

Medr

Y Comisiwn Addysg Drydyddol ac Ymchwil
Commission for Tertiary Education and Research

Occupational Qualifications

Programme Specification

This version of the specification is applicable
for the 2026/27 Academic Year.

Mae'r ddogfen hon hefyd ar gael yn y Gymraeg |
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1. Introduction

This Programme Specification outlines the criteria for the Further Education Institutions (FEIs) that provide Occupational Qualifications programmes in workplace settings. It provides an overview of the programme requirements, including learner eligibility and entry conditions; and details the data submission and monitoring requirements in order that Medr can monitor programme delivery and learning outcomes for the Programme.

Occupational Qualifications delivered in the workplace must meet the standards and conditions established within Medr's evolving regulatory framework, including the *Terms and Conditions of Grant*, *Conditions of Registration*, *Quality Framework*, and the *Learner Engagement Code*.

The Occupational Qualifications programme is one of the seven elements of the Medr-funded Post-16 Part-Time core provision in Wales. These include:

- Adult Basic Education (ABE) and Preparation for Life and Work (PREP)
- English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)
- GCSE Resits (GCSE-R)
- Occupational Qualifications (OccQs)
- Other Local Priorities (OLP)
- Personal Learning Account (PLA)
- Work Experience Placements (WEP)

2. Purpose

The Occupational Qualifications funding approach directly replaces the previous 'NVQs in the workplace' funding methodology.

These programmes aim to enable learners to gain occupational competence through structured workplace learning and assessment. Occupational Qualifications (OccQs) support career progression by building structured, industry recognised competence enabling learners to move into roles with greater responsibility, better pay, and increased specialisation. They facilitate the development of transferable and industry-specific skills essential for a dynamic economy.

The primary target group for OccQs is employees developing role specific skills that are aligned to employer needs and national occupational standards. This ensures that learning is relevant, high quality, and directly supports workforce development and productivity.

3. Delivery overview

The Further Education Institutions must demonstrate active partnerships with employers to ensure:

- suitable and safe learning environments
- access to real-work tasks for assessment
- appropriate supervision and mentoring
- alignment of workplace roles with qualification outcomes

Recognised modes of delivery are:

- workplace embedded training
- on-the-job assessment
- supported off-the-job learning (where required)

Qualifications may be approved for this funding methodology by default if they have:

- a review type of 'Designation' on the [Qualifications in Wales \(QiW\) database](#); and
- the 'Qualification type' recorded as "Occupational Qualification"¹; and
- 'Sub-purposes' recorded as "D1. Confirm competence in an occupational role to the standards required" only.

Additional qualifications may be approved by the Medr panel where there is clear evidence that they contribute to national priorities², and have:

- a review type as 'Other Regulated' on QiW, or are regulated (officially recognised) by [The Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation](#) (Ofqual); and
- the 'Qualification type' recorded as "Occupational Qualification"³; and
- 'Sub-purposes' recorded as "D1. Confirm competence in an occupational role to the standards required" only, for qualifications with a review type of 'Other Regulated' on QiW.

The following process must be followed for all qualifications that are proposed for Medr panel approval:

- Stage 1: Application from Further Education Institution
- Stage 2: Assessment by Regional Skills Partnerships
- Stage 3: Evaluation by Medr Panel

Stage 1: Further Education Institution prepares and submits the application to their respective Regional Skills Partnerships via the approved form⁴.

Stage 2: The Regional Skills Partnerships will review the proposal, assess to what degree the qualification meets the needs of the economy within their region and only pass the application over to Medr where they can supply supporting reasons for the qualification to be approved.

Stage 3: Medr will assess all applications received based on the evidence submitted by the Further Education Institution and recommendation from the Regional Skills Partnerships.

Outcomes from panel evaluation will be communicated to all stakeholders via a monthly bulletin. If an application is rejected, the provider can appeal by submitting revised

¹ Medr will verify this information against the details published on the awarding body's official website, including the approved qualification specification. Where any inconsistencies are identified, approval under this funding methodology will be withheld.

² These priority areas are: Advanced Materials and Manufacturing, Digital, Health and Social Care, Hospitality and Tourism, Net Zero, and Transport and Logistics.

³ See footnote 1.

⁴ See Annex A.

evidence to Medr Senior Leadership Team for further consideration. Medr SLT will assess all information and make a final decision⁵.

