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Using the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) for progression between FE and HE

Qualifications & Credit Framework

What is the QCF?

- A new **framework** for **recognising and accrediting qualifications** in England, Wales and Northern Ireland
- The framework is at the heart of a major reform of the vocational qualifications system designed to make the whole system **simpler to understand and use** and **more inclusive**
- The intention is to make both the system and the qualifications offered **far more relevant to the needs of employers and more flexible and accessible for learners**

When is it happening?

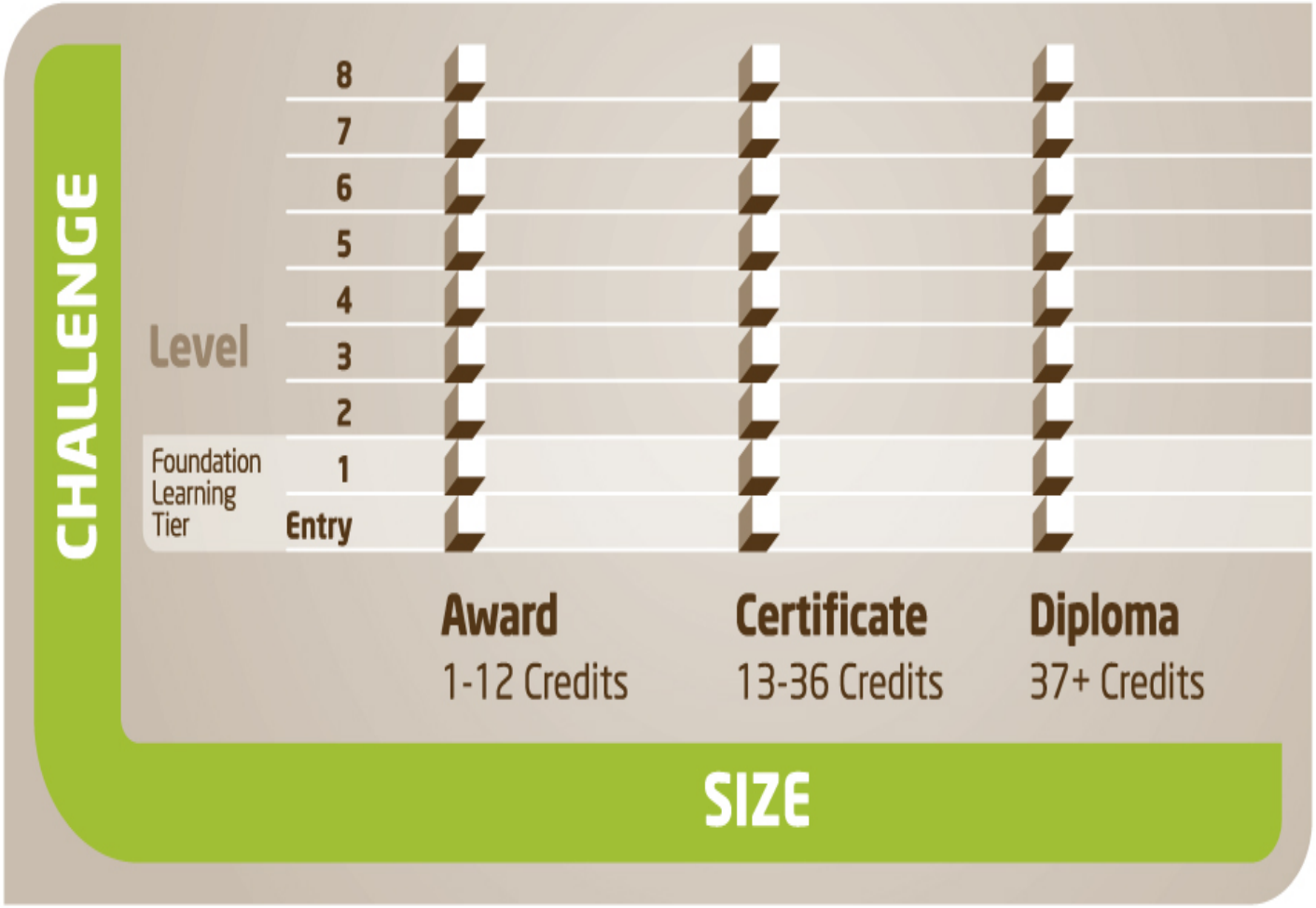
Now!

