

Teitl: Title:	Skills Strategy
Fersiwn: Version	3
I bwy mae'r Polisi hwn yn berthnasol? Who does this Policy Relate to?	Myfyrwyr / Staff / Myfyrwyr a Staff / Arall (rhowch fanylion) Students

Cydraddoldeb ac Amrywiaeth / Equality & Diversity

Dolen at Gam 1 Asesu Effaith (ar Gydraddoldeb a'r Gymraeg): / Impact Assessment Stage 1 (Equality & Welsh) link:	Skills Strategy Welsh and E&D Impact Assessm...
<i>Effaith ar yr Iaith Gymraeg</i> <i>Mae asesiad effaith wedi'i gynnal ar y polisi hwn i ystyried ei effaith ar yr iaith Gymraeg yn unol â Safonau'r Gymraeg (94-104) a Mesur yr Iaith Gymraeg (Cymru) 2011.</i>	<i>Welsh Language Impact</i> An impact assessment has been carried out on this policy to consider its effect on the Welsh Language in accordance with the Welsh Language Standards (94-104) and the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011.

Adolygu a Chymeradwyo / Review and Approval

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Anfonwch y ddogfen wedi ei chymeradwyo i'w chyfieithu gan ddefnyddio'r [Ffurflen Cais Cyfieithu](#)
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Strategy / Policy

1. Scope

- 1.1. This strategy is relevant for all types of teaching and learning provision at the College and seeks to address local and national priorities in relation to skills' development and progression.

2. Introduction - Literacy, Numeracy, Employability and Digital skills

- 2.1. The Skills Strategy embeds Literacy, Numeracy, Digital and Employability skills within all learning pathways; supporting young people and adults in our learning communities to reach their potential through a Skills focused curriculum.
- 2.2. All teaching and assessing colleagues at Coleg Cambria must be committed to developing the Literacy, Numeracy, Employability and Digital skills of all our learners, in English or Welsh. This strategy covers learners studying through the medium of English or Welsh and the term literacy covers the reading, writing and the speaking and listening skills needed in both languages.
- 2.3. **Literacy** develops skills in reading, writing and speaking & listening across a range of contexts to improve communication skills. Improved literacy skills enable learners to read or listen to a broad range of text types and understand/evaluate more confidently. Moreover, learners will be able to express their thoughts with greater articulation, fluency and confidence. Improved literacy skills such as active listening, scanning, skimming, summarising and comprehension skills will support

progression and next steps.

- 2.4. Numeracy** develops skills which enable learners to understand the relationship between numbers and everyday situations. Embedding numeracy supports learners to calculate, interpret and present information which is needed to succeed in their subject area or workplace.
- 2.5. Employability** skills develop creative and critical thinking skills in addition to innovation and entrepreneurship. In accordance with the [Cambria Strategic Plan](#), harnessing creativity and seeking opportunities to innovate and develop solutions to challenges enables learners to make active contributions to problem solving. Activities will also encourage independence and add real-life experience to the curriculum.
- 2.6. Digital** skills promote flexible, independent learning which equips students with resilience they may require in societies where rapid technological changes are frequent. Developing digital skills through our strong digital infrastructure supports Cambria's strategic aims of supporting national and local communities.

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- 2.7. Bilingual and Welsh Medium Learning** - Learners who were previously educated through the medium of Welsh will be actively encouraged to continue accessing learning through the medium of Welsh. The College is committed to helping learners recognise the value of their Welsh language skills and will work to ensure there are as many opportunities as possible for learners to continue their learning through the medium of Welsh or bilingually. The Skills team will make active offers of Welsh medium Maths, Digital and Employability delivery to learners educated through the medium of Welsh. The proactive development of bilingualism in all sessions is encouraged with an active emphasis on the Welsh Government priority areas.

3. Purpose

- 3.1.** Our vision is to develop the skills of young people and adults in our learning communities through a high quality Skills focused curriculum.
- 3.2.** In accordance with the [Cambria Strategic Plan](#), the purpose of the Skills Strategy is to create brighter futures for our learners through a high quality Skills focused curriculum. Our curriculum should equip learners with the necessary Literacy, Numeracy, Employability and Digital skills to be successful in their next steps.