4. Learner eligibility and other requirements

To be eligible for the programme, individuals must:

- reside legally in Wales⁶;
- be aged⁷ 18 years or over where the qualifications delivered have a review type of 'Designated' on QiW and 19 years old or over for all panel-approved qualifications; and
- in employment (including self-employment).

Individuals are deemed ineligible if, at point of application, they are:

- not meeting the above age criteria; or
- attending higher-education or full-time further-education; or
- in receipt of an Assembly Learning Grant or Education Maintenance Allowance; or
- in Welsh Government funded Work Based Learning; or
- un-employed; or
- an ineligible overseas national.

The qualifications must also be:

- 'available to learners'⁸ at the time of the learner's initial enrolment; or
- the registration with the relevant awarding body must still be valid⁹ if the learner has changed providers.

5. Programme content

Further Education Institutions must ensure that Occupational Qualifications delivered in the workplace:

- meet approved occupational standards;
- align with Welsh Government workforce priorities;
- include clear mapping of on-the-job training to assessment criteria.

The programmes of study should include:

- workplace skills development aligned to occupational standards;
- practical competency assessment;
- knowledge development via structured activities;
- employer supported learning tasks.

Occupational Qualifications should enable successful learners to progress into:

⁵ For funding values review process, please check Annex B.

⁶ Full residence eligibility can be found in the *Post-16 Funding Framework*.

⁷ Age criteria is to be validated at point of course commencement.

⁸ The Typical Designation/Approval final start date' from QiW or the 'Operational start date' set up on Ofqual must not have elapsed.

⁹ The 'Designation/Approval Certification End Date' from QiW or the 'Final certification date' set up on Ofqual must not have elapsed.

- higher-level occupational qualifications – enabling continued skills development and specialisation;
- full apprenticeship frameworks – providing a seamless pathway into structured work-based learning;
- professional recognition or supervisory roles – supporting career advancement and progression in the workplace.

Providers must define clear, measurable outcomes in line with occupational standards. Outcomes must include:

- knowledge outcomes – learners must demonstrate understanding of:
 - industry practices
 - workplace regulations and safety
 - tools, equipment, and procedures
 - role-specific theory
- skills outcomes – learners must demonstrate occupational competence by:
 - completing workplace tasks independently
 - applying theory to real-world contexts
 - using tools and equipment safely
 - solving job-related problems
- behaviours – learners must demonstrate professional behaviours appropriate to workplace culture and sector standards

6. Data submission requirements

Medr will use data from the Lifelong Learning Wales Record (LLWR) to monitor programme delivery and learning outcomes for the Occupational Qualifications.

In line with the conditions set out in the annual *Terms and Conditions of Grant*, the Further Education Institutions must submit accurate and timely learner data. Data supports funding allocations, monitoring, and sector analysis.

The LLWR User Support Manual¹⁰ sets out the guidelines that providers should follow when submitting LLWR data for the current academic year.

The programme codes listed below (LP74) are accessible through the Occupational Qualifications funding methodology:

9001EXXV	Occupational Qualifications (sub-Tier 1)
9001KXXV	Occupational Qualifications (sub-Tier 2)
9001FXXV	Occupational Qualifications (sub-Tier 3)
9001LXXV	Occupational Qualifications (sub-Tier 4)
9001GXXV	Occupational Qualifications (sub-Tier 5)
9001HXXV	Occupational Qualifications (sub-Tier 6)
9001IXXV	Occupational Qualifications (sub-Tier 7)
9001JXXV	Occupational Qualifications (sub-Tier 8)
9000AXXV	Occupational Qualifications (1-34 credits)
9001AXXV	Occupational Qualifications (35-45 credits)
9001BXXV	Occupational Qualifications (46-60 credits)

¹⁰ See [Lifelong Learning Wales Record \(LLWR\)](#).

9001CXXV
9001DXXV

Occupational Qualifications (61-90 credits)
Occupational Qualifications (91+ credits)

7. Monitoring and audit

Monitoring and audit will play a role in ensuring that the guidance is being applied consistently and to help assess whether policies, procedures and controls are adequate.

The approach to monitoring will focus on the following areas:

- compliance with the programme's specifications; and
- learning outcomes for the programme.

This will be achieved through end-of year monitoring; a data matching exercise; and detailed audit testing of learners on Occupational Qualifications programmes.