The QCF has been tested and trialled for the past two years. The process of bringing all vocational qualifications into the new framework is now well under way, with growing numbers of learners taking units and qualifications through the system.

- 24109 units in the databank (26th January)
- 2761 qualifications (26th January)

By December 2010, it is expected that all vocational qualifications (approx 6000) will have been accredited to the QCF and by that point, the QCF will have replaced the current National Qualifications Framework (NQF) for vocational qualifications.

The simple architecture of the Qualifications and Credit Framework



Size and level

- Every unit and qualification in the framework will have a credit value and a level

- Three sizes of qualifications
  - Award / Certificate / Diploma

- Nine levels
  - The level of a unit of qualification shows you how difficult it is
  - To help understand the levels it is useful to know: GCSEs (A*-C) are level 2, A levels are level 3 and a PhD degree is level 8

- Credits
  - 1 credit = 10 hours of learning time (the amount of time and effort it takes to complete)

Units

- A unit (unit of assessment) is defined as a coherent set of learning outcomes and related assessment criteria, with a title, credit value and level
- Each unit must be capable of being individually assessed
- Each unit must be capable of contributing towards at least one qualification
- Information on delivery, content/coverage, assessment methods or learning modes are not included
- There are no restrictions on the size of units
- Units can be generic and applicable to a range of contexts and qualifications
- Units can be shared or restricted

QCF units: The building blocks of the

TITLE: Should be clear, unambiguous and reflect achievements specified in learning outcomes and assessment criteria

CREDIT VALUE: Arrived at by estimating the learning time and dividing by ten. Process focuses on te learning outcomes and assessment criteria not the mode of delivery.

LEVEL: Indicates relative demand, complexity and depth of learning and degree of learner autonomy.

Plan to sell yo	
3	
1	
Learning outcomes The learner will:	**Assessment Criteria** The learner can:
your	1.1 Assess the advantages and disadvantages of different methods of selli 1.2 Assess the i potential volum
2. Understand the importance of setting sales targets for your business	2.1. Explain why your business 2.2. Set sales targets that take account of sales forecasts, profit margins and cash flow and determine a possible timescale to meet them. 2.3 Produce a sales plan and include all the information needed to show the basis for your decisions

LEARNING OUTCOMES: When identifying ask the question 'what do learners need to know, understand or be able to do as a result of this learning experience?'. The answer should take the form of a series of broad statements that describe the result of the learning process.

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA: Should relate to a specific learning outcome: at least one criterion to each outcome. They should be observable, measurable and indicate the standard expected when the learner is assessed.

*Example from **OCR Level 3 Award in Business Enterprise (QCF)***

Rules of combination

- Rules of combination specify the credits that need to be achieved, through particular units, for a qualification to be awarded
- All qualifications within the framework have rules of combination
- They are the mechanism through which sets of achievements are grouped together into a qualification. In this respect they serve a similar purpose to existing qualification structures in the NQF
- The other purpose of RoC is the structure through which credits are transferable between qualifications and awarding organisations. (Credit Accumulation and Transfer – CAT)
- The scope of opportunities for CAT will vary between different qualifications

Benefits of the QCF include:

- Offers more freedom, choice and flexibility
- Describes levels of achievement in terms everyone can understand
- Allows credit to be built up and transferred through recognising smaller steps of achievement
- Reduces the need to repeat learning or to start again
- Assists retention and progression
- Allows in-house training to be recognised within a national framework

QCF Myth Buster

The Regulatory arrangements for the QCF set out the rules on how units and qualifications should be designed

