of choices that reflect the needs of their learners, which should include both general, vocational and skills-based qualifications at all appropriate qualification levels.

4.2.9 Schools are encouraged to explore opportunities for partnership working – with other schools and colleges – where this will allow the school to broaden the curriculum offer available to their learners and where this is in the best interests of those learners.

4.2.10 Wider learning and experiences across the curriculum – an offer of a breadth of learning opportunities that develop knowledge, skills and provide experiences across the curriculum.

4.2.11 Schools must ensure that all learners, no matter their choices of qualifications, secure learning in all Areas and in all mandatory elements of the curriculum (including RSE and RVE). Not all of the learning and experiences within years 10 and 11 need to result in a formal qualification. However, in respect of some of this wider learning, schools may wish to provide courses of study that lead to a qualification to support learner progress. It is vital that this wider learning contributes to a learner's progress toward the four purposes.

4.2.12 Within this component of wider learning, we strongly advise schools to provide all their learners with an opportunity (and associated curriculum time and support) for more independent study. See further details below under the **Deeper learning and independence** sub-section.

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5. Components of the Learner Entitlement: further guidance

5.1 Reflection and post-16 planning

5.1.1 Developing the effectiveness of our learners as they progress towards the four purposes is fundamental and forms part of the mandatory [progression](#) requirements.

5.1.2 This principle of progression is broad and can relate to a range of aspects of learner development. In the context of the '*Reflection and post-16 planning*' component of 14 to 16 learning, we would advise schools to consider how learners are:

- becoming increasingly effective *as learners* in social and work-related contexts (becoming lifelong learners)
- becoming more able to identify appropriate support with increasing independence
- developing increasingly successful approaches to self-evaluation, identification of their next steps (in learning and beyond) and developing more effective means of self-regulation.

5.1.3 Schools should allocate appropriate curriculum time for learners to reflect on what they are learning and experiencing during years 10 and 11 (as well as any relevant prior learning), which will also include time to explore and plan for post-16 next steps. Whilst some of this will inevitably take place as a natural part of the learning and teaching across the curriculum, it is important that learners have dedicated time and support in this regard.

5.1.4 The [CWRE section of Curriculum for Wales framework guidance](#) outlines some of the key aspects of support, advice, learning and experiences that learners will require for work and for post-16 next steps.

5.1.5 Schools should ensure that learners are supported to reflect on their strengths and areas for improvement as individuals, across their learning. This might include:

- consideration of requirements for post-16 pathways (in terms of qualifications, skills, attributes and characteristics)
- undertaking a balanced options analysis for post-16 pathways, ensuring that learners are fully advised and able to make informed decisions (this would include learners having sufficient information around the options available at Further Education Institutions and other post-16 providers)
- identifying areas where learners need additional support or challenge in respect of the above, and setting a clear plan for progress
- building a holistic picture and understanding of their learning, progression and achievements, and considering how these will support them in the future
- reflecting on aspects of their learning within certain disciplines, and considering how these might link with other learning and experiences (in and outside school)
- reflecting on aspects of their lives outside school and considering things that help or hinder their progress
- providing opportunities for them to showcase and reflect upon their learning and achievements from outside as well as in school, for example, sporting or musical achievements; Duke of Edinburgh awards; characteristics or skills developed as a result of personal circumstances (for example, being a home carer).

5.1.6 Schools could consider how a digital learner portfolio, where learners can be supported to collate this information within a single digital space, might support that ongoing process of reflecting on, and planning for, progress.

5.2 Ensuring a broad offer of learning and experiences to support learner pathways:

5.2.1 This section covers:

- what we advise schools to do to ensure the curriculum ‘secures learning’² in each Area
- the range of courses schools should offer learners in each Area.

5.2.2 As outlined above, the difference for learners in years 10 and 11 (as distinct from learners up to and including year 9) is that whilst learning and teaching must be secured in each Area, this does not require learning within each statement of what matters. All Areas however, need to form part of the curriculum for learners in years 10 and 11, whether they take a qualification in that Area or not. [Summary of legislation - Hwb \(gov.wales\)](#)

5.3 Securing learning in each Area

5.3.1 When schools consider their approach to **securing learning** in all Areas, their curriculum and assessment arrangements must allow for learners to make appropriate progression in accordance with mandatory progression requirements. We would also strongly advise them to design learning and experiences that:

- draw on themes from a breadth of statements of what matters in that Area
- capture the broad aims of the Area as described in the ‘Introduction to the Area’ sections of this Curriculum for Wales framework guidance.

