

February 2010

# Progression for All – is credit the answer?



Qualifications  
& Credit  
Framework



**If credit is the answer.....**

we need to unpick the question

# A number of questions, including...

Leitch 2006:

- Why is there more training going on outside the qualification system than within it?
- What do we need to do to raise skills and address skills shortages to continue to be competitive in the 21st Century?
- What changes need to be made to address the fact that 70% of the 2020 workforce is already in the workforce today?
- What can be done to re-engage those who are not in employment, education or training?

# Why credit?

## **Ethos**

Giving people credit for what they can do

## **Equity**

Recognising achievement beyond a set curriculum; recognising achievement of learning which has taken variable amounts of time to complete; recognising prior learning

## **Language**

Creating a culture, where people understand what credit is, can bank it, use it and claim it

## **Common currency**

Allowing for transferability: Credit Accumulation and Transfer (CAT) – across the UK and beyond

# Credit is not new

- HE internal, local and regional agreements
- Open College Networks/ National Open College Network (NOCN)
- Scotland and Wales - qualifications frameworks which incorporate credit
- Europe e.g. European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) – 'designed to operate at the European level, interfacing with national systems and arrangements for credit accumulation and transfer (CAT)'
- Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF)

## Main stages of education / employment

## Qualifications and Credit Framework/National Qualifications Framework for England, Wales and Northern Ireland<sup>1</sup>

[www.ofqual.gov.uk](http://www.ofqual.gov.uk)

LEVEL	
8	Vocational Qualifications Level 8
7	Fellowships, NVQ Level 5, Vocational Qualifications Level 7
6	Vocational Qualifications Level 6
5	NVQ Level 4, Higher National Diplomas (HND), Higher National Certificates (HNC), Vocational Qualifications Level 5
4	Vocational Qualifications Level 4
3	NVQ Level 3, Vocational Qualifications Level 3, GCE AS and A Level, Advanced Diplomas
2	NVQ Level 2, Vocational Qualifications Level 2, GCSEs at grade A*-C, ESOL skills for life, Higher Diplomas, functional skills Level 2 (English, mathematics & ICT)
1	NVQ Level 1, Vocational Qualifications Level 1, GCSEs at grade D-G, ESOL skills for life, Foundation Diplomas, functional skills Level 1 (English, mathematics & ICT)
Entry Level	Entry Level Certificates (sub levels 1-3), ESOL skills for life, functional skills, Entry Level (English, mathematics & ICT)

## Credit and Qualification Framework for Wales

[www.cqfw.net](http://www.cqfw.net)

LEVEL	
8	Doctoral Degrees
7	Master's Degrees, Integrated Master's Degrees, Postgraduate Diplomas, Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE), Postgraduate Certificates
6	Bachelor's Degrees with Honours, Bachelor's Degrees, Professional Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE), Graduate Diplomas, Graduate Certificates
5	Foundation Degrees, Diplomas of Higher Education (DipHE), Higher National Diplomas (HND)
4	Higher National Certificates (HNC), Certificates of Higher Education (CertHE)
3	NVQ Level 3, Vocational Qualifications Level 3, GCE AS and A Level, Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification Advanced
2	NVQ Level 2, Vocational Qualifications Level 2, Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification Intermediate, GCSEs grade A*-C
1	NVQ Level 1, Vocational Qualifications Level 1, GCSEs at grade D-G, Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification Foundation
Entry Level	Entry Level Certificate (sub levels 1-3)

## National Framework of Qualifications for Ireland

[www.nfq.ie](http://www.nfq.ie)

LEVEL	
10	Doctoral Degree, Higher Doctorate
9	Master's Degree, Post-graduate Diploma
8	Honours Bachelor Degree, Higher Diploma
7	Ordinary Bachelor Degree
6	Advanced Certificate, Higher Certificate
5	Level 5 Certificate, Leaving Certificate
4	Level 4 Certificate, Leaving Certificate
3	Level 3 Certificate, Junior Certificate
2	Level 2 Certificate
1	Level 1 Certificate

## The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework

[www.scof.org.uk](http://www.scof.org.uk)

