
W E L S H S T A T U T O R Y
I N S T R U M E N T S

2023 No. 1232 (W. 218)

**EMPLOYMENT AND
TRAINING, WALES**

**The Apprenticeships (Specification
of Apprenticeship Standards for
Wales) (Modification) Order 2023**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

(This note is not part of the Order)

This Order is made under section 29(1) of the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 (“the 2009 Act”). This Order modifies the Specification of Apprenticeship Standards for Wales (“the SASW”) which was originally brought into effect in May 2013 by the Apprenticeships (Specification of Apprenticeship Standards for Wales) Order 2013, and subsequently modified in 2016 by the Apprenticeships (Specification of Apprenticeship Standards for Wales) (Modification) Order 2016.

The SASW specifies the requirements that must be met for recognised Welsh apprenticeship frameworks to be issued under section 19(1) of the 2009 Act.

The modifications made by this Order include ensuring accessibility for those with a learning difficulty or disability.

To assist the reader the Welsh Ministers have published a consolidated version of the SASW which incorporates the modifications shown in the Schedule to this Order.

The Welsh Ministers’ Code of Practice on the carrying out of Regulatory Impact Assessments was considered in relation to this Order. As a result, it was not considered necessary to carry out a regulatory impact assessment as to the likely costs and benefits of complying with this Order.

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2023 No. 1232 (W. 218)

**EMPLOYMENT AND
TRAINING, WALES**

**The Apprenticeships (Specification
of Apprenticeship Standards for
Wales) (Modification) Order 2023**

Made 17 November 2023

Laid before Senedd Cymru 20 November 2023

Coming into force 11 December 2023

The Welsh Ministers make the following Order in exercise of the power conferred by section 29(1) of the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009(1).

In accordance with section 29(2) of that Act the Welsh Ministers are satisfied that the Specification of Apprenticeship Standards for Wales as modified by this Order complies with section 31.

Title and coming into force

1. The title of this Order is the Apprenticeships (Specification of Apprenticeship Standards for Wales) (Modification) Order 2023 and it comes into force on 11 December 2023.

Interpretation

2. In this Order, “the Specification of Apprenticeship Standards for Wales” means the document given effect by article 2 of the Apprenticeships (Specification of Apprenticeship Standards for Wales) Order 2013(2).

(1) 2009 c. 22.

(2) S.I. 2013/1192 (W. 128) as modified by S.I. 2016/930 (W. 229).

Modification

3. The Specification of Apprenticeship Standards for Wales has effect subject to the modifications specified in the Schedule to this Order.

Vaughan Gething

Minister for Economy, one of the Welsh Ministers

17 November 2023

SCHEDULE

Article 3

Modifications to the Specification of Apprenticeship Standards for Wales

1. For paragraph 1 substitute—

“1. The Specification of Apprenticeship Standards for Wales (“SASW”) sets out the minimum requirements to be included in a recognised Welsh apprenticeship framework. Compliance with the SASW is a statutory requirement of the Apprenticeship, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009. This version incorporates modifications made to the original SASW published in May 2013 and modifications made in 2016.

It incorporates modifications to allow additional “proxy” qualifications as a recognised alternative to Essential Skills as detailed under each apprenticeship framework level, and includes a more inclusive offer for people with learning difficulties and disabilities to widen participation, opening up the essential skills entry requirements for levels 2 and 3.

It includes a new section on degree and professional apprenticeships (levels 6 and 7), which removes the essential skills requirements for apprenticeships at this level.

Updated guidance has been issued in a separate document. The Welsh Issuing Authorities must have regard to this updated guidance in reaching a decision on whether a framework submission complies with SASW.

The modifications to SASW have been made by order by the Welsh Ministers.”

2. For paragraph 2 substitute—

“2. An apprenticeship framework must specify its level using the national level descriptors described in the Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales (“CQFW”).”

3. For paragraph 3 substitute—

“3. A framework must be at Level 2 to qualify as a Foundation Apprenticeship, be at Level 3 to qualify as an Apprenticeship, be at Level 4 or 5 to qualify as a Higher Apprenticeship and Level 6 or 7 to qualify as a Degree or Professional Apprenticeship.”

4. For paragraph 6 substitute—

“6. A framework must be a minimum of 38 credits, excluding essential skills credits, but may, where appropriate, exceed this; in many cases frameworks will significantly exceed 38 credits. A framework must not be so narrow that it is only relevant to a specific workplace where the apprenticeship was attained.”

