

# Qualifications and Credit Framework

## QCF Funding: myth and reality

Funding fact sheet 2

February 2010

### Qualifications and units (the QCF offer)

**Myth:** QCF means that units will be funded instead of qualifications.

**Reality:** The QCF funded offer will continue to focus primarily on vocational qualifications. There will be a unit offer available for learners as part of the ongoing unit funding trials in Adult Learner Responsive provision, and unit funding trials are also commencing in through the Offender Learning and Skills Service (OLASS). For 2010/11, QCF vocational qualifications will become available across all programmes, with sector organisations advising the Skills Funding Agency on which qualifications should be considered for public funding. For 2010/11 there are no significant changes to the funding approach; however, SFA will continue to explore how providers can deliver qualification outcomes more flexibly, and to examine what changes may be needed to encourage this (for example in areas such as funding and performance measures) and what changes may be able to be implemented to better support flexibility from 2011/12.

### QCF provision approved for funding

**Myth:** It is difficult for providers to identify what qualifications / units are approved for funding.

**Reality:** In future, public funding will be targeted on those vocational qualifications/units in the QCF, that sector organisations have advised should be considered for funding, this will include qualifications which are target bearing (full) with regard to the Adult Skills Public Service Agreement targets. The process of confirming qualifications for funding has already begun. Providers will be informed of those QCF qualifications which are to be publicly funded through the following routes: a web based list which will be updated on an ongoing basis, and the Learning Aims Database.

### Funding for non-QCF provision

**Myth:** NQF provision will continue to be funded in 2010/11.

**Reality:** SFA's intention is to focus funding on vocational qualifications in the QCF from August 2010, across all publicly funded programmes. It is recognised that the transition to QCF will not be fully complete until December 2010, and therefore some NQF provision may continue to be funded in the interim, but only where QCF provision does not exist, and only for a limited period and on sector organisation advice. More details about how providers may manage the transition to the QCF will be confirmed shortly. However, providers are expected to begin to deliver QCF qualifications, in preference to predecessor qualifications, as soon as they become available.

## QCF Flexibilities

**Myth:** Funding, performance and allocations methodologies will need immediate changes to support QCF flexibilities.

**Reality:** Many of the required flexibilities in the funding formula and performance measures exist currently, but have not been fully applied due to custom and practice, or the characteristics of the NQF. For example:

- Start and planned end dates in ALR can span 5 years and still be included in success rate calculations (3 years for ER)
- Funding rates can be assigned to learning aims, whether qualifications or units
- The ILR can record planned breaks in learning

However, some changes have been identified as potentially needed, including:

- Introduce a more flexible line in allocations for delivery of units for engagement and progression (depending on programme)
- Review how a short programme can be defined in a QCF context for funding purposes
- Greater flexibility for planned time to achieve used by providers
- A credit success rate to recognise unit achievement and progression

For 2011/12, SFA will be looking at ways of achieving greater alignment between funding and performance arrangements and the QCF through tactical changes where it will not disrupt providers. In the longer term, the use of credit as a consistent metric across funding, entitlement, performance, commissioning will require more far-reaching changes, and, if agreed, these are likely to be implemented incrementally from 2011/12 and 2012/13.

## Funding for recognition of prior learning, credit transfer and exemptions

**Myth:** Funding is not currently able to accommodate and limits the opportunities for recognition of prior learning.

**Reality:** Within the QCF there are three ways for learners to avoid duplication of learning and assessment:

- Credit transfer: for achievements in the QCF it will be possible to transfer credits.
- Exemptions: for certificated achievements outside the QCF, exemption can be claimed to achieve credits for designated units.
- RPL: for learning or achievements that have not been certificated, it will be possible to assess and validate these through an RPL process.

ILR field A51a is already used by providers to amend funding for a learning aim that does not require the full level of expected input. Where exemption and credit transfer are used toward the partial or full completion of a qualification, the LSC would not expect to fund that portion. For RPL, current policy is set out in the funding guidance, and providers are expected to abide by this. This policy is under review, and an announcement will be made in 2010.

## Further information and support available

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

LSC QCF Service Desk: tel. 0870 2670054 (8am-6pm weekdays excluding bank holidays in England) or via email [qcfservicedesk@lsc.gov.uk](mailto:qcfservicedesk@lsc.gov.uk)