4. Key Principles

- 4.1. Initial assessment**

Learners who have not achieved GCSE English and/or Maths (A*-C/9-4) shall undertake a robust initial assessment in literacy and/or numeracy to establish a starting point for their next steps. The initial assessment tool (see Appendix 1) should be available in English and Welsh.

4.2. FE: Full time learners

For FE learners studying within Foundation Learning or Level 2, the initial assessment will be conducted by the skills tutor. For learners enrolled on A level, Level 3 or Enhanced programmes, the initial assessments will be managed by curriculum/vocational areas with support available from Skills colleagues.

4.3. Part time ABE/ESOL learners

For Adult Basic Education (ABE) and ESOL learners, the initial assessments will be undertaken by the learners' lecturers.

4.4. Work Based Learning (WBL)

Initial assessments for all WBL learners should be undertaken prior to sign-up onto any framework; with the process managed by their designated Work Based Learning (WBL) practitioner. All WBL frameworks have ESW qualification requirements and learners will undertake ESWs in line with WBL framework requirements unless proxies are in place.

5. Curriculum Planning and Delivery Models

- 5.1.** Whilst embedding and developing Literacy, Numeracy, Employability and Digital skills is a cross-college responsibility, the Skills department lead on the planning, delivery and development of formal GCSE and Essential Skills Wales (ESW) ESW qualifications. Advanced Skills Baccalaureate Wales (ASBW) is delivered by designated A level and vocational tutors
- 5.2.** Learners without an A*-C (9-4) grade in GCSE Maths and English/Welsh Language will develop their skills and follow either a GCSE or Essential Skills Wales (ESW) pathway to achieve a formal Maths and English/Welsh qualification at the appropriate level. Depending on vocational requirements and planned progression routes, learners will be allocated to the appropriate GCSE or ESW sessions. Learners who have achieved an A*-C (9-4) grade will have the opportunity to enhance their skills by undertaking ASBW (at L3 and A Level) or additional ESW qualification/s, such as ESW Digital Literacy and/or Employability Skills.

5.3. - Skills Pathway (Foundation Learning and Level 2)

The GCSE pathway is designed for learners who have achieved a Grade D or 3 in GCSE Maths and/or English/Welsh or have obtained a Level 2 Essential Skills

qualification. In exceptional cases, learners with a grade E or below may be considered for a GCSE resit, on a case by case basis. Additionally, learners may have the opportunity to resit their GCSE once they have successfully completed Level 2 Essential Skills in Communication and/or Application of Number. The ESW pathway is for learners not undertaking a GCSE. ESWs are specific qualifications designed to provide learners with the opportunity to gain formally recognised qualifications in literacy, numeracy, digital competence, and employability. These qualifications aim to enhance individuals' abilities, making them more effective in the workplace and everyday situations. ESW qualifications are available at a range of levels to suit individual abilities. From a delivery perspective, Foundation Learning programmes are taught ESW within their class groups. At L2, learners are streamed by QOE into the appropriate GCSE or ESW class.

5.4. - Skills Pathway (Level 3 and A Level)

Level 3 learners undertaking ASBW should have achieved A*-C (9-4) grade in both GCSE Maths and English Language/Welsh 1st Language. However, if Maths and English/Welsh 1st Language are not achieved, learners should prioritise their lacking skill over ASBW. This can be GCSE for D/3 grade learners or ESW at L2 threshold, depending what is in the learners best interests. Normal expectation for D/3 is GCSE unless assessment or progression route dictates an ESW is of more value? One skill should be undertaken per academic year.

Level 3 learners who do not have ASBW included in their learning programme should undertake 2 skills at the appropriate level. These can include any combination of GCSE or ESW and can be accessed via a range of innovative delivery models. However, formal Maths and English qualifications should always be prioritised over DL and EES.