LEVEL	
12	Professional Development Awards, Doctoral Degrees
11	SVQ Level 5, Professional Development Awards, Postgraduate Diplomas, Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE), Master's Degrees, Integrated Master's Degrees, Postgraduate Certificates
10	Bachelor's Degrees with Honours, Professional Development Awards, Graduate Diplomas, Graduate Certificates
9	Bachelor's Ordinary Degrees, Professional Development Awards, SVQ Level 4, Graduate Diplomas, Graduate Certificates
8	Higher National Diplomas, SVQ Level 4, Professional Development Awards, Diplomas of Higher Education (DipHE)
7	Professional Development Awards, Higher National Certificates (HNC), Certificates of Higher Education (CertHE), SVQ Level 3, Advanced Highers
6	Highers, SVQ Level 3, Professional Development Awards, National Progression Awards, National Certificates
5	Intermediate 2, Credit Standard Grade, SVQ 2, National Progression Awards, National Certificates
4	Intermediate 1, General Standard Grade, Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQ) 1, National Progression Awards, National Certificates
3	Access 3, Foundation Standard Grades, National Progression Awards, National Certificates
2	Access 2, National Progression Awards, National Certificates
1	Access 1

## Framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland

[www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/fheq](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/fheq)

LEVEL	
8	Doctoral Degrees
7	Master's Degrees, Integrated Master's Degrees, Postgraduate Diplomas, Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE), Postgraduate Certificates
6	Bachelor's Degrees with Honours, Bachelor's Degrees, Professional Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE), Graduate Diplomas, Graduate Certificates
5	Foundation Degrees, Diplomas of Higher Education (DipHE), Higher National Diplomas (HND)
4	Higher National Certificates (HNC), Certificates of Higher Education (CertHE)



<sup>1</sup>The Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) will eventually replace the National Qualifications Framework (NQF).

# What is the QCF?

- A new **framework for recognising and accrediting qualifications** in England, Wales and Northern Ireland
- The framework is at the heart of a major reform of the vocational qualifications system designed to make the whole system **simpler to understand and use** and **more inclusive**
- The intention is to make both the system and the qualifications offered **far more relevant to the needs of employers** and **more flexible and accessible for learners**

# When is it happening?

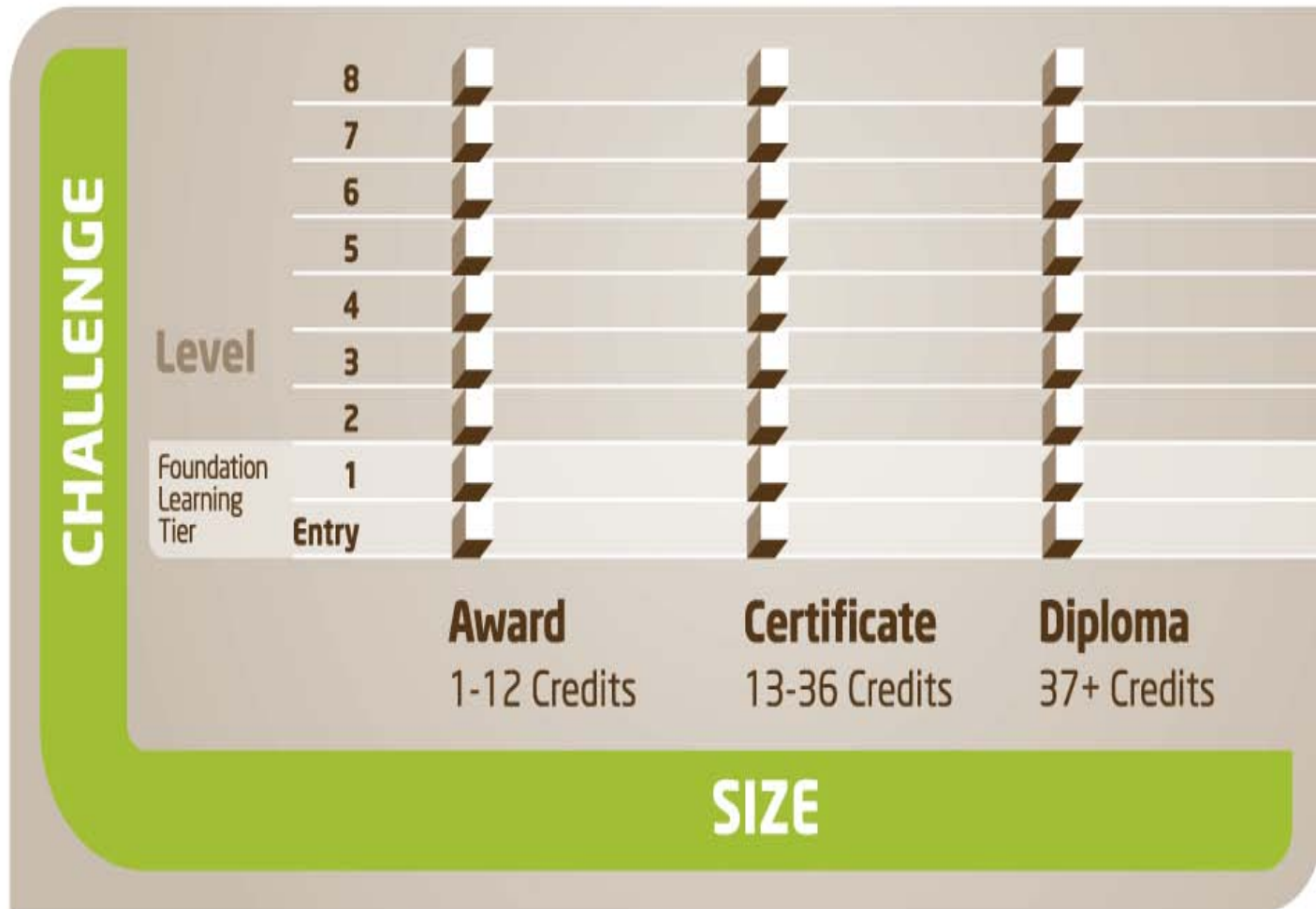
## Now!

