

# **Qualifications and Credit Framework: Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)**

**Updated: July 2011**

## **Purpose and Scope**

This updated Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document has been produced to support colleges and training organisations in the delivery of publicly funded qualifications and units from the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF).

The document will also be of interest to awarding organisations and other stakeholders and sits alongside other materials and resources (referenced throughout) linked to QCF delivery.

The document is split into two sections;

- Section 1. General QCF questions and answers.
- Section 2. Unit Delivery questions and answers.

Questions and responses have been categorised under the following headings to help colleagues use the document;

### **Section 1: QCF**

- [QCF Qualifications](#)
- [Transition from National Qualifications Framework \(NQF\) to QCF](#)
- [Qualifications and Funding](#)
- [The Learning Aim Database \(LAD\) / Learning Aim Reference Application \(LARA\)](#)
- [Performance Measures](#)
- [Apprenticeships](#)
- [Personal Learning Record for the QCF](#)
- [Recognition of Prior Learning](#)
- [Shared / Restricted Units](#)
- [Review of Vocational Education - The Wolf Report](#)
- [A Single Regulatory Framework](#)
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### **Section 2: Unit Delivery**

- [Unit Based Delivery](#)
- [Unemployed Learners](#)
- [Recording in the Individualised Learner Record \(ILR\)](#)
- [Evaluation](#)
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# Section 1: QCF

## QCF Qualifications

### 1. Who decides which qualifications receive public funding?

The Skills Funding Agency (Agency) confirms which qualifications are publicly funded for learners aged 19 or over in England. It does this through a funding confirmation process, which has replaced the previous 'Section 97' arrangements. Currently the Agency confirms qualifications for public funding in line with priorities identified in the annual [Skills Investment Strategy](#) and in line with a set of parameters aligned to qualification 'size' (credit value), purpose and based on learner entitlements and eligibility and programme.

### 2. Who does the Agency take advice from on confirming qualifications for public funding?

For vocational qualifications accredited into the QCF the Agency currently seeks advice from Sectors Skills Councils, Standard Setting Bodies and Sector Bodies (referred to hereafter as SSCs). For non-vocational provision accredited into the QCF the Agency will seek external advice from appropriate representative bodies where required. Further details on the current funding confirmation process are available on the [Skills Funding Agency](#) website.

### 3. How do I find out what QCF qualifications are available for public funding?

The Agency publishes an online list of QCF qualifications confirmed for public funding on the [Skills Funding Agency](#) website. From the end of July 2011 the list will be updated on a monthly basis with the Learning Aim Database (LAD) updated 2-3 weeks following the publication of the list to reflect changes or amendments.

Qualifications are confirmed for funding for the academic year or their operational end date (set by Awarding Organisations and recorded by Ofqual), whichever is sooner. Every January the Agency will review the confirmation of provision for public funding for the following academic year, at which point the funding end date for all confirmed qualifications will be extended as appropriate.

### 4. Why is a particular QCF qualification not confirmed for public funding?

Not all qualifications in the QCF will automatically be confirmed for public funding, this is because funding policy decisions are separate from regulatory decisions. There may be a range of reasons why a qualification in the QCF has not been confirmed for public funding:

- The qualification is categorised as prescribed Higher Education, e.g. Foundation Degrees, Higher Nationals and Degrees, and therefore not within the remit of the Agency.
- Qualifications identified as ineligible for funding due to statutory<sup>1</sup> or Ministerial restrictions, e.g. provision which meets statutory and/or employer responsibility such as health and safety at work, food safety and first aid.
- The qualification does not meet current Agency funding parameters around size (credit value), purpose or level. The Agency has produced and currently operates a set of funding parameters applicable to Adult Learner Responsive, Train to Gain, Foundation Learning and Offender Learning and Skills Service. The funding parameters can be found on the [Skills Funding Agency](#) website. The Agency is currently reviewing both the funding confirmation process and the funding

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<sup>1</sup> Please refer to [Vocational Qualification Reform & Qualifications and Credit Framework Implementation - Technical Parameters for Funding - General Guidance](#) document.

parameters in the context of the move towards a single Adult Skills Budget, the [Wolf Report of 14-19 Vocational Education and Training](#) and in order to support a broader QCF offer for full and part public subsidy. Further details of this review will be disseminated in early autumn 2011<sup>2</sup>.

