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Qualifications and Credit Framework

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Agenda



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- **What is the QCF?**
- **Why is it being introduced?**
- **QCF Definitions**
- **How does the QCF work?**
- **FLT and Apprenticeships**
- **Timescales & Implications of the QCF rollout**
- **Q&A and further sources of information**

UK Vocational Qualifications Reform Programme



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The Governments in England, Wales and Northern Ireland aim to reform adult vocational qualifications. This involves:

- Reforming and rationalising sector qualifications so that they reflect employer and learner needs, providing recognised and valued levels of skills both within and across sectors
- Developing a unit-based qualification offer which is underpinned by credit, allowing credit accumulation and transfer, which is known as the Qualification and Credit Framework (QCF)
- Establishing in England, Wales and Northern Ireland planning, funding and delivery arrangements to support these reforms

QCF Implementation: Why?



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NQF and current qualifications:

- Limited
- Unresponsive or irrelevant
- Incomprehensible
- Need for greater flexibility to reflect individual and employers needs

(This is not true of all qualifications – but there is room for improvement)

The QCF:

- is a more inclusive and flexible regulated (via Ofqual) qualifications framework
- contains units and qualifications which will recognise a wider range of achievement
- allows learners to accumulate credits over time and transfer these between qualifications, providers and awarding organisations
- ensures that public funding is focused on those vocational qualifications that are valued by employers (via SSCs) and learners

Role of LSC and Sector Skills



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Councils in Qualifications Reform

•LSC to:-

- align funding, planning & performance arrangements for QCF
- develop the QCF service layer to facilitate the transfer of data
- ensure that advice and guidance services are able to support learners

•SSCs to:-

- develop Sector Qualification Strategies based on updated NOS and approve qualifications developed by Awarding Organisations to be submitted for accreditation in QCF
- Recommend to LSC what the key qualifications are within SQSs, credit definitions for full Level 2 & 3 in QCF which meet LSC criteria for funding

Correct QCF definitions



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QCF term	Definition
1 - Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF)	i) A new way of recognising skills and qualifications within a nationally regulated framework
2 - Foundation Learning Tier (FLT)	c) A programme of work to develop a more focussed and strategic approach to entry level and level 1 for learners aged 14 and over within the context of the Qualifications and Credit Framework in order to raise participation, achievement and progression amongst learners at these levels
3 - Progression Pathways	h) Organising structures for learning built from units and qualifications that are drawn from entry level and level 1 of the QCF
4 - Credit	l) An award made to a learner in recognition of the achievement of designated learning outcomes
5 - Level	f) An indication of the relative demand, complexity and/or depth of achievement, and/or the autonomy of the learner in demonstrating that achievement
6 - Unit	o) A coherent and explicit set of learning outcomes and assessment criteria, with a title, credit value and level
7 - Rules of combination (RoC)	a) A description of the credit accumulation requirements for the achievement of a named qualification
8 - Shared Unit	n) Available to all other recognised awarding organisations to access for use in the development of their rules of combination and to award credit for

Correct QCF definitions



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QCF term	Definition
9 - Credit accumulation and transfer (CAT)	j) The process of putting together a combination of credits to meet the achievement requirements of a qualification and the process of using credits awarded in the context of one qualification towards the achievement requirements of another qualification
10 – Award	m) A vocational qualification of 1 to 12 credits
11 – Certificate	b) A vocational qualification of 13 to 36 credits
12 – Diploma	p) A vocational qualification of 37 credits or more
13 - Learning time	e) The amount of time a learner at the level of the unit is expected to take, on average, to complete the learning outcomes of the unit to the standard determined by the assessment criteria
14 - Key qualification	k) Vocational qualification prioritised for public funding and accredited by September 2010
15 - Sector Qualification Strategy (SQS)	d) Document to identify high level requirements for qualifications which employers / the sector demand
16 - Action Plan	g) Document that outlines timescales for subsequent qualification development

How does the QCF work?