Medr will use the data submitted via the LLWR to monitor compliance with the programme specification. This will include:

- monitoring of the workplace element using *LP12* and *LP13* data; and
- monitoring of the data from the programme and activity datasets to check that delivery requirements are being met.

Outcomes for assessable learning activities undertaken as part of the programme will be reported through the achievement measures, part of the Consistent Performance Measures for Post-16 Learning and will be included in the achievement reports issued to Further Education Institutions.

Learner progression and destination is a key performance measure for the programme and crucial in evaluating programme delivery. Medr is continuing to develop its reporting on learner progression and destinations based on linked data, and reporting on the programme will be incorporated into these measures in the future.

In addition to the approach to monitoring set out above, data returned by Further Education Institutions will be subject to existing end of year audit requirements¹¹. Within this, particular emphasis will be placed in the *Auditors' Notes for Guidance* to ensure that external auditors appropriately sample learners undertaking the Occupational Qualifications programmes.

8. Contact details

For any queries relating to the content of this Programme Specification, please contact Medr at InvestmentandMonitoring@medr.cymru.

¹¹ The audit requirements for the current year will be published at the end of the academic year.

9. Annexes

A. New Qualification Request / Amendment

Part 1: Application from Provider

1(a) Provider Name	
1(b) Qualification Title	
1(c) Link to Qualification on Awarding Body website	
1(d) Proposed Funding Sub-Tier	
1(e) Evidence of Need	<i>Please include evidence from labour market intelligence or through other means.</i>
1(f) Evidence of Employment and Progression Prospects	<i>Include evidence of types and volume of jobs available to participants once they achieve the qualification. What is the employment progression?</i>
1(g) Gender-Focused Approach	<i>What consideration has been given with regards to how the operational activity and delivery of this course will impact on different genders?</i>
1(h) Additional Information	<i>Please confirm any other supporting evidence, if available.</i>

Part 2: Assessment by Regional Skills Partnerships

2(a) Evidence of Need	<i>How does the qualification address skills shortages / employment demand in the region?</i>
2(b) Additional Information	<i>Please confirm any other supporting information, if available.</i>

Part 3: Evaluation by Medr Panel

3(a) Panel Assessment	<i>Is the qualification in line with the priority sectors? Does it equip individuals with the necessary skills for the industry? Does the information regarding the evidence of need, supplied by both the provider and RSP, meet the programme's requirements? Is the evidence of employment and progression clearly defined and aligned with the programme's objectives? Has the gender-focused approach been considered? Is the suggested funding tier considered suitable? Any additional comments?</i>
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B. Occupational Panel Process – Funding Values Review

In addition to submitting new programme requests, Further Education Institutions (FEIs) may identify instances where the current funding tier for an approved qualification is no longer appropriate or financially viable. In such cases, providers may submit a request for the Medr panel to review the existing programme value.

Stage 1 – Submission by the FEI to Medr

The FEI must complete a *New Qualification Request / Amendment* form (Annex A). For funding tier review requests, the submission must include the following information:

- the qualification title and current funding tier;
- the proposed revised funding tier;
- a clear justification for the proposed change, supported by detailed evidence, such as cost breakdowns, labour market intelligence, employer feedback, and comparable provision;
- an assessment of any potential impacts on learner access and/or programme viability.

Stage 2 – Medr Panel Review and Decision

At the next scheduled monthly Medr panel meeting (held on the third Tuesday of each month), the panel will consider the request alongside the following factors:

- national and regional labour market analysis;
- consistency of funding approaches across Wales;
- existing programme aims; and
- impacts on public value and learner outcomes.

The panel may decide to:

- approve the revised funding tier;
- decline the request, providing a clear rationale;
- request additional evidence; or
- defer the decision for broader policy consideration. In such cases, the request will be referred to the Medr Senior Leadership Team (SLT) for further consideration.

The outcome of the panel review will be communicated to the FEI via email within a month and shared with the sector through the ensuing monthly bulletin.

Stage 3 – Resubmission Following Rejection (Optional)

Where a funding tier review request is declined following SLT consideration, FEIs may resubmit the request only where new or significantly strengthened evidence is available.

After a qualification is approved by the panel, this information will be passed to the relevant LLWR teams at Medr and Welsh Government to make the changes to the relevant LLWR lookup tables. Medr monitors the [Qualification in Wales database](#) monthly to ensure that any new or updated qualifications are reflected in the LLWR database.

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