5. For paragraph 10 substitute—

“10. The framework developer will decide the balance of credits between occupational competencies and relevant technical knowledge qualifications. However, the framework must specify:

- (a) a minimum of 19 credits achieved from an occupational competence-based qualification or the competence element of an integrated qualification, which specifically relates to the skill, trade or occupation and is based on the National Occupational Standards (NOS) where they exist, or industry-wide standards or, where they do not, professional standards for the employment sector for which the framework is designed and be at a level which reflects the job role; and
- (b) a minimum of 19 credits achieved from a technical knowledge qualification or knowledge element of an integrated qualification which provides the technical knowledge and understanding of the theoretical concepts specifically relating to the skill, trade or occupation to underpin occupational competence. The knowledge qualification element must equip the apprentice with the knowledge and understanding of the industry and its market; or
- (c) a minimum of 19 credits from an equivalent competencies qualification (non-CQFW) recognised by a professional body for a Higher Apprenticeship at Levels 4 or 5 and Degree or Professional Apprenticeships Levels 6 or 7 where the successful completion of such an apprenticeship is a recognised pathway to professional registration.”

6. For sub-paragraph 11(b) substitute—

“(b) the learning content from an equivalent competencies qualification recognised by a professional body for a Higher

Apprenticeship and a Degree and Professional Apprenticeship, where the successful completion of such an apprenticeship is a recognised pathway to professional registration.”

7. After paragraph 16 insert—

“**16A.** Some apprentices with a learning difficulty or learning disability may be able to meet the occupational standard but may struggle to achieve the English or maths qualification at the level normally required. Providers are expected to continue to make every effort to help apprentices meet these standards.

However, in recognition of the barriers to participation these requirements may present to a person with a learning difficulty or disability, exceptions for foundation apprenticeships and apprenticeships will be permitted to the English and maths minimum requirements.

The reasonableness of the adjustment to be made will depend on the apprentice’s individual circumstances and assessment. The adjustment may apply to one subject, or to both English and maths. If the adjustment is only applied to one subject, the regular requirements for the non-adjusted subject will continue to apply. Adjusting the minimum requirements to Essential Communication Skills and Essential Application of Number Skills can be considered by the provider on an individual case-by-case basis where **all** the following conditions have been satisfied:

The apprentice has either an existing or previously issued Individual Development Plan (IDP), a statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN), Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan, or a Learning and Skills Plan (LSP);

An evidenced assessment is undertaken demonstrating that even with support and adjustments the apprentice is not able to achieve English or maths to the minimum level as a result of their learning difficulty or disability;

The employer and provider must reasonably expect that the apprentice will be able to successfully achieve all other aspects of the apprenticeship requirements, become occupationally competent and achieve Essential Communication Skills and Essential Application of Number Skills in the

adjusted subjects before the end of their apprenticeship; and

There are no industry specific minimum entry requirements.”

8. For paragraph 19 substitute—

“**19.** A Higher Apprenticeship framework at Levels 4 or 5 or a Degree or Professional Apprenticeship Levels 6 or 7 may specify additional professional qualifications as recognised by the sector if they confer eligibility for professional status.”

9. For paragraph 24 substitute—

“**24.** A foundation apprenticeship framework may specify as a Welsh certificate requirement a qualification in Essential Digital Literacy Skills to at least Level 1, unless Digital Literacy is not relevant to effective performance in the skill, trade or occupation to which the framework relates. However, exceptions will be permitted for apprentices with learning difficulties or a learning disability as outlined in paragraph 16A.”

10. After paragraph 25 insert—

“**25A.** The issuing authority may at their discretion specify in a framework the acceptance of regulated qualifications that are equivalent or at a higher level to the proxies listed in SASW for Essential Skills in Communication and Application of Number. Any such qualifications must evidence completion of the competencies being assessed in the Essential Skills qualifications in communication and number.

25B. Where Essential Skills qualifications are specified in a foundation apprenticeship framework, the apprenticeship framework must specify as a Welsh certificate requirement, the acceptance of one of the recognised proxy qualifications outlined in the tables below:

<i>English qualification</i>	<i>Level / Grade criteria</i>
Essential Communication Skills or Essential Skills Wales in Communication 1	Minimum Level 1
GCSE/IGCSE English - any with English in the title. Including: English Literature,	Minimum Grade 1 or Minimum Grade G

English Language,
English Studies and
English
Communication
Welsh Language Short
courses, Pilot courses
Double Awards
(minimum grade
acceptable E or F)

(English as a Second
Language is not
acceptable)

Functional Skills – English	Minimum Level 1
A/AS Level English - any with English in the title. Including: - English Language, English Literature or English Language and Literature, Welsh Language	Minimum Grade E or pre 1986 A Level “O” grade (Ordinary Grade equivalent)