The QCF has been tested and trialled for the past two years. The process of bringing all vocational qualifications into the new framework is now well under way, with growing numbers of learners taking units and qualifications through the system.

- 24109 units in the databank (26<sup>th</sup> January)
- 2761 qualifications (26<sup>th</sup> January)

By December 2010, it is expected that all vocational qualifications (approx 6000) will have been accredited to the QCF and by that point, the QCF will have replaced the current National Qualifications Framework (NQF) for vocational qualifications.

# The simple architecture of the Qualifications and Credit Framework



# QCF units: The building blocks of the

**TITLE:** Should be clear, unambiguous and reflect achievements specified in learning outcomes and assessment criteria

**CREDIT VALUE:** Arrived at by estimating the learning time and dividing by ten. Process focuses on learning outcomes and assessment criteria not the mode of delivery.

**LEVEL:** Indicates relative demand, complexity and depth of learning and degree of learner autonomy.

Plan to sell your product	3	1
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Learning outcomes	Assessment Criteria
The learner will:	The learner can:
1. Plan your business	1.1 Assess the advantages and disadvantages of different methods of selling 1.2 Assess the impact of sales on potential volume
2. Understand the importance of setting sales targets for your business	2.1. Explain why you need sales targets for your business 2.2. Set sales targets that take account of sales forecasts, profit margins and cash flow and determine a possible timescale to meet them. 2.3 Produce a sales plan and include all the information needed to show the basis for your decisions

**LEARNING OUTCOMES:** When identifying learning outcomes ask the question 'what do learners need to know, understand or be able to do as a result of this learning experience?'. The answer should take the form of a series of broad statements that describe the result of the learning process.

**ASSESSMENT CRITERIA:** Should relate to a specific learning outcome: at least one criterion to each outcome. They should be observable, measurable and indicate the standard expected when the learner is assessed.

