



Inquiry question	Consortia response
<p>The extent to which the Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification is understood and valued by learners, parents, education professionals in schools and colleges, higher education institutions and employers</p>	<p>Initially when the revised Welsh Baccalaureate was launched in 2015 there was a lack of understanding of the Skills Challenge Certificate/Welsh Baccalaureate amongst learners, parents and education professionals. Initial promotion and awareness raising of the value of the qualification was not effective. There was a lack of understanding about how the course had changed from the previous version of the qualification.</p> <p>Individual schools undertook promotion activities, many of which were successful in informing pupils about the course. However, it is our view that there is still insufficient level of understanding amongst parents, and education professionals who do not have direct experience of the qualification. In particular there is a general lack of understanding amongst all stakeholders about the relationship between the Skills Challenge Certificate and the Welsh Baccalaureate and the value of the qualification in terms of employability skills and its value in the world of work.</p>
<p>The extent to which the Welsh Baccalaureate is considered by learners, education professionals in schools and colleges, employers and higher education to be an equivalent, rigorous qualification</p>	<p>The Advanced Skills Challenge Certificate carries equal UCAS points to an A level and there are students in many schools who have gained a university place because of their achievement of this qualification. The Skills Challenge Certificate qualification is accepted by the vast majority of UK universities and higher education institutions as equivalent to an A Level. The few universities/departments who do not accept it have been well publicised in the media, and this has reduced confidence in the qualification amongst students and parents and damaged the reputation of the course. Whilst some universities do not make an offer including the Skills Challenge Certificate many of these value the Individual Project and will sometimes make a reduced offer based on this.</p> <p>As it is the Skills Challenge Certificate that carries the UCAS points, it is unclear to students how</p>

	<p>valuable achievement of the Advanced Welsh Baccalaureate is at KS5.</p> <p>Views on the rigour of the National/Foundation (KS4) Skills Challenge Certificate vary between schools. In some schools, the KS4 Skills Challenge Certificate is not considered to be as challenging or rigorous as GCSE courses which have examination components. Feedback from teachers delivering the course often shows that it is challenging to cover the volume of controlled assessment work required.</p> <p>There is still confusion within schools regarding the long-term future of the Welsh Baccalaureate Skills Challenge Certificate as a measure. Until this has been clarified, schools will continue to give prominence to the core subjects and to the L2+ measure and will allocate insufficient time, resources, and staff training to the Skills Challenge Certificate in KS4. In some schools there is little continuity of staffing.</p>
<p>The status of the Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification in schools and colleges, including the Welsh Government's target for universal adoption and the potential impact of this approach</p>	<p>Views on the value of the Advanced (KS5) Skills Challenge Certificate vary. In a minority of schools it is not seen as an A level equivalent, despite the equivalence in terms of UCAS points. There has been a recent move in some sixth forms to make the qualification optional for students. This is particularly the case for higher ability students who are undertaking 4 A level courses.</p> <p>Universal adoption of the Skills Challenge at KS4 has been the result of the Welsh Baccalaureates inclusion as a performance measure from 2018. In Spring 2018, due to a perceived lack of clarity over performance measures for 2019 onwards, a small number of schools did consider making the Skills Challenge Certificate optional at KS4.</p>
<p>The wider impact of studying the Welsh Baccalaureate on other curriculum subjects and education provision</p>	<p>The introduction of the KS4 Skills Challenge Certificate/Welsh Baccalaureate led some schools to reduce GCSE option choices. Others have made space on the timetable by reducing PHSE allocation and/or providing collapsed days. There is a wide variety of curriculum models within schools for delivering the course, not all of which have proved successful. There is evidence of some successful KS4 models where there is strong collaboration between core subjects and the Skills Challenge Certificate, for example English and RE departments</p>

	<p>delivering Global Citizenship, or PE departments delivering the Community challenge. Less successful delivery models include insufficient timetabled time devoted to delivering the course, and schools who have delegated responsibility for challenges to specific departments without adequate training, support or accountability procedures.</p>
<p>The benefits and disadvantages of the Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification to learners, schools and colleges, higher education institutions and employers</p>	<p>Teachers directly involved in the qualification, and in many schools where the qualification has been successful to date, there is a very positive view of the benefits of the qualification.</p> <p>However, in some schools there is a less positive view of the benefits of the qualification. This is often due to poor implementation of the course making the benefits less visible to learners, parents and teachers. In schools where there are established teams delivering the qualification teachers have been able to develop expertise in particular areas which has led to improved standards. In some schools where the allocation of teachers delivering the qualification changes frequently and is based on available time on the timetable rather than expertise the delivery is less successful, and the value of the qualification is diminished.</p> <p>Benefits of the qualification to learners is that they are able to develop independent learning skills that are transferable to other academic subjects. Higher education institutions value the independent research skills developed, particularly in completing the Individual project.</p> <p>Greater efforts to promote understanding of the Skills Challenge Certificate and the employability skills it develops is still needed amongst stakeholder institutions and employers.</p>