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The diagram below illustrates how the QCF will work.

*Diagram 1: Standardising Level, Size and Title of Qualifications –
(Qualifications are built from the achievement of units which result in the award of credit. One Credit = 10 hours learning time. No regulated ‘types’ of qualifications like NVQs as defined by purpose but title could still be used)*



How does the QCF work?



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- All learners taking QCF units/qualifications on LSC programmes need a **Unique Learner Number (ULN)** which currently comes from MIAP's Learner Registration Service to create an electronic **Learner Record**
- Approaches to **unit funding** are being tested through Train to Gain SME Flexibilities & Adult Learner Responsive Unit Funding trials
- Provider performance measures are unchanged for 2009/10 but a **credit success rate measure** is being tested through the funding trials
- A **new interim definition for full Level 2 & 3 qualifications** within the QCF will initially apply for 2 years to 2010/11. SSCs have to define how many credits apply for their specific full Level 2 & 3 qualifications in the QCF
- **Information, Advice & Guidance (IAG)** will be extended to help learners make the right choices in the context of the QCF.

Foundation Learning Tier



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- The Foundation Learning Tier is a programme operating only in England to reform 14 + year old provision below Level 2 to improve participation, achievement & progression.
- Units and qualifications are being accredited on the QCF at Entry Level and Level 1.
- Progression Pathways set the parameters for designing individual learner programmes made up of these QCF units & qualifications.
- Currently being trialled and reviewed with full implementation of Progression Pathways planned for 2010.

Apprenticeship Frameworks



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- Report from consultation on Specification of Apprenticeship Standards for England (SASE) due out August 2009 and **all Frameworks are to be drawn from the QCF by September 2010**
- Recommended that Frameworks include as a minimum: competence and knowledge outcomes (and the relevant qualification(s) and/or unit(s); Functional Skills qualifications; Employee Rights & Responsibilities; and Personal Learning and Thinking Skills (PLTS)
- In addition, Frameworks must specify the number of Guided Learning Hours (GLH) to be delivered annually and the number of GLH to be delivered off-workstation (min 250 hours)
- **GLH is still how learning input is expressed at present** to calculate funding support, although the LSC is working on alternative options to underpin the QCF
- More flexible assessment processes will be possible under the QCF but these are not based on PTTLs which are part of a wider strategy to qualify all teachers & trainers in the lifelong learning sector. Awarding Organisations & SSCs will determine the requirements of assessors for their qualifications and units within the QCF.

Timescales & Implications for Providers



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- From August 2009 some qualifications and learning aims will no longer be eligible for funding, so providers need plans in place to switch to QCF provision
- Where new full level 2 and 3 qualifications have been accredited into the QCF, providers should start to deliver them across all appropriate programmes
- Key list of QCF qualifications for public funding published June 2009 & put on the Learning Aims Database (LAD)
- From August 2010 – major shift of funding to key vocational quals within QCF
- Providers need to start delivering Foundation Learning Tier Progression Pathways from August 2009 as full roll out planned for 2010
- QCF qualifications and units will become the core offer of all LSC (and SFA) funded programmes. Full functionality and flexible funding planned for 2012/13

Information and Q & A



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For more information on the UK Vocational Qualification Reform Programme:

<http://qfr/lsc.gov.uk/ukvqrp/>

For the document *Qualifications and Credit Framework Policy Update: Issue 1 and 2, plus List of Ineligible Qualifications for 2009/10*:

<http://qfr.lsc.gov.uk/ukvqrp/support/>

For details of the QCF Implementation Support Programme from LSIS including a readiness matrix for providers to use::

www.qrsp.org.uk

For the FLT Interim Guidance document:

<http://qfr.lsc.gov.uk/flt/support/>

For information on the tailored FLT Implementation Support Programme from LSIS:

<http://flt.excellence.qia.org.uk>