

Roderic Gillespie  
Chief Executive Officer  
WJEC

21 March 2019

Dear Roderic,

### **Teaching of Welsh history and culture in schools**

The Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee is scrutinising the teaching of Welsh history, culture and heritage in schools.

During the summer of 2018 we ran a public poll inviting members of the public to select the topic of our next inquiry. Nearly 2,500 people participated in the poll and 44% of them voted for this topic.

In February, we held an event to hear from practitioners and others interested in this issue. There were many comments on the importance of teaching Welsh history to give children a sense of identity. Whilst we are clear that there are requirements to teach aspects of Welsh history in the curriculum and within exam syllabuses, it was clear that there is a perception from professionals that the reality on the ground is quite different. This is obviously of great concern and an issue that we feel must be resolved at a time when the new curriculum is being developed and implemented.

I would be grateful if you could provide us with information on the following:

- Please can you detail the Continuing Professional Development training courses you provide that supports the teaching of Welsh history at GCSE and A level?
- What learning resources, for teachers and pupils, are available that support the teaching of Welsh history at GCSE and A level?
- For the History A/AS level, introduced for teaching from 2015, do you have any data that indicates the amount of specifically Welsh history that learners are studying?'
- Is the WJEC aware of any issues regarding schools' compliance with the requirement in the GCSE specification to teach Wales specific content?

---


**Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru**  
Y Pwyllgor Diwylliant, y Gymraeg a Chyfathrebu

**National Assembly for Wales**  
Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee

---

I would be grateful for your response to these questions by 24 April in order to inform our work.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bethan Sayed." The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Bethan Sayed

**Chair of the Committee**

**Ms Bethan Sayed**  
**Chair of the Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee**  
**National Assembly for Wales**

09 April 2019

Dear Bethan

### **The teaching of Welsh history and culture in schools**

Thank you for your letter of March 21 requesting information on aspects of teaching Welsh history in schools and colleges in Wales. We provide below the responses under each heading outlined in your letter.

#### **1. The Continuing Professional Development training courses provided by WJEC to support the teaching of Welsh history at GCSE and A Level**

WJEC provides a comprehensive, annual programme of CPD training for practitioners to support the delivery of its qualifications. This includes a structured continuum of support, from **Preparing to Teach** events during the academic year leading into first teaching of a reformed qualification, **Next Steps** during Year 1 of teaching, **Approaches to Teaching** during Year 2 of teaching and **Assessment > Classroom Practice** events following the first and subsequent assessments / examinations, feeding back on candidate performance, focussing on areas of strength and weakness and effective teaching and learning strategies for improving learner outcomes.

The focus of CPD events will therefore depend on the stage of delivery of a qualification but will always consider any specific needs identified by stakeholders, feedback from practitioners, the WJEC Subject Officer and the senior examining team within the context of the specification requirements and its Assessment Objectives.

With regards to WJEC History qualifications in particular, it is important to note that, integral to the study of the GCSE specification (first teaching from September 2017), "learners must consider a Welsh perspective if the opportunity arises naturally from the subject matter and if its inclusion would enrich learners' understanding of the world around them as citizens of Wales as well as the UK, Europe and the world. Specifically, Units 1 and 3 will require candidates to make reference to the impact of historical change on Wales or on a Welsh perspective. Unit 1 assessments will include compulsory questions that require knowledge and understanding of Welsh History. Unit 3 assessments take a thematic approach to historical development. Candidates will be required to draw upon the Welsh context in their responses to specific Unit 3 questions."

At AS/A Level (first teaching from September 2015), included in the specification document is a requirement for “learners to be given opportunities, where appropriate, to consider a Welsh perspective if the opportunity arises naturally from the subject matter and if its inclusion would enrich learners’ understanding of the world around them as citizens of Wales as well as the UK, Europe and the world. Learners should also be given access to primary source material and historical interpretations which reflect a Welsh perspective where appropriate.”

CPD training relating to the delivery and assessment of the reformed GCSE and GCE History specifications and feedback from their assessment have and continue to reflect these requirements and have been delivered as followed:

### GCSE History

CPD Event (full day face-to-face)	Academic Year	Outreach
Preparing to Teach	2016/17	4 events (Cardiff x 2, Carmarthen, Llandudno): 199 delegates
Next Steps	2017/18	4 events (Cardiff x 2, Carmarthen, Llandudno): 132
Approaches to Teaching	2018/19	4 events (Cardiff x 2, Carmarthen, Llandudno): 115
Assessment > Classroom Practice	2019/20 + beyond	TBC

### GCE History

CPD Event (full day face-to-face)	Academic Year	Outreach
Preparing to Teach	2014/15	4 events (Cardiff x 2, Llanelli, Llandudno): 168 delegates
Next Steps	2015/16	4 events (Cardiff x 2, Llanelli, Llandudno): 142 delegates
Approaches to Teaching	2016/17	4 events (Cardiff x 2, Llanelli, Llandudno): 123 delegates
Assessment > Classroom Practice	2017/18 (+ beyond)	4 events (Cardiff x 2, Llanelli, Llandudno): 100 delegates

## 2. Learning resources available for teachers and pupils to support the teaching of Welsh history at GCSE and A level

WJEC provides an extensive range of free digital resources for both teachers and pupils studying aspects of Welsh history

<https://resources.wjec.co.uk/Pages/ResourceByArgs?subld=17> . These include:

GCSE: Patterns of Migration: The Welsh Context

GCSE: Depression, War and Recovery, 1930-1951

GCSE: The Development of Warfare, c.1250 to the present day

GCSE: Radicalism and Protest, 1810-1848

GCSE: Changes in Patterns of Migration, c.1500 to the present day

GCSE: Austerity, Affluence and Discontent, 1951-1979

GCE: Developing conceptual awareness—Unit 1. Welsh issues are dealt with, where relevant, in: government, rebellion and society in Wales and England; government, revolution and society in Wales and England; politics, protest and reform in Wales and England; politics, people and progress in Wales and England.

