

WJEC GCSE MATHEMATICS AND NUMERACY (DOUBLE AWARD)

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Questions related to the structure of the qualification

Q: Why is there no intermediate tier in the new GCSE?

A: Qualifications Wales reviewed the options and decided to implement a two-tier structure for the new GCSE.

Q: Why is the Maths-Numeracy re-sit scheduled for January 2027 instead of November 2026?

A: WJEC has moved the November 2026 series for legacy Maths Numeracy to January 2027 to ensure manageability for centres and examiners during the busy November period that will have a series for legacy GCSE Mathematics as well as the new GCSE Units 1-3.

Q: Is a Single Award option available for this qualification?

A: There is no Single Award GCSE for Mathematics. The double award has been introduced to provide the most appropriate qualification for most learners. It will continue to be a tiered qualification (with foundation and higher tiers) so that schools can enter learners at the most suitable tier for their individual needs. Learners who begin in Year 10 in 2025 and 2026 and who are not ready to access the double award GCSE Mathematics and Numeracy should follow an Entry Level qualification relating to mathematics and numeracy. As part of the National 14 to 16 Qualifications, from 2027, alongside the GCSE, there will be a Foundation qualification in mathematics and numeracy that spans Entry Level and Level 1, providing an alternative route to a numeracy qualification for some learners.

Q: How are grades determined for students entered into different tiers?

A: The grades are awarded from UMS (Uniform Mark Scale) marks. See Section 5.3 of the specification. This process, along with example scenarios showing how UMS scores are applied, will be covered in the face-to-face Professional Learning events.

Q: How long are unit exam results valid?

A: Unit results are valid for the duration of the specification, but their use is subject to the rules for making entries such as unit resit limits and the terminal rule. See section 5.1. of the specification for more details.

Q: For the Higher tier, if pupils do not achieve enough UMS for a D grade (60 UMS) in a unit, is the UMS allocated based on a sliding scale of marks achieved, or is it automatically 0 UMS for not meeting the minimum grade?

A: The UMS awarded is indeed on a sliding scale down to 0, dependent on the marks achieved. Even if a pupil does not meet the minimum grade for the higher tier paper, they may still receive UMS proportionate to their raw marks, rather than automatically receiving 0 UMS.

Note: This response clarifies and corrects earlier communication on this topic during a specification briefing event.

Questions related to the content of the qualification

Q: In section 1.5.5, what is meant by 'other appropriate functions'?

A: This question refers to the use of a calculator efficiently and effectively. The specification mentions things like powers and standard form, but one bullet point is 'other appropriate functions'. There are no specific functions we mean here, but some teachers might wish to educate learners on other functions e.g. the degrees, minutes, seconds button and the 'ANS' button.

Q: What is the definition of an infographic in the context of this qualification?

A: An infographic is a structured, visually engaging representation of information that combines data and design to make complex information more accessible and compelling. To deal with infographics, learners require the ability to interpret familiar and unfamiliar charts or graphs and be able to scan across the various visuals to find what they're looking for.

Q: To what extent should mortgages be taught within this qualification?

A: Mortgages serve as another context to practice financial skills, such as percentages and taxes. Students should have a basic understanding of mortgages and be able to compare mortgage products or determine the required deposit amount. For more in-depth questions, such as calculating monthly payments, loan amounts needed for a specific monthly payment, or the remaining balance on a loan, all necessary information will be provided within the questions.

Q: What new vocabulary will candidates need to learn for topics such as finance?

A: For financial maths topics, a glossary of terms will be available in the GfT, along with numerous helpful resources like the BLs, KOs, and the Money and Pensions Service text book (<https://www.young-enterprise.org.uk/your-money-matters-wales/>). All of these resources are available in both Welsh and English. For assessment contexts, extensive internal quality assurance is conducted to ensure that the language in questions is as accessible as possible. If unfamiliar terms must be used, a clear explanation will be provided within those questions.

Q: In section 3.2.2 of the new specification, it states "using a ruler and protractor." Should this be corrected to "compass" instead of "protractor"?

A: No – use of compasses is NOT required in loci questions to draw angles accurately, as constructions are no longer assessed. They are still required to draw circles or part-circles. Candidates can answer the questions using a protractor instead. In December 2024, there was an update to the wording of section 3.2.2 to clarify where exactly a pair of compasses would be needed.

