

# **WELSH BACCALAUREATE QUALIFICATION**

## **INTERMEDIATE DIPLOMA**

**HOW DID THE FIFTH EXAMINATION  
CYCLE (SUMMER 2006) GO?**

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## INTRODUCTION

This Report, *'How did the Fifth Examination Cycle (Summer 2006) Go?'* follows the style adopted by the first Report produced in 2005 and has the same aims, to provide:

- information about how successful the candidates were who followed the overarching Welsh Baccalaureate Intermediate Diploma achieved in this, the fifth full examination cycle; and
- advice on those parts of the WBQ programme that were successful and those that require attention.

The WBQ Project Team suggests that the broad messages contained within this Report are best considered in discussions with teachers. Accordingly, the main findings provided the framework for the feedback meetings held in north, south-west and south-east Wales during the middle part of the autumn term, 2006. An important part of these meetings were the workshops, during which teachers considered these issues in the context of examples of candidates' work. To gain the full advantages from this Report, it should be read alongside the examples which are circulated to all WBQ centres.

The Report is based upon information derived from a variety of sources, in particular:

- candidates' prior attainment at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 (GCE or equivalent);
- statistics and work submitted for the 2006 Intermediate Award;
- Moderators' Reports;
- a range of data generated by questionnaires and centre visits.

The Project Team believes that the most important participants in the development of the WBQ are the teachers and their candidates, and it is hoped that the Report will provide them with useful information as they prepare for the next phase of the WBQ.

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October 2006

## 1. WHAT IS THE WELSH BACCALAUREATE?

### What is it?

The Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification (WBQ) is an over-arching qualification that recognises candidate achievement at levels 2 and 3 of the National Qualifications Framework (NVQ).

The programme of study is made up of a Core and Options. The Core has four components:

- Key skills
- Wales, Europe and the World (WEW)
- Work-related Education (WRE)
- Personal and Social Education (PSE).

The Options are the subjects and courses such as GCSE, VGCSE, NVQ and BTEC that make up a candidate's complete programme of study.

In addition, all candidates work with a personal tutor who provides overall support and guidance.

### What do candidates have to do to achieve the WBQ?

Candidates who complete all parts of the WBQ (Core and Options) at the required standard are awarded the Welsh Baccalaureate Diploma at either level 2 (Intermediate) or level 3 (Advanced). The assessment requirements for the Intermediate Award in summer 2006 include both the Core and the Options, and are:

Core	Options
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Three key skills at level 2, one of which must be from the first three key skills together with the other key skills at level 1 (requirements for cycle ending in summer 2006).</li><li>• Records/reports of Working with Employers, Team Enterprise Activity, and Community Participation.</li><li>• Individual Investigation at level 2.</li><li>• Evidence of work on the Language Module and other core curriculum requirements.</li></ul>	Four grades A*-C at GCSE or NVQ Level 2 or BTEC First at pass level or equivalent.

This report gives information about how this over-arching qualification performed in its second 'live' year and, in the process, provides teachers with advice on those parts of the programme that were successful and those that require attention.

## 2. HOW MANY CANDIDATES SAT THE WBQ? HOW DID THEY DO?

### The Entry

**A few facts about what was achieved (note: figures in brackets are those for 2005).**

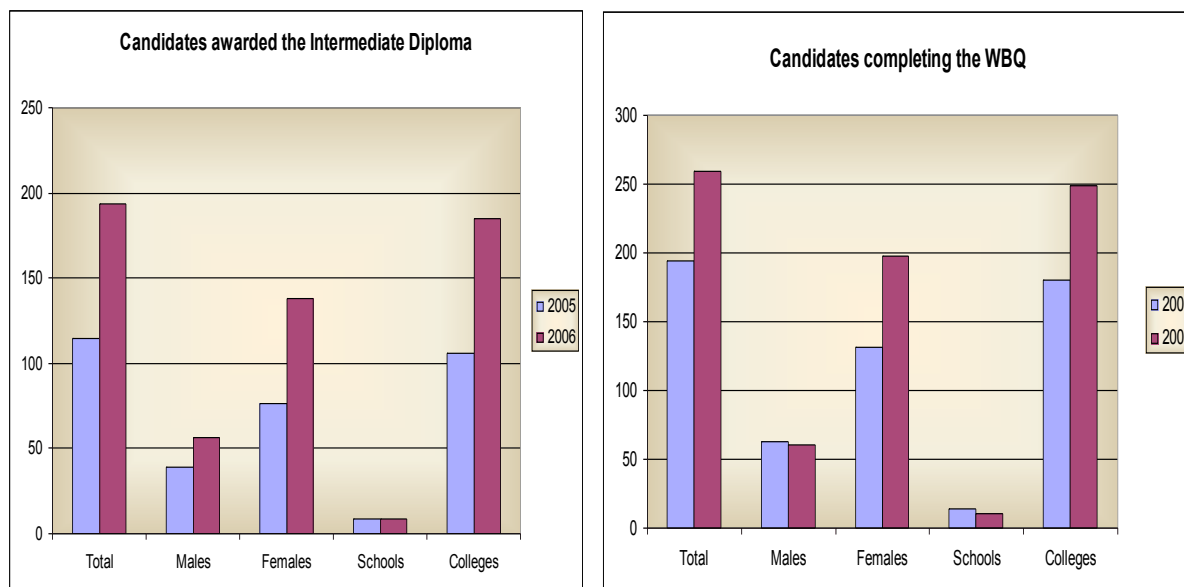
- The total 'entry' for the WBQ Intermediate Diploma in 2006 was 722 (404), of whom 259 or 36% completed the programme (194 or 48%). The 'entry' figures represent the number of candidates aiming at an Intermediate Baccalaureate Award this year, as indicated by 4 schools and 10 colleges at February 2006. 194 candidates were awarded the WBQ Intermediate Diploma, being 75% of the 259 who completed the programme (115 or 59%).
- A further 19 (9) candidates were awarded the WBQ Intermediate Core Certificate. This in itself represents a very significant achievement by these candidates, including all 6 key skills. However, at this stage they have fallen short of the full Diploma Award through not having met the Options requirement (i.e. GCSE, NVQ level 2 or equivalent). A total of 213 (124) candidates achieved the Core Certificate, being 82% (64%) of the 259 who completed the programme.
- The remaining 46 candidates have gained an average of 3 key skills qualifications each but did not achieve the Core Certificate or the Diploma having fallen short on the full range of requirements. The cumulative nature of the Welsh Baccalaureate means that if these candidates achieve the remaining parts of the qualification in the coming academic year, they may choose to enter again for the Intermediate Diploma in March or August 2007.'
- It should be noted that there is also an award every March, which is an opportunity for candidates who have not achieved the full Intermediate award the previous summer to achieve their diploma. 12 candidates at the Intermediate level were entered for the March award. All 12 (100%) of the Intermediate candidates achieved the full Diploma. 6 of the candidates had been entered for the Summer 2005 award and were now improving their performance or taking parts of the Diploma not yet attempted. 6 were completing the Intermediate Award prior to progressing into the Advanced Award in Summer 2006.