5.3.2 Whether a learner takes a qualification in an Area or not, when securing learning in each Area, the learning is expected to:

- be meaningful, allowing learners to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding
- support progression in the capacities, dispositions and characteristics set out in the four purposes
- challenge learners and enable them to make progress in that Area;
- include a number of learning experiences over the breadth of the two years rather than providing a one off experience.

² Section 30 (1) and (2) of the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act 2021 states that

(1) *The adopted curriculum must be implemented in accordance with subsection (2) for pupils who have completed the school year in which the majority of the pupils in their class attained the age of 14*

(2) *The adopted curriculum must be implemented in a way that —*

(a) *secures teaching and learning for each pupil that encompasses the mandatory elements within the areas of learning and experience, and*

(b) *secures other teaching and learning for each pupil in each area of learning and experience*

5.3.3 Schools will of course need to balance the legal requirement to secure learning with the demands of completing qualifications. Where possible, schools are advised to consider opportunities to develop interdisciplinary learning experiences which can contribute towards learners securing learning in multiple Areas; this could also involve exploring opportunities where learning in one Area (either as part of a qualification or otherwise) can be built upon or expanded to support securing learning in another Area. Here, the time learners are given to reflect on their learning will be of benefit, and practitioners can support that process of making connections between different learning and experiences.

5.3.4 The Learner Entitlement is designed to support schools in securing learning and teaching across all Areas of the curriculum, and to satisfy their statutory curriculum obligations. As such, 'securing learning' can take place across all four components of the Learner Entitlement.

Specific guidance on each Area is detailed below.

5.4 Languages, Literacy, and Communication

5.4.1 As described in the [introduction](#) to the Area within the Curriculum for Wales framework guidance, this Area aims to support learning across the whole curriculum and to enable learners to gain knowledge and skills in Welsh, English and international languages, including in literature.

5.4.2 As a cross-curricular skill, literacy should feature across a learner's curriculum and all practitioners should be supporting their progress in that regard. This should also provide opportunities for learners to develop their communication skills with growing independence in various contexts; learners should be supported to reflect on their progress in accordance with the principles of progression.

5.4.3 In respect of each individual learner, schools will be best placed to make decisions on the most appropriate literacy qualifications for each learner in Welsh and English, and will ultimately be responsible for those decisions, taking into account learners' preferences, prior learning, aspirations and pathways.

5.5 Welsh

5.5.1 We strongly advise schools to consider how they propose to ensure all learners are making suitable and challenging progress in their skills along a Welsh language continuum by increasing the amount of Welsh instruction in line with their local authority's [Welsh in Education Strategic Plan](#) (WESP).

5.5.2 In years 10 and 11 schools should consider the role of qualifications in supporting the need to build on prior learning up to and including year 9.

5.5.3 As part of '*Qualifications in literacy and numeracy*' in years 10 and 11, all learners in [category 3 Welsh-medium schools](#) should follow a challenging and ambitious course that leads to a qualification in Welsh. This will allow schools to satisfy the requirement to include this subject as a mandatory part of their curriculum.

5.5.4 The new made-for-Wales GCSE suite of qualifications offers an integrated GCSE double award and single award in Cymraeg language and literature.

- The double award has been introduced to provide the most appropriate qualification for the majority of learners in category 3 schools.
- The single award provides an alternative route for the small proportion of learners who would benefit from undertaking a qualification with less content than the double award, given their particular circumstances.
- New joiners to category 3 schools, who have not undertaken prior study in a Welsh-medium setting, should be provided with an opportunity to attend a late immersion centre, in order to enable them to access a GCSE in Cymraeg.
- Learners in category 3 schools, who begin year 10 in 2025 and 2026, who are not ready to access either the single or double award GCSE in Cymraeg language and literature, should follow the entry level Welsh qualification.

