

January Exam Series

Background

The January exam series is scheduled from [11 to 25 January](#) and includes both general and vocational qualifications. In England only technical and vocational qualifications are sat in January.

Potential Disruption

Qualifications Wales has confirmed that the January series will run as scheduled to provide learners who have been preparing the opportunity to take their exams. Prior to the November exam series centres were provided with updated contingency arrangements guidance providing advice on dealing with general disruption to exams:

[Qualifications Wales / Guidance: what schools and colleges should do if exams or other assessments are seriously disrupted](#)

For learners who are ill, self-isolating or otherwise feel unable to take their scheduled exams in January, they will have the opportunity to take these exams in the summer and Qualifications Wales has developed learner focussed [FAQs](#) to clarify this.

WJEC will be communicating with centres this week to remind them of the information, resources and assistance available in respect of the January series. Qualifications Wales will also work WJEC to monitor entry patterns, late withdrawals/ non-attendance and any queries/ concerns arising, as with the November 2020 and 2021 exam series, the former of which was held during the firebreak last year.

Support for Learners

We recognise that many learners may be anxious about the prospect of taking exams and the continuing disruption and uncertainty.

We have put together a package of support for learners in exam years with the intention to address learner anxiety and to provide support to the teaching and learning. This is a £24m funding package, available until the end of the financial year, which will provide support to schools, colleges and learners in three ways:

1. Supporting learner well-being and reducing exam anxiety:

- Online learning and revision resources for learners in both schools and colleges:
 - o [investment in additional WJEC resources such as revision guides, exam walk-throughs and knowledge organisers](#)
 - o [E-sgol virtual GCSE revision and support sessions](#)
 - o [Mental Health Toolkit](#)

2. Supporting teaching and learning in GCSE exam years

- Grant funding for schools (via the regions and partnerships) to provide additional support in a flexible way with a particular focus on students taking

GCSE Maths, English or Welsh to meet the needs of the learners in each school.

- This flexible funding can be used at the school's discretion and could be used to give the students who need it most access to additional teaching, study skills, mentoring, revision support and revision resources to enhance their opportunity to perform in their GCSEs – especially the core subjects which enable progression. The funding allocation will be weighted by FSM numbers to better target these learners.

3. Enabling the transition of learners to their next steps

- To ensure all year 11, 12 and 13 and equivalent college learners are given the opportunity to consider the full suite of options available to them, funding is being provided to access resources and provide personalised support in terms of applications and learning support as they transition to both FE and HE,
- This can be delivered through mechanisms such as:
 - o Virtual open events,
 - o Engagement between schools, colleges and higher education
 - o Access to [transition resources](#)
 - o 'University Ready' programme, developed last year with Open University, providing mentoring from HE students to prepare A-level students for University.
 - o Provide access to resources and support for learners to start writing their UCAS application personal statement/ or CV for those who want to enter employment or an apprenticeship.
 - o Make impartial careers information and guidance materials available to all learners. This could be online, personal interviews, workshops, events, industry speakers, [Careers Wales](#) etc
 - o Disseminate [Seren programme resources](#) in support of all learners e.g. webinars on personal statement writing, study skills, student life
 - o Encourage and support Students to complete the Destination Plan task of the Skills Challenge Certificate to support their future planning and reinforce their vision for year 13
- Provision in each local authority for targeted person-centred support for year 11 learners: to provide support to those who are not attending school to find a route back in to completing their education, and another to support those who may be less engaged from learning to support them to complete their GCSEs. This approach would draw in attendance officers, advisers from the careers service, the National Training Federation for Wales and FE partners.

An info-sheet is currently being developed for learners to signpost the support that is available and how to access it, similar resources are being developed for teachers/ lecturers and parents/ carers. During the spring and summer terms there will also be coordinated communication activity by WJEC, Qualifications Wales and Welsh Government to signpost teachers and learners to this support and provide learners with further information about what to expect from the 2022 exam process.