

WELSH APPRENTICESHIP FRAMEWORK FOR
LEVEL 4 PEARSON HEALTHCARE SCIENCE
QUALIFICATION CONSULTATION EVENT

CONSULTATION RESPONSES SUMMARY DOCUMENT
JULY 2025

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INTRODUCTION

HEIW, as the Development Partner for the Healthcare Apprenticeships, on behalf of Pearson are leading on a review of the Level 4 Pearson Healthcare Science Qualification in Wales. The initial phase of the consultation was launched at the HEIW Healthcare Science conference in Llandudno in May 2025. Following the launch the consultation was available via the HEIW website until July 2025.

The consultation aimed to establish which sectors within healthcare science use the existing qualification and how the sector(s) wish to proceed with work-based education at level 4 in the future.

FEEDBACK SUMMARY

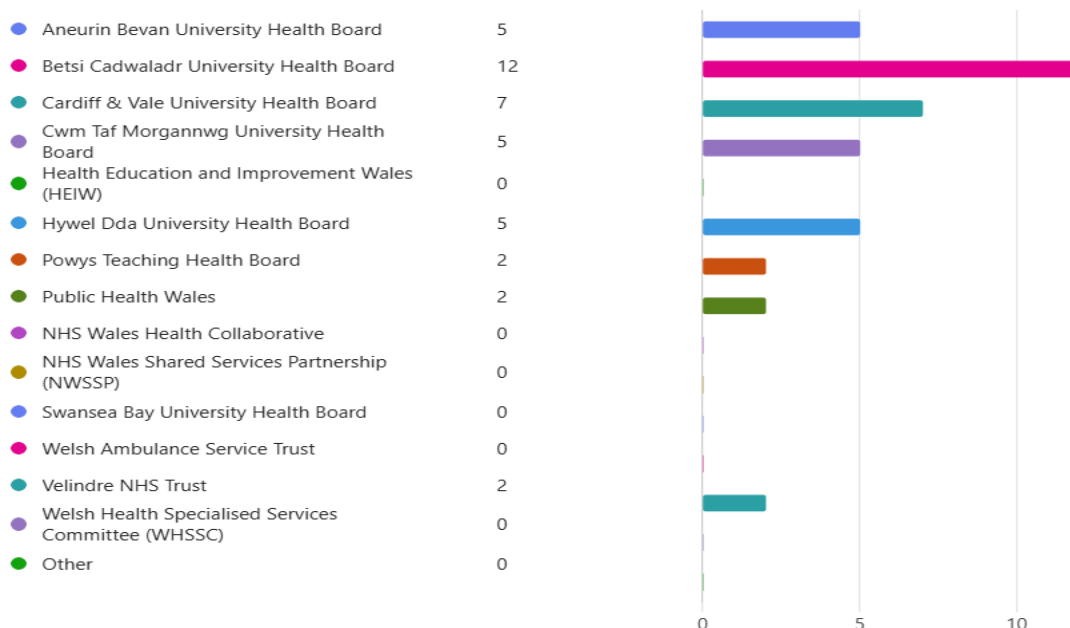
All comments and feedback received during the consultation period via consultation responses have been considered within the feedback. In addition to asking respondents to respond via multiple choice questions, we have also given respondents the opportunity to give their views via free-text commentary to ensure we are able to gather high-quality and in-depth feedback that will help to shape the final plan. 41 responses were received from the online consultation.

For the purpose of this paper, we have considered them as each representing one respondent as we think all views are equally valid and will be considered in the final version of the units.

SECTOR OF WORK

97.5% of respondents worked in NHS Wales health boards / trusts. The remaining 2.5% of respondents represented an education provider.

The health boards represented by responses are shown below:



Sectors represented by responses are detailed below:

● Audiology	3
● Bioinformatics	1
● Cardiac Physiology	5
● Clinical Imaging	6
● Decontamination Science	0
● Equipment Management & Clinical Engineering	7
● Gastrointestinal Physiology	0
● General Science	0
● Genetics and Genomics	0
● Laboratory Science	6
● Life Science	0
● Medical Physics	0
● Neurophysiology	2
● Ophthalmology	0
● Pathology	3
● POCT	0
● Reproductive Science	0
● Respiratory and Sleep Physiology	2
● Urodynamics and Urology	0
● Other	6

SPECIFIC QUESTION RELATED TO PEARSON LEVEL 4 HEALTHCARE SCIENCE

68% of respondents indicated that they do not currently use the Pearson Level 4 qualification

The table below details reasons for not using the qualification as provided by each sector.



Sector	Reason for not delivering						
	Learning route does not exist for my sector	Route exists but content inappropriate	A route exists, but not available to the sector	Apprenticeship funding is unavailable	Currently no education partner to deliver the qualification	Insufficient staff capacity (to deliver and/or assess)	Other
Rehabilitation Engineering							
Neurophysiology							
Clinical Imaging							
Bioinformatics							
Equipment Management & Clinical Engineering							
Vascular Science							
Laboratory Science							Not heard of qualification
Anatomical Pathology							
Pathology							
Cardiac Physiology							Currently developing the route & job role
Audiology							Just starting use the route, due to sign up soon
Respiratory & Sleep							Unaware of qualification
Diagnostic Imaging							We don't have HCSW – share with nursing

The remaining 32% of respondents, who do currently utilise the qualification were asked for brief details of what they feels works well with the qualification:

Sector	Content of the course delivers the required learning	Using as a pathway to higher level learning	Helps to develop wider skills such as patient communication
Clinical Imaging			
Equipment Management & Clinical Engineering			
Pathology			
Cardiac Physiology			
Audiology			
Laboratory Science			

77% of current users have indicated that they intend to continue using the qualification.

