



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

To:  
Regional Education Consortium Managing Directors  
Directors of Education

Cc:  
Regional 14-19 Co-ordinators  
Secondary School Headteachers  
Her Majesty's Chief Inspector

19 October 2017

Dear Colleagues

### **Changes to Performance Measures at Key Stage 4 affecting early entry**

On 16 October the Cabinet Secretary for Education announced [changes to Key Stage 4 performance measures](#) as a consequence of notable increases in GCSE early entry by schools in Wales.

In the current Key Stage 4 performance measures the best results from any attempt for a qualification counts. The Cabinet Secretary's announcement ([link to Record of Proceedings](#)) explains that in 2019 this will change. **From 2019, only the results of the first entry of a qualification will count** towards performance measures.

Qualifications Wales will also be removing the resit restrictions from the November series from 2018 to allow schools the option to enter any learner for English and Welsh Language GCSEs. This is currently only available for GCSEs in Mathematics and Mathematics-Numeracy.

This change will encourage schools to enter learners when schools are confident they are ready to gain the best possible result. It does not prevent a learner resitting should a school or learner wish to attempt to improve their results, but the resit result would not count towards school performance measures, even when the outcome is higher.

This change applies to all qualifications taken by a learner regardless of when they were taken. For example, if a year 10 learner first sits GCSE Mathematics in November 2017, their result will be counted towards that school's performance in summer 2019, because the November 2017 sitting would be that learner's result from their first entry for maths. No subsequent entries in the same subject will be



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counted towards the performance measures, even where these entries result in a higher grade. **The learner will still be able to use their best result to access further learning and employment.**

Making these changes to how school performance measures are calculated should not discourage schools from using early entry for those learners where it is in their best interest. That is why schools will have greater flexibility to use first entry for English and Welsh Language in November 2018.

For this November's exams, WJEC has confirmed that, if requested by a school, they will withdraw the entry and not charge the entry fee **for students in Year 10 and below only**. Schools have until Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> October to make this request by contacting [entries@wjec.co.uk](mailto:entries@wjec.co.uk).

We will be undertaking detailed research specifically on learner impacts to inform revised guidance to schools, so that decisions on examination entry are made on the basis of firm evidence. Further guidance will be available by the summer term.

A reminder of changes to Key Stage 4 performance measures following the Review of Qualifications can be found here:

<http://gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/schoolshome/schooldata/using-school-information-and-reporting-on-performance/?lang=en>.

Would you please share this information with your colleagues in local authorities and schools as necessary. If you have any queries about the contents of this letter then please email us at [ims@gov.wales](mailto:ims@gov.wales).

Yours faithfully



Steve Vincent  
Deputy Director  
School Effectiveness