

Why Sustainability Skills are Key for Everyone

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Ian Morgan, WJEC Chief Executive

Hi, I'm Ian Morgan. I'm chief executive at WJEC.

Our Sustainability qualifications are about giving learners the opportunity to better understand the impact of sustainability and environmental challenges on us as both a nation and as individuals.

What we've tried to do with this suite of qualifications is provide a good grounding and understanding of what sustainability actually is. What does it mean, and what is the impact on our daily lives.

The qualifications are available at a range of different levels. We've got the Entry 3 and Entry 2 and Level 1 and 2 qualifications. Level 2 is an equivalent to a GCSE qualification, while Level 1, Entry 3 and Entry 2 are at a slightly lower level but provide an opportunity for learners to get a basic understanding of the subject matter - a basic understanding of what sustainability means for them, and how that impacts them in their own personal lives.

I think this suite of qualifications could be valid to all learners as they progress. To put it in the context of WJEC as an employer, we've got 480 to 500 staff. We work with a lot of external examiners and moderators in the thousands, and it's incumbent on all of us as individuals to better understand sustainability and the challenges in the world that we are currently seeing.

This qualification will be available to those that have left traditional learning environments as well, as long as they have access to providers such as an FE College or training provider, then they would be able to access these qualifications. Obviously we have to route them through an institution that that is approved to deliver the qualifications, but in that context, any adult learner, anybody returning to learning would be able to access these qualifications through the normal routes.

I think it would be beneficial for employers to have people with this broader knowledge in their organisations. We all have to respond to the challenges of sustainability, and we all have to respond appropriately. It cannot be any one person's role to ensure that an organisation or an employer is doing the right things in the right way. We've all got a responsibility to protect the future.

We've introduced these qualifications now because what we can see is there is that there is a void of qualifications of this kind on the market. Yes, there are a lot of other qualifications with sustainability elements, for example the Curriculum for Wales is developing that knowledge and skills in our learners, and we've got sustainability built into a broad range of qualifications at GCSE and A Level such as the sciences. But what we haven't had in the system is anything that's standalone, something that is purely focused on sustainability.

The opportunity to work with partners, and in particular to work with the Future Generations Commissioner came along, and we were really pleased to be party to that discussion.



At WJEC we see this as a unique offering, particularly in Wales.

We've taken the opportunity that that that's been afforded to us, and again that opportunity to work with other key partners in the mix with the Future Generations Commissioner and others gives us a real opportunity to take a large step forward - this isn't a little step forward, this is a big step forward. And what we're able to do is access a range of employers and a range of other people within society that understand where we are.

I think undoubtedly other boards, particularly in England, might come along at some point further down the line with qualifications that that are similar, but I'm really pleased and proud that we are first in the mix.

The other important thing to mention is the way that these qualifications have been developed. It's not only about working with the Future Generations Commissioner. We've also worked with employers, and we've worked with FE colleges to make sure that we are able to get all the right information into the mix at the start.

What we want to do is provide something that can be accessed easily by learners. What we need to do is make sure that we're able to respond to all of our key stakeholders' needs and aspirations.

