

# **The Qualification Journey from the Register of Regulated Qualifications to Publication on the Learning Aim Database**

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

### **Guidance and Information**

**Date: 1 December 2010**

Audience details: Of interest to everyone involved in delivering Skills Funding Agency funded provision

## Revision to Document

- 1 This document was originally published on 01 October 2010 and has now been updated to:
  - Reflect the introduction of the [Register of Regulated Qualifications](#) by Ofqual (the replacement for the National Database of Accredited Qualifications).
  - Include a new section added on Key Learning Aims Database (LAD). Fields related to the Skills Funding Agency funding confirmation process.

## Introduction

- 2 This document describes the stages in the qualification journey. The starting point of this document is the addition of the qualification to the [Register of Regulated Qualifications](#). It provides information on the current Skills Funding Agency post 19 funding confirmation process, which commenced on 1 April 2010 when Section 97 was repealed, and outlines the journey through to the funding information being published on the Learning Aim Database (LAD).
- 3 Content includes a diagram illustrating the Skills Funding Agency qualification funding confirmation process:
  - a) a visual step-by-step guide to track a Qualification and Credit Framework (QCF) qualification
  - b) step by step information on how to check a QCF qualification on the journey from recognition to funding confirmation
  - c) a visual step-by-step guide to track a National Qualification Framework (NQF) qualification – including the journey to QCF transition:

Vocational NQF provision that has had funding ceased from the 31 July for new starters

Vocational NQF provision that is due to have funding ceased for new starters from either the 31 December or for the 31 March 2010

General NQF and other provision the Skills Funding Agency will continue to fund.
  - d) step by step information on how to check a NQF qualification on the journey and what to do after funding has ceased for the qualification.

Key LAD fields that support the Skills Funding Agency funding confirmation process.

Related links for further information.

## Provision in Scope

- 4 The Skills Funding Agency, funding confirmation process covers all publicly-funded provision for learners aged 19 and above in England. The Skills Funding Agency is responsible for confirming provision for public funding in the following categories;
  - a) vocational qualifications in the QCF. Qualifications within the QCF will be confirmed for funding for one or more of the Agency's delivery programmes (Adult

Learning Responsive (ALR), Offender Learning and Skills Services (OLASS), Train to Gain, and Programmes for the Unemployed)<sup>1</sup>.

**b)** QCF units for inclusion in the ongoing QCF flexible delivery unit funding trials

**c)** non-vocational qualifications in the QCF

**d)** certain categories of National Qualification Framework (NQF) provision – A-Levels, Functional Skills, GCSEs, Skills for Life

**e)** other provision (including Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) recognised Access to Higher Education)

5 Some QCF provision does not receive public funding because the qualification;

- is not supported by the relevant Sector Skills Council (SSC)
- is not aligned to the Agency's funding parameters
- falls under the ineligible category.

