

Managing the Transition from funding qualifications on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) to funding qualifications on the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF)

Guidance and Information for Colleges and Providers

Date: 6 August 2010

Audience details: Colleges and providers, AoC and ALP members

Introduction

The following additional information is intended to support colleges and providers during the period July 2010 - January 2011 as public funding for Adult Learner Responsive (ALR) and Employer Responsive (Train to Gain) moves to qualifications on the Qualifications Credit Framework (QCF)¹. Further information, including important dates concerning transition to the QCF are included in the paper: [Managing transition from NQF to QCF](#) and on the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) section of the Skills Funding Agency website.

This paper is produced at a time in the transition period that takes account of the publication in June of the first list confirming withdrawal of funding for National Qualification Framework (NQF) qualifications and the outcomes following the challenge process. Between July and September, when the next NQF withdrawal of funding list will be released, providers will need to be familiar with the progress of QCF qualifications which attract public funding and the NQF qualifications being withdrawn from public funding.

What providers need to do:

From 14 July onwards it is important that colleges and providers use the following three lists which are updated fortnightly:

1. [NQF Qualifications Confirmed for Withdrawal of Public Funding](#) - to check that the NQF qualification is one of the 50% (approximately 2000 qualifications) of NQF provision that has been turned off. The bulk of turn off is qualifications at Levels 1 to 3 because there is an appropriate number of QCF qualifications confirmed for public funding.
2. [QCF Qualifications Confirmed for Public Funding](#) - as part of planning use for new starts from 31 July 2010 because an appropriate QCF offer is accredited and confirmed for funding. Currently there is over 1000 qualifications confirmed for public funding on QCF, and the number will continue to increase on fortnightly basis as the list gets updated.
3. [Correction to NQF Qualifications Confirmed for Withdrawal of Public Funding](#) - this list gives the agreed corrections to the NQF qualifications that will no longer be available for funding from 31 July 2010. It lists the 338 challenges that were upheld and confirms that funding for new starts, or the accreditation end date, whichever is earlier, continues until 31 December. The 338 qualifications listed will be taken forward into the NQF Qualifications Confirmed for Withdrawal of Public Funding list to be published in September.
4. **Liaise with Awarding Organisations** - Providers should start looking at QCF replacement by initially contacting their Awarding Organisation to see if a replacement has been accredited, approved and made available for delivery. It is important for providers to have regular contact with Awarding Organisations as they are best placed to give guidance on what is and what is not being developed and to what timelines, including support materials. Awarding Organisation web sites will often provide schedules for their transition to the QCF. However, if a replacement is not available with the Awarding Organisation a provider currently uses, then it is important to identify a suitable alternative QCF qualification. See paragraph five for further information.

¹ The note does not cover Apprenticeships

5. **Identify a suitable QCF qualification** - Providers may need to look for a suitable alternative qualification. If a provider is not able to find an alternative with their current Awarding Organisation, either because it is not available, or is still in development, providers need to refer to the [QCF Confirmed for Public Funding List](#) and look for a replacement under a different Awarding Organisation. The list can be filtered by Sector Skills Council and Level which can give a good indication of the offer that is confirmed and available for a particular sector. It is important that providers remember that QCF Confirmed for Public Funding List is updated fortnightly.

QCF replacement for providers means:

- Colleges and providers need to recognise that QCF is not intended to be a direct replica of the NQF and not all QCF qualifications are direct 'one-to-one' replacements for provision in the NQF.
- Not all Awarding Organisations seeking to offer a QCF qualification will be developing provision and seeking accreditation at the same pace or at the same time which may mean that a provider may potentially have to change Awarding Organisation. If the Awarding Organisation currently used by a provider has not yet either had accredited or confirmed the date of delivery of the QCF offer then the provider needs to switch Awarding Organisation. Where there is similar provision already on QCF providers are expected to use the QCF qualification.
- In some cases a QCF qualification may have been accredited for a period of time but either the actual start date is September 2010 or the Awarding Organisation has not produced supporting materials to enable delivery to take place. Providers should contact the relevant Awarding Organisation for further information.
- The next key date for NQF turn off will be a list to be published on 24 September. Providers should be reviewing remaining NQF provision with relevant Awarding Organisations so that they are aware of plans that lead to NQF turn off and QCF January new starts.

Basis for switch off of NQF provision

For interest, the decision to switch off NQF provision has been based on the following categories:

- suitable alternative provision is available in QCF - information provided by the Sector Skills Council or search done by the Sectors/QCF team
- there is no guarantee that the alternative is delivered by the same Awarding Organisation or will be a like for like
- a low number of publicly funded adult enrolments - information extracted from the ILR funded enrolments. The exception is niche provision which did not have a QCF replacement accredited and confirmed for public funding. It is anticipated that provision deemed niche will be developing QCF provision for consideration by December 2010
- no publicly funded adult enrolments - information extracted from the ILR funded enrolments
- not identified as a priority for public funding - feedback provided by Sector Skills Council.

Qualifications that continue to be funded under NQF

The Skills Funding Agency remains committed to currently funding the following NQF qualifications:

- GCSEs
- A levels
- Skills for Life
- Functional Skills

and also QAA recognised access to Higher Education.

Agency support for colleges and providers:

A QCF Service Desk is available:

Telephone: 0870 2670054 (Monday - Thursday 9.00am - 5.00pm and Friday 9.00am - 4.30pm, except public holidays in England)

Email: qcf servicedesk@skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk

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