QCF Myth	QCF Fact
Pick and mix of units	All units in the QCF are submitted to the databank •All units are only active once they have been included in the RoC of a qualification •All units in the lead to a full qualification •All qualifications are developed in collaboration by SSCs and AOs so they are coherent and fit for purpose
Qualifications that use compensation cannot be included (Compensation Good performance compensates for poor performance in units, components, modules or qualifications).	All LO and AC in QCF units need to be achieved to be awarded the credit for that unit. •All qualifications can be developed to the regulations of the QCF and some of the purposes of compensation can be realised through roc.
Leads to atomisation of assessment	The QCF regulations state that all units need to be **capable of individual assessment but it is not the intention of the regulator that this happens other than when a single unit is being delivered and assessed in the absence of other units or a qualification.**
Only for vocational qualifications	The QCF is an organising structure •Any qualification for any purpose can be developed to the QCF •The QCF does not prescribe content
Only for adults	The QCF does not prescribe age ranges, it is not age specific. •The QCF is an organising structure •Any qualification for any age group can be developed to the QCF •The QCF does not prescribe content
Only for qualifications in the lower levels	The QCF includes levels entry through 8 •Levels 4 – 8 are comparable to the FHEQ •QCF units and qualifications can be developed at any of these levels

14-19 Strategy: consistency across frameworks

Four National Suites:

- Apprenticeships
- Diploma including Additional Specialist Learning (ASL)
- GCSE and A-level
- Foundation Learning (FL)

In response to DSCF request:

- Completed an impact assessment end 2008
- Completed a technical report on the issues 2009
- Submitted a Benefits Case Nov 2009
- Expecting a letter early Feb 2010

Frameworks

Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ)	National Qualifications Framework (NQF) (Current Framework)	QCF Level	Size of Award		
D (Doctoral) Doctorates	**Level 8** e.g. BTEC Advanced Professional Diplomas Certificates and Awards	8			
M (Masters) Masters degrees, postgraduate certificates and diplomas	**Level 7** e.g. BTEC Advanced Professional Diplomas Certificates and Awards, City and Guilds Master Professional Diplomas	7			
H (Honours) Bachelors degrees, graduate certificates and diplomas	**Level 6** e.g.: BTEC Professional Diplomas, Certificates and Awards;	6			
I (Intermediate) Diplomas of HE & FE, foundation degrees, higher national diplomas (HNDs)	**Level 5** e.g.: BTEC Professional Diplomas, Certificates and Awards; HNDs and HNCs	5			
C (Certificate) Certificates of higher education	**Level 4** e.g.: BTEC Professional Diplomas, Certificates and Awards; City and Guilds Higher Professional Diplomas	4			
	Level 3 e.g. BTEC National Diplomas, Certificates and Awards, BTEC Advanced Diplomas, Certificates and Awards; A Levels,	3			
	Level 2 e.g. BTEC First Diplomas & Certificates, BTEC Intermediate Diplomas, Certificates and Awards, GCSE grades A*-C	2			
	Level 1 e.g. BTEC Introductory Diplomas and Certificates, BTEC Foundation Diplomas Certificates & Awards; GCSE grades D-G	1			
	Entry Level e.g. BTEC Entry Diplomas, Certificates and Awards, Skills for Life Certificates	Entry	1-12 Credits	13-36 Credits	Above 36 Credits
		LEVEL	Award	Certificate	Diploma