- The qualification is not supported for public funding by the relevant SSC. Some qualifications will not be supported for public funding as they do not meet current industry standards and/or technical requirements set by the applicable SSC.

#### **5. A QCF qualification has been accredited on Ofqual's Register of Regulated Qualifications but a funding decision has not been made by the Agency as part of the funding confirmation process, why is this?**

Where a new vocational qualification has been accredited into the QCF and appears on Ofqual's [Register of Regulated Qualifications](#) the Agency will need to seek SSC advice as part of the funding confirmation process before a final decision on funding can be made. Time scales for the funding confirmation process are outlined in the [Qualification Journey](#) (updated 9 December 2010) document.

#### **6. There is a qualification on the Learning Aim Database with a 'last date for new starts' for 31 December 2010, why is this qualification no longer available for funding new starts for adult learners?**

There are some qualifications which were approved for funding Under Section 97 of the Learning and Skills Act 2000 prior to 1 April 2010 but which have not been confirmed for funding by the Agency going forward. These are referred to as 'legacy Section 97 qualifications'. If an awarding organisation and/or SSC wishes these 'legacy Section 97 qualifications' to be considered for future funding they will need to be reviewed as part of the current funding confirmation process and SSC advice sought.

#### **7. Why is a QCF qualification on the confirmed for funding list but not available on the LAD?**

Qualification funding details are updated to the LAD by the Data Service. This can take up to 2-3 weeks from when the online list is updated on the Skills Funding Agency website. If you have any further queries regarding the LAD please contact the Data Service, Service Desk on 0870 267 0001 or by email [servicedesk@thedataservice.org.uk](mailto:servicedesk@thedataservice.org.uk).

Please also refer to the [Qualification Journey](#) document (updated 9 December 2010) for further clarification.

#### **8. Will Awards at Levels 2 and 3 be funded?**

Currently Awards at levels 2 and 3 are not routinely funded<sup>3</sup>. This is because 'full' qualifications at level 2 are drawn from the Certificate and Diploma band of the QCF and 'full' qualifications at level 3 will be drawn predominantly (though not exclusively) from the Diploma band. Therefore this excludes the funding of Awards at Levels 2 and 3.

#### **9. How are 'full' Level 2 / Level 3 qualifications within the QCF defined?**

As indicated above, 'full' qualifications in the QCF are defined by size (Certificates and Diplomas at level 2 and Diplomas at level 3) and also purpose. In addition, SSCs, in advising the Agency on which vocational qualifications to fund will also designate

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<sup>2</sup> Although the Agency is implementing a Single Adult Skills Budget from 2011/12; until the review of funding confirmation process is complete, we will still apply existing parameters. Parameters for Train to gain will be applied to the Work Place Offer and parameters for ALR to the classroom based offer.

<sup>3</sup> Except for exceptional cases, made by a SSC where credit threshold for minimal occupational competency in a particular sector or sub-sector, is set at 12 credits or fewer.

qualifications as 'full'. Where the qualification is competency based the SSC will set a credit threshold to indicate minimal occupation competence in that sector or sub sector.

## **Transition from National Qualifications Framework (NQF) to QCF**

### **10. Is the transition of vocational NQF qualifications to the QCF complete?**

In the main the transition from focussing funding on vocational qualifications in the QCF and away from vocational qualifications in the NQF is now complete. There are a small number of NQF qualifications where, because of exceptional circumstances, funding for new starts will need to continue until 31 July 2011. These are identified on the [Skills Funding Agency](#) website in the document titled [NQF Qualifications confirmed for withdrawal of public funding](#) (published 31 January 2011).

