Offender Learning, Skills and Employability Conference - March 2010

The Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF)

Qualifications & Credit Framework

Context for reform: World class skills

In the Leitch implementation plan the Government has committed itself to the ambition of becoming a world leader in skills by 2020.

- **Raising the skills levels of adults in and outside the workforce**
- **Creating a demand-led system that responds to the needs of employers, learners and society as a whole**
- **Equipping young people with the skills they need for life and work**
- **Creating a more flexible, innovative and inclusive qualifications system**

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?

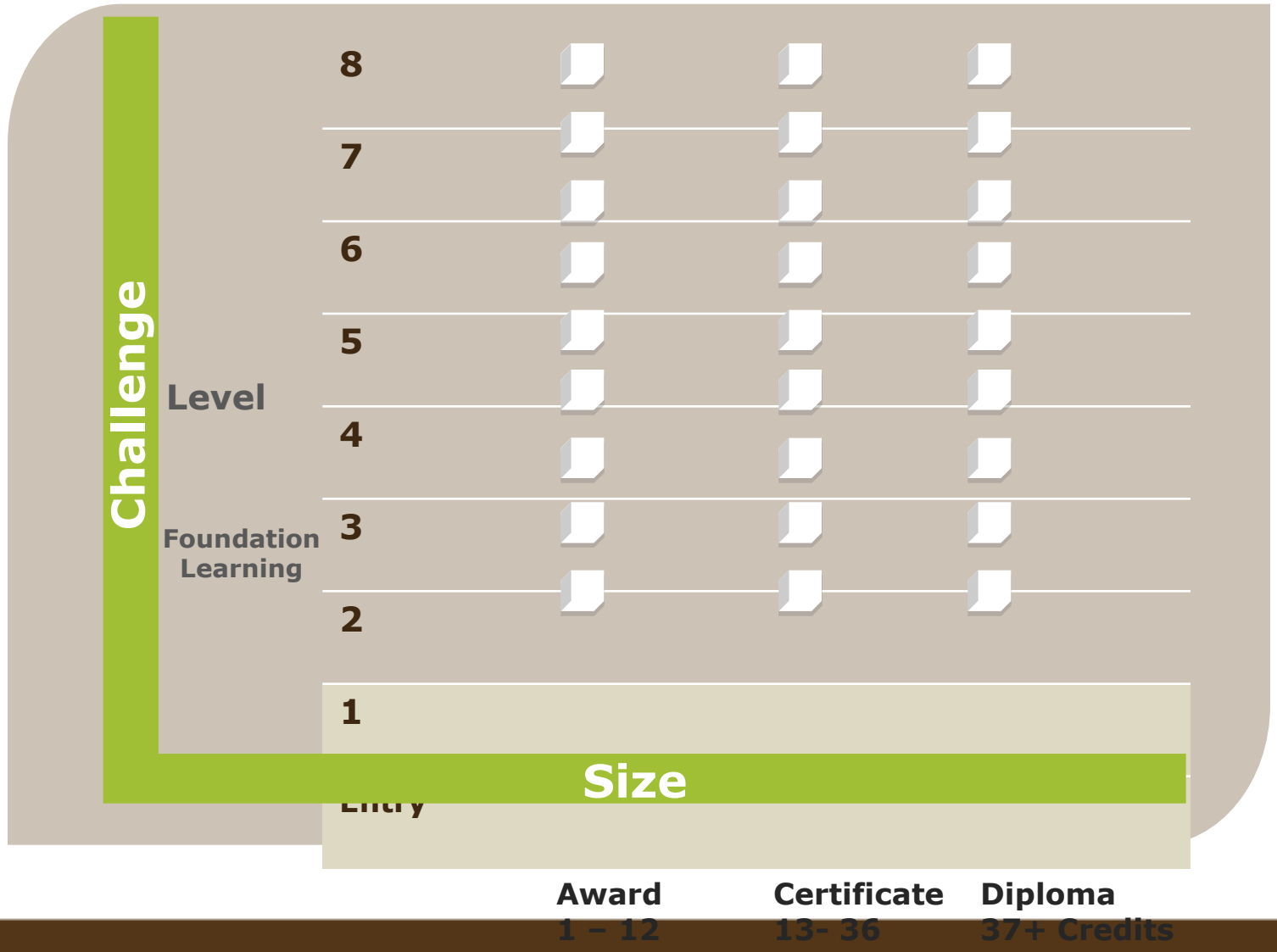
Now!

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



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
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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

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

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

14-19 Qualification Reform in England

Joint Advisory Committee for Qualification Approval (JACQA) – agrees eligibility for funding

Four National Suites:

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

Functionality/ Functional Skills a mandatory component

'We said we would create a qualifications system in which every young person can learn the right subject for them, at the right level for them, learning in a style that suits them – no matter where they are in the country – and achieve a valuable qualification if they succeed.' (DCSF 2008)

Includes:

- IAG and progression within and across suites and to HE and/or employment
- Personalised curriculum
- Use of credit for progression

The use of credit

Ethos

Giving people credit for what they can do

Equity

Recognising achievement beyond a set curriculum; recognising achievement of learning which has taken variable amounts of time to complete; recognising prior learning

Language

Creating a culture, where people understand what credit is, can bank it, use it and claim it

Common currency

Allowing for transferability: Credit Accumulation and Transfer (CAT) – across the UK and beyond e.g. referencing the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)

More information

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

www.qcda.gov.uk/qcf

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