5.5.5 For [category 1](#) English-medium schools, the made-for-Wales GCSE suite of qualifications offers courses to ensure that all learners can continue to make progress, and receive a qualification at 16, in Welsh. All learners should, therefore, continue to have the opportunity to study towards a suitably challenging and ambitious qualification in Welsh.

- The new GCSE core Cymraeg qualification has been introduced to replace and build on the current GCSE Welsh second language.
- In addition to the main GCSE, the new level 2 qualification in additional core Cymraeg has been introduced for learners who are progressing well in their study of GCSE core Cymraeg and are ready to progress further along the Welsh language continuum. This qualification builds on the learning from GCSE core Cymraeg and provides additional stretch and challenge for learners with the ability or interest to develop their Welsh skills further. It is not an alternative to GCSE core Cymraeg.

5.5.6 For [category 2](#) dual-language schools, the made-for-Wales GCSE suite of qualifications similarly offers courses to ensure that all learners can continue to make progress, and receive a qualification at 16, in Welsh. All learners should, therefore, continue to have the opportunity to study towards suitably challenging and ambitious qualifications in Welsh. This will include a greater proportion of learners studying for qualifications further along the Welsh language continuum than in category 1 schools, based on their ability and prior learning.

5.5.7 Learners in category 1 and 2 schools who have undertaken prior study in a Welsh medium setting should have an opportunity to study qualifications from the suite of qualifications that are most appropriate to their level of ability. This includes the opportunity to study GCSE Cymraeg language and literature and the level 2 award in additional core Cymraeg, where their school judges these qualifications to be most appropriate to their level of ability. Where schools judge the level 2 award in additional core Cymraeg to be most appropriate to their learners' level of ability, they should ensure that the GCSE core Cymraeg syllabus has been covered sufficiently.

5.6 English

5.6.1 As part of '*Qualifications in literacy and numeracy*' in years 10 and 11, all learners should follow a challenging and ambitious course that leads to a qualification in English. This will allow schools to satisfy the requirement to include this subject as a mandatory part of their curriculum.

5.6.2 The new made-for-Wales GCSE suite of qualifications offers an integrated GCSE double award and single award in English language and literature.

- The double award has been introduced to provide the most appropriate qualification for the majority of learners in all schools.
- The single award provides an alternative route for the small proportion of learners who would benefit from undertaking a qualification with less content than the double award, given their particular circumstances.

5.6.3 Learners who begin year 10 in 2025 and 2026 and who are not ready to access either the single or double award GCSE in English language and literature should follow an entry level English qualification. As part of the range of National 14 to 16 Qualifications, from 2027, alongside the English GCSEs, there will be a Foundation qualification in English that spans entry level and level 1, providing an alternative route to a literacy qualification for some learners.

5.7 International languages

5.7.1 Some learners will choose to follow qualifications in one or more international language; schools are advised to ensure that this option is available to learners in years 10 and 11 within the *'Qualifications to encourage breadth'* component of the Learner Entitlement. Where learners do not choose to follow a qualification in an international language, schools are encouraged to provide learners with opportunities to continue their progression in this regard within the *'Wider learning and experiences across the curriculum'* component.

5.8 Mathematics and Numeracy

5.8.1 As described in the [introduction](#) to the Area within the Curriculum for Wales framework, this Area is one that underpins so many aspects of our daily lives and is essential for progress in other Areas.

5.8.2 As a cross-curricular skill, numeracy should feature across a learner's curriculum and all practitioners should be supporting their progress in that regard. It is advised that this should also provide opportunities for learners to develop their numeracy skills with growing independence in various contexts; they should be supported to reflect on their progress in accordance with the principles of progression.

5.8.3 As part of the *'Qualifications in literacy and numeracy'* in years 10 and 11, all learners should follow an ambitious and sufficiently challenging course that leads to a qualification in this Area.

5.8.4 The new made-for-Wales GCSE suite of qualifications offers a GCSE double award mathematics and numeracy course. This double award has been introduced to provide the most appropriate qualification for the majority of learners. This will continue to be a tiered qualification – with foundation and higher tiers – so that schools can enter learners at the most suitable level. From 2026, there will also be a level 2 additional mathematics qualification available, designed to build on the learning from GCSE Mathematics and Numeracy and to provide additional stretch and challenge for learners with the ability or interest to develop their mathematical skills further.