### **11. What about Skills for Life, Functional Skills, GCSE's, A levels etc?**

There are certain categories of provision which will continue to be eligible for funding within the NQF. These are general qualifications, such as GCSEs, A levels, Skills for Life Adult Literacy and Numeracy qualifications, ESoL and Functional Skills. These are only published on the [Learning Aim Database](#) (and subsequently the [Learning Aim Reference Application – LARA](#)) and will not be identified on the list of QCF qualifications confirmed for funding.

### **12. The Awarding Organisation has extended the operational end date of a qualification and informed me it will be funded for adults, but this is not reflected on the Learning Aim Database (LAD), when will this happen?**

If an Awarding Organisation extends the operational end date of a qualification, this does not automatically mean the qualification will also have its funding extended to match the operational end date. In all cases where an Awarding Organisation extends an operational end date, providers should check with the Agency, via the online list and/or LAD about the funding status.

## **Qualifications and Funding**

### **13. Will providers be funded for delivering units or qualifications, or both?**

Providers are funded on the basis of delivering 'full' qualifications but increasingly and within certain parameters, the Agency is now supporting the delivery of units. Since 2009 the Agency has been taking forward unit delivery trials in order to support providers in realising the flexibilities of the QCF, including the facility to support learners undertaking learning in small size steps and accumulate achievement towards a qualification incrementally.

During 2010/11 unit delivery trials have continued in Adult Learning Responsive, and units are also being delivered within Offender Learning and Skills Service (OLASS) and as part of the Joint Investment Programme (JIP). We have recently expanded the Unit Delivery trials to a small number of private training organisations, working closely with the Association of Learning Providers (ALP). From 1 August there will also be a substantial unit offer specifically to support the unemployed and we also expect to continue the unit delivery trials in the Single Adult Skills Budget in 2011/12.

Providers should note that the facility to deliver publicly funded units is currently limited to supporting unemployed learners, OLASS, JIP and providers participating in the unit delivery trials in 2011/12. This does not limit a provider's ability to deliver credit-based units of regulated qualifications at full cost to the learner or provider.

#### **14. Why do qualifications on the LAD have a funding validity start date of 1 August 2011? Is this correct?**

The Learning Aims Database has been updated to reflect changes to learning aim availability in order to support the implementation of a single offer for all providers effective 1 August 2011. This is due to the implementation of the single Adult Skills Budget in 2011/12 which was announced in [Guidance Note 7: April 2011](#). The impact is that qualifications that are approved for only one funding model in 2010/11 can be available for both in 2011/12, but providers will need to be aware of awarding organisation assessment requirements and methodology.

Further information about the single adult skills budget in 2011/12 is provided in [Funding Requirements for 2011/12](#).

#### **15. How are rates for QCF qualifications being set?**

For 2011/12 we are continuing to use the existing methodology for setting funding values (rates) for QCF qualifications. The principle of this approach is that funding rates should reflect the directly-incurred costs of efficiently delivered provision. Guided learning hours (GLH) are used as the measure of costs incurred for Adult Learner Responsive provision. Activity – delivering provision and assessment in the workplace (together with any associated GLH) is used as the measure of costs incurred in Apprenticeships.

A set of standard rates based on the level of the learning aim is used for learning aims where the primary purpose is to confirm competence delivered through the ER\_Other route. Please refer to the following document - [Train to Gain 2010/11 Funding Requirements Principles, Rules and Regulations section 4](#) for further details.

During 2011/12 it is expected that the simplified approach to funding will be modelled for all providers, which will include a simplified set of rates. For further information on funding simplification and modelling please see the [Skills Funding Agency's](#) website, which will be updated with further details in the near future.