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Size of Qualification

Main stages of education / employment	Qualifications and Credit Framework/National Qualifications Framework for England, Wales and Northern Ireland[1] www.ofqual.gov.uk	Credit and Qualification Framework forWales www.cqfw.net	National Framework of Qualifications for Ireland www.nfq.ie	The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework www.scqf.org.uk	Framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/fheq
	LEVEL	LEVEL	LEVEL	LEVEL	LEVEL
Professional or postgraduate education, research or employment	8 Vocational Qualifications Level 8	8 Doctoral Degrees	10 Doctoral Degree, Higher Doctorate	12 Professional Development Awards, Doctoral Degrees	8 Doctoral Degrees
Higher education Advanced skills training	7 Fellowships, NVQ Level 5, Vocational Qualifications Level 7	7 Master's Degrees, Integrated Master's Degrees, Postgraduate Diplomas, Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE), Postgraduate Certificates	9 Master's Degree, Post-graduate Diploma	11 SVQ Level 5, Professional Development Awards, Postgraduate Diplomas, Master's Degrees, Integrated Master's Degrees, Postgraduate Certificates,	7 Master's Degrees, Integrated Master's Degrees, Postgraduate Diplomas, Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE), Postgraduate Certificates
Entry to professional graduate employment	6 Vocational Qualifications Level 6	6 Bachelor's Degrees with Honours, Bachelor's Degrees, Professional Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE), Graduate Diplomas, Graduate Certificates	8 Honours Bachelor Degree, Higher Diploma	10 Bachelor's Degrees with Honours, Professional Development Awards, Graduate Diplomas, Graduate Certificates	6 Bachelor's Degrees with Honours, Bachelor's Degrees, Professional Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE), Graduate Diplomas, Graduate Certificates
Specialised education and training	5 NVQ Level 4, Higher National Diplomas, (HND), Higher National Certificates (HNC), Vocational Qualifications Level 5	5 Foundation Degrees, Diplomas of Higher Education (DipHE), Higher National Diplomas (HND)	7 Ordinary Bachelor Degree	9 Bachelor's/Ordinary Degrees, Professional Development Awards, SVQ Level 4, Graduate Diplomas,Graduate Certificates	5 Foundation Degrees, Diplomas of Higher Education (DipHE), Higher National Diplomas (HND)
	4 Vocational Qualifications Level 4	4 Higher National Certificates (HNC), Certificates of Higher Education (CertHE)	6 Advanced Certificate, Higher Certificate	8 Higher National Diplomas, SVQ Level 4, Professional Development Awards, Diplomas of Higher Education (DipHE)	4 Higher National Certificates (HNC), Certificates of Higher Education (CertHE)
Qualified/Skilled worker Entry to higher education Completion of secondary education	3 NVQ Level 3, Vocational Qualifications Level 3, GCE AS and A Level, Advanced Diplomas	3 NVQ Level 3, Vocational Qualifications Level 3, GCE AS and A Level, Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification Advanced	5 Level 5 Certificate, Leaving Certificate	7 Professional Development Awards, Higher National Certificates (HNC), Certificates of Higher Education (CertHE) SVQ Level 3, Advanced Highers	
Progression to skilled employment. Continuation of secondary education.	2 NVQ Level 2,Vocational Qualifications Level 2, GCSEs at gradeA*–C, ESOL skills for life, Higher Diplomas, functional skills Level 2 (English,mathematics & ICT)	2 NVQ Level 2, Vocational Qualifications Level 2,Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification Intermediate, GCSEs grade A*–C	4 Level 4 Certificate, Leaving Certificate	6 Highers, SVQ Level 3, Professional Development Awards, National Progression Awards, National Certificates	
Secondary education Initial entry into employment or further education	1 NVQ Level 1, Vocational Qualifications Level 1, GCSEs at grade D–G, ESOL skills for life, Foundation Diplomas, functional skills Level 1 (English, mathematics & ICT)	1 NVQ Level 1, Vocational Qualifications Level 1, GCSEs at grade D–G, Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification Foundation	3 Level 3 Certificate, Junior Certificate	5 Intermediate 2, Credit Standard Grade, SVQ 2, National Progression Awards, National Certificates	
			2 Level 2 Certificate	4 Intermediate 1, General Standard Grade, Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQ) 1, National Progression Awards, National Certificates	
Qualifications can be taken at any age in order to continue or return to education or training	Entry Level Entry Level Certificates (sub levels 1–3), ESOL skills for life, functional skills Entry Level (English, mathematics & ICT)	Entry Level Entry Level Certificate (sub levels 1–3)	1 Level 1 Certificate	3 Access 3, Foundation Standard Grades, National Progression Awards, National Certificates	
				2 Access 2, National Progression Awards, National Certificates	
				1 Access 1	

[1] The Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) will eventually replace the National Qualifications Framework (NQF).

European Qualification Framework Referencing

What is the EQF?

- The EQF for lifelong learning is a common European reference framework which enables European countries to link their qualifications systems to one another

- It is a translation device making qualifications more readable and understandable across different countries and systems in Europe

Aims of the EQF

- To assist learners and workers to move between countries, change jobs or move educational institutions

- To contribute to creating a European workforce that is mobile and flexible.

More information

For more information on the QCF visit the QCA web page:

www.qcda.gov.uk/qcf

To subscribe to a QCF monthly e-update visit the QCA web page:

www.qcda.gov.uk/subscribe

For QCF Readiness support materials visit:

www.qcda.gov.uk/readiness

To obtain copies of the QCF Support Pack Version 4

Phone: 0300 303 3015

Quote: QCA/08/3989