## **Skills Funding Agency Confirmation Process**

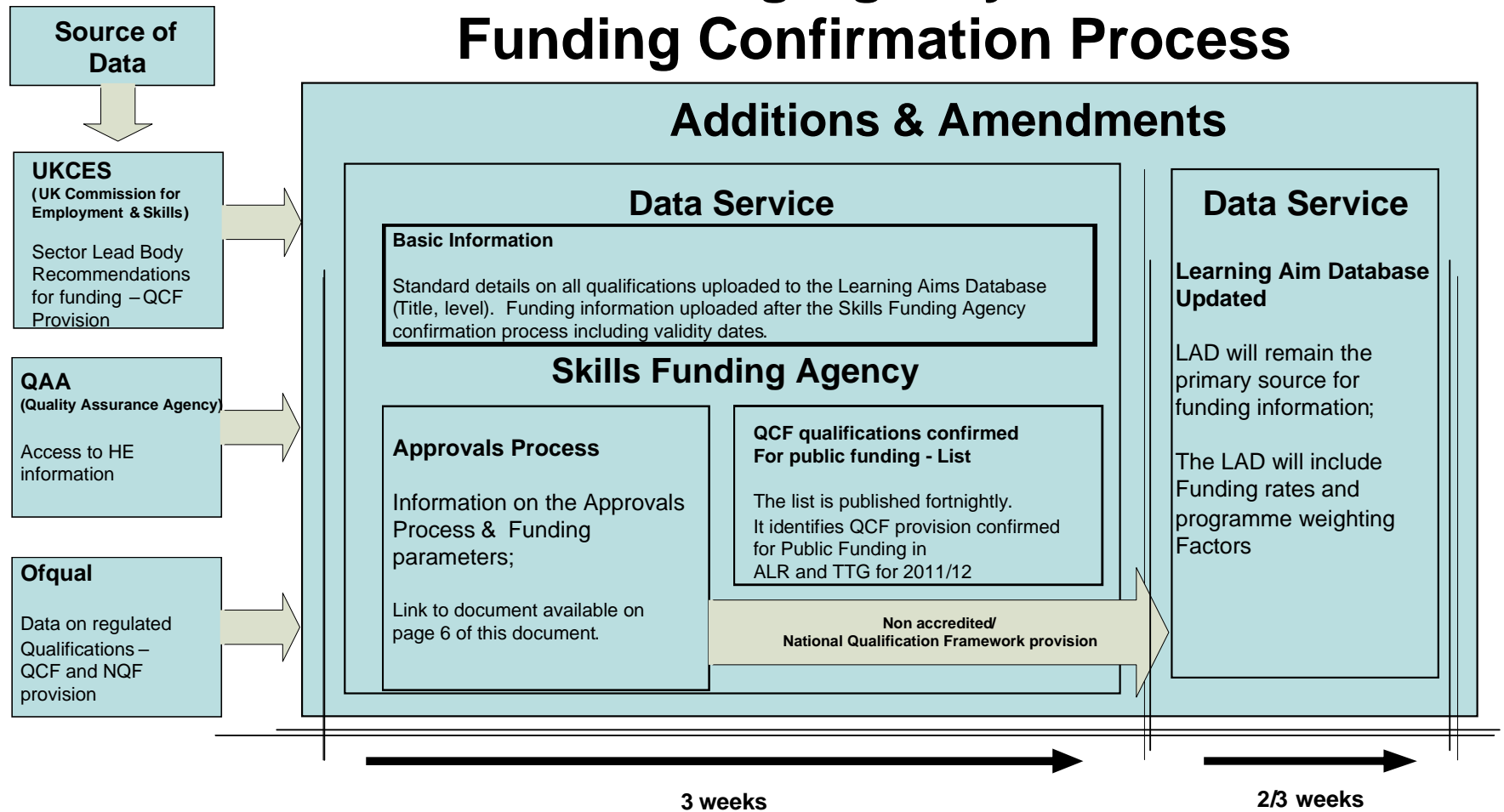
6 The Agency's funding confirmation process replaces section 97 and took effect on 1 April 2010. The confirmation process supports the Agency's commitment to the QCF through the transition phase from funding provision on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) to the QCF. For vocational qualifications the Agency takes account of advice received from the relevant Sector Skills Council (SSC). It is acknowledged that the NQF will continue to exist and the Agency will continue to fund some non vocational and general provision in the NQF and some non-accredited provision.

7 For further guidance of how this is achieved, and what will happen at each stage of the process, this document should be read in conjunction with the [Approval Process document](#) and [Managing Transition from NQF to QCF](#).

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<sup>1</sup> Apprenticeships are subject to separate arrangements.