#### **16. Why are some QCF qualifications funded at a lower rate than similar qualifications which the Agency previously funded in the National Qualifications Framework (NQF)?**

It is important to note that the QCF and NQF are different qualification frameworks with different 'rules' for qualification design and development. Qualifications in the QCF should not be viewed as 'like for like' replacements for similar qualifications in the NQF.

QCF qualifications may be larger or smaller than similar qualifications in the NQF and rates will be set accordingly. Irrespective of the comparison of 'size', currently rates are set to reflect the guided learning hours (GLH) of the actual qualification, not on the basis of a 'predecessor'.

#### **17. Why are changes made to the GLH for a qualification during the academic year not reflected on the LAD?**

Funding rates are set based on the information available to the Agency at the time the qualification is accredited by Ofqual. Subsequent changes to the qualification, such as a change to the recommended GLH are not automatically updated. The Agency has implemented a new review process that will monitor changes, for example, the GLH on which the funding rate was set to is the most up to date recommended GLH as recorded by Ofqual. This is a new process which started in January 2011. Any changes required as a result of that review are implemented for the next funding year.

## **The Learning Aim Database (LAD) / Learning Aim Reference Application (LARA)**

### **18. What is the Learning Aim Database Replacement Project?**

The Data Service is working on a project to redevelop the LAD for 2011/12 in order to better reflect recent qualification reform such as the QCF but also to be more responsive and fit for purpose.

Work is progressing on developing a replacement system for the LAD, the Learning Aim Reference Application (LARA). The objective of the LARA system is to decrease the time it takes for learning aim and funding information to be made available to training organisations and other key stakeholders. The system will also include new information concerning the status of funding decisions in order to improve clarity and transparency of the information presented.

It is expected that LARA will be available from July 2011 and in the interim the Data Service will be publishing validity and funding information for 2011/12 on the LAD. Validity and Funding information for 2011/12 has now been updated. This includes base details for the offer for the unemployed and expansion of validity and funding details in the ER\_Other section of the LAD (current known as Train to Gain) to support the introduction of the single adult offer.

Even though the LAD will contain 11/12 funding information it will not support the 2011/12 data collection cycle for the ILR. The LAD will be maintained throughout the remainder of the 2010/11 Data Collection cycle.

Further information about LARA can be found on the [Data Service](#) website.

## **Performance Measures**

### **19. Is the Skills Funding Agency going to change the way provider performance is measured as a result of the QCF?**

The Agency is taking forward work to understand the implications of the QCF as a unit based and credit framework on current performance measures. Currently success measures (such as the Qualification Success Rate and Minimum Levels of Performance) do not take account of the attributes of unit and credit or of the award of credit alongside the award of qualifications. This runs the risk of inhibiting some of the flexibility of the QCF, including Credit Accumulation and Transfer.

We have consulted with colleagues' in the Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA) and in Ofsted on what a broader Qualification Success Rate (QSR), incorporating credit might look like and how it might be applied and we are now taking forward modelling work in this area, particularly focusing on the unit offer to support the unemployed. We are currently undertaking initial modelling work, with results due before the end of 2011. Outcomes from the initial modelling work will support further comprehensive analysis work and is expected to continue in early 2011/12 with an aspiration for implementation of a revised QSR for 2012/13.

### **20. What will happen if a learner decides to leave their course having achieved some units, but not a qualification? How will this affect provider success rates?**

The answer depends on what has been entered as the learner's learning aim on the Individualised Learner Record (ILR). The Agency's Qualification Success Rate measures are based on successful completion of the stated learning aim. This means that a learner

who achieved units but did not complete their intended qualification would not be counted as a success in the provider's success rate (although this should not detract from the fact that the learner has achieved and gained credit). However, if the learner is enrolled specifically on units (through the unit funding trials) then this will not impact the qualification success rate positively or negatively.