O Level English, English Language, English Literature or English Language and Literature	Minimum Grade E or pre 1975 evidence of a Pass
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Key Skills Communication / Literacy (Welsh Key Skills only consist of portfolio. English Key Skills require achievement of test and portfolio)	Minimum Level 1
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CSE English	2 or 3
Pre U Certificate	P3
Literature in English	

Northern Ireland Certificate in Essential Skills Communication	Minimum Level 1
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British Sign Language - regulated qualification (only where British Sign Language is the Apprentice’s primary language)	Minimum Level 1 or Minimum SCQF Level 4
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Scottish Advanced Higher in English (SCQF Level 7)	Minimum Grade C
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Scottish Higher in English (SCQF Level 6)	Minimum Grade C
Scottish National 4 in English (SCQF Level 4)	Pass
Scottish Intermediate 1 in English (SCQF Level 4)	Minimum Grade C
Scottish Standard Grade General in English (SCQF Level 4)	Minimum Grade 3
Scottish National Certificate Unit in Communication (SCQF Level 6)	Pass
Scottish Core Skill Unit in Communication (SCQF Level 4)	Pass
Scottish Workplace Core Unit in Communication (SCQF Level 4) (Oral Communication and written communication)	Pass
Scottish National Unit in Literacy (SCQF Level 4)	Pass
Scottish Ordinary Grade in English (SCQF Level 5)	Minimum Grade C
IBO Middle Years Programme Level 1 / 2 Certificate in Language and Literature	Minimum Grade 2
International baccalaureate Diploma Standard or Higher Level Qualification in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English A: Literature or; • English A: Language and Literature or; • English 	Minimum Grade 3

Literature and Performance

Overseas qualifications are acceptable with clear evidence from NARIC (a certificate / statement of comparability) that qualification is an equivalent level to the minimum SASW requirements and additional information that confirms qualification is equivalent to GCSE A*-C

Welsh Baccalaureate – Only where Essential Skills Wales or Essential Skills Qualifications Communication element is demonstrated

<i>Maths qualification</i>	<i>Level/Grade Criteria</i>
Essential Application of Number Skills or Essential Skills Wales in Application of Number	Minimum Level 1
GCSE/IGCSE Maths - any with Maths in the title. Including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short course, Pilot courses • Double Awards (minimum acceptable EF) • Linear Maths, Modular Maths • Application of Maths • Methods in Mathematics • Additional Maths • Use of Mathematics 	Minimum Grade 1 Or Minimum Grade G
Functional Skills – Maths A/AS Level Maths - any with Maths in the title. Including: Pure Maths, Further Maths, Use of Maths O Level mathematics	Minimum Level 1 Minimum Grade E or pre 1986 A Level “O” grade (= Ordinary Grade equivalent) Minimum Grade E

	Or Pre 1975 evidence of a pass
Key Skills Application of Number (Numeracy) Welsh Key Skills only consist of portfolio, English Key Skills require achievement of test and portfolio	Minimum Level 1
Northern Ireland Certificate in Essential Skills Application of Number	Minimum Level 1
CSE Mathematics Core Maths Level 3 (where included in performance tables) • Mathematical Studies • Using and Applying Mathematics • Quantitative Problem Solving • Quantitative Reasoning • Mathematics in Context • Mathematics for Work and Life	Minimum Level 2 Minimum Grade E
Level 2 Freestanding Mathematics qualification - Foundations of Advanced Mathematic	Minimum Grade E
Pre U Certificate in Mathematics or Further Mathematics	Minimum P3
Scottish Advanced Higher in Mathematics or Further Mathematics	Minimum Grade C
Scottish Higher in Mathematics (SCQF Level 6)	Minimum Grade C
Scottish National 4 in Mathematics or Life Skills Mathematics or Applications of Mathematics (SCQF Level 4)	Pass
Scottish Intermediate 1 in Mathematics (SCQF	Minimum Grade C

Level 4)

Scottish Standard Grade
General in Mathematics
(SCQF Level 4) Minimum 3

Scottish Core Skill Unit
in Numeracy (SCQF
Level 4) Graphical
Information and Using
Number Pass

Scottish Workplace Core
Skill Unit in Numeracy
(SCQF Level 4) Pass

Scottish National Unit in
Numeracy (SCQF Level
4) Pass

Scottish Ordinary Grade
in Mathematics (SCQF
Level 5) Minimum Grade C

IBO Middle Years
Programme Level 1/2
Certificate in
Mathematics or
Mathematics Extended Minimum Grade 2

International
Baccalaureate Diploma
Standard or Higher Level
Qualification in: Minimum Grade 3

- Mathematical Studies or;
- Mathematical or;
- Further Mathematics

Overseas qualifications
are acceptable with clear
evidence from NARIC (a
certificate/statement of
comparability) that
qualification is an
equivalent level to the
Minimum SASW
requirements and
additional information
that confirms
qualification is equivalent
to GCSE A*- C Minimum Grade
equivalent to GCSE
A*-C

Welsh Baccalaureate –
Only where Essential
Skills Wales or Essential Minimum Level 1”.