### **Did the candidates come from schools or colleges?**

The candidates entered for the Intermediate Diploma in 2006 were based in 4 schools and 10 colleges involved in the pilot. The aggregate distribution by school/college and by gender for candidates completing the programme, and for those awarded the Diploma, are shown below.

Candidates	Total	Schools	Colleges	Male	Female
Completing the WBQ	259 (194) 36% (48%)	10 (14) 4% (7%)	249 (180) 96% (93%)	61 (63) 24% (32%)	198 (131) 76% (68%)
Awarded Intermediate Diploma	194 (115) 75% (59%)	9 (9) 5% (8%)	185 (106) 95% (92%)	56 (39) 29% (34%)	138 (76) 71% (66%)

**Table 1:  
Completion and achievement**



**Fig. 1**

### Why did some candidates not complete the WBQ Programme?

As part of the evaluation of the pilot programme, the 463 (210) candidates in the overall 'entry' of 722 (404) who did not complete the programme were surveyed in order to obtain an understanding of their reasons for non-completion. The most prominent reasons for non-completion relate to the following:

46% (17%) indicated that they wished to defer until 2007.  
 16% (23%) indicated that they had left their school or college for employment.  
 25% (60%) of the candidates 'entered' did not complete the Welsh Baccalaureate Intermediate Diploma but remained in the school or college to complete their other programmes of study: The major reasons for not completing the Intermediate Diploma indicated by this group of candidates were difficulty in completing:  
 (a) the key skills requirements (18%); and  
 (b) a combination of the Individual Investigation, the key skills requirements and the Options (78%).  
 4% of candidates indicated that they had difficulty completing the Core curriculum requirements.

**Table 2:  
Reasons for non-completion**

### 3. HOW 'ABLE' WERE THE CANDIDATES WHO SAT THE WBQ?

Information was obtained about the prior achievement of candidates at Key Stage 3 and GCSE, or equivalent, for those who completed the WBQ Intermediate programme in 2006 and for those who did not. The data itself was analysed in terms of:

- total entry for each group;
- males and females;
- colleges and schools.

#### **Candidates who completed the WBQ programme**

These numbered 259 candidates, of which 61 were male and 198 were female. 249 followed the WBQ programme in colleges and only 10 in schools.

The data shows the scores of all the candidates in Mathematics, English, Science and Welsh at Key Stage 3 and in GCSE or equivalent courses. As stated above, the data are presented in terms of the total entry, males and females, college and school.

#### **Key Stage 3**

**Colleges:** 249 Candidates: mean level – 4.6 (national average 5)

Maths			English			Science			Welsh		
Overall	Males	Females	Overall	Males	Females	Overall	Males	Females	Overall	Males	Females
4.7	4.8	4.6	4.5	4.2	4.4	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.4	4.4

**Schools:** 10 Candidates: mean level – 4.7

Maths			English			Science			Welsh		
Overall	Males	Females	Overall	Males	Females	Overall	Males	Females	Overall	Males	Females
5.0	5.2	4.0	4.4	4.5	3.7	4.8	4.7	4.8	4.5	4.5	4.5

**Table 3:**

#### **KS3 scores in schools and colleges**

- the mean level achieved at KS3 for the majority of the candidates, 4.6, was lower than the national average, 5.0;
- the mean level achieved by candidates now in colleges was 4.6, which was higher than in 2005. The mean level in schools was slightly higher, 4.7. However, this was for a very small number of candidates;
- attainment was comparable across the four subjects for candidates now in colleges, which make up the vast majority of the candidates.

#### **GCSE, COEA, GNVQ**

**Colleges: mean GCSEs – 2.2**

GCSE	COEA	GNVQ
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mean number of GCSEs: 2.2</li> <li>78% had less than 4 A*-C</li> <li>26% had no GCSEs</li> </ul>	39 (19%) of candidates had CoEA with a mean of 1.3 subject passes.	12 candidates (11 females, 1 male) had GNVQs in Business, Health and Social care, ICT, Leisure and Tourism, Leisure Level 1

**Schools: mean GCSEs – 4.3**

GCSE	COEA	GNVQ
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mean number of GCSEs: 4.3</li> <li>50% had less than 4 A*-C</li> <li>12.5% had no GCSEs</li> </ul>	3 candidates had CoEA, with a mean of 3 subject passes	5 candidates (all males) had GNVQ in ICT.

**Table 4:  
GCSE, COEA, GNVQ scores in colleges and schools**

- attainment at GCSE is low (the vast majority of candidates are in colleges and the average is 2.2 GCSEs);
- 19% of candidates now in colleges had Entry level qualifications.

**Candidates who did not complete the WBQ programme**

Of the 463 candidates not completing the programme, data was obtained for 428 candidates. The data are as follows:

**Key Stage 3**

**Colleges: 218 Candidates: mean level – 4.6 (national average 5)**

Maths			English			Science			Welsh		
Overall	Males	Females	Overall	Males	Females	Overall	Males	Females	Overall	Males	Females
4.3	4.3	3.9	4.3	4.8	5.1	4.8	4.5	4.4	4.5	4.4	4.4

**Schools: 210 Candidates: mean level – 4.8**

Maths			English			Science			Welsh		
Overall	Males	Females	Overall	Males	Females	Overall	Males	Females	Overall	Males	Females
5.2	5.3	4.9	4.7	4.8	5.1	4.9	4.6	4.9	4.5	4.5	4.5

**Table 5:  
KS3 scores in colleges and schools– non-completers**

These figures suggest that candidate attainment at KS3 for both schools and colleges was very similar for completing and non-completing groups.