## **Apprenticeships**

### **21. How does the QCF impact on Apprenticeships?**

Currently the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) is working with the delegated issuing Authorities to implement the new Specification for apprenticeship standards in England (SASE) compliant frameworks. SASE compliant frameworks will need to ensure that all qualifications are listed on the QCF.

Please note that due to the large number of frameworks being approved, NAS are experiencing slight delays making the frameworks available for funding. Please be assured that where frameworks take longer to make available on the LAD, NAS will backdate funding where appropriate.

For more information regarding the SASE and a list of new SASE compliant frameworks and availability for funding, please visit the [National Apprenticeship website](#).

## **Personal Learning Record for the QCF**

### **22. What is the Personal Learning Record (PLR) for the QCF?**

The PLR can support the operation of Credit Accumulation and Transfer in the QCF and is also a critical part of the work being taken forward on Lifelong Learning Accounts and Further Education Loans.

The PLR is a free service that helps providers and advisers support learners to access and interpret their QCF achievement data via the PLR, on-line and in one place.

- The 'find a QCF qualification' feature allows the user to select a qualification and identify what additional units a learner requires for it, or select some or all of the units a learner has and identify which achievements they can build towards.
- The PLR displays the achievements gathered from multiple sources.
- Learners can obtain personalised information, advice and guidance and enrol more easily with providers without the need to re-present data and information already collected.
- The PLR enables the learner through a provider or an adviser to view and review their learning and support them in making the right learning choices.
- More information on how to view the PLR and use the 'find a QCF qualification' function can be found in the [User Guide](#).

Further information and support on the PLR is available at the [Personal Learning Record website](#).

### **23. What data will available be on the PLR?**

The type of QCF qualification and unit data available on the Personal Learning Record consists of:

- Subject
- Level

- Grade
- Credit
- Source
- Start Date
- End Date
- Award Date
- Reference Code
- Name of Owning Organisation
- Grading Type
- Minimum Guided Hours

QCF achievement may be on the PLR which has been sourced from the Individualised Learner Record (ILR). This data is not used within the QCF modelling functionality.

The PLR for an individual may also hold details of other qualifications and participation data which is sourced from the ILR or schools data.

## Recognition of Prior Learning

### **24. How should providers handle Recognition of Prior Learning when the Agency does not provide funding for it?**

It is incorrect to say that the Agency does not provide funding for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL). RPL is a method of assessment that considers whether a learner can demonstrate that they can meet the assessment requirements for a unit through knowledge, understanding or skills they already possess and do not need to develop through a course of learning and is distinct from credit transfer (for existing achievement within the QCF) or exemptions (for certificated achievement outside the QCF). Where credit transfer or exemptions are used towards a qualification, the Agency would not expect to fund for that portion of the qualification.

However, for RPL, the current policy is that a reduction in funding is expected only where 50% or more of the assessment is carried out through RPL, and there is a 50% reduction in funding for those parts of the qualification achieved through RPL. The full current policy is set out in the relevant programme section on the [Skills Funding Agency](#) website, and providers are expected to abide by this.

## Shared / Restricted Units

### **25. Does it make any difference whether a qualification is made up of shared or restricted units?**

In recommending vocational QCF qualifications for public funding the Agency has stated that we wish to support the use of shared units<sup>4</sup> across the QCF in order to drive forward and stimulate credit accumulation and transfer and because we believe this represents best value for public money. However we also understand there are, in certain instances, clear reasons why restricted units<sup>5</sup> may be used. Therefore, qualifications which include restricted units may be funded but on the basis of a clear rationale and in line with [Ofqual guidance](#) on designating units as shared or restricted (May 2009).

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<sup>4</sup> A 'shared unit' is a unit that a recognised organisation places in the unit data-bank and makes available to all other recognised organisations to access for use in the development of its rules of combination and to award credit for.

<sup>5</sup> A 'restricted unit' is a unit that a recognised organisation places in the unit data-bank and restricts the use of to a list of recognised organisations to access for use in the development of its rules of combination and to award credit for.

