

**Vocational Qualification Reform &
Qualification and Credit Framework
(QCF) Implementation:**

**Technical Parameters for Funding
Programmes for the Unemployed –
Version 1**

16 June 2010

Background and Purpose

1. This document sets out the details of what will be funded within Programmes for the Unemployed, commencing with the policy intent of provision, the scope of the offers and identifying the technical funding parameters which Sector Skills Councils (SSCs), Standard Setting Bodies (SSBs), Sector Bodies (SBs) and awarding organisations (AOs) should work within. This document should be read in conjunction with the general guidance on technical parameters.

Policy Intent

2. The objective of pre-employment training (currently delivered through the Programmes for the Unemployed suit of provision) is to equip a learner with the appropriate skills to compete effectively in the labour market.

Scope of the offer

3. Provision in this area can vary by regional and learner need it comprises of:
 - Short courses (typically 2-8 week interventions),
 - Small (Bite-sized) qualifications
 - Longer term intervention (3-6 month interventions)
 - And parts of qualifications alongside non-accredited skills development packages.
4. The Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) offers the opportunity to have more of the content in these interventions nationally recognised by using qualifications and units drawn from the framework and, where units are used, allowing learners to begin to transfer and accumulate credit towards a qualification in the future.
5. Within the context of the areas of provision listed below, SSCs/SSBs/SBs should identify where current QCF provision of an appropriate standard for their sector exists, or, in the absence of existing provision, commission the development of appropriate units and qualifications working with awarding organisations. SSC/SSB/SB advice will not be sought for non-vocational provision.
6. It is expected that in the main, vocational units confirmed for funding in Programmes for the Unemployed (including pre-employment provision funded through the ALR budget) will be drawn from units in the rules of combination (ROC) of those vocational qualifications already in the QCF and be predominantly those already confirmed for public funding or in the process of being confirmed. So, for example, where SSCs/SSBs/SBs have already identified target-bearing (full) Level 2 and 3 vocational qualifications in these programmes, it is expected that they will also identify some or all of these qualifications as appropriate for provision in Programmes for the Unemployed, rather than needing to undertake a fresh exercise.
7. However, given the interventional nature of aspects of the offer in Programmes for the Unemployed, SSCs/SSBs/SBs may also wish to review the appropriateness of some smaller qualifications at Award size for use in this funding stream. We are aware that not all qualifications covered in Programmes for the unemployed will need to be target bearing (full) Level 2 and Level 3 qualifications. As with all other Skills Funding Agency programmes we will move to focus funding on the use of shared units in the forthcoming delivery year.

8. Programmes for the Unemployed/ pre-employment provision is typically made up of three areas, and can be very different in each region and depending on the learners needs in that area. Each area contains distinct offers:
- a) **Employability provision:** This area covers provision to give learners skills to work in employment, It operates on a roll on/ roll off basis throughout an academic year this can include employability training or personal and social developmental learning for adults and is usually delivered along with basic skills qualifications. Examples of generic employability skills would encompass, time-keeping, communicating at work, reliability and so on. Current examples of this provision are -**Employability Skills Programme (ESP):**
 - b) **Short sharp training opportunities focused on work and occupationally focussed.** They can be delivered full or part time and typically last between 2 and 8 weeks. The training focuses on skills development and relates to a sector offering current vacancies or in which there will be vacancies in the near future. Training offered need not lead to qualifications, but can be composed of a coherent package of recognised units in the QCF (within ROC of accredited qualifications) made available to provide individuals with transferable achievement (credit) of skills and knowledge for future progression. Current examples of this provision are - **Response to Redundancy**
 - c) **Longer term intervention that can be used to support learners who need a significant re-skilling or up-skilling in order to compete in the labour market (typically 3 – 6 months in duration)** Training delivered under this offer should support progression, of participants towards the achievement of a target bearing (full) Level 2 or Level 3 qualification that can be continued in work or around work if required. The offer can then include units within the ROC of a target bearing (full) level 2 or level 3 qualification or a coherent package of recognised units in the QCF which can deliver a bespoke learning episode for each learner and where the credit can be accumulated and transferred to an appropriate qualification (units again within the ROC of the chosen qualification). Current examples of this provision are – **Work Focused Training.**

Technical Funding Parameters

9. The technical parameters to be followed by SSCs/SSBs/SBs, when recommending vocational qualifications in the QCF to be considered for funding in Programmes for the Unemployed, are set out below. It is acknowledged there will on occasion be legitimate exceptions to these. Where this is the case, a clear written rationale must be provided for consideration by the Skills Funding Agency and a final decision will be made by the Strategic Approvals Panel.
10. The technical funding parameters vary for each are of provision of the Programmes for the Unemployed, according to the offer which the strand provides. Qualifications meeting the parameters for one or more of the strands will be confirmed for funding within Programmes for the Unemployed.