## GCSE, COEA,GNVQ

**Colleges:** mean GCSEs – 1.6

GCSE	COEA	GNVQ
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mean number of GCSEs:1.6</li> <li>• 88.2% had less than 4 A*-C</li> <li>• 35.4% had no GCSEs</li> </ul>	25% of the candidates had CoEA, with a mean of 2.6 subject passes.	29 candidates (11 females, 18 males) had GNVQs in Business, Health and Social Care, ICT, Leisure and Tourism.

**Schools:** mean GCSEs – 4.9

GCSE	COEA	GNVQ
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mean number of GCSEs 4.9</li> <li>• 49.7% had less than 4 A*-C</li> <li>• 19.5% had no GCSEs</li> </ul>	2.1% of candidates had CoEA, with a mean of 1.5 subject passes.	6 candidates had GNVQs in ICT, Health and Social Care, Leisure and Tourism.

**Table 6: GCSE, COEA, GNVQ scores in schools**

- as in the completing group, attainment in GCSE is low, although better amongst the school candidates;
- the college candidates in the non-completing group had lower prior attainment than those in the completing group. The number of school candidates in the completing group is so small that no valid conclusions can be reached;
- 25% of college candidates in the non-completing group had Entry level qualifications.

### What general conclusions can be drawn from this data?

- The Key Stage 3 data suggest that the whole cohort (completers and non-completers) achieved below average (level 5) scores. Within this pattern there were small differences in achievement between male/female and school/college. Candidates appeared to do slightly better in Maths and Science than in English. Attainment in Welsh was slightly better than that in English.
- Prior achievement at Key Stage 4 is low, with an average of 2 GCSEs per candidate and 26% of the completing college candidates having no GCSEs at all. Amongst college candidates between 19% (completing group) and 25% (non-completing group) had Entry level qualifications.
- It is interesting to note that both the completing and the non-completing cohort had difficulty at GCSE at Key Stage 4 and therefore might be expected to have difficulty meeting the requirements of the WBQ Intermediate Diploma. This raises the question of whether a proportion of this cohort would have been better suited to a Foundation Diploma.

## 4. WHAT OPTIONS COURSES DID CANDIDATES FOLLOW?

The group of candidates completing the Intermediate Diploma in 2006 had two sub-groups. One group which took their Options qualification this year, and the other group which had already achieved the Option requirement necessary to claim the Intermediate Diploma prior to this year and had gone on to follow further programmes.

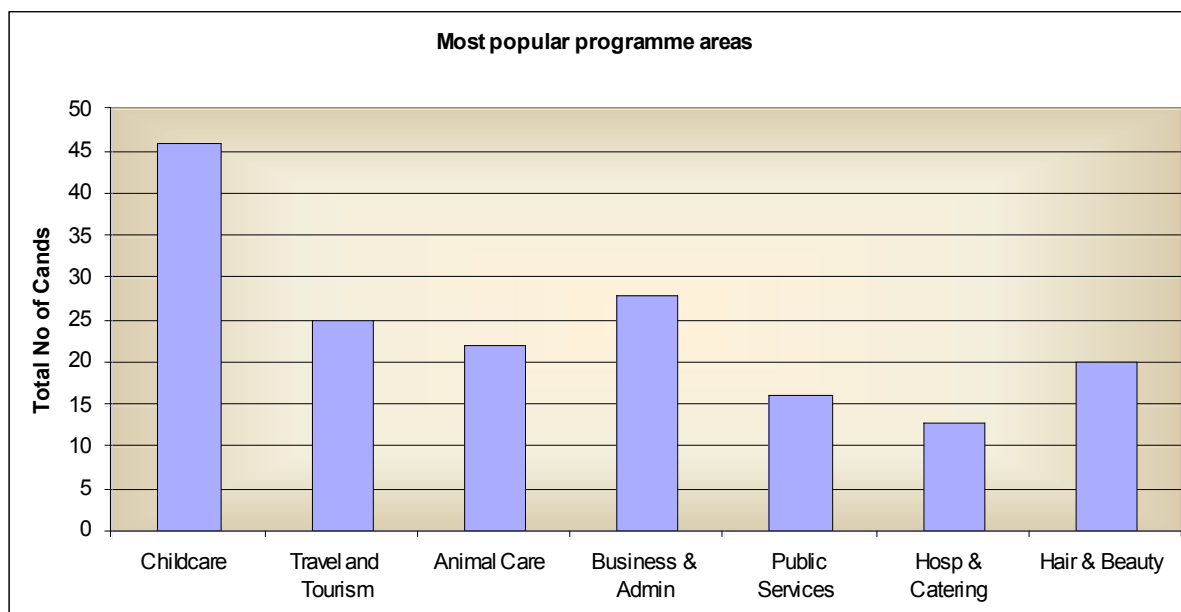


**Fig. 2**

**Courses/programmes followed (%)**

**Most popular programme areas**

The 7 most popular programme areas followed were:

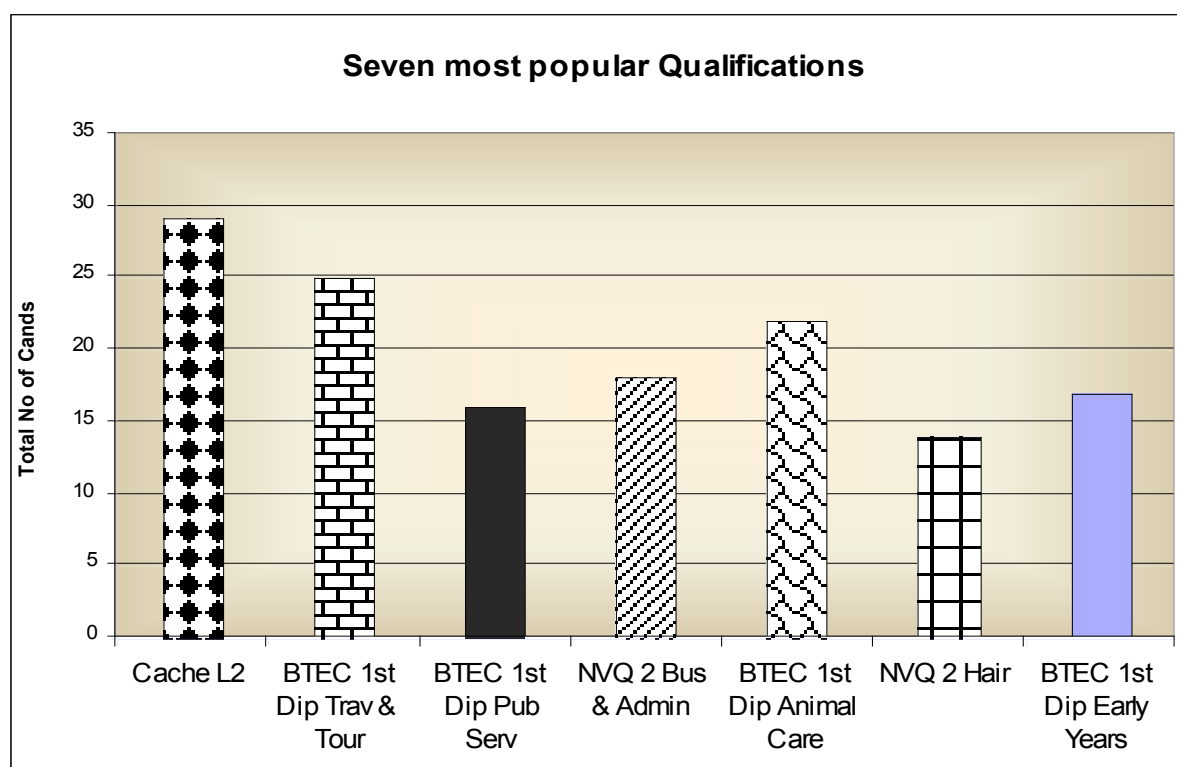


**Fig. 3**

Other vocational areas featuring in the Welsh Bac were Health and Social Care IT, Vehicle maintenance & repair and DIDA (Diploma in Digital Applications).

### Most popular qualifications

The 7 most popular individual qualifications were:

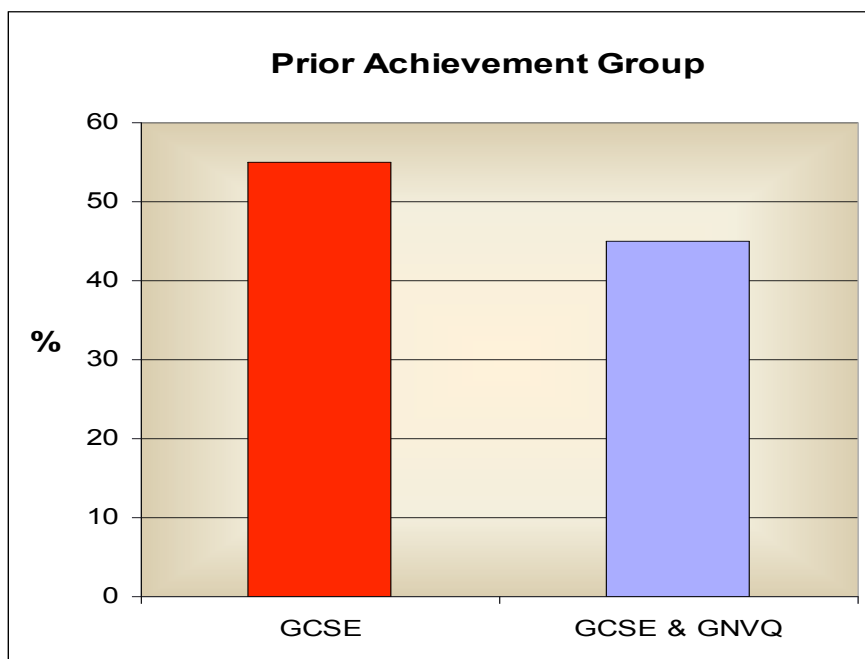


**Fig. 4**

The remaining 37% were other types of qualifications in Travel and Tourism, Business, Health and Social Care, Hospitality and Catering, Vehicle Maintenance and DIDA.

### Prior achievement group (12% of total)

Of the group which had already achieved the Option requirement necessary to claim the Intermediate Diploma, over 50% had achieved at least 4 A\*-C GCSEs. The remainder had achieved a combination of GCSEs and other level 2 qualifications in Catering, IT and Leisure/Travel and Tourism.



**Fig. 5**

### **Summary of the vocational Options featuring in the Intermediate Diploma**

As in 2005, the vast majority of the Intermediate candidates entered for the award this summer were based in colleges and there are 7 programme areas which are particularly popular, of which 4 feature in the Intermediate Diploma for the second year running. The programme areas which feature in the WBQ are the result of the policy of the colleges involved, which chose to start piloting with certain programme areas which they viewed as being most suitable for the WBQ.

Last year Health and Social Care and IT were two of the most popular programme areas. This year Animal Care, Hospitality and Catering and Hair and Beauty are among the 7 most popular.

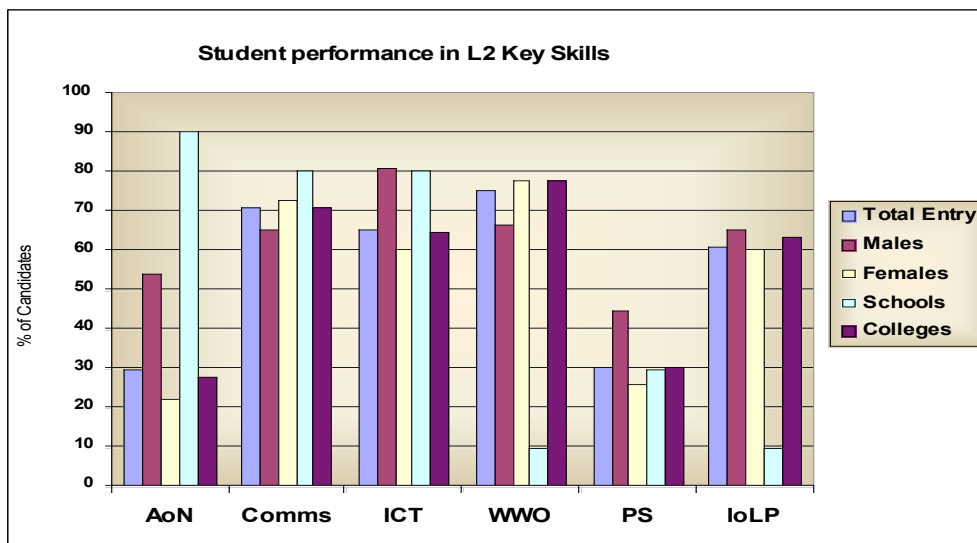
Over the past two years, the Project Team has been involved in work to draw into the WBQ pilot other programme areas, specifically Construction, Engineering and Land-based studies. Some colleges have begun to offer these courses, but there has been some reluctance to involve such areas because they are perceived as difficult to match to the requirements of the WBQ. Working groups in all three areas have been attempting to show how this can be done.