## **Review of Vocational Education - The Wolf Report**

### **26. What are the implications for post 19 learners from the Wolf Report of 14-19 Vocational Learning?**

In May 2011 the Government published its [response to the Wolf Review of Vocational Education](#). In the main, Government has accepted the recommendations in the report and the response indicates the key milestones for implementing the recommendations. Both the Wolf Review and government response recognise that there are differences with regard to the vocational qualifications offer for young people and adults. The Report also recognises that there are aspects of the QCF which are particularly applicable for adults. Although there may be a differentiated offer pre and post 19 it is important that this offer is not fragmented and that progression is not inhibited.

The detailed aspects of the implementation of the Wolf Recommendations are being worked through and a high level implementation plan being developed. More information will become available in due course. The Agency is continuing to work close closely with the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills to understand the detail and 'next steps' of Wolf implementation in the context of the post 19 offer.

### **A Single Regulatory Framework**

#### **27. Now that Ofqual are referencing a single framework that will encompass all regulated qualifications, what will this mean for post 19 learners?**

In May 2011 Ofqual published the [General Conditions of Recognition and Criteria for Recognition](#) which are part of the new regulatory arrangements for awarding organisations. These requirements come into force during July 2011 and awarding organisations will have until May 2012 to comply with the requirements.

As part of the movement to new regulatory arrangements Ofqual have announced the intention to move towards a single regulatory framework to which all qualifications in the NQF and QCF can be referenced. We anticipate that work on the single framework will be taken forward early in 2012.

Although there is a move towards a single regulatory framework, the Agency has stated that it will continue to focus funding on vocational qualifications which are unit based and credit bearing.

# Section 2: Unit Delivery

This section has been produced specifically to address queries raised by providers who are currently involved in the Unit Delivery trials or who are likely to become involved in unit delivery during 2011/12.

Questions and responses have been categorised under the following headings to help colleagues use the document;

- [Unit Based Delivery](#)
- [Funding](#)
- [Unemployed Learners](#)
- [Recording in the Individualised Learner Record \(ILR\)](#)
- [Research & Evaluation](#)
- [Further Support](#)

## Unit Based delivery

### 28. What is the purpose of the unit delivery trials?

The Agency is taking forward unit based delivery as part of supporting providers to realise the flexibilities of the QCF. We are working with providers to understand the issues and challenges in delivering both units and qualifications and also to encourage and support credit accumulation and transfer.

We want to understand how flexible delivery can support learners to work towards a target qualification in smaller steps and in particular, how flexible delivery might successfully engage learners who would not otherwise have the opportunity of achieving a target qualification or not be able to commit to a qualification in one go. We also want to work with providers in raising the awareness and understanding of employers in terms of flexible delivery and the opportunities for co investment it may offer.

### 29. Where has unit delivery operated in 2010/2011?

It's important to note that providers in 2010/11 can only deliver units where the Agency has agreed this as part of a particular programme or trial. Therefore, unit delivery is currently operating across the following areas:

- 2010/11 Adult Learner Responsive (trials);
- 2010/11 Train to Gain (pilot) in partnership with the Association of Learning Providers
- Offender Learning and Skills Service (OLASS);
- Qualify with a Business;
- Joint Investment Programme.

### 30. Can anyone deliver units in Adult Learner Responsive?

Only providers who are part of the unit delivery trials can deliver units, with the exception of the programmes listed in Question 29. A list of providers who are participating is available from the [Skills Funding Agency](#) website. This delivery will be funded from remaining 2010/11, ALR allocation.

### 31. Will the Agency be publishing another round of Expression of Interest?

Not for 2010/11.

**32. How will providers know which units are available to access as part of this work?**

We have confirmed 1,927 units which are available on the Learning Aim Database (LAD). A list of confirmed units as part of the unit delivery trials can be found on [the Skills Funding Agency](#) website.