5.8.5 Learners who begin in year 10 in 2025 and 2026 who are not ready to access the double award GCSE in mathematics and numeracy, should follow an entry level qualification relating to mathematics and numeracy. As part of the National 14 to 16 Qualifications, from 2027, alongside the GCSE, there will be a Foundation qualification in

mathematics and numeracy that spans entry level and level 1, providing an alternative route to a numeracy qualification for some learners.

5.8.6 In respect of each individual learner, schools will be best placed to decide on the most appropriate numeracy qualification and will ultimately be responsible for that decision, taking into account learners' preferences, aspirations and pathways.

5.9 Science and Technology

5.9.1 As described in the [introduction](#) to the Area within the Curriculum for Wales framework, the importance of science and technology in our modern world cannot be overstated.

5.9.2 Within the '*Qualifications to encourage breadth*' component of the Learner Entitlement, schools are advised to offer a range of ambitious and sufficiently challenging courses that lead to qualifications within this Area, which will ensure a breadth of options for learners. This would extend to courses in computation and digital technology.

5.9.3 Specifically, in years 10 and 11, we would strongly advise schools to ensure that all learners follow an appropriate, challenging and ambitious course that leads to a qualification in science.

5.9.4 The new made-for-Wales GCSE suite of qualifications offers The Sciences – double award GCSE. This double award has been introduced to provide the most appropriate qualification for the majority of learners. This will also be a tiered qualification – with foundation and higher tiers – so that schools can enter learners at the most suitable level.

5.9.5 There will be an alternative, single award, integrated science GCSE, which provides an alternative route for the small proportion of learners who would benefit from undertaking a science qualification with less content than the double award, given their particular circumstances. This single award qualification is not designed to support progression to GCE science (AS and A-Levels).

5.9.6 This single award will not be available for first teaching until September 2026. Until then, the GCSE Applied Science (Single Award) will operate in a similar way for year 10 learners in 2025.

5.9.7 In respect of each individual learner, schools will be best placed to decide on the most appropriate science qualification, and will ultimately be responsible for that decision, taking into account learners' preferences, aspirations and pathways.

5.9.8 Whether or not a learner follows a course that leads to a qualification in technology, computer science or digital technology, it is vital that all learners are given the opportunities to make progress towards the four purposes through learning and experiences in this Area; such opportunities can be offered within the '*Wider learning and experiences across the curriculum*' component of the Learner Entitlement.

5.9.9 As a cross-curricular skill, digital competence should feature across a learner's curriculum and all practitioners should be supporting their progress in that regard. It is advised that this should also provide opportunities for learners to develop their digital skills with growing independence in various contexts, and they should be supported to reflect on their progress in accordance with the principles of progression.

5.10 Expressive Arts

5.10.1 As described in the [introduction](#) to the Area within the Curriculum for Wales framework, this Area is designed to engage, motivate and encourage learners to develop their creative, artistic and performance skills to the full.

5.10.2 Within the ‘*Qualifications to encourage breadth*’ component of the Learner Entitlement, schools are advised to offer a range of courses that lead to qualifications within this Area, which will ensure a breadth of options for learners.

5.10.2 Whether or not a learner follows a course that leads to a qualification in an expressive arts subject or discipline, it is vital that all learners are given opportunities to make progress towards the four purposes through learning and experiences in this Area. Such opportunities can be offered within the ‘*Wider learning and experiences across the curriculum*’ component of the Learner Entitlement.

5.11 Health and Well-being

5.11.1 As described in the [introduction](#) to the Area within the Curriculum for Wales framework, this Area is concerned with developing the capacity of learners to navigate life's opportunities and challenges. The fundamental components of this Area are physical health and development, mental health, and emotional and social well-being, and learners should be supported to understand how the different components of health and well-being are interconnected. Good health and well-being are important to enable successful learning.

5.11.2 Within the ‘*Qualifications to encourage breadth*’ component, schools are advised to offer a range of qualifications within this Area, which will ensure a breadth of options for learners.