## 5. HOW DID CANDIDATES DO IN THE WBQ CORE?

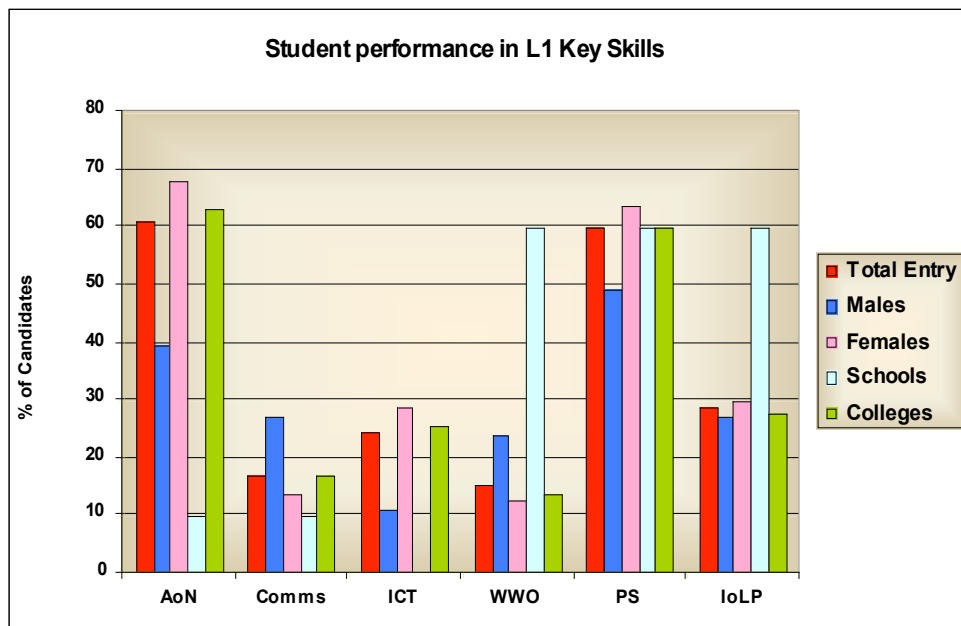
Now that we know something about the prior achievement of this cohort, together with information about their programmes of study, it is time to look in some detail at how well they did in the various assessment components. So, this section considers attainment in the WBQ Core. Candidate attainment is considered under 3 headings:

- the Key Skills;
- the Individual Investigation;
- the Diaries/Verification statements.

### KEY SKILLS



**Fig. 6**



**Fig. 7**

The results of candidate performance in the key skills part of the WBQ Core are shown in Table 7 that follows. They are then related to the national attainment levels in key skills as shown in 'Statistical Bulletin' issued by the Statistical Directorate of the National Assembly for Wales, 27 June 2006.

Key Skill (%)	Total Entry 259 (%)				Males 61 (%)				Females 198 (%)				School 10 (%)				College 249 (%)			
	1	2	3	F	1	2	3	F	1	2	3	F	1	2	3	F	1	2	3	F
Communication	16.7	71.1	1.5	10.6	27.0	65.0	3.1	4.8	13.5	73.0	1.0	12.5	10.0	80.0	10.0	0	17.0	70.7	1.2	11.1
Application of Number	61.2	30.0	0.4	8.4	39.7	54.0	0	6.3	68.0	22.5	0.5	9.0	10.0	90.0	0	0	63.2	27.7	0.4	8.7
ICT	24.3	65.0	1.5	9.1	11.1	81.0	3.1	4.8	28.5	60.0	1.0	10.5	0	80.0	20.0	0	25.3	64.4	0.8	9.5
Working with Others	15.2	75.3	2.3	7.2	23.8	66.7	6.3	3.1	12.5	78.0	1.0	8.5	60.0	10.0	30.0	0	13.4	77.9	1.2	7.5
Problem Solving	60.0	30.4	1.5	8.0	49.2	44.4	3.1	3.1	63.5	26.0	1.0	9.5	60.0	30.0	10.0	0	60.0	30.4	1.2	8.3
Improving Own Learning	28.9	61.2	1.1	8.7	27.0	65.0	4.8	3.1	29.5	60.0	0	10.5	60.0	10.0	30.0	0	27.7	63.2	0	9.1

**Table 7**  
**Key skills attainment in the WBQ by gender and school/college**

**Key:**

3 = Level 3

2 = Level 2

1 = Level 1

F = Fail at either level 1 or 2

The following points are highlighted by the table:

- The majority of centres and candidates targeted Communication, ICT, Working with Others and Improving Own Learning and Performance to make up their three level 2s.
- Achievement at level 2 in Application of Number and Problem Solving was lower than the other four key skills.
- Most of the candidates achieved the required 6 key skills, with only a small percentage failing in each skill.
- Significant differences emerge between males and females in Application of Number, ICT and Problem Solving.
- Generally, centres' continued with the pattern of 'level 2 entry' seen last year, with the preferred choices for level 2 being Communication, ICT, Working with Others and IOLP.
- A small number of candidates achieved Key Skills at Level 3, over and above the requirement for the Intermediate Diploma.

What about these key skills results in relation to those for candidates in Wales, as a whole? These national figures are:

- Over 168,000 key skills were awarded to approximately 85,700 learners between October 2000 and September 2005, with an average per learner of 1.9.
- 85,294 key skills qualifications were awarded in Wales between October 2004 and September 2005. This was an increase from 30,786 awards in 2003/04.
- In 2004/05, the percentage of key skills qualifications awarded in Wales were:

at Level 1, 47%; at Level 2 42%; and 11 per cent at Level 3.
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This compares with the following figures for the WBQ:

at Level 1, 10.1% at Level 2, 45.8% at Level 3, 38.4% Unsuccessful, 5.7%
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In 2004/05, at a National level:

28% of key skills awards were in Communication 22% were in Application of Number 20% were in IT 12% were in IOLP 12% were in Working with Others 7% were in Problem Solving.
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For the WBQ, all six key skills were achieved by 94.3% of the entry, with only a small percentage failing in each key skill.
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- Nationally, 22,200 individuals achieved three or more key skills since October 2000, nearly all of these aged 16 or over. This is 13.1% of the total entry. For the WBQ, 99.6% of the entry achieved three or more key skills.

