

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

Managing down NQF provision

Date: 08 October 2010

Purpose

- 1 This paper outlines the ongoing process for the transition from the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) to the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) for publicly funded learners aged 19 and over in England. This paper updates the 'Managing the Transition from Funding Qualifications on the NQF to Funding Qualifications on the QCF' paper published by the Skills Funding Agency (referred to as the Agency here after) on 04 June 2010.
- 2 This process does not apply to:
 - a. NQF provision in existing Apprenticeship Frameworks which may continue as the timescales for the refreshing of frameworks to ensure they are drawn from QCF provision and are SASE compliant is different. Further information can be found in the [July Policy Update](#).
 - b. Some categories of NQF provision Skills for Life, GCSEs, A Levels and Functional Skills and Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) recognised Access to Higher Education (HE), which are outside the scope of the QCF, and therefore will continue to be funded.

Introduction and Approach

- 3 The implementation of the QCF across the post 19 Further Education and Skills sector in England is a key part of the Agency's work, and is central to the aspiration for a system where there is wider and more flexible access to skills training and a greater focus on skills for the modern world. As part of the implementation of the QCF and wider programme of vocational qualification reform, the Agency has begun to focus funding on provision from the QCF from 01 August 2010 and intends to move to a comprehensive QCF offer by January 2011.
- 4 To support the transition to the QCF there are two activities that the Agency will undertake:
 - a. Confirming QCF qualifications for public funding
 - b. Cessation of funding of NQF qualifications.

Confirming QCF qualifications for public funding

- 5 From 01 April 2010, the Agency assumed responsibility for confirming qualifications for public funding for post 19 learners in England. A high level overview of the Agency's process for confirming public funding is available on the [Agency website](#). This process, by which vocational qualifications will be confirmed for funding on the advice of sector organisations, is part of the move to focussing funding on the QCF.
- 6 QCF qualifications already confirmed for funding and available for delivery now and throughout the forthcoming delivery year (2010/11) can be viewed on the [Agency website](#). This list is currently updated on a bi-weekly basis.

Cessation of funding of NQF qualifications

- 7 As part of the transition to the QCF the Agency has embarked upon a process of removing funding for NQF qualifications where an appropriate QCF offer exists and is available for delivery. Taking account of provider concerns regarding transition times the Agency is doing this in three stages. The first tranche of turning off funding for NQF qualifications was completed in July 2010. The second tranche is taking place in September 2010 and the final tranche will take place in January 2011 for the small number of NQF qualifications where the appropriate QCF offer will not be available until early 2011.

- 8 Funding will only be ceased for new starts in all three tranches. Therefore continuing learners (learners enrolled before the last date for new starts) will be funded to complete the qualification.
- 9 The Agency has been working with sector organisations to identify and confirm those vocational NQF qualifications where funding can cease for new starts. The Agency is also taking account of information from the UK Commission of Employment and Skills (UKCES) action plan database in terms of both anticipated availability of QCF provision and where there may be any delays in the transition. This information forms the basis of NQF turn off lists for each tranche. During the process of compiling the lists of NQF qualifications in scope for ceasing of funding, the Agency has shared the lists with the Association of Colleges (AoC), the Association of Learning Providers (ALP), the Federation of Awarding Bodies (FAB) and the Joint Council for General Qualifications (JCQ). We have also worked with individual Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) as well as individual awarding organisations (via FAB) to ensure we can arrive at lists which are accurate.

Summary of Timelines

July Published List

- 10 Following the first tranche of turning off funding for NQF qualifications in July 2010, a confirmed list of NQF qualifications was published for which funding has ceased for new starts from the 31 July 2010. The list contained 2,117 NQF qualifications. Challenges were upheld for 345 NQF qualifications which had funding extended until the 31 December 2010 for new starts or the accreditation/operational end date, whichever is sooner. The July list of qualifications for which funding has ceased can be found on the [Agency website](#).

End of September Published List

- 11 The list for the removal of funding published on the 30 September 2010, identifies:
 - a. those NQF qualifications where appropriate QCF qualifications are already accredited, available for delivery and confirmed for funding ¹,
 - b. a small minority of NQF qualifications where QCF qualification will be accredited, available for delivery and confirmed for funding no later than end November 2010.
- 12 As identified above the list includes those NQF qualifications where for certain sectors or levels, the appropriate QCF offer is anticipated to be in place and available for delivery no later than the end of November. We realise that this may constrain readiness to deliver but wished to include these qualifications in order to support as broad a QCF offer as possible and in the context that historically the majority of new starts tend to come towards March rather than January. However, we are aware of the risks of including these NQF qualifications where the timescale for providers to prepare to deliver is curtailed and do expect a number of challenges to be focused on these NQF qualifications.

End of January Published List

- 13 There will be a small group of NQF qualifications where the appropriate QCF offer will not be ready for delivery in 2010. These qualifications will be reviewed in January 2011 and it is intended that these qualifications will be funded on an exceptional basis and funding will cease for new starts on 31 March 2011 or the accreditation/operational end date, whichever is sooner.

¹ Qualifications confirmed for funding can be found on the list on [the Agency website](#).

- 14 A list of those NQF qualifications where funding for new starts will continue is published alongside the 'NQF turn off' list on 30 September 2010.
- 15 Going forward, the Agency will, each January, publish a list of those qualifications where funding for new starts may be subject to review in advance of the new academic year.

Challenges to the Published Lists

- 16 The Agency will consider formal challenges to the published lists at each tranche when the lists are published. Further information regarding the challenge process will be published alongside the lists on the [Agency website](#). Please note that there will only be a small window for challenges to be submitted. Challenges will not be considered once the deadline has passed. NQF qualifications will be extended only where a successful challenge has been agreed. This agreement will be at the discretion of the Agency's Strategic Approvals Panel (SAP).
- 17 The diagram below summarises the timetable:

Diagram 1: Funding for new starts on QCF and NQF



	April – July 2010	Aug – Dec 2010	Jan 2011 onwards
What will be funded?	Both NQF and QCF provision funded	Majority of funded provision on QCF; some NQF provision.	Mainly QCF provision funded, NQF qualifications funded on exceptional basis for a limited period in 2011
What will not be funded?		NQF provision on July list will not be funded	NQF provision on September list will not be funded
Lists published	July list published (Confirmed list of NQF qualifications for which funding will cease for new starts from the 31 July 2010)	September list published (Initial list of NQF qualifications for which funding will cease for new starts or the accreditation/operational end date from the 31 December 2010. This list will be confirmed on the 22 November 2010)	January list published (Initial list of NQF qualifications for which funding will cease for new starts or the accreditation/operational end date from the 31 March 2011.

Further information and support

- 18 More information relating to the QCF, including transition is available on the [Agency website](#).
- 19 The Agency has put in place a service desk to act as the single point of entry for QCF queries and to handle the anticipated higher volume of queries during the transition period. It can be accessed at qcf servicedesk@skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk. Queries received via the service desk will also inform a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document that will also be made available on the QCF website.

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