54% of current users indicated that the existing qualification needs to be reviewed for their sector,

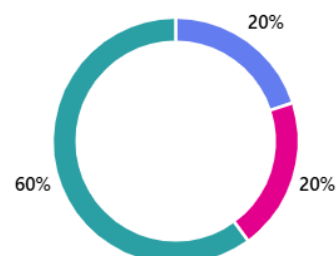
36% of those not currently using the qualification have indicated that the qualification needs to be reviewed for their sector.

THE FUTURE OF LEVEL 4 HEALTHCARE SCIENCE QUALIFICATION

The respondents were asked to provide their views on awarding body consideration for future developments.

Would you prefer to:

- Redesign the current **Pearson** Level 4 Diploma in Healthcare Science qualification 6
- Design an alternative qualification with a **new** awarding body 6
- Unable to comment as I am not familiar with level 4 work-based qualifications for Healthcare science 18



Reasons for remaining with Pearson, but redesigning some elements of the qualification include:

Equipment Management	There is a system already in place, lets make it work for us
	We are using it, and it works. Not opposed to something new but the capacity to reinvent everything again would be challenging and enhancing is better than starting over
Audiology	Working well just needs updating
	Pearson are familiar with the training so likely the best supplier if they can take on more of the responsibility of training
Laboratory Science	Still stick with the Pearson course but try to expand the common elements to facilitate greater numbers across HCS network
Pathology	Have a regional teaching centre

Reasons for choosing to design an alternative qualification with a new awarding body include:

Cardiac Physiology	Only reasoning would be I have been involved with writing level 3 so would all be with same provider. Also, the issues with TAQA qualification for assessors taking 18 months
Clinical Imaging	If Agored deliver this staff could do mentor training for one body? Simplifies needs for service - especially since we don't have staff currently delivering anything Pearson. Might be different for other profession where staff already have
Equipment Management	Opportunity to reconsider the skillets + how they tie into the overall career framework, tailoring to local arrangements needed.
	On the fence regarding a re-design with Pearsons or a new body. A centralised assessor or independent verifier is a must.
Anatomical Pathology	Happy with any provided that can offer the qualification, but not sure which ones can
Audiology	Biased response here but Universities have experience of delivering level training and these are run to a high standard

Of the respondents who would prefer to switch to another awarding body, there was just one named; Agored Cymru. Reasons for this choice were included they offer the level 3, so it would provide some continuity and did not require assessors to hold the full CAVA. There was one respondent who indicated they would prefer a university to be the awarding body, due to the quality assurance levels being in place.

32% of respondents provided suggestions for new sector developments within level 4 Healthcare Science education. These included:

Audiology	Training materials provided. Teaching support for clinical staff. Structured logbook of learning. Structured assessment process. Support to deliver the training. .
	HEIW commission level 4 training courses at universities
Clinical Engineering / Equipment Management	External Assessor support
	A college based educational qualification that incorporates elements of existing relevant HNCs (e.g. in Mechanical or Electrical Engineering) together with those other elements necessary for progression through the HCS career pathway including work-based practice e.g. in rehabilitation engineering or in medical equipment management.
	A more holistic approach, ensuring that all assessments and learning can be facilitated remotely due to the geographical area of Wales and the qty of learners coming through, to ensure cost effectiveness
Clinical Imaging	Imaging units
	Training in speciality's specifically such as CT/MRI
	Well supported, tailored practice-based education. I do feel however that it is essential that this program feeds directly into a Higher Education Institution's course, otherwise this will prevent the apprentices from progressing in their careers. It seems like a wasted resource to spend so long training an individual for their career to be capped as unable to feed into a university level course. Direct access into an institution that allows individuals to finish with a BSc or equivalent would allow them to be able to register and practice as a Radiographer in the future if they should wish to pursue that pathway.
Pathology	North Tees are the only place in the UK running this course see (https://www.trainingapt.com/) we have the skills and expertise to do it in Wales to do it if we have the framework.
	Look to incorporate scientific information at entry level before advancing to department specific technical jargon, avoid duplication in the questions, provide more opportunity for in house observations, make the personnel connections obvious to the users define who an assessor is who and who is a trainer.
Laboratory Science	Pathology program rather than NHS, the core element of the HCS could be incorporated into modules that are pathology based and give a wider scope of the department in pathology, especially the emerging areas like bioinformatics
	Staffing and managerial issues need to be rectified urgently, so that this qualification is open to all staff to apply not for the select few by management. The NHS is missing out on

	growing their own highly knowledgeable, hardworking staff into fantastic Bio-medical Scientists.
Respiratory and Sleep	Communication and implementation guidance

Respondents were provided with an opportunity to raise any additional points which had not been covered by the questions in the consultation. The table below reflects these contributions:

Equipment Management	Needs to be accessible remotely to provide across Wales.
	To remove service silo approaches and ensure we work stronger together to achieve the requirement
	Whatever is finally decided upon it must be fully resourced otherwise it will fail.
	We also need centralised teachers for specific content ie Maths, electronics etc and online would be sufficient.
Respiratory & Sleep	I would really like to utilise this qualification but don't know how to go about this
Laboratory Science	We need supportive software like Turnitin to support the assessors to deliver the program. Capacity for learners, assessors and services is a challenge to make the course viable and to be as good as they can.
Anatomical Pathology	The North Tees L4 APT programme starts every Jan making funning difficult though Equivalence or HCSW funding due to the timing and knowing what staff we will have, and the course is one that can only be completed while in service.
Audiology	HEIW commission level 4 training courses at universities
Pathology	Look to incorporate scientific information at entry level before advancing to department specific technical jargon, avoid duplication in the questions, provide more opportunity for in house observations, make the personnel connections obvious to the users define who an assessor is who is a trainer.