This is the latest version:

3.2.2	<p>accurately draw, using a ruler and a protractor:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an angle bisector • a perpendicular line bisector • 2-D shapes given side lengths and, if appropriate, angles (compasses will be required to draw triangles when three side lengths are known) • the locus of a point which moves such that it satisfies certain conditions, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. a given distance from a fixed point or line (compasses will be required) ii. equidistant from two fixed points or lines.
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Further clarity will be provided on loci, constructions and compasses will be provided at the Preparing to Teach events.

Q: Regarding taxation, the CfW progression steps refer to tax in Wales, while the tax bands and percentages required will be based on Wales/UK or could include the WJEC specification refers to tax more generally. Can you confirm whether the examples from outside the UK?

A: Tax questions in assessments will use pounds (£) alongside foreign currencies, but tax rates may not match current UK rates. While the CfW refers to taxation systems in Wales, the WJEC specification does not restrict tax contexts to Wales or the UK, so examples from outside the UK could also be used to ensure varied and valid assessment.

Q: Can you clarify the method for estimating the median from grouped frequency tables? Is it the same as in the existing specification, or does it require additional analysis, such as interpolation or proportional reasoning?

A: The Guidance for Teaching provides an example to exemplify what is required/accepted for this topic. This is an extract from that document:

Find an estimate for the median of the following grouped frequency distribution, where t is time in seconds:

Time	$50 \leq t < 54$	$54 \leq t < 58$	$58 \leq t < 62$	$62 \leq t < 70$
Frequency	4	16	12	4

Solution:

Total frequency = 36.

The median time is the 18th value, which is in the group $54 \leq t < 58$ seconds.

The 18th value is $(18 - 4) / 16$ of the way up from 54.

= $14/16$ of the way up from the lower bound of the group.

(Note that the '4' in the calculation is the total frequency of all groups lower than the group the median is in.)

Therefore, the estimate of the median value is $54 + (14/16) \times 4 = 57.5$.

Note that the calculation is similar when we use the 18.5th person, which is strictly more correct. The median then is 57.625. However, as we're *estimating* the median, and there isn't a significant difference between the two answers, particularly when the total frequency is large, using 18 is easier and is acceptable in examination questions.

Note that the data could be presented in a histogram instead of in a grouped frequency table.

Other questions

Q: Will a Word version of the specification be made available?

A: An Excel version of the specification content, featuring filter and search functions, will be included in the resource pack for the face-to-face Professional Learning days.

Q: When will the SAMs be produced, and will more than one set be available?

A: The SAMs were published on 19 December 2024. As with all subjects, only one set of SAMs will be produced, and as each set must be approved by the regulator, no more will be created.

Q: What are the plans for Entry Pathways?

A: Entry Pathways will continue as it is until 2027 at least. This will run alongside the new GCSE (double award) (2025), L2 additional maths (2026) and a foundation level (entry and L1) from 2027. Designation of the Entry Pathways for Wales beyond 2027 is yet to be decided by Qualifications Wales.

Q: When will the WJEC resources, including the digital and editable materials, be publicly available?

A: The Blended Learning resources are scheduled to go live in the first week of November. These new resources will include a new feature that allows teachers to edit activities and information, providing flexibility for tailoring content to suit each centre's unique "cynefin." This editable platform will be available at the end of January using your Hwb log in credentials. Please note that this editability feature will apply only to the Blended Learning resources, not to the Knowledge Organisers. Existing Blended Learning resources on our site will remain unchanged and will continue to be accessible to the current GCSE cohort.

Q: Can WJEC provide Word versions of the SAMs and past papers?

A: Unfortunately not, as the papers aren't produced in Word.

Q: Will a textbook be produced or commissioned for this qualification?

A: There will be no text books produced. However, new knowledge organisers and blended learning materials will be produced.

Q: Can FE lecturers attend the school face-to-face training days, or will separate sessions be arranged?

A: For the Spring 2025 training days, FE centres will not be invited to attend. However, with the first cohort taking this new qualification entering post-16 education from September 2027 onwards, separate "Preparing to Teach" PL provision will be arranged and delivered between now and then.

Q: Will guidance be provided for FE colleges delivering the course as a one-year re-sit?

A: No, there are currently no plans to provide specific guidance for delivering the course in one year as a resit.

Q: When the SAMs are released, will grade boundaries and UMS conversion charts be provided for tracking and predicting grades?

A: No, grade boundaries for official assessments are determined only after students have sat their exams. Without the data from thousands of students sitting these sample assessment materials, we will not be providing grade boundaries or UMS conversions.

Q: Can private tutors attend the Spring 2025 lectures, and if so, how can they register?

A: No, the Spring 2025 events are specifically for state schools, private schools, consortia, and council subject advisers. Unfortunately, we are unable to extend the invitation to private tutors at this time..