# 1. Skills Funding Agency Qualifications Funding Confirmation Process

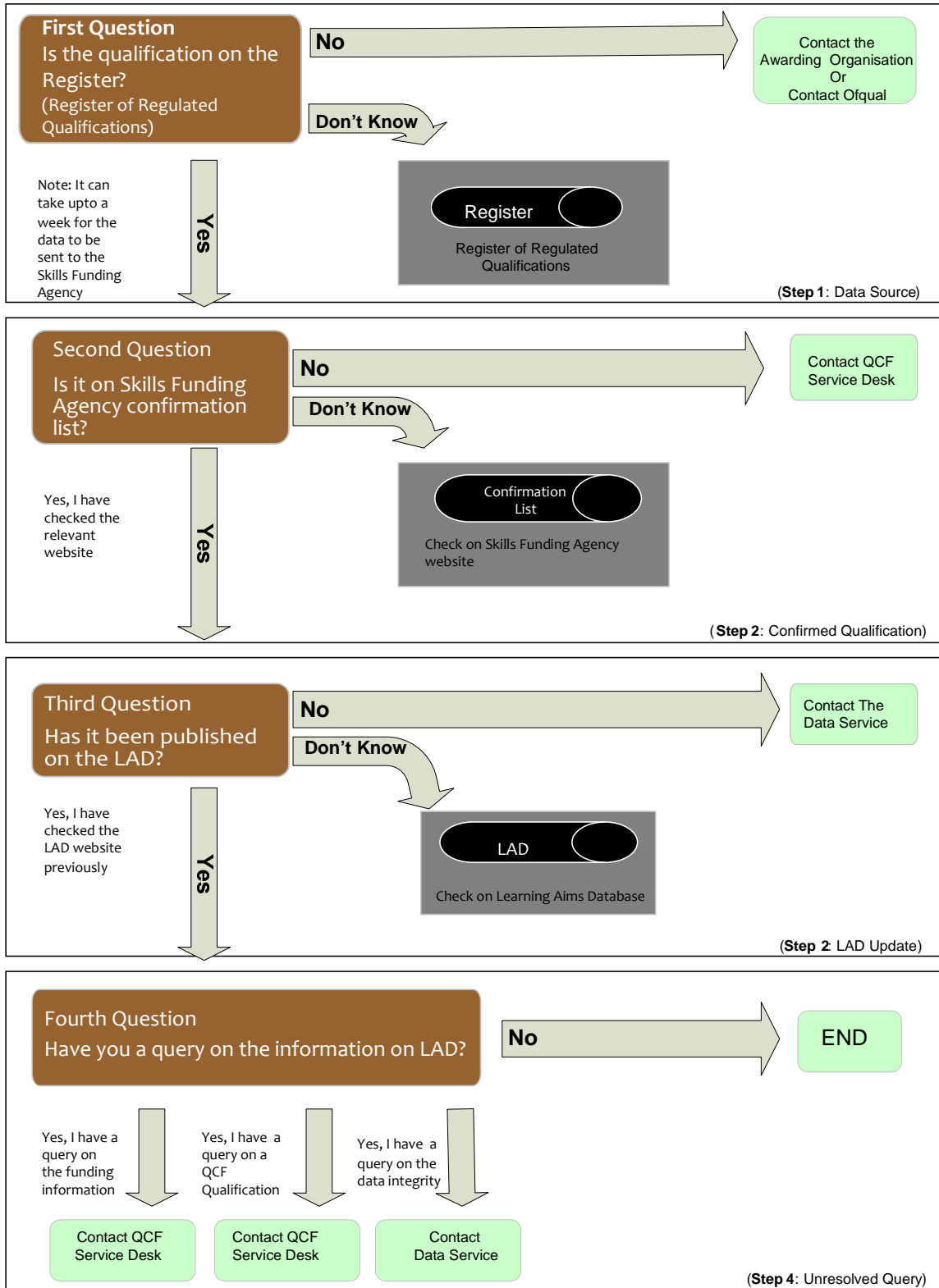


Note: The target turnaround time within Skills Funding Agency will be a maximum of 5 weeks from the point of receiving endorsement from the Sector Skills Council and information from Ofqual. This can take longer in exceptional cases where further information is required to make a decision.

# 2a. Qualification and Credit Framework

## Visual Step-by-Step Guide to Track a Qualification and Credit Framework (QCF) qualification

(to be read in conjunction with steps to take in the QCF journey)



## 2b. Steps to take to check where a QCF qualification is in the journey to accreditation and funding approval

- 8 The following steps provide additional details to support the Visual Step-by-Step Guide 2a. Each step provides summary detail along with related links to further information in the process.
- 9 **Step 1: Data Source**  
During the transition to QCF it is particularly important to use awarding organisations as a data source. Awarding organisations will be able to advise on what they are intending to develop and what stage the qualification development is at.
- 10 [The Register of Regulated Qualifications](#)<sup>2</sup> is another source which can be used to check for published details of regulated qualifications, including details of recognised awarding organisations. Specific queries should be sent by e-mail to [Ofqual](#).
- 11 **Step 2: Confirmed Qualification**  
To check whether a qualification has been approved and confirmed for public funding search the QCF Qualification confirmed for public funding [list](#)
- 12 Specific queries should be sent by e-mail to the [QCF Service Desk](#) or call 0870 267 0054.
- 13 **Step 3: LAD update**  
To check the funding status for a QCF qualification search on the [LAD](#).
- 14 **Please note:** It is possible for generic details of a qualification to be showing on the LAD with no funding rates applied. This is likely in the event that the qualification is currently going through the Skills Funding Agency funding confirmation process. Equally it is possible for different funding programs to have funding rates showing on the LAD for example 16-18 this is because each program goes through a separate approval process.
- 15 If the funding information is still not showing on the LAD 2 weeks after being listed on the confirmed funding list then e-mail the [Data Service](#).

