

Qualifications and Credit Framework

Unit Delivery Trials 2011/12 Single Adult Skills Budget

Expressions of Interest Document

Version 1

October 2011

Of interest to providers

Background

1. During 2010/11 the Skills Funding Agency (Agency) supported a number of colleges and training organisations to trial unit delivery of Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) provision. The purpose was to both explore and test the flexibilities of the unit and credit qualifications framework system and also begin to deliver its benefits to learners and employers.
2. During 2011/12 the Agency wishes to take forward a second round of unit delivery trials, building on the 2010/11 programme and recognising that the QCF is now fully populated.
3. The evaluation of the 2010/11 unit delivery trials indicated that learners and employers welcomed the facility the QCF offers to undertake learning more flexibly and achieve incrementally. The trials also began to quantify some of the challenges, as well as opportunities, that there are for providers, learners and awarding organisations (AOs) in relation to both: (i) systems, processes and overall curriculum approaches required; and (ii) the planning necessary to support a more flexible approach to delivery and achievement. The full report of the evaluation of the 2010/11 unit delivery trials is available on the Agency's website.
4. To take part in the 2011/12 trials providers should submit an 'Expressions of Interest' (Eoi) to the Agency. Unlike the 2010/11 trials, the Agency will make available a range of units which are within the Rules of Combination of a qualification and confirmed for funding so providers will be able to select those units which will support their learner offer and progression.
5. The 2010/11 unit delivery trials established a momentum around flexible delivery and credit accumulation, and the Agency wishes to continue this into the 2011/12 trials. The recent consultation document [New Challenges, New Chances – Next Steps in Implementing the Further Education Reform Programme' \(August 2011\)](#) reiterates the commitment to encouraging flexible and innovative approaches to teaching and learning and a vision of a further education and skills sector more responsive to learner needs and enabled through new freedoms and flexibilities. The development of an effective system of credit accumulation and transfer, together with the facility to deliver learning in smaller steps is a key to supporting these aims.
6. These unit delivery trials are a distinct piece of work and should not be confused with other unit delivery that is taking place across:
 - Offender Learning and Skills;
 - Joint Investment Programme (Growth and Innovation Fund);
 - European Social Fund: Support for Redundancy;
 - The offer for individuals who are unemployed and need help to enter work.
6. The 2011/12 unit delivery trials are distinct because:
 - There is a broader offer available from Entry to Level 5 of the QCF;
 - Learners will be either employed, in full-time or part-time further education and training;
 - Where employed, learners may be seeking to reskill or up-skill;
 - Where not currently engaged in education, employment and training, units may be used to re-engage individuals;
 - Unit and credit accumulation and transfer may be used to support progression;

- Units may be used to support to support the acquisition of enterprise and/or entrepreneurship skills.

Aim, objectives and context

7. For 2011/12 the unit delivery trials will focus on how flexible delivery and credit accumulation can support individuals who:
 - May be returning to learning and are primarily working at entry level and Level 1;
 - May wish to undertake a 'full' qualification at Level 2 and 3 but who are not yet ready or able to commit to a 'full' qualification immediately;
 - May be seeking to progress into further learning and training, from level 3 to higher level skills;
 - May be wishing to 'upskill' and/or 'reskill' in response to local economic conditions and are willing to part subsidise their learning based on appropriate prior achievement;
 - May be looking to 'start up' in business or become freelance and so support enterprise and entrepreneurship skills.
8. Alongside the groups described above, the Agency also wants to use the 2011/12 unit delivery trials to test and understand:
 - How we can ensure learners undertaking flexible delivery are provided with high quality information and guidance;
 - How we, through the development of delivery models, establish an expectation that employers and learners either co-fund or fully fund the cost of unit delivery;
 - How we realise the benefits of the Personal Learning Record which has an important role in supporting both training organisations and learners in areas such as curriculum planning, information, advice and guidance.
9. We will include these areas in the external evaluation of the 2011/12 unit trials.
10. Unit delivery does not change a learner's entitlement or eligibility. These remain as identified in the Agency's [Learner Eligibility and Contribution Rules](#).

The Unit Offer

11. Unlike the 2010/12 trials, the 2011/12 trials will make available a range of units which will be:
 - Within the Rules of Combination (RoC) of a qualification already in the QCF and already confirmed for funding (in order to support progression to qualification achievement).
 - Within the RoC of a qualification with a primary purpose of:
 - 'A' (specifically **A4**) Recognised relevant to employability skills and/or knowledge;
 - 'B' Prepare for further learning or training and/or develop knowledge and/or skills in a subject area;
 - 'C' Prepare for employment;

The Agency is willing to consider those units that have a purpose of 'D' (i.e. confirm occupational competence) if providers propose these in their Expressions of Interest.

- Will be across Entry to Level 5 of the QCF and in the main, shared units.
 - Not have a minimum or maximum number of units imposed but providers involved in the trials should actively be supporting credit accumulation and transfer (CAT) towards qualification achievement (where appropriate) as defined by the operational start and end dates of the target qualification.
12. There are over 11,000 units available via the new learning aims reference application (LARA). We will add to this list in advance of the unit delivery trials so that the full list is comprehensive enough to support the trials. We will consider the delivery of alternative units, but only where they directly link to the aims of this 2011/12 trial work. Providers should provide full details of any alternative units they wish to be included in the trials. The list of units in scope for the trials can be found at <http://qcf.skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk/qcf-funding/unitdelivery/>.
13. For the 2011/12 unit delivery trials, those units that were previously offered as part of the 'Qualify with a Business' (QwaB) initiative will also be included so that providers can support provision focussed on enterprise and entrepreneurship.