These two sets of statistics show very clearly the extent to which the WBQ has facilitated the achievement of more and a broader range of key skills than with non-WBQ candidates nationally.

## **THE INDIVIDUAL INVESTIGATION**

Many candidates produced Individual Investigations of a satisfactory to good standard. The work was interesting, varied and within the spirit of the WBQ. The choice of illustrative material was broadly suitable, manageable and appropriate to Level 2. The main features of the Individual Investigations submitted by candidates were:

- The topics covered by the Investigations were, in the main, varied and clearly derived from the candidates' own interests or from their Core programme areas.
- There was a range of relevant contemporary topics that were, in the majority of instances, issue based. In the best examples, they were hypothesis based, which allowed the candidates to progress to meaningful conclusions.
- In some cases, Powerpoint presentations were used to evidence Key Skills at level 2.
- In the better investigations there was good use of questionnaires and individual research. However, this was followed up to varying degrees in terms of evaluation.
- Bibliographies were included in the majority of Investigations, and these were helpful in verifying the sources of information. In the better investigations, the inclusion of some appropriate source work in an Appendix form was also helpful.
- Investigations were generally well structured with clear aims and appropriate to Key Skills level 2 in terms of Communication. This allowed the candidates the opportunity to display the competencies across the four assessment criteria.

A number of more detailed comments may be made about the structure and assessment of the Investigations.

### **Skills and techniques**

Use of **maps and diagrams** in the best Investigations was helpful to introduce an Investigation where relevant, and gave the studies a real sense of place and/or context. **Statistics** were included to varying degrees. In the better Investigations

these were effectively integrated into the text and used in the studies and were not included as a 'bolt on' simply to satisfy the assessment criteria. Where Investigations were bare passes or fails, this element was a key determinant. Simple **graphs** were generally introduced appropriately, and were linked to the text. They did, in a number of Investigations, enhance the studies. However, at level 2, in too many instances, there was an opportunity to introduce observation and evaluation that was not fully developed. Inclusion of **tabulated data** was also evident to varying degrees and enhanced the Investigations. It was pleasing to see the inclusion of **primary data**. It enriched the work and added a valuable source of information from which to illustrate techniques, and from which to arrive at conclusions and evaluations. Several candidates had undertaken simple questionnaires but did not take the opportunity to display the results to maximum effect. This was an 'opportunity lost'. It is important to see the use of charts, graphs, diagrams etc, included as the best evidence to support this criterion.

Where candidates did fall short of a pass in the Investigation, this criterion was a significant barrier.

## **Knowledge**

Good use of **internet research** in the majority of Investigations. **Systematic treatment of the information** was evident in an organised and planned manner from the majority of candidates at the higher level of work.

Few candidates did not fulfil this criterion. Unfortunately, in a limited number of instances, over reliance of 'lifted' information from the internet adversely affected outcomes.

## **Understanding**

The level of **communication** was broadly in line, acceptable and appropriate to level 2 Investigations. **Understanding** was demonstrated to varying degrees and was obviously often a reflection of the ability of the candidates. Some were at times a little confused and this again did make them marginal in this criterion. It was evident that the majority of candidates had tried hard, enthusiastically and had benefited from the experience.

As expected at level 2, many of the candidates were good at describing but less confident in giving **explanations** or indeed **causes and consequences** for material included.

## **Evaluation and conclusions**

It is evident that the majority of candidates had benefited from undertaking the Investigations and had improved their **ability to form opinions and arrive at judgements**. There was, in a significant number, a genuine **appreciation of the issues** associated with their titles. The **conclusions** were often meaningful and

**addressed the titles**, and the best ones were based on both a consideration of the information included and on **personal research** (questionnaire and personal observation). In the weaker Investigations this skill was demonstrated less well. Some of the **conclusions were a little brief and simplistic** and for some of the weaker candidates there was an over reliance on personal comment and opinion rather than on documented information and fact included earlier in the work. In addition to a formal conclusion there was, from some of the more able candidates, attempts at **personal reflection and evaluation** throughout the Investigations, for example after graphs, diagrams, photographs etc and this improved the quality of their work.

For those candidates who obtained a 'bare pass' or indeed 'failed' this assessment criterion, the **lack of clear evaluation** was a major determining factor.

### **Some further observations on the Individual Investigation**

#### **Titles**

There was a wide range of original innovative and individual titles that reflected the diverse range of options the candidates were taking, but also their interest areas. Such a range of titles is again entirely appropriate and in the spirit of the WBQ. As a general rule those titles that are hypothesis or question-based tended to be the most effective, in the sense that they naturally arrived at definite and meaningful conclusions. The advice to candidates and centres is to **keep titles simple and avoid over complexity**.

#### **The 'Welsh Perspective' and the use of 'wider' perspectives**

In some examples the candidates became confused about how best to use the examples from Wales and other perspectives. The most effective approach is where the candidate selects an **issue for study** and **illustrates** its nature, problems and features with **appropriate examples** drawn from a part of Wales and from one another part of the world or at a different scale outside Wales. This is more appropriate than using multiple comparisons that often confuse candidates and take them off at tangents.

#### **The Diaries/Verification Statements**

The diaries seen demonstrated that the rich variety of learning experiences and activities offered by the WBQ. Moderators were impressed with the range of learning opportunities and experiences on offer and centres are to be congratulated on this.

- Diaries were generally well organised.
- In the better diaries, candidates had undertaken additional research and had therefore enhanced their files.