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<sup>2</sup> In replacement of the National Database of Accredited Qualifications (NDAQ)

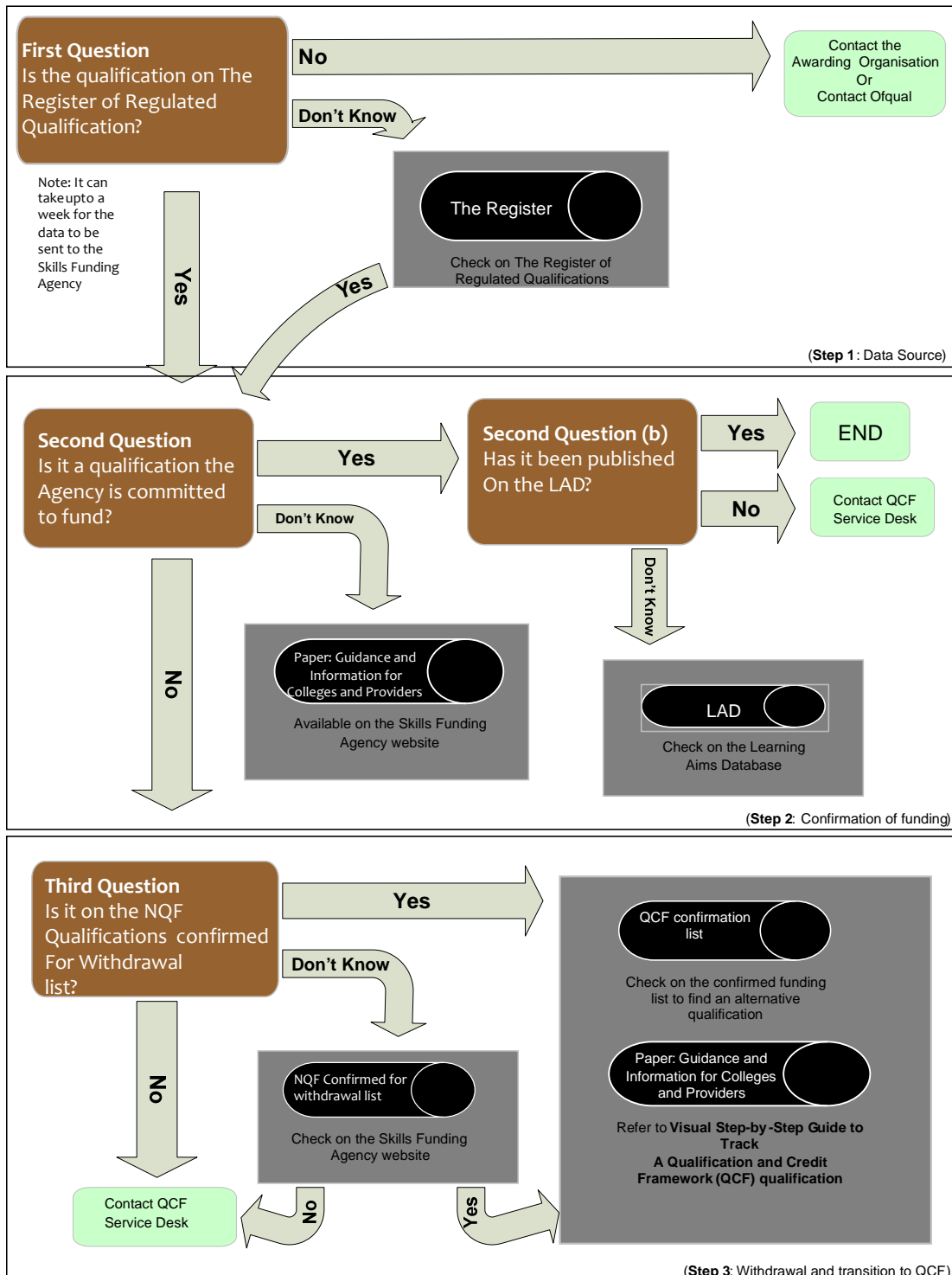
#### 16 **Step 4: Unresolved query**

If the qualification has been published on the LAD but you have a query on a QCF qualification relating to Adult provision, (Adult Learner Responsive, Train to Gain) for example the qualification is not showing on the confirmed funding [list](#) 5 weeks after appearing on the LAD then please e-mail the [QCF Service Desk](#) or phone on 0870 267 0054. Alternatively if the query is around data integrity contact the [Data Service](#).