**33. Will more units be added to the list?**

In May 2011, we contacted all providers involved in the trials with the opportunity to add units as a 'refresh'. As before units must have been within the Rules of Combination for a qualification the Agency has already confirmed for funding within ALR. There will not be another opportunity to add units for 2010/11. The units requested for unit delivery work are available on the LAD; there is also a list available on the [Skills Funding Agency](#) website.

**34. Can we deliver units other than those we indicated in the initial Expression of Interest?**

All providers who are confirmed participants in the unit funding work can deliver any QCF units within the rules of combination from the confirmed list agreed by the Agency which can be found on the [Skills Funding Agency](#) website.

**35. What was the timetable for this work?**

Providers should have been in a position to start delivery immediately their participation in the unit delivery trials was confirmed with the intention of completing the unit delivery work within the 2010/11 academic year. However, the Agency will continue to support learners continuing their learning into the 2011/12 academic year, but this should be the exception and the expectation would be that delivery of units should be completed within 2010/11.

**36. Is the Agency planning to expand this work for different funding streams?**

The Agency is working in collaboration with the Association of Learning Providers (ALP) with a small group of Independent Training Providers to explore potential delivery models for co-investment. They are testing how the QCF flexibilities of accumulation of credit and transfer can be used to support both learner and local employer needs.

**37. Will this work be extended into 2011/12?**

We are anticipating that unit delivery trials will continue in 2011/12 and hope to be able to confirm this before the end of August 2011.

**38. Do I need to discuss my involvement in the unit delivery work with my Account Manager?**

Yes, providers must ensure that their Agency Account Manager is kept informed about their involvement in the unit delivery work.

**39. If a learner starts undertaking units now and is eligible under the current rules, can they continue so that they can complete the units and achieve credit?**

Yes. Current learner eligibility rules apply. You will need to refer to the [Learner Eligibility Guidance](#) on the Agency's website. However, it is important not to confuse delivery method (being units) with funding eligibility.

**40. If I have already enrolled a learner and they have already completed one unit, can I now claim for that unit?**

Yes, if you have had an Expression of Interest accepted and the unit is on the list.

## Unemployed Learners

### 41. What will be the offer in 2011/12 for unemployed learners?

The Agency has now identified over 11,000 units which in scope for providers to use as part of the new offer to support the unemployed in 2011/12. This list of units to support unemployed learners is available on the [Skills Funding Agency](#) website.

Further information about the offer for the unemployed and eligibility please refer to Skills Funding Agency's [Guidance Note 7](#) - Published April 2011 and from the relevant [Programmes](#) section of the Skills Funding Agency website.

### 42. How will unemployed learners be funded?

For those learners who are on inactive benefits they will be co-funded<sup>6</sup>. For unemployed learners on active benefits<sup>7</sup>, funding of units will be through mainstream funding (Single Adult Skills Budget) for all providers.

## Recording in the Individualised Learner Record (ILR)

### 43. Against what funding stream do I return my learners?

There will be no immediate changes for returning data on the ILR in 2010/11. The ILR needs to be completed in compliance with available [guidance](#) and the timetable published by the Information Authority for mainstream funded provision through their Single Adult Skills Budget (ALR).

### 44. What code must be used on the ILR return?

The Agency is supporting a number of different trials, to help us identify that you are part of Single Adult Skills Budget (ALR) Unit Delivery, providers are required to enter 'Code 122' in field A46 (special projects and pilots) of the ILR.

### 45. How can providers involved in the unit delivery trials use the PLR?

The PLR is available and is a free service that helps providers and advisers support learners to both understand what particular combinations of QCF units can lead to and to access and interpret their QCF achievement data via the PLR, on-line and in one place.