Volume of Learning and Challenge

11. QCF qualifications, and units within the rules of combination for QCF qualifications, may be identified for Programmes for the Unemployed, as follows:
- a) **Shared Units within the rules of combination for vocational qualifications** confirmed for funding from Entry Level to Level 3. (Appropriate for Response to Redundancy and other funded short pre-employment interventions, some of which will be ESF funded). For the latter, these should be units that meet

participant and local recruiting sector needs within the rules of combination for vocational qualifications).

- b) **Units within the rules of vocational qualifications approved for public funding focused on employability**, at Entry Levels 2 and 3. (Appropriate for 2-8 week intervention work).
- c) **Target-bearing (full) Level 2 and 3 vocational qualifications** confirmed for funding under Adult Learner Responsive provision or Train to Gain, or units within the RoC of these qualifications. These will normally be Certificates or Diplomas. The expectation is that learners will start these qualifications within this offer, then move on to complete them within the Train to Gain or Adult Learner Responsive offers. Where a qualification already confirmed for funding in Train to Gain is identified the SSC/SSB/SB must be content that the delivery context is appropriate for its availability in this strand.
- d) **Vocational qualifications at Entry Level and Level 1**. These may be of Award or Certificate size, but would not be expected to include Diplomas. (Appropriate for Response to Redundancy).
- e) **Vocational qualifications focused on employability** at Entry Levels 2 and 3 and Level 1. These may be of Award or Certificate size, but would not be expected to include Diplomas. (Appropriate to Employability Skills Programme and other pre-employment employability programmes, many of which will be ESF funded)

Qualification Purpose

- 12. For provision within Programmes for the Unemployed, the Agency would in general expect to see qualifications, or units belonging to qualifications, with the following purposes:
 - a) **Vocational qualifications focused on employability**: 'C' (Prepare for employment), with 'A' (Recognise personal growth and engagement in learning), 'B' (Prepare for further learning or training and/or develop knowledge and/or skills in a subject area) also acceptable.
 - b) **Vocational qualifications at Entry Level and Level 1**: At Level 1: 'A4' (Recognise development of employability skills and/or knowledge), 'B' (Prepare for further learning or training and/or develop knowledge and/or skills in a subject area), C1 (Prepare for employment in a broad occupational area) or 'D1' (Confirm competence in an occupational role to the standards required). At Entry Level: 'A4' (Recognise development of employability skills and/or knowledge), 'B1' (Prepare for further learning or training) or 'C' (Prepare for employment).
 - c) **Target bearing (full) Level 2 and 3 vocational qualifications**: Purpose indicators should be as appropriate for Train to Gain or Adult Learner Responsive provision. Qualifications with Purpose 'D' (Confirm occupational competence) should generally be accepted only where assessment can be carried out in a realistic working environment.

Process and Timescales

- 13. The Skills Funding Agency will only accept advice from SSCs/SSBs/SBs via the Action Plan database. Sector bodies must ensure the database is updated regularly and accurately to permit a timely response. The Action plan database must be fully populated with all funding stream information by the 9th of July

14. SSCs/SSBs/SBs must ensure that the Action Plan database is completed correctly, including all fields and that where more than one Awarding Organisations offers the qualification, all Awarding Organisations are referenced.
15. Once approved for funding through the Agency's funding approval process and confirmed by the Strategic Approvals Panel the qualification will be added to the published list of approved qualifications. This list will be a 'live' list and will be available on the Skills Funding Agency website, the list will be updated on a fortnightly basis from April to December 2010.
16. Where an SSC/SSB/SB identifies a qualification which needs to be considered as an exception a written case must be put forward to the appropriate Skills Funding Agency Sector Manager setting out the rationale for the recommendation. This will then be considered and a final decision made by the Strategic Approvals Panel.

Notification of Unit Funding

17. The SSC will notify the Agency through the APDB of the qualification they require for public funding and then notify us of any units of that qualification that are not appropriate through the sector manager on an exceptions basis. We are currently exploring how we can integrate the notification of units into the system.

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