# Rules of combination

- Rules of combination specify the credits that need to be achieved, through particular units, for a qualification to be awarded
- All qualifications within the framework have rules of combination
- They are the mechanism through which sets of achievements are grouped together into a qualification. In this respect they serve a similar purpose to existing qualification structures in the NQF
- The other purpose of RoC is the structure through which credits are transferable between qualifications and awarding organisations. (Credit Accumulation and Transfer – CAT)
- The scope of opportunities for CAT will vary between different qualifications

# Benefits of the QCF include:

- Offers more freedom, choice and flexibility
- Describes levels of achievement in terms everyone can understand
- Allows credit to be built up and transferred through recognising smaller steps of achievement
- Reduces the need to repeat learning or to start again
- Assists retention and progression
- Allows in-house training to be recognised within a national framework

# QCF Myth Buster

The Regulatory arrangements for the QCF set out the rules on how units and qualifications should be designed

QCF Myth	QCF Fact
<p><b>Pick and mix of units</b></p>	<p>All units in the QCF are submitted to the databank</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•All units are only active once they have been included in the RoC of a qualification</li> <li>•All units in the lead to a full qualification</li> <li>•All qualifications are developed in collaboration by SSCs and AOs so they are coherent and fit for purpose</li> </ul>
<p><b>Qualifications that use compensation cannot be included (Compensation Good performance compensates for poor performance in units, components, modules or qualifications).</b></p>	<p>All LO and AC in QCF units need to be achieved to be awarded the credit for that unit.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•All qualifications can be developed to the regulations of the QCF and some of the purposes of compensation can be realised through roc.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Leads to atomisation of assessment</b></p>	<p>The QCF regulations state that all units need to be <b>capable of individual assessment but it is not the intention of the regulator that this happens other than when a single unit is being delivered and assessed in the absence of other units or a qualification.</b></p>
<p><b>Only for vocational qualifications</b></p>	<p>The QCF is an organising structure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Any qualification for any purpose can be developed to the QCF</li> <li>•The QCF does not prescribe content</li> </ul>
<p><b>Only for adults</b></p>	<p>The QCF does not prescribe age ranges, it is not age specific.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•The QCF is an organising structure</li> <li>•Any qualification for any age group can be developed to the QCF</li> <li>•The QCF does not prescribe content</li> </ul>
<p><b>Only for qualifications in the lower levels</b></p>	<p>The QCF includes levels entry through 8</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Levels 4 – 8 are comparable to the FHEQ</li> <li>•QCF units and qualifications can be developed at any of these levels</li> </ul>

# 14-19 Strategy: consistency across frameworks

## Four National Suites:

- Apprenticeships
- Diploma including Additional Specialist Learning (ASL)
- GCSE and A-level
- Foundation Learning (FL)

## In response to DSCF request:

- Completed an impact assessment end 2008
- Completed a technical report on the issues 2009
- Submitted a Benefits Case Nov 2009
- Expecting remit letter Feb 2010

# European Qualification Framework Referencing

## What is the EQF?

- The EQF for lifelong learning is a common European reference framework which enables European countries to link their qualifications systems to one another
- It is a translation device making qualifications more readable and understandable across different countries and systems in Europe

## Aims of the EQF

- To assist learners and workers to move between countries, change jobs or move educational institutions
- To contribute to creating a European workforce that is mobile and flexible.

**So is credit the answer?**

Yes.....but only if there is an effective infrastructure to support it

# **Building and infrastructure to support credit accumulation and transfer (CAT) – more questions.....**

## **Funding**

Commitment from LSC/ SFA to fund credit as well as qualifications from 2013 – but what about higher level skills and the FE/HE interface?

## **Information, Advice and Guidance**

How will individuals make sense of credit and how to use it to best advantage?

## **Parity**

The levels are the same between vocational and academic programmes – or are they?

## **Quality and regulation**

Can credit be fully introduced into a single framework, while maintaining or improving quality, and ensuring articulation with HE?

# More information

For more information on the QCF visit the QCA web page:

[www.qcda.gov.uk/qcf](http://www.qcda.gov.uk/qcf)

To subscribe to a QCF monthly e-update visit the QCA web page:

[www.qcda.gov.uk/subscribe](http://www.qcda.gov.uk/subscribe)

For QCF Readiness support materials visit:

[www.qcda.gov.uk/readiness](http://www.qcda.gov.uk/readiness)

To obtain copies of the QCF Support Pack Version 4

Phone: 0300 303 3015

Quote: QCA/08/3989