

Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru | National Assembly for Wales

Y Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg | Children, Young People and Education Committee

Statws y Cymhwyster Bagloriaeth Cymru | The status of the Welsh Bacculaureate Qualification

WB 15

Ymateb gan: Cynghrair Dysgu Byd-Eang Cymru

Response from: Wales Alliance for Global Learning

Introduction

1. I'm responding as the Chair of the Wales Alliance for Global Learning, a global learning policy group with 70+ members consisting of global learning professionals in Wales.
2. The response is based on members' experience of delivering teacher training and student interventions related to the new Welsh Bacculaureate, mostly informed by evidence we've received from Welsh Bacculaureate Coordinators and pupils during this delivery.
3. Information for this consultation response was collected from members via an online survey, via email and during our quarterly meeting.

The extent to which the Welsh Bacculaureate Qualification is understood and valued

4. Through our work supporting schools with Welsh Bacculaureate delivery, the Wales Alliance for Global Learning feel that the Qualification is undervalued within many schools and by pupils and parents. In part, this is because the implementation phase of the Qualification was not sufficiently resourced. Consequently, some pupils and teachers reported a poor, pressured and/or confused initial experience of the Qualification.
5. However, there are pockets of success where schools have delivered transformational experiences through the Welsh Bac, otherwise not available as pupils focus on GCSE and A-Level study. These success stories tend to be in schools where the value of global citizenship (and other skills-based approaches to learning) are already highly valued and understood.
6. Members of the Wales Alliance for Global Learning worked with some Schools to support the implementation phase of the Qualification (teacher training, schemes of work, pupil interventions), but this could only take place where schools were able to resource the intervention directly, or where grant funding was available.

The extent to which the Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification is considered to be equivalent and rigorous

7. While the skills featured in the Qualification are increasingly important to employers¹ the Alliance do not generally feel it is seen as an equivalent qualification as compared to GCSEs and A-Levels. We've been given messages by Welsh Baccalaureate Coordinators that pupils, parents and schools identify GCSEs and

A-Levels as the more rigorous and relevant qualifications for university. However, members of the Alliance had been given anecdotal examples of the qualification as valuable in as part of young people's UCAS applications.

The status of the Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification in schools and colleges

8. In some schools, there is a positive status for the Qualification, but in many institutions it is seen as an add-on rather than integral to pupils. This is likely related to insufficient resources during the implementation phase and the relative value placed on the qualification.

9. Some schools also reported that pupils were not equipped with the skills to complete the Welsh Baccalaureate, having focused mostly on subject knowledge rather than skills during their Secondary experience.

The wider impact of studying the Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification

11. The Alliance believe that studying the Qualification, when delivered well, has a powerful impact. For example, it gives opportunities for those at all levels of attainment to develop their skills, often with unexpected pupils taking leadership roles. The Community Challenge gives opportunities for young people to engage with volunteering and social action, bringing communities closer to school life. The Global Challenge helps to embed the global citizenship skills essential for the young people to participate as ethical citizens and employees in a globalised society.

12. We believe that the impact of the Welsh Baccalaureate will be greater when Successful Futures has been implemented, as pupils will have better developed the relevant skills when beginning the Qualification. In the meantime, impact would be greater if there was better marketing to demonstrate to schools and colleges the benefits of the Welsh Baccalaureate when delivered well.

¹ For example, see Bughin et al (2018) Skill Shift: Automation and the Future of the Workforce, <https://mck.co/2sGMG93>, accessed 18 Sept 2018.

The benefits and disadvantages of the Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification

13. Members of the Wales Alliance for Global Learning identified the following benefits and disadvantages of the Qualification:

Benefits	Disadvantages
<p>Skills-based approach including global citizenship skills are essential so young people can play a role as citizens and have relevant employability skills. The Qualification develops practical and entrepreneurial skills. This is particularly relevant at a time when pupils are heavily focused on subject-based learning for GCSEs and A-Levels.</p>	<p>Implementation has been under-resourced, leaving Welsh Baccalaureate Coordinators under huge pressure and struggling to convey the benefits to parents and pupils.</p>
<p>Provides a broader learning experience for learners, offering opportunities that makes education provision more relevant to a wider cross-section of pupils.</p>	<p>It's been challenging to get pupils and parents to appreciate the importance of the Welsh Baccalaureate while pupils are also studying for their GCSEs and A-Levels.</p>
<p>Allows young people the opportunity to select areas of interest, empowering them to make choices about what matters.</p>	<p>Lack of understanding/value from universities and employers</p>
<p>Promotes self-reflection and evaluation.</p>	<p>Pressure to get 100% of pupils through the Qualification can detract from learning.</p>
<p>Includes highly relevant and engaging challenges enabling schools to develop their own approaches aligned with</p>	<p>Brightest pupils tend to put in the most effort are those who least need the qualification to help them access higher</p>

their pupils' needs.	education
	There is no Modern Foreign Languages included – this is a missed opportunity

Concluding points

1. The Welsh Bac has the potential to be impactful and valuable to pupils, schools, and employers, but several elements are required to maximise its impact and to gain support and recognition for the qualification in and out of Wales:
 - a. **Align with the new curriculum:** Students will flow much more easily into the Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification once Successful Futures is implemented as it shares the skills-based approach. There are key links between the four purposes and the Qualification and these should be made explicit. Introducing a Modern Foreign Languages element would also enhance the value and reputation of the qualification.
 - b. **Engage better with employers, the third sector and higher education:** Parents, pupils and schools are likely to value the Qualification more highly if it is better recognised by those who will be employing or educating pupils beyond compulsory education.
 - c. **Professional development and networks:** Facilitate the sharing of good practice and lessons learned between schools and Welsh Baccalaureate Coordinators, building in professional development opportunities where required. Support these networks to share the value of the Qualification with parents, pupils and other teachers so schools so can improve people's engagement with and perception of the Qualification.