A Level learners should have achieved 5 GCSEs A*-C (9-4) grade including GCSE Maths and English/ LanguageWelsh 1st Language and will follow the ASBW pathway without the need to undertake any additional skills.

5.5. - Application of The Skills Strategy

The table** below illustrates the application of the Skills strategy:

Application of The Skills Strategy	
Level of study	Skills activity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FL: Entry and Level 1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 x skills at the appropriate level (literacy & numeracy focus) Timetabled by learning programme Up to 4 hours timetabled for Core skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> L2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 x skills (GCSE or ESW) at the appropriate level. English/Welsh or Maths with D grades should prioritise GCSE pathways

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lower than D grade should follow an ESW pathway • DL/EES pathways can be followed where learners have A*-C grade in English/Welsh or Maths • Up to 4 hours timetabled for Core skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • L3: 1 year programmes (Non ASBW) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 x skills (GCSE or ESW) at the appropriate level. • English/Welsh or Maths with D grades should prioritise GCSE pathways • Lower than D grade should follow an ESW pathway • DL/EES pathways can be followed where learners have A*-C grade in English/Welsh or Maths • Up to 4 hours timetabled for Core skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • L3: 2 year programmes (Non ASBW / <u>not achieved either</u> GCSE Maths or English / Welsh 1st language A*-C grade 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritise the most appropriate lacking skill over ASBW in year 1 and 2 • 1 x skill (GCSE or ESW) at the appropriate level each year. • English/Welsh or Maths with D grades should prioritise GCSE pathways • DL/EES pathways can be followed where learners have A*-C grade in English/Welsh or Maths • Up to 2 hours timetabled for Core skill
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • L3: 2 year programmes (Non ASBW / <u>has achieved one of</u> GCSE Maths or English / Welsh 1st language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritise the lacking skill over ASBW in year 1 and 2 • 1 x skill (GCSE or ESW) at the appropriate level each year • English/Welsh or Maths with D grades should prioritise GCSE pathways • DL/EES pathways can be followed in year 2 where learners attain the lacking skill in year 1. • Learners may undertake ASBW alongside the lacking skill if it is in their best interests • Up to 2 hours timetabled for Core skill and 2 further hours if following an ASBW pathway
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • L3: 2 year programme (ASBW / <u>achieved both</u> GCSE Maths & English or Welsh 1st language) • A Levels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ASBW - 2 hrs per week • No additional GSCE / ESWs required

5.6. Exception to GCSE Requirement

While the college aligns with the Welsh Government's directive requiring all D grade learners aged 16-19 without an A*-C (9-4) grade in GCSE Maths and English/Welsh 1st Language to continue working towards achieving a grade C or above, there may be exceptional circumstances where a learner can elect not to undertake a GCSE. Such decisions will be based on a careful review of the learner's intended progression route, such as employment or specific university courses that do not explicitly require specific GCSE qualifications. D grade learners wishing to be exempt from GCSE studies must engage in a discussion with their

course leader or a member of the academic team to assess the potential impacts on their future opportunities. Following this discussion, if the learner still wishes to opt-out, they must sign a waiver acknowledging their understanding of the potential consequences, such as limitations on further education or employment options.

5.7. Waiver Process for Opting Out of GCSE

Learners who choose not to undertake a GCSE course must sign a digital waiver agreement form (Appendix 2) confirming that:

1. They have discussed the implications with a suitably qualified colleague
2. They understand that not having a GCSE qualification in Maths or English/Welsh Language may limit their progression to certain university programmes or employment opportunities
3. They are making an informed decision to proceed without a GCSE qualification and undertake an ESW instead

The digital waiver agreement is to be kept on file by the curriculum area and revisited periodically to reassess the learner's position and ensure they remain informed of any changes to their intended progression pathway. This process aims to provide clarity and flexibility while ensuring learners make informed decisions about their educational pathways.