5.11.3 For the purposes of securing learning, this Area includes a broad range of learning that is critical to enable all learners to develop in the ways described in the four purposes and to their wider progression. Much of the learning specified in the statements of what matters and statutory guidance goes beyond anything that would be directly assessed within a qualification. Such learning and opportunities can be offered within the ‘*Wider learning and experiences across the curriculum*’ component of the Learner Entitlement.

5.11.4 In addition to a whole school approach to learner well-being, schools would be expected to include within their curriculum:

- weekly opportunities for learners to enjoy and develop their abilities in physical activities
- regular and consistent opportunities for learners to support their mental health and emotional well-being and relationships
- opportunities for learners to learn about, and develop positive behaviours around, other aspects of each of the statements of what matters.

5.11.5 For the avoidance of doubt, schools must continue to provide learning in [RSE](#) for all learners in years 10 and 11 in accordance with the requirements of the Act, the RSE Code and guidance. However, this is separate to the requirement to secure learning in this Area. It is not necessary for this learning to result in any specific qualification; it will be for schools to design the most appropriate approach to meet the needs of their learners.

5.12 Humanities

5.12.1 As described in the [introduction](#) to the Area within the Curriculum for Wales framework, this Area is concerned with encouraging learners to engage with the most important issues facing humanity, including sustainability and social change, and help to develop the skills necessary to interpret and articulate the past and the present.

5.12.2 Within the ‘*Qualifications to encourage breadth*’ component, schools are advised to offer a range of qualifications within this Area, which will ensure a breadth of options for learners.

5.12.3 Whether or not a learner follows a course that leads to a qualification in a humanities subject or discipline, it is vital that all learners are given the opportunities to make progress towards the four purposes through learning and experiences in this Area; such opportunities can be offered within the ‘*Wider learning and experiences across the curriculum*’ component.

5.12.4 For the avoidance of doubt, schools must continue to provide learning in [RVE](#) for all learners in years 10 and 11 in accordance with the requirements of the Act and the [RVE guidance](#). However, this is separate to the requirement to secure learning in this Area. It is not necessary for this learning to result in any specific qualification; it will be for schools to design the most appropriate approach to meet the needs of their learners.

5.13 Deeper learning and independence

5.13.1 As schools encourage individuals to become increasingly independent and more effective as learners, some curriculum time should be safeguarded for more independent study.

5.13.2 Learners should be encouraged to transfer and make connections between their learning within and across other aspects of their study; they should be given guidance, support and time to deepen their understanding within a particular area of interest. There may be opportunities here for schools to explore interdisciplinary learning as they support learners to explore the interconnectedness of their learning and experiences.

5.13.3 Courses, such as the Skills Challenge Certificate’s individual project, or the personal project, which will form part of the National 14 to 16 Qualifications offer from 2027, can be used by schools to facilitate learning of this nature.

5.13.4 It is recognised that for a small proportion of learners, this type of extended independent task may not be appropriate; in respect of each individual learner, schools will be best placed to make that decision, and will ultimately be responsible for it.

5.14 Welsh Baccalaureate

5.14.1 Although the Skills Challenge Certificate will continue to be available for learners starting year 10 in 2025 and 2026, the aggregated qualification known as the Welsh Baccalaureate will end in the summer of 2026 (final award). (That is, learners who begin year 10 from 2025 onwards will not be able to complete the Welsh Baccalaureate.)

5.14.2 From 2025, schools should ensure that all learners in years 10 and 11 are provided with a broad and balanced set of learning and experiences, to allow them to progress and

achieve within the four components of the Learner Entitlement. Schools are strongly advised to ensure that the learning and experiences for all learners are suitably challenging and appropriate, in line with this guidance.

5.14.3 For the avoidance of doubt, whilst the Welsh Baccalaureate will no longer exist as an aggregated qualification for learners starting year 10 in 2025, schools are encouraged to continue to use the Skills Challenge Certificate to support curriculum provision of wider learning and experiences, as part of learners' Learner Entitlement. Likewise, following the planned introduction of the skills suite from 2027 (comprising skills for life and work qualifications and the personal project), which will build on and replace the Skills Challenge Certificate, schools will no doubt find this broader offer helpful in supporting the provision of 14 to 16 learning in accordance with the above.