# 3a. National Qualification Framework (NQF)

## Visual Step-by-Step Guide to NQF journey (including transition of QCF)

(to be read in conjunction with "steps to take in the NQF journey")



### 3b. Step-by-Step NQF Journey including QCF Transition

17 The Agency has stated its commitment to focus funding on provision from the QCF and to move towards only funding vocational qualifications where they are in the QCF from 31 March 2011. This journey takes into consideration a number of scenarios including ceasing publicly funded NQF qualifications. The following steps provide additional details to support the Visual Step-by-Step Guide 3a. Each step provides summary detail along with related links to further information in the process.

#### 18 Step 1: Data Source

During the transition to QCF it is particularly important to use awarding organisations as a data source. Awarding organisations will be able to advise on what they are intending to develop and what stage the qualification development is at.

19 Another available source which can be searched for published details of regulated qualifications, including details of recognised Awarding Organisations is [The Register of Regulated Qualifications](#). Specific queries relating to The Register should be sent by e-mail to [Ofqual](#).

#### 20 Step 2: Confirmation of funding

[Guidance on managing the transition from NQF to QCF](#) will give a staged approach to checking NQF and QCF lists published by the Agency. To check the funding status for a QCF qualification search the [LAD](#).

21 If the Qualification has been published on the LAD and you have a query on the funding information in the LAD then please e-mail the [QCF Service Desk](#) or phone on 0870 267 0054.

#### 22 Step 3: Withdrawal and transition to QCF

If there is no funding status showing on the LAD, check if the funding has been withdrawn. The [NQF Qualifications Confirmed for Withdrawal of Public Funding list](#) sets out those Vocational NQF qualifications where funding for new starts from 31 July 2010 ceased and Vocational NQF qualifications where funding will cease from either the 31 December 2010 or the 31 March 2011.

23 Going forward, as the QCF reaches a 'steady state' the Agency will review annually in January of each year the mix and balance of publicly funded provision; where there are any changes to that mix and balance this will allow providers adequate time to prepare for change in advance of the new delivery year. .

24 If the qualification is not listed on the NQF Qualification Confirmed for Withdrawal of Public Funding then please e-mail the [QCF Service Desk](#) or phone on 0870 267 0054.

25 If the qualification is listed on the NQF Qualification Confirmed for Withdrawal of Public Funding the following steps need to be taken:

- [Guidance on managing the transition from NQF to QCF](#) paper offers an update on the process for the transition from funding qualifications on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) to funding qualifications on the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) *for learners aged 19 and over in England*. This document is to be used in conjunction with the Qualification Journey. It offers guidance and information of what you need to do next once the above steps have been followed.
- Find an appropriate QCF offer on the confirmed [list](#).

## Key LAD fields that support the Skills Funding Agency funding confirmation process

26 **Changes to the Learning Aims Database (LAD):** For 2010/11 changes have been made to the LAD to provide greater clarity for providers concerning the availability of provision for public funding through the Agency's key delivery programmes. Where a policy decision to change funding from a specific point in time has been made, this will now be reflected on LAD through the introduction of Validity date details for funding eligibility by delivery programme. Please note that Apprenticeship and Train to Gain Validity details are now displayed separately<sup>3</sup>.

27 The following are key fields that populated through the Skills Funding Agency QCF funding confirmation process. **Please note that the 'Funding Status' field on LAD is no longer applicable for Skills Funding Agency Funded provision.**

28 Key fields have been separated into two categories;

- Additional Learning Aim Information - details at aim level (generic information which applies to all funding models)
- 'Validity Details' for funding – specific details at program funding level

### 29 Additional Learning Aim Information:

The following additional information about the learning aim is provided through the confirmation process – this information will be held in the "Key Details" tab on the LAD.

Annual Values 2010/11:

Key Details	Aim Details	Shared	16-18 LR	Adult LR	ER App	ER TtG
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Learning Aim Title: Diploma in Health and Social Care (Adults) for England (QCF)  
Learning Aim Reference: 50116071  
Awarding Body: EDEXCEL - EDEXCEL  
Learning Aim Type: 0006 - Diploma  
Teaching Year: 2010/11

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Skills Funding Agency Approval  
Status: 01 - Confirmed for Funding

Ofqual accreditation and/or Section 96 approval do not guarantee that an aim is funded.