5.8. Maths and English/Welsh Entry Requirements for Programmes

Entry requirements for all programmes will be set by individual curriculum teams, taking into consideration the likely destinations of learners. Entry criteria should reflect both the academic level and the specific skills required for progression into employment, apprenticeships, or higher education.

It is important to note that some university programmes may have additional entry requirements, such as specific GCSEs in Maths or English/Welsh, that are not always detailed on the individual course page. Therefore, curriculum teams must ensure that learners are aware of these potential requirements and how they may affect their future choices.

5.9. Teaching and Learning

Qualified and experienced lecturers will develop the skills learners need for their individual skills' development. Lecturers will:

- Use initial assessments to tailor teaching and learning approaches to individual learner needs.
- Identify and address gaps in prior learning that may impact learners' literacy and numeracy development
- Provide access to up-to-date and relevant learning resources through a range of delivery models

- Actively embed, where possible, literacy and numeracy skills across all learning environments within the college
- Set clear and specific skills targets, with regular reviews and feedback to monitor progress and support next steps
- Seek opportunities to embed digital and employability skills

By fostering a whole-college approach to skills development, lecturers will support learners in overcoming barriers to literacy and numeracy, enhancing their overall educational and employment prospects.

6. Professional Learning

- 6.1.** Lecturers should engage in regular Professional learning (PL) relevant to the skills they deliver.
- 6.2.** Lecturers are encouraged to access internal and external PL sessions to ensure their knowledge and skills remain current.
- 6.3.** Skills specialist lecturers are required to participate in standardisation events and IQA processes to ensure consistency and best practice in skills delivery.

Appendix

Appendix 1

The chosen assessment tool should be used consistently across all areas of the college where an initial assessment is required. The current assessment tool is **Wales Essential Skills Toolkit (WEST)**. For WEST, all learners in funded post-16 learning over 5 hours in length are required by the Welsh Government to undertake WEST initial assessments in literacy and numeracy. The initial assessments are also available through the medium of Welsh. All learners at Coleg Cambria with programmes over 5 hours in length undertake these WEST initial assessments. Completion of these is monitored by curriculum managers and via college data monitoring. It is expected that WEST assessments will take place prior to sign up or within four weeks of formal learning engagement at Coleg Cambria.

Appendix 2

Learner Waiver Agreement for Opting Out of GCSE Courses

Learner's Full Name: _____

Learner's ID Number: _____

Programme of Study: _____

Date: _____

Section 1: Purpose of the Waiver

This waiver confirms that the learner named above has chosen not to enrol in a GCSE course in [Maths/English/Welsh Language] as part of their programme of study at Coleg Cambria. The decision to opt out of GCSE studies has been made following a discussion with a qualified staff member and after careful consideration of the potential impacts on future educational and employment opportunities.

Section 2: Acknowledgement of Understanding

By signing this waiver, I acknowledge that:

1. I have discussed my decision with [Name/Title of Staff Member] on [Date of Discussion], who has explained the possible consequences of not obtaining a GCSE qualification in [Maths/English/Welsh Language].

2. I understand that not having a GCSE qualification in [Maths/English/Welsh Language] may affect my ability to:
 - Apply for certain university programmes that require a GCSE in these subjects as part of their entry criteria.
 - Meet the minimum qualifications required for certain employment opportunities or apprenticeships.
 - Progress to specific courses within further education that may require GCSE qualifications.
3. I am aware that the absence of a GCSE qualification could limit my future choices, and I accept full responsibility for any potential impact on my educational and career progression.

Section 3: Decision Confirmation

I confirm that I have made an informed decision to opt out of the GCSE course and that this decision is voluntary and in accordance with my personal and academic goals. I understand that I can review this decision with my course leader or academic team within the first Half Term of the academic year if my goals or circumstances change.

Section 4: Signatures

Learner's Signature: _____

Date: _____

Staff Member's Signature: _____

Date: _____

Staff Member's Name and Title: _____

Section 5: Review and Follow-up

This waiver will be reviewed periodically throughout the academic year to ensure the learner remains informed and that their decision aligns with their ongoing progression plans.

Next Review Date: _____