

FAQs on the Qualifications Reform Process

We have developed this briefing and set of frequently asked questions (FAQs) in order to help employers understand the main issues surrounding Qualifications & Credit Framework (QCF) implementation.

The QCF is the new way of recognising achievement - through the award of credit for units and qualifications - across England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

It provides more flexible routes to gaining full qualifications and enables progression to be achieved in smaller steps through the accumulation of credit.

During 2010 qualifications currently on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) are being moved on to the Qualifications and Credit Framework. This will result in a new suite of qualifications replacing those currently on the NQF.

The new framework will also allow employers to have more input in tailoring qualifications to meet their needs. During this process funding arrangements will also be in transition.

By early 2011 the transition to the QCF will be complete. This means no vocational qualification will receive funding unless it has been approved by a Sector Skills Council (SSC).

The Skills Funding Agency (SFA), which is a successor agency to the Learning and Skills Council (LSC), will focus funding on the new qualifications framework from August 2010 with the following transition steps:

April 2010

QCF provision will be prioritised by the SFA. If the qualification has been accredited and confirmed for funding by 1st April 2010, providers will be required to deliver it from 1st August 2010.

August 2010

Provision from the previous framework will only be funded for new starters where no QCF provision is available and on SSC advice.

January 2011

QCF will be fully populated by the end of 2010. If the qualification is accredited and confirmed for funding after 1st April and up to 31st August 2010 inclusive, providers will be required to deliver it as soon as possible. New starts on the old framework will not be funded from January 2011.

April - May 2011

Vocational Qualifications will only receive public funding if approved by employers through their SSC and are on the QCF.

In August 2010, the SFA will review QCF readiness and:

1

Publish a list of approved QCF qualifications. A 'live' list of accredited QCF qualifications confirmed for funding will be available on the SFA website:

<http://qcf.skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk/qcf-funding/confirmationfunding>

This list will be 'frozen' on 1st April 2010 and on the 1st September 2010 and form the definitive lists for delivery as of 1st August 2010 and 1st January 2011 respectively.

2

Publish a list of NQF qualifications that will not be funded for new learners. For all qualifications without a direct QCF successor new starts will not be funded from January 2011, exception for new starts beyond January 2011 may be made where critical NQF provision has been identified.

The Agency operates a web-based QCF Service Desk to which implementation enquiries should be directed.

The email address is:

qcf servicedesk@skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk

Old	New
NQF	QCF
NVQs	Awards, Certificates and Diplomas

Frequently Asked Questions

What are NQF qualifications?

They are termed National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs).

What are QCF qualifications?

QCF qualifications are designated Awards, Certificates and Diplomas and are credit based (1 credit = 10 learning hours) an Award is 1-12 credits; a Certificate 13-36; a Diploma >36.

When do NQF qualifications finish?

From August 2010 QCF qualifications will replace NQF equivalents with full transfer in January 2011 when funding for new starts will end for NQF qualifications.

I have started an NVQ will the funding stop in 2011?

No, the funding will continue; the changes in funding are for new starts.

I have started an NVQ; do I have to restart on a QCF qualification?

No, you will complete your NVQ.

I finish my NVQ in 2011, what qualification will I get?

You will get an NVQ.

Is the NVQ the same as an equivalent QCF qualification?

Some NVQs have been transferred onto the QCF in entirety when employers have requested (although the units of assessment have been revised to the QCF format). In most instances the QCF qualifications are different in their make-up from NQF qualifications.

What will happen to apprenticeship frameworks?

The apprenticeship frameworks will be moved onto the QCF during 2010 for new apprentice starts in 2010/2011.

I am in the middle of my apprenticeship, do I have to change or start again?

No, you will complete your apprenticeship as originally described.

Does the QCF cover Scotland?

The QCF covers England, Northern Ireland and Wales; Scotland has an equivalent Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF).

Are all QCF qualifications fundable?

No, broadly funding is targeted at qualifications that develop a fully competent individual. Details of funded qualifications can be found at:
<http://qcf.skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk/qcf-funding/confirmationfunding>.

Who will deliver the new qualifications?

Training providers are required to deliver the new qualifications from August 2010 when funding will be available; from January 2011 only QCF qualifications will be offered and funded (except for designated critical NQF provision as noted).

Which Awarding bodies will offer the new qualifications?

All the Awarding bodies will move to the new QCF qualifications.

My company is currently an NVQ Approved Centre. Will this continue?

Your company can easily become an approved QCF qualifications centre by contacting their linked Awarding Body.

Are there any changes to Assessor and Verifier awards?

Yes, these have been revised by the SSC.

Do they need retraining?

Existing assessors and verifiers will not need to be retrained but will need to become familiar with the new QCF qualifications. The Awarding Bodies and providers will ensure assessors and verifiers are up to date.