Accreditation End Date: 31/01/2015  
Section 96 End Date 14-19 Diplomas:  
Section 96 End Date Apprenticeships:  
Section 96 End Date Foundation:  
Section 96 End Date General:  
Section 96 Approval End Date (Standalone):  
Combined End Date:  
Certification End Date: 31/01/2018

Level 2 Category: X - Not Applicable  
Level 3 Category: 1 - Full Level 3 Qualification

→ Full level 2/3 Category

<sup>3</sup> Please visit the [Policy Update Issue 5](#) document for more information

Sector Lead Body	UKCES	<p>Most vocational qualifications fall with the footprint of a Sector Lead Body. This information is provided to the Skills Funding Agency by the UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES).</p> <p>This field is left blank where the Skills Funding Agency has not been notified of a Sector Lead Body.</p>
Skills Funding Agency Approval Status	Skills Funding Agency	<p>This field indicates if the learning aims have been confirmed by the Skills Funding Agency for funding through either Adult Learner Responsive or Train to Gain. This field reflects the <a href="#">confirmation list</a> published on the dedicated QCF website.</p> <p>Please note: this field does not reflect whether the learning is available through any other Skills Funding Agency program (such as Apprenticeships or the European Social Fund)</p>
Full Level 2 Category	Skills Funding Agency	<p>This field identifies if a qualification has been specified as a full Level 2 by the Skills Funding Agency. This field identifies provision available under the adult entitlement [insert link].</p> <p>The definition for defining full Level 2 has changed with the introduction of the QCF</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The definition of full Level 2 that applies to qualifications in the National Qualifications Framework can be found on the Data Service <a href="#">LAD pages</a>.</li> <li>• The definition of full Level 2 that applies to QCF qualifications can be found on the Skills Funding Agency dedicated <a href="#">QCF website</a>.</li> </ul>
Full Level 3 Category	Skills Funding Agency	<p>This field identifies if a qualification has been specified as a full Level 3 by the Skills Funding Agency. This field identifies provision available under the adult entitlement [insert link].</p> <p>The definition for defining full Level 3 has changed with the introduction of the QCF</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The definition of full Level 3 that applies to qualifications in the National Qualifications Framework can be found on the Data Service <a href="#">LAD pages</a>.</li> <li>• The definition of full Level 3 that applies to QCF qualifications can be found on the Skills Funding Agency dedicated <a href="#">QCF website</a></li> </ul>

### ‘Validity Details’ for Funding:

- 30 The Validity Details fields have been introduced to the LAD to support greater clarity about the availability of learning aims. It allows policy decisions concerning funding end dates to be published explicitly in advance of the date. The validity table on the LAD shows when the learning aim is first available for new starts (Validity Start Date), when funding will only be available for continuing learners (Last Date for New Starts) and when funding is no longer

available for the learning aim (Validity End Date). **Please note:** the same field definitions will apply to different programmes but the values may vary.

31 The 'Validity Details' is the most reliable location to confirm if a learning aim is available for funding through a specific program.

Annual Values 2010/11:

[Key Details](#) | [Aim Details](#) | [Shared](#) | [16-18 LR](#) | [Adult LR](#) | [ER App](#) | [ER T&G](#) | [ASL](#) | [16-18 LR SSF](#) | [Frameworks](#) | [Print A Aim Det](#)

**Learning Aim Title:** Certificate in Basic Construction Skills  
**Learning Aim Reference:** 50107999 For Ofqual details, click [here](#).  
**Awarding Body:** CG - City & Guilds of London Institute  
**Learning Aim Type:** 0016 - Certificate  
**Teaching Year:** 2010/11  
**Sector Subject Area Tier 2:** 2.5.2 - Building and Construction

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OCF Type: X - Not Applicable

Sector Lead Body: 4 - ConstructionSkills

Sector Skills Priority:

Growth Priority:

**16-18 LR: Validity Start Date:** 16/08/2010    **Last Date for New Start:** 31/08/2013    **End Date:** 31/08/2014    **Created Date:** 02/09/2010    **Modified Date:** 31/08/2013

**Funding**

SLN1	SLN2	SLN3	SLN Type	Programme Weighting Factor	vWAGLH	Fee %	Effective From	Effective To	Created Date	Modified Date
111			SLN_GLH	C			16/08/2010	31/08/2014	02/09/2010	