Expressions of Interest (Eol) Scope

14. As indicated above, providers interested in participating in the 2011/12 unit delivery trials should take account of the objectives and overall themes identified above. In summary, these are to support:
- employment upskilling and reskilling,
 - access to and progression through entitlements; and
 - enterprise and entrepreneurship.
15. In submitting Eols to the Agency, providers need to be aware that involvement in the unit delivery trials will **not attract** any additional funding and delivery must be within the single Adult Skills Budget for 2011/12.
- Only providers in receipt of the single Adult Skills Budget and are approved to deliver provision for the Agency are eligible to take part in this work.
- Apprenticeships are **outside** the scope of these unit delivery trials.
16. Providers confirmed as participating in the trials will need to liaise with the relevant awarding organisation (AO) about the units they wish to use. The organisation that owns the unit, awards credit for the unit(s), registers and certificates should be identified and related arrangements clear and agreed.
17. Providers wishing to submit an Eol should ensure their Relationship Manager (formerly Account Manager) is informed. Agency colleagues in the appropriate Delivery Centre will also be kept informed for provider performance purposes.
18. These 2011/12 unit trials will be restricted to the current academic year and all unit delivery must be completed by 31 July 2012.
19. The Agency will, with the assistance of NIACE, undertake an independent evaluation of the unit delivery trials. We hope all participating providers will assist in the evaluation of the trials.

The Agency's Role

20. The Agency will:

- Provide advice and guidance to participating providers;
- work with providers to understand the challenges and issues in relation to the flexible delivery of qualifications;
- continue to stimulate the demand for credit accumulation and transfer;
- ensure outcomes from the trials can inform the continued reform of the adult further education and skills sector: and
- facilitate dialogue and the resolution of issues with awarding organisations where appropriate and necessary.

Timetable

23. Expressions of Interest should be returned by **Friday 28 October 2011**

24. Providers will be confirmed to participate in the unit delivery trials by **Friday 11 November 2011** and we expect learners to start as soon as possible thereafter.

25. The trials will complete **31 July 2012**.

Guidance for Expressions of Interest

26. The Agency hopes that by indicating the areas of preferred focus within this EoI it will encourage providers to further develop and exploit the benefits of flexible delivery and credit accumulation and transfer. As indicated previously, the key parameters are: would be:

- Units delivered must be from the identified list and if providers wish to identify additional units there must be a clear rationale for these to be included.
- Units must be within Rules of Combination of a QCF qualification already confirmed for funding at Entry to Level 5 and appearing on the QCF online list and available for delivery - [QCF Confirmation of funding](#).
- There should be a focus on supporting individuals to access and progress through entitlements.
- A focus on stimulating and supporting innovation approaches to co funding and employer investment.
- Particular focus on learners where unit delivery could support progression, reskilling, upskilling and entrepreneurship.

Next steps

27. The attached profoma for Expressions of Interest should be returned to the contact below by **Friday 28 October 2011**.

Contact details

Peter Coady
Funding Policy Team
Skills Funding Agency
Cheylesmore House
Quinton Road
Coventry
CV1 2WT

Email: peter.coady@skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk

Expression of Interest Pro forma Unit Delivery Trials 2011/12 Single Adult Skills Budget

Organisation Name	
UPIN	
Organisation Address (including Post Code)	
Organisation Contact (this should be the lead for the trials) Name: Address: (if different from provider's address) Phone: e-mail:	
Skills Funding Agency Relationship Manager Name (previously Account Manager)	
Before completing, please ensure the accompanying guidance to this pro forma has been read.	
Please indicate which of the main theme(s) (paragraph 14) the proposed trials will focus on?	
At this stage and depending on the theme, how far do you anticipate the trials actively seeking to stimulate co-investment?	
Within those themes and taking account of paragraphs 7 and 8; what particular cohorts of learners do you intend to focus on?	
At this point in time, what are your estimated volumes of learners likely to be involved?	
Are there any partner organisations (including employers) involved in the delivery of the trials. If so, please list them here.	

<p>Are you involved in any other unit delivery? If so, please indicate what this is?</p>																					
<p>The Unit Offer:</p>																					
<p>Please list the units you intend to delivery in the trials on the right, including the Awarding Organisation(s) you intend to work with. The list of units in scope can be found at: http://qcf.skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk/qcf-funding/unitdelivery/. (If you are unsure which Awarding Organisation you can work with to deliver the unit, a link to the Official Register of Regulated Qualifications is provided in the spreadsheet. You may need to copy and paste the link into your browser for it to work.)</p>	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="534 315 754 353">Unit Reference</th> <th data-bbox="754 315 1182 353">Unit Title</th> <th data-bbox="1182 315 1506 353">Awarding Organisation</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="534 353 754 394"></td> <td data-bbox="754 353 1182 394"></td> <td data-bbox="1182 353 1506 394"></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="534 394 754 434"></td> <td data-bbox="754 394 1182 434"></td> <td data-bbox="1182 394 1506 434"></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="534 434 754 474"></td> <td data-bbox="754 434 1182 474"></td> <td data-bbox="1182 434 1506 474"></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="534 474 754 515"></td> <td data-bbox="754 474 1182 515"></td> <td data-bbox="1182 474 1506 515"></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="534 515 754 555"></td> <td data-bbox="754 515 1182 555"></td> <td data-bbox="1182 515 1506 555"></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>			Unit Reference	Unit Title	Awarding Organisation															
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<p>Are there any additional units not on the list you wish to be included; if so, please list these and also provide a rationale for their inclusion.</p>																					

Please email the completed pro formal to Peter Coady (peter.coady@skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk) no later than Friday 28 October 2011.

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