GCE: A guide to the learning and teaching of the interpretation issues at Unit 2. Again, Welsh issues are dealt with, where relevant, in: the mid-Tudor crisis in Wales and England; royalty, rebellion and republic; reform and protest; politics and society in Wales and England, c.1900–1939

GCE: Supporting the breadth study—Unit 3. Wales is the focus: Wales—resistance, conquest and rebellion. And Welsh elements are embedded in: poverty, protest and rebellion in Wales and England; parliamentary reform and protest in Wales and England, social change and reform in Wales and England.

GCE: Support for depth study 4—politics, society and the war: Wales and England c.1900–1918

Hodder Education has published the following textbooks covering significant aspects of Welsh history <https://www.hoddereducation.co.uk/history> :

GCSE: The Elizabethan Age, 1558-1603 and Depression, War and Recovery, 1951-1979

GCSE: Changes in Health and Medicine, c.1340 to the present day and Changes in Crime and Punishment, c.1500 to the present day

GCSE: CCA Cymru has also published a textbook for Crime and Punishment [https://www.aber.ac.uk/caa-shop-assets/covers/thumbnails/9781845216801\\_sm.jpg](https://www.aber.ac.uk/caa-shop-assets/covers/thumbnails/9781845216801_sm.jpg)

### **3. Data indicating the amount of specific Welsh history learners are studying for A/AS level History A/AS level, introduced for teaching from 2015**

No specific data of this nature is captured; however in order to meet the requirements of the GCE course all learners must study elements of Welsh history. To avoid doing this runs the risk of the learners being unable to respond to examination questions.

**GCE History Unit 1** is a period study that includes options that explicitly require references to events in Wales. These are: government, rebellion and society in Wales and England c.1485–1603; government, revolution and society in Wales and England, c.1603–1715; politics, protest and reform in Wales and England, c.1780–1880; politics, people and progress in Wales and England, c.1880–1980.

**GCE History Units 2 and 4** are depth studies that include options that explicitly require references to events in Wales. These are: the mid-Tudor crisis in Wales and England, c.1529–1570; royalty, rebellion and republic, c.1625–1660; reform and protest in Wales and England c.1783–1848; politics and society in Wales and England, c.1900–1939.

**GCE History Unit 3** is a breadth study that includes options that explicitly require references to events in Wales. These are: Wales—resistance, conquest and rebellion c.1240–1415; poverty, protest and rebellion in Wales and England, c.1485–1603; royalty, rebellion and restoration in Wales and England, c.1603–1715; parliamentary reform and protest in Wales and England, c.1780–1885; social change in Wales and England, c.1890–1990.

In addition there are several NEA Wales-specific tasks available to schools for study at GCE. These can be found at: [https://www.wjec.co.uk/qualifications/history/r-history-gce-asa-from-2015/NEA%20suggested%20questions.pdf?language\\_id=1](https://www.wjec.co.uk/qualifications/history/r-history-gce-asa-from-2015/NEA%20suggested%20questions.pdf?language_id=1)

#### **4. Awareness of schools' compliance with the requirement in the GCSE specification to teach Wales specific content**

WJEC is not aware of any issues regarding compliance with the requirement in the GCSE specification to teach Wales-specific content. Were schools not to do this they would risk candidates not being able to answer specific questions and/or accessing the higher Bands in certain questions.

For GCSE History, all content must be taught and this includes significant Wales-specific content where relevant.

**GCSE History Unit 1** is entitled Studies in Depth – Wales and the wider perspective. It offers four options all of which have significant Wales specific content embedded [https://www.wjec.co.uk/qualifications/history/r-history-gcse-2017/wjec-gcse-history-sams-unit-1-e.pdf?language\\_id=1](https://www.wjec.co.uk/qualifications/history/r-history-gcse-2017/wjec-gcse-history-sams-unit-1-e.pdf?language_id=1) All content must be taught.

**GCSE History Unit 3** is entitled Thematic studies from a broad historical perspective. It offers four options all of which have Wales specific content embedded. More specifically this includes the study of a Welsh historic site in each option [https://www.wjec.co.uk/qualifications/history/r-history-gcse-2017/wjec-gcse-history-sams-unit-3-e.pdf?language\\_id=1](https://www.wjec.co.uk/qualifications/history/r-history-gcse-2017/wjec-gcse-history-sams-unit-3-e.pdf?language_id=1) . In the assessment of these options, Question 7 requires specific Welsh content to be incorporated into responses in order to access Bands 3 and 4 in AO1. All content must be taught.

In addition there are several NEA Wales-specific tasks available to schools for study at GCSE [https://www.wjec.co.uk/qualifications/history/r-history-gcse-2017/GCSE%20History%20-%20Exemplars%20for%20NEA%20Topic%20Area%201%20\(10%2011%2016\).pdf?language\\_id=1](https://www.wjec.co.uk/qualifications/history/r-history-gcse-2017/GCSE%20History%20-%20Exemplars%20for%20NEA%20Topic%20Area%201%20(10%2011%2016).pdf?language_id=1) Were schools to choose a Wales specific NEA task up to 75% of the course followed at GCSE would contain significant aspects of Welsh history.

I trust that the information provided is sufficiently detailed and will aid the Committee's important work on this theme. If WJEC can be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to get back in touch.

Yours sincerely



**Roderic Gillespie**

Chief Executive