- The Team Enterprise activity was consistently good. Not only was it well documented, through diaries and self evaluation, but the candidates had obviously benefited and enjoyed the activity. In the best files, candidates' comments were quite astute and reflective on the issues of 'Working with Others.'
- Community Participation was generally very effective and candidates had enjoyed it. There was a variety of 'buddy' or 'peer mentoring' schemes, both inside and outside the centre.
- The content of WRE was generally appropriate and satisfied the criteria. WRE had allowed accreditation of a number of key skills at levels 1 or 2 and was well evidenced. The placement diaries were often the highlight of the candidates' files, especially in CACHE placements.
- WEW – generally well presented and included candidate evaluations.
- PSE was, in the best scenarios, time logged and effective.
- Key skills are being embedded in a number of centres, with the diary becoming a vehicle for evidence.
- Many candidates made appropriate use of the internet as a resource.

## **Conclusions**

### **Areas of Strength**

- On the whole, the judgments made by tutors were very much in line with the moderators' findings. This was most pleasing and significant.
- Some very good assessment of the Investigations, particularly those using annotation, to highlight competence in the four assessment criteria.
- The best quality work both in the Investigations and the diaries comes from the Core areas of work in which the candidates have ownership, or have chosen the topics because of enjoyment or interest.
- Candidate checklists used in a variety of forms by a variety of centres allowed for good mapping and tracking of the assessment criteria.
- Some sensitive contemporary issues considered in a mature and sensible way resulting in the production of effective Investigations.

Overall evidence suggested that candidates had benefited from undertaking the programme.

### **Areas of Concern**

- Care must be taken to ensure that centres obtain signatures on relevant declaration sheets.
- Where candidates did 'fail' it was usually because of weak evaluation. In many instances there was simply a lack of evidence of evaluation and reflection with conclusions being repeated summaries simply recapping the Investigation.
- A limited number of centres had diaries that were classed as 'sparse' and any further reduction in evidence would mean that portfolios would not reach the minimum standard for a pass.

- The use of the internet for research and to provide evidence for Investigations must be closely monitored by tutors.
- In some diaries, a considerable amount of excess evidence had been included, often teacher generated, that had very little purpose and often detracted from the quality of the candidates' genuine work. Although an important balance, there is mileage in the old adage that sometimes less is actually more.
- A small number of Investigations were judged as 'good'.
- In a few centres there were issues in the use of shared resources such that much of the content and terminology the candidates used was often very similar. These centres were advised how close to plagiarism this is. It should be stressed that this aspect of the course is an **Individual** Investigation.
- In a minority of centres, there was confusion as to whether some candidates had been entered, withdrawn or re-entered. Definitive lists of candidates need to be provided to the WJEC at the time of the sample being defined.
- Some of the weaker candidates would have benefited from a tighter focus in their titles and greater support.

## Summary

- There was compliance with the assessment objectives laid down in the specification for Level 2. Candidates had generally worked enthusiastically and had benefited from the exercise.
- A range of abilities was seen, ranging between those that were very good to a significant minority that was marginal at the Intermediate level, particularly in terms of the Investigation.
- Ironically, in some instances candidates had failed to get the full award because key skills were either missing or insufficiently robust to meet external qualification yet some of the work contained within the diaries of evidence, particularly in the Team Enterprise or Community Participation could, with a relatively small amount of guidance and support from the tutor, have met the requirements of the wider key skills. This was therefore clearly a case of opportunities lost, demonstrating the need for Co-ordinators to work smarter where appropriate learning opportunities naturally emerge.
- In summary, it is thought that the overall standards had increased and that tutors had a greater understanding of potential and as a result were more confident about making appropriate and accurate judgements.

## 6. WHY DID SOME CANDIDATES FAIL?

Of those candidates who failed to achieve the WBQ Intermediate Diploma, the following were the 'reasons' for failure (in terms of percentage of the failure group):

- 35% (39%) because of lack of success in key skills, of which, the most important in descending order were Comm, IT, IOLP, AoN, PS and WWO. These candidates also failed their Options.
- A further 18% (40%) failed their key skills but passed their Options.
- 28% (11%) because of failure in their Options.
- 1% (10%) because of the Individual Investigation.
- 18% (0%) because of the curriculum elements of the Core, i.e. diaries, verification statements. This was largely explained by one centre which did not submit the diaries and other records correctly, leading the candidates to fail.

Difficulties with key skills and the Options continue to be a problem for some candidates.

## 7. TEACHER ESTIMATES

Teachers were asked to forecast whether candidates would 'pass' or 'fail' the WBQ Intermediate Award. This is an important and useful indicator of teacher perceptions of how successful they think they and their candidates have been during the course of the WBQ. It also allows us to gain further evidence about those learning areas where problems may exist for candidates.

The forecasts produced the following information:

- 9 of the 14 centres entering candidates for the 2006 award completed forecast grade estimates.
- The 9 centres provided information for 157 candidates, that is, 61% of the completing group.
- 91% of teacher forecasts were correct, a high figure.
- Of the 9% of forecasts that were incorrect:

6% of these were incorrect due to an **overestimate** of candidate achievement in the Key Skills or the Options.

3% of these were incorrect due to an **underestimate** of candidate performance.

These statistics indicate a high correlation between teachers' perceptions of their candidates' attainment level and actual award obtained.

## 8. ADMINISTRATION ISSUES

During 2005-06 the WBQ Team introduced an INSET programme that focused on 'administration'. It was felt that the relatively complex nature of an over-arching qualification like the WBQ has within it the potential for administrative challenges. Accordingly, guidance was provided on a range of administrative issues from the forms to be completed, their purpose, the timing of their completion and return, and the problems that could arise. Even though there was some progress in the period leading up to the award of results, it is clear that a number of problems persist among some centres. The list that follows contains some examples of administrative errors that emerged during the year. It should be re-emphasised that most centres fulfil all administrative requirements.

- Instruction received to withdraw candidates in May/June but when provisional results were issued in August the centre complained that it had not intended the candidates to be withdrawn. They all achieved the Advanced Diploma.
- Candidates were entered for the Advanced Diploma but the centre did not enter them for the additional level 3 key skills to obtain the Diploma (these candidates already had 6 key skills at level 2 and had achieved the Intermediate Diploma in March but should have been entered for three key skills at level 3).
- One candidate was recorded as a female with one awarding body and as a male with another awarding body. Therefore the results did not match.
- A centre indicated in the Part 2 Entry that all the candidates were taking all their key skills with OCR in June 06. However, the centre then did IT with the WJEC in June 05.
- For her key skills results, one candidate had the same middle name, same surname and same date of birth; however, her first name was spelt differently for just one key skill result.
- A centre changed the candidates from a BTEC Diploma to a BTEC Certificate but did not enter the candidates properly for the BTEC Certificate - therefore it did not appear on the results file from the awarding body.
- One centre entered their candidates for their BTECs through one campus but then entered the same candidates for their key skills via another campus which made matching the date more difficult.

