

Introduction

This document provides a high-level overview of the proposed WJEC GCSE Social Studies Qualification.

It is based on Qualifications Wales's Approval Criteria (key sections are included in Appendix 1). Our qualification **must** meet these requirements.

The qualification outline will provide a guide for the development of the Specification and Sample Assessment Materials (SAMs).

Qualification Overview

The GCSE Social Studies qualification will support the Curriculum for Wales by:

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Supporting the principles of progression² by encouraging learners to:

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Defining Social Studies

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There are many different definitions of Social Studies in existence. Social Studies can be understood as a subject which encompasses and combines many disciplines but there is a need for this new GCSE to be a unique and clearly defined subject in its own right. Social studies will complement other subjects within the Humanities AoLE, but will not overlap with significant aspects of those subjects, by providing a unique learning experience focusing on social issues, actions and beliefs.

In order to define Social Studies, we have consulted:

the Curriculum for Wales guidance stated above

the Qualified for the Future Decisions report that stated that this qualification would give learners 'the opportunity to not only engage with current events and with the important

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Unit 2 - Investigating Society and Social Issues

The purpose of this unit is to:

Explore methods

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Consideration of manageability, engagement, validity and reliability

In developing this proposed qualification outline, we have considered manageability, engagement, validity and reliability, and how to balance these considerations in the context of the requirements of the Approval Criteria.

The Approval Criteria require 40% of the qualification to be assessed by non-examination assessment; one non-examination assessment must be set by WJEC, internally marked by the school, and moderated by WJEC, and the other will must be set and marked by WJEC. This poses some potential manageability challenges which we propose to minimise by allowing centres to spread the workload and assessment. As the Approval Criteria states that the qualification is unitised, we propose making both non-examination assessment in the summer terms of both first and second year of teaching to give centres some choice in deciding when to undertake the non-examination assessments.

We have also considered the assessment time that we have allocated to both non-examination assessments to try to reduce the impact on teaching and learning. Both non-examination assessments will feature tasks that require practical enquiry (investigating a social issue in Unit 2 and planning for action for social change in Unit 4). To aid manageability we would foresee these featuring a low level of control to enable learners to undertake an authentic enquiry experience. However, in order to ensure reliability, we will provide guidance on what notes are able to be used from the practical enquiry when responding to the assessment tasks. When undertaking the assessed tasks, we have concluded that a high level of control is considered crucial to assure reliability and equity for learners. This will secure the requirement of the Approval Criteria that learners can demonstrate a range of appropriate enquiry and investigation skills including the ability to think critically and the ability to reflect.

We believe that our proposed qualification should provide opportunities for centres to develop an engaging programme of study for its learners, in line with the expectations of the Curriculum for Wales. Unit 1 will cover a broad understanding of society, allowing for a range of topics to be covered, and will allow learners to gain a deeper understanding of the concepts underpinning how society works and functions in Welsh, national and global contexts. Unit 2 will enable learners to engage with source material and data related to a social issue. This will provide learners with a real-world context to their learning and allow them to explore an issue through a variety of viewpoints. Unit 3 will enable learners to explore the factors and processes involved in social change. This will enable learners to appreciate the political, economic, social, legal drivers for change as well as social pressure and actions of groups/individuals and the cause and effect of social change. Unit 4 will allow learners to engage with a social issue that is important to them. They will be able to explore a variety of viewpoints relating to their chosen social issue and devise a relevant plan that incorporates a social change strategy that can be used as part of a project or campaign.

We believe that the non-examination assessments we proposed for Units 2 and 4 are a valid approach to assessing the purpose and content because they allow learners to demonstrate their skills and understanding.

We believe that the purpose and content of Units 1 and 3 can be validly assessed by Units 1 and 3

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Assessment objectives

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