Skills Qualifications
Application of Number
element is demonstrated

11. For paragraph 35 substitute—

“**35.** An apprenticeship framework may specify as a Welsh certificate requirement a qualification in Essential Digital Literacy Skills to at least Level 2, unless Digital Literacy is not relevant to effective performance in the skill, trade or occupation to which the framework relates. However, exceptions will be permitted for people with learning difficulties or disabilities, as outlined in paragraph 16A.”

12. For paragraph 36 substitute—

“**36.** The issuing authority may at their discretion specify in a framework the acceptance of regulated qualifications that are equivalent or at a higher level to the proxies listed in SASW for Essential Communication Skills and Essential Application of Number Skills. Any such qualifications must evidence completion of the competencies being assessed in the Essential Skills qualifications in communication and number.

36A. Where Essential Skills qualifications are specified in apprenticeship frameworks, the apprenticeship framework must specify as a Welsh certificate requirement, the acceptance of one of the recognised proxy qualifications outlined in the tables below:

<i>English qualification</i>	<i>Level / Grade Criteria</i>
Essential Communication Skills or Essential Skills Wales in Communication 1	Minimum Level 2
GCSE/IGCSE English - any with English in the title. Including: • English Literature, English Language, English Studies and English Communication • Welsh Language • Short courses, Pilot courses • Double Awards (minimum grade acceptable C/D)	Minimum Grade 4 or Minimum Grade C

(English as a Second Language is not acceptable)	
Functional Skills – English	Minimum Level 2
A/AS Level English - any with English in the title. Including: English Language, English Literature or English Language and Literature, Welsh Language	Minimum Grade E or pre 1986 A Level “O” grade (Ordinary Grade equivalent)
O Level English, English Language, English Literature or English Language and Literature	Minimum Grade C or pre 1975 evidence of a Pass
Key Skills Communication / Literacy	Minimum Level 2
(Welsh Key Skills only consist of portfolio. English Key Skills require achievement of test and portfolio)	
CSE English	Minimum Grade 1
Pre U Certificate Literature in English	P3
Northern Ireland Certificate in Essential Skills Communication	Minimum Level 2
British Sign Language - regulated qualification (only where British Sign Language is the Apprentice’s primary language)	Minimum Level 2 or Minimum SCQF Level 5
Scottish Advanced Higher in English (SCQF Level 7)	Minimum Grade C
Scottish Higher in English (SCQF Level 6)	Minimum Grade C

Scottish National 5 in English (SCQF Level 5)	Minimum Grade D
Scottish Intermediate 2 in English (SCQF Level 5)	Minimum Grade C
Scottish Standard Grade General in English (SCQF Level 5)	Minimum 2
Scottish National Certificate Unit Communication (SCQF Level 6)	Pass
Scottish Core Skill Unit in Communication (SCQF Level 5)	Pass
Scottish Workplace Core Unit in Communication (SCQF Level 5) (Oral Communication AND written communication)	Pass
Scottish National Unit in Literacy (SCQF Level 5)	Pass
Scottish Ordinary Grade in English (SCQF Level 5)	Minimum Grade C
IBO Middle Years Programme Level 1 / 2 Certificate in Language and Literature	Minimum Grade 3
International Baccalaureate Diploma Standard or Higher Level Qualification in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English A: Literature or; • English A: Language and Literature or; • English 	Minimum Grade 3

Literature and
Performance

Overseas qualifications are acceptable with clear evidence from NARIC (a certificate / statement of comparability) that qualification is an equivalent level to the min SASW requirements and additional information that confirms qualification is equivalent to GCSE A*-C

Minimum Grade equivalent to GCSE A* - C

Welsh Baccalaureate – Only where Essential Skills Wales or Essential Skills Qualifications Communication element is demonstrated

Minimum Level 2

Maths Qualification *Level/Grade Criteria*

Essential Application of Number Skills or Essential Skills Wales in Application of Number

Minimum Level 2

GCSE/IGCSE Maths - any with Maths in the title. Including:

- Short course, Pilot courses
- Double Awards (minimum acceptable CD)
- Linear Maths, Modular Maths
- Application of Maths
- Methods in Mathematics
- Additional Maths
- Use of Mathematics

Minimum Grade 4 or Minimum Grade C

Functional Skills – Maths

Minimum Level 2

A/AS Level Maths - any with Maths in the

Minimum Grade E or pre 1986 A Level “O”

title. Including: Pure Maths, Further Maths, Use of Maths O Level mathematics	grade (= Ordinary Grade equivalent) Minimum Grade C Or Pre 1975 evidence of a pass
Key Skills Application of Number (Numeracy)	Minimum Level 2
Northern Ireland Certificate in Essential Skills Application of Number	Minimum Level 2
CSE Mathematics Core Maths Level 3 (where included in performance tables) • Mathematical Studies • Using and Applying Mathematics • Quantitative Problem Solving • Quantitative Reasoning • Mathematics in Context • Mathematics for Work and Life	Minimum Level 1 Minimum Grade E
Level 2 Freestanding Mathematics qualification - Foundations of Advanced Mathematic	Minimum Grade C
Pre U Certificate in Mathematics or Further Mathematics	Minimum P3
Scottish Advanced Higher in Mathematics	Minimum Grade C
Scottish Higher in Mathematics (SCQF Level 6)	Minimum Grade C
Scottish National 5 in Mathematics or Life Skills Mathematics or Applications of Mathematics (SCQF Level 5)	Minimum Grade D

Scottish Intermediate 2 in Mathematics (SCQF Level 5)	Minimum Grade C
Scottish Standard Grade General in Mathematics (SCQF Level 5)	Minimum 2
Scottish Core Skill Unit in Numeracy (SCQF Level 5) Graphical Information and Using Number	Pass
Scottish Workplace Core Skill Unit in Numeracy (SCQF Level 5)	Pass
Scottish National Unit in Numeracy (SCQF Level 5)	Pass
Scottish Ordinary Grade in Mathematics (SCQF Level 5)	Minimum Grade C
IBO Middle Years Programme Level 1/2 Certificate in Mathematics or Mathematics- Extended	Minimum Grade 3
International Baccalaureate Diploma Standard or Higher Level Qualification in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mathematical Studies; or • Mathematical; or • Further Mathematics 	Minimum Grade 3
Overseas qualifications are acceptable with clear evidence from NARIC (a certificate/statement of comparability) that qualification is an equivalent level to the minimum SASW	Minimum Grade equivalent to GCSE A*-C

requirements and
additional information
that confirms
qualification is
equivalent to GCSE
A*- C

Welsh Baccalaureate – Minimum Level 2”.
Only where Essential
Skills Wales or
Essential Skills
Qualifications
Application of
Number element is
demonstrated

13. For the heading at paragraph 38 substitute
“Higher Apprenticeship Frameworks (Levels 4 and
5)”.

14. After paragraph 42 insert—

<i>“Degree or Professional Apprenticeships (Level 6 and 7) – Qualifications related to the sector</i>	<i>Section references</i>
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43. A degree or Professional apprenticeship framework must identify the occupational competencies qualification which must be achieved by the apprentice to qualify for a Welsh apprenticeship certificate, and which is the qualification required to demonstrate competence in performing the skill, trade or occupation to which the framework relates. The competencies qualification must be at the level of the framework specified and be underpinned by National Occupational Standards (NOS) where	Section 31(2)(c)(iii)
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they exist, or industry-wide standards or professional standards where they do not.

44. A degree or Professional apprenticeship framework must identify a technical knowledge qualification which must be achieved by the apprentice to qualify for a Welsh apprenticeship certificate. A technical knowledge qualification is the qualification required to demonstrate achievement of the technical skills, knowledge and understanding of the theoretical concepts and knowledge and understanding of the industry and its market relevant to the skill, trade or occupation to which the framework relates.

Section 31(2)(c)(ii)

45. A degree and Professional apprenticeship framework must identify:
 an occupational competencies qualification and a separate technical knowledge qualification at a minimum of Level 6; or
 an integrated qualification at a minimum of Level 6 which combines occupational competencies and technical knowledge elements in which each element is separately assessed; or
 specify a relevant

Section 31(2)(a)

Section 31(2)(c)(iii)

technical knowledge
qualification
recognised by a
professional body that
represents the
occupational area.

Essential Skills

46. There are no
essential skills
requirements for
Degree and
Professional
apprenticeship
frameworks.

*On-the-job training
and off-the-job
training*

47. Requirements are as for a foundation apprenticeship framework at Level 2

Section 31(2)(b)".