

Edexcel Thinks

What's the issue?

In August 2008, the three UK regulators Ofqual, DCELLS, and CCEA published Regulatory Arrangements for the new Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) due to be in place by 2010. The QCF is a credit-based system for adult vocational qualifications. These regulatory arrangements set the standard that organisations and qualifications need to meet in order to be recognised as part of the QCF. What does Edexcel think?

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- Edexcel believes the publication of the regulatory arrangements provide the basis for the QCF to move from tests and trials to gradual implementation over the next two years
- Edexcel is pleased that non-awarding organisations are required to involve awarding organisations if they wish to develop units for the Framework. It believes that this will open up opportunities for a wide range of units to be available whilst maintaining integrity across different developing organisations. Edexcel will share its expertise with other organisations where appropriate to ensure a wide learner choice
- Edexcel recognises the role of shared units within the QCF and the move to more collaborative working through combining skills and experience. However, it would like to maintain the unit sampling group set up in the tests and trials to ensure standards are maintained
- Edexcel would like to see further clarification on the new titling of qualifications within the QCF. Movement to the new system could disadvantage learners if the meaning of the qualification title is not clearly understood. The use of 'Diploma' for any qualification above 37 credits will not distinguish between a qualification of a BTEC National Certificate size (720 guided learning hours) and a BTEC National Diploma size (1060 guided learning hours)
- Edexcel is further concerned that the uniformisation of titles into Award, Certificate and Diploma for all vocational qualifications on the QCF will further confuse learners and employers due to the loss of well-respected and understood brands of qualifications
- Edexcel welcomes the fact that more time has been allowed for the implementation of the framework than the initial timescale suggested



What is Edexcel doing?

- Edexcel has been involved in a number of the recent test and trial projects and has used this experience to develop new working relationships with SSCs and other stakeholders
- Edexcel is currently redeveloping a range of qualifications for the QCF and already has nearly 800 units on the QCF including BTEC units
- Edexcel is working closely with the LSC on funding and has commissioned work on the funding changes generally
- Edexcel is working to ensure its systems and procedures are QCF compliant, including the development of a robust process for assigning and checking credit
- Edexcel has established its own Programme Board to manage the development of the QCF internally
- Edexcel is developing a cross-company protocol for assigning credit to units and checking credit values. Edexcel has been proactive in establishing cross awarding-body protocols for assigning credit

Background

The QCF is a new way of recognising adult skills and qualifications. It does this by awarding credit for units or small steps of learning. It enables people to gain qualifications at their own pace along flexible routes. The QCF has four main aims.

To ensure a wider range of achievements can be recognised within a more inclusive qualifications framework

To establish a qualifications system that is more responsive to individual and employer needs

To establish a simpler qualifications framework that is easier for all users to understand

To reduce the burden of bureaucracy in the accreditation and assessment of qualifications

Ministers asked the regulators for England (QCA) Wales (DCELLS) and Northern Ireland (CCEA) to subject the proposed framework to 'Tests and Trials' over a two year period from September 2006 to June 2008. This involved learners, employers, awarding bodies, sector skills councils, colleges and training providers. The regulators final report with recommendations was published in June 2008. In the light of this report, Ministers in England, Northern Ireland and Wales have asked the LSC to provide further clarification on implementation.

Useful links

- <http://www.ofqual.gov.uk/121.aspx> Link to the Regulatory Arrangements for the QCF
- http://www.ofqual.gov.uk/files/Regulatory_Arrangements_for_the_Qualifications_and_Credit_Framework_28aug08.pdf Link to Ofqual's covering letter
- http://www.qca.org.uk/qca_8150.aspx Link to QCF website
- http://www.edexcel.org.uk/VirtualContent/103617/_4_Response_to_the_QCF_consultation.pdf Link to previous Edexcel Thinks on the QCF criteria consultation
- http://www.ofqual.gov.uk/files/Summary_QCF_consultation_responses.pdf Link to Ofqual response to their consultation on the criteria