**Adult LR: Validity Start Date:** 01/08/2010    **Last Date for New Start:** 31/07/2011    **End Date:** 31/08/2014    **Created Date:** 01/09/2010    **Modified Date:** 31/07/2011

**Funding**

SLN1	SLN2	SLN3	SLN Type	Programme Weighting Factor	vWAGLH	Fee %	Effective From	Effective To	Created Date	Modified Date
105			SLN_GLH	C			01/08/2010	31/08/2014	01/09/2010	

LAD Field	Applicable to	Definition
Validity: Start Date	New starts	<p>The first date on which funding for a learner will be available on the specified programme. <b>This date is only set where the learning aim has been confirmed for funding for the specified program.</b></p> <p>For learning aims that relate to Ofqual regulated provision the date in this field is set using the operational start date or the beginning of the academic year, whichever ever is later.</p> <p>For learning aims that relate to QAA Access to HE provision the date in this field is set using the QAA recognition year which refers to the academic year</p> <p>For all other learning aims the date is set using the start of the academic year is used.</p>
Validity: Last Date for New Starts	New starts and continuing learners	<p>The last date on which a learner can start a learning aim and receive funding from the Skills Funding Agency. <b>Continuing learners will be funded to the planned end date of their program or the Validity End Date, whichever is sooner.</b></p> <p>For learning aims that relate to Ofqual regulated provision the date in this field is set using the operational end date where available or the end of the academic year, whichever ever is sooner.</p>

		<p>For learning aims that relate to QAA Access to HE provision the date in this field is set this is based on the QAA revalidation year, if QAA confirm that the qualification has been revalidated then the last date for new starts will be amended accordingly to reflect the new revalidation year</p> <p><i>For all other learning aims the date is set using the end of the academic year. This field may be left blank if a specified date is not established by policy (such as some generic codes).</i></p> <p><b>Please note that availability for the 2011/12 academic year will be confirmed in February 2011, at which point these dates will be updated to reflect availability for 2011/12.</b></p>
Validity: End Date	Continuing learners	<p><b>Continuing learners will be funded to the planned end date of their program or the Validity End Date, whichever is sooner.</b></p> <p><i>For learning aims that relate to Ofqual regulated provision the date in this field is set using the certification end date or three years after the Last Date for New Starts if not available.</i></p> <p>For learning aims that relate to QAA Access to HE provision the date in this field is set based on the maximum award duration of a qualification plus an additional year to allow learner to complete the qualification. Where a award duration is not established it will be assumed that the maximum award duration of the qualification is two years.</p> <p><i>For all other learning aims the date is set three years after the Last Date for New Starts. This field may be left blank if a specified date is not established by policy (such as some generic codes).</i></p>

*If you have any queries regarding Access to HE qualifications please do not hesitate to contact the [QCF Service Desk](#). However you may also want to contact your Access Validating Agency (AVA) to determine if the qualification is still current.*

#### **4. Related links**

32 The following is a list of useful links to publications and resources to support with the implementation of the QCF programme and the transition from NQF to QCF.

#### **33 Confirmation Process**

A summary of the new arrangements for the confirmation of public funding for qualifications delivered to learners aged 19 and above in England is in [Agency Funding Confirmation Process](#).

#### **34 Guidance and Information for Learning Providers**

The document is produced at a time in the transition period that takes account of the publication in June of the first list confirming withdrawal of funding for National Qualification Framework (NQF) qualifications and the outcomes following the challenge process. Providers will need to be familiar with the progress of QCF qualifications which attract public funding and the NQF qualifications being withdrawn from public funding: [Provider Guidance](#).

#### **35 QCF Policy Update published August 2010**

The Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) Policy Update is the fifth in a series of regular communications from the Skills Funding Agency (the Agency). The next update is planned for the end of November 2010: [QCF Policy Update](#).

#### **36 QCF Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)**

The FAQ document has been produced by the Skills Funding Agency's Qualifications and Credit Framework team to sit alongside other materials and resources developed to support the implementation of QCF for providers and other stakeholders, specifically in the context of managing the transition from funding qualifications on the NQF to funding qualifications on the QCF: [Frequently Asked Questions](#)

#### **37 iGuide**

The iGuide is an interactive introductory guide to the QCF, developed to help learning providers, careers advisers and awarding organisations support the learners they are working with: [QCF iGuide](#).

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