- The 'find a QCF qualification' feature allows the user to select a qualification and identify what additional units a learner requires for it, or select some or all of the units a learner has and identify which achievements they can build towards with those.
- The PLR displays the achievements gathered from multiple sources.
- The PLR enables the learner through a provider or an adviser to view and review their learning and support them in making the right learning choices.
- More information on how to view the PLR and use the 'find a QCF qualification' function can be found in the [User Guide](#).

Learners do not have direct access – this is done in collaboration with the Learning Registration Body (LRB) so the learner's identity can be verified. An LRB is a provider that has registered to use the Learning Records Service and then has requested access to view the PLR which is automatic unless the learner 'opts' out via the Privacy Notice within the enrolment form.

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<sup>6</sup> Please refer to [Learner Eligibility and Contribution Rules](#) document for further details.

<sup>7</sup> Active benefits are those in receipt of Jobseekers Allowance and Employment and Support Allowance (Work Related Activity Group).

Use of the PLR in the unit delivery trials is not mandatory, but providers may find the PLR a useful tool for information, advice and guidance.

## **Evaluation**

### **46. Is the Agency taking forward any evaluation of the unit delivery work?**

Yes, the Agency has commissioned an independent evaluation of the 2010/11 unit delivery trials. The evaluation began in December 2010 and will finish at the end of July 2011.

### **47. What is the purpose of the evaluation?**

The evaluation is intended to practically understand the challenges and issues providers face in moving towards more flexible delivery and how they are overcoming these in practical terms. The evaluation is gathering case studies of providers working flexibly on the delivery of units, to identify innovation, good practice that is taking place and to track the journey providers are following through the trials.

As part of the evaluation the Agency is keen to assess the costs and affordability of flexible delivery from a learner and provider perspective and is particularly interested in costs associated with awarding organisations.

### **48. What tools will be used to carry out the evaluation of the trials?**

Three methods of evaluating the trials are taking place. They consist of:

- Online base-lining questionnaire (April): providers new to the trials were asked to confirm learner numbers, sectors/subject areas and other details via a short questionnaire accessed online. The questionnaire was pre-populated with details from each provider's Expressions of Interest to ensure that providers were not being asked to re-submit information already provided.
- Progress reviews by telephone (late May and late July): which have been focussed on reviewing progress, successes, innovation and good practice, and challenges.
- Face-to-face case study visits (May-August): a sample of providers have been invited to host a half-day case study visit by a member of the evaluation team.

### **49. How will the Agency communicate the outcome from the trials?**

The Agency has published the interim and final report of the evaluation on the [Skills Funding Agency](#) website. In addition, providers have been contacted for their consent to publish individual case studies.

A copy of each College's individual case study will be provided at the end of the evaluation by Ekosgen.

## **Further Support**

### **Data Service Help Desk**

If you have any queries or questions relating to qualifications for post 19 learners, and/or Unit Delivery please contact the Service Desk:

- Email: [servicedesk@thedataservice.org.uk](mailto:servicedesk@thedataservice.org.uk)
- Telephone: 0870 2670001

### **Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF)**

For more information about the QCF please visit the [QCF website](#).

### **Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA) Queries**

For enquiries regarding 16 -19 year olds in England please contact the YPLA by:

- Telephone: 0845 337 2000
- E-mail: [enquiries@ypla.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ypla.gov.uk)

### **Personal Learning Record**

For more information about the PLR, please contact the LRS Customer Helpdesk by either:

- Telephone: 0845 602 2589
- Email: [lrsupport@learningrecordsservice.org.uk](mailto:lrsupport@learningrecordsservice.org.uk)
- You can also visit the LRS website for more information:  
[www.learningrecordsservice.org.uk](http://www.learningrecordsservice.org.uk).

### **Programmes for the Unemployed**

For more information on how the Agency works to support the unemployed please visit the [Programmes for the Unemployed](#) website.

## **Skills Funding Agency**

Cheylesmore House  
Quinton Road  
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F 024 7682 3675

[www.bis.gov.uk/skillsfundingagency](http://www.bis.gov.uk/skillsfundingagency)

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