5.15 Studying for qualifications other than in years 10 and 11

5.15.1 The curriculum guidance is clear in respect of progression in learning along the 3 to 16 continuum as well as the expected breadth of that learning. It is essential that schools develop their curriculum arrangements to reflect that progression and breadth in learning, allowing appropriate space and time up to and including year 9 for that to happen across all statements of what matters. As such, it would not be appropriate for schools to commence courses that lead to qualifications earlier than in year 10 where this requires the school to narrow the curriculum for these younger learners and, in doing so, prevent learners from covering all of the statements of what matters, alongside other mandatory aspects of learning and teaching.

6. Self-evaluation and improvement

6.1 Schools have ultimate responsibility for the curriculum that is provided for each learner along the 3 to 16 curriculum. In years 10 and 11 this curriculum will include some of the choices made by learners in terms of their qualifications. This guidance sets out the Welsh Government policy that, regardless of those choices, every learner is entitled to end their period of compulsory education at 16 able to demonstrate their learning, progress and achievements in accordance with the 14 to 16 Learner Entitlement.

6.2 As part of their self-evaluation and improvement processes, schools should evaluate and reflect upon:

- their curriculum offer to learners in years 10 and 11, ensuring that this allows all learners to achieve and to access learning experiences across all four components
- the quality of the curriculum, learning and teaching offered to each individual learner in years 10 and 11. Specifically schools should consider the extent to which, on completing their education in year 11, each learner has made appropriate progress across all the components of the 14 to 16 Learner Entitlement, drawing on a range of information and evidence about individuals and groups of learners.

6.3 As part of their self-evaluation and improvement processes, schools should therefore monitor and reflect upon the learning, progress and achievement of their learners in accordance with these components. Where schools are concerned that a learner will complete compulsory education without learning, progress or achievements in one or more component, they should communicate this to the local authority so that adequate support can be made available to this learner as they transition to post-16.

6.4 The conclusions of these evaluations should inform schools' improvement planning.

6.5 We recognise that there will be a range of information and evidence that schools can draw on at a school and individual learner level to evaluate their curriculum offer and whether they are meeting the requirements set out in the guidance, including information on qualification entries and outcomes. A significant part of this evidence should also include the way in which their learners are able to reflect upon their learning and progress, and how confident they feel about their transition to post-16.

6.6 Schools are advised, as part of their statutory obligations in developing a shared understanding of progression, to discuss and evaluate their years 10 and 11 curriculum offer with other secondary schools; this will help schools gain a better understanding of the quality of their curriculum and allow them to have an informed sense of their expectations for learner progress and achievement.

6.7 One way of meeting this requirement could be for secondary schools to meet on the following occasions during each academic year.

- Early in the autumn term – to reflect on those year 11 learners who left compulsory education in the previous summer term. Here, schools could consider the respective learning, progress and achievements of learners within each component of the 14 to 16 Learner Entitlement and how that progress along the 3 to 16 continuum has supported them to progress to post-16.

- Later in the autumn term or early in the spring term – to consider the respective progress, learning, achievements and post-16 plans of the learners in their current year 11 cohort.

6.8 Improvement advisers should help facilitate this evaluation and the development of a shared understanding of progression between schools, as part of their wider role in promoting, brokering and overseeing school-to-school collaboration and cluster working. In working with individual schools, they will also provide feedback and support on school's self-evaluation arrangements, taking into account the evaluation of learner progress across all the components of the 14 to 16 Learner Entitlement.

6.9 Work to develop a shared understanding of progression between secondary schools should not, however, be limited to learners in year 11.

6.10 The advice set out in this guidance, centred around the 14 to 16 Learner Entitlement, summarises those elements of 14 to 16 learning that the Welsh Government considers to be most important for learners in years 10 and 11. They will therefore be used to help determine one element of the information and evidence that should be used at the different levels of the school system for evaluation, improvement and accountability purposes, as we develop a [reformed information ecosystem](#) that supports our policy objectives.

6.11 Drawing on this guidance, we will develop proposals for the information ecosystem in 2024, continuing to work with practitioners and leaders and to share proposals with the sector, so that we can finalise new arrangements by summer 2025, in readiness for the first teaching of year 10 learners under the Curriculum for Wales.