- Several centres 'forgot' to enter their candidates for key skills or 'forgot' to claim proxies, leaving the candidates entered for the WBQ with no chance of achieving it.
- One candidate with a double barrelled name had the full name recorded for one awarding body but only part of the name recorded for another.
- Three candidates were entered for the Advanced Diploma and their Individual Investigations were assessed at level 3 but when provisional results were issued the centre said that it had entered those three for the Intermediate Diploma.
- One centre had all its candidates entered for the Options with another campus.
- A number of candidates would have failed the Options because the WJEC had not been informed that 4 GCSEs had already been obtained. This was picked up the WBQ Team.

The result of errors such as these is that information is still being checked in the day before the results are published, with urgent telephone calls and emails being exchanged between the WBQ Offices and a range of GCE, Vocational and Key Skills Awarding Bodies. There is a period of approximately a month after provisional results are issued for centres to raise queries about the results. This period is called 'Enquiries upon results' and ends on or around the 20.9.06.

## 9. SO, WHAT CONCLUSIONS CAN WE DRAW FROM THE 2006 WBQ?

- **Aims and achievement:** two of the basic aims of the WBQ are (a) to increase candidates' retention rates and (b) to raise levels of achievement. Clearly, the retention rate for the Intermediate Diploma is a source of concern. The greatest problem with the Intermediate Diploma is that the vast majority of candidates attempt to complete it within a year as part of their vocational programme of study post-16. Realistically, this gives the teachers and candidates only two terms to meet the requirements of the Diploma and means that curriculum planning is crucial if these candidates are to complete. Another feature causing concern is the very small number of candidates in schools who complete the programme at Intermediate level, despite the initial intentions of both candidates and teachers when they are entered for the qualification in February. Those completing the full programme achieved very high success rates with 75% gaining the Intermediate Diploma, whilst the success rate in achieving the required six key skills shows a positive outcome of the WBQ teaching-learning programme. It should be noted that it is hoped that the piloting of the Foundation Diploma 14-19 and the Intermediate Diploma 14-16 will address some of the concerns about the retention rate.

- Proportion of males and females involved in the Intermediate Diploma:** It is a concern that 76% of the candidates completing the Intermediate Diploma are females and only 24% are males. This can be explained by the vocational areas involved in the Intermediate level post-16, as described below. It is expected that the piloting of the Intermediate Diploma at Key Stage 4 will change the nature of the cohort.
- Prior achievement:** the Key Stage 3 and GCSE data suggest that this cohort had a below average standard of prior achievement, which means that the group achieving the Intermediate Diploma have done exceptionally well. Even though there were only small differences between the sub-groups (male/female, school/college) there was some indication that the candidates who did not complete the WBQ programme were slightly lower achievers than those who completed. It is hoped that the introduction of the Foundation Diploma will be of help in allowing those candidates to aim for a qualification which they could achieve. These sets of data suggest that information about prior achievement may well be of value to teachers when deciding if candidates are capable of following the WBQ programme, which level is most appropriate for them and areas of learning that may need attention.
- Courses followed:** As in 2005, the vast majority of the Intermediate candidates entered for the award this summer were based in colleges and following one-year vocational qualifications. There are 7 programme areas which are particularly popular, of which 4 feature in the Intermediate Diploma for the second year running - Childcare, Business and Administration, Travel and Tourism and Public Services. Last year Health and Social Care and IT were featured in the most popular programme areas. This year Animal Care, Hospitality and Catering, and Hair and Beauty are among the 7 most popular. The programme areas which feature in the WBQ are the result of the policy of the colleges involved, which chose to start piloting with certain programme areas which they viewed as being most suitable for the WBQ. Work is ongoing to draw other vocational areas into the WBQ.
- Key skills:** generally, results in the key skills were very good amongst the completing group, based mainly in colleges, particularly in the number of candidates achieving the required six (the requirement for summer 2006), and in the rate of success at level 2 in Communication, ICT, Working with Others and Improving Own Learning and Performance. Application of Number and Problem Solving were more often targeted at level 1. There were also different patterns of achievement between males/females in some key skills. The candidates based in schools are such a small number that no conclusions can be drawn. The general conclusion to be drawn from the data is that centres and their candidates have achieved high standards. It should be noted that the requirements for the achievement of the Intermediate Diploma have changed from September 2006 to four key skills with two at level 2 and two at level 1. All three of the first three key skills should be covered in this achievement and the candidate must show evidence of having developed all 6 key skills.

- **Individual Investigations:** even though centres suggested that many of their candidates found the Individual Investigation difficult and was a major contributory factor in 'drop out' from the WBQ, the majority of candidates submitted satisfactory Individual Investigations. An area of concern appears to be the limited use made in skills of analysis and presentation, and the ability to evaluate and draw conclusions. Clearly two areas where candidates could be given more advice. Teachers may find the examples of candidates' work to be circulated with this report of use in this process.
- **Diaries/records/verification statements:** work submitted showed that most candidates had completed effective records of their work, whilst Community Participation, Team Enterprise and Working with an Employer appeared to generate both enthusiasm and work of a high standard among candidates.
- **Language Module:** even though improvements were evident, this is still the weakest part of the WBQ Core programme. The main areas of concern remain (a) the amount of time spent on the Module, and (b) the lack of evidence of progress made between the beginning and end of the course. A new self-assessment pro-forma has been included in the Specimen Assessment Materials for the Intermediate Diploma.
- **Why did candidates fail?** as anticipated in the reasons given by centres for non-completion, an important contributory factor to 'failure' was the key skills, especially Communication, ICT and Application of Number. A number of centres still found some difficulty in adjusting to the administrative demands of the WBQ in relation to the key skills, for example, delaying entry until late in the academic year – earlier submission of portfolios allows resubmission to key skills awarding bodies. On the other hand, the anticipated difficulties with the Individual Investigation and the diaries/verification statements did not materialise. It is clear that centres are becoming more proficient in preparing for and in the delivery of key skills. Finally, it is suggested that some candidates may continue to encounter problems in completing their Option programmes, related, perhaps, to the candidates' perceptions of workload.