



Qualifications
& Credit
Framework



The WAMITAB Guide to the Qualifications & Credit Framework (QCF)

The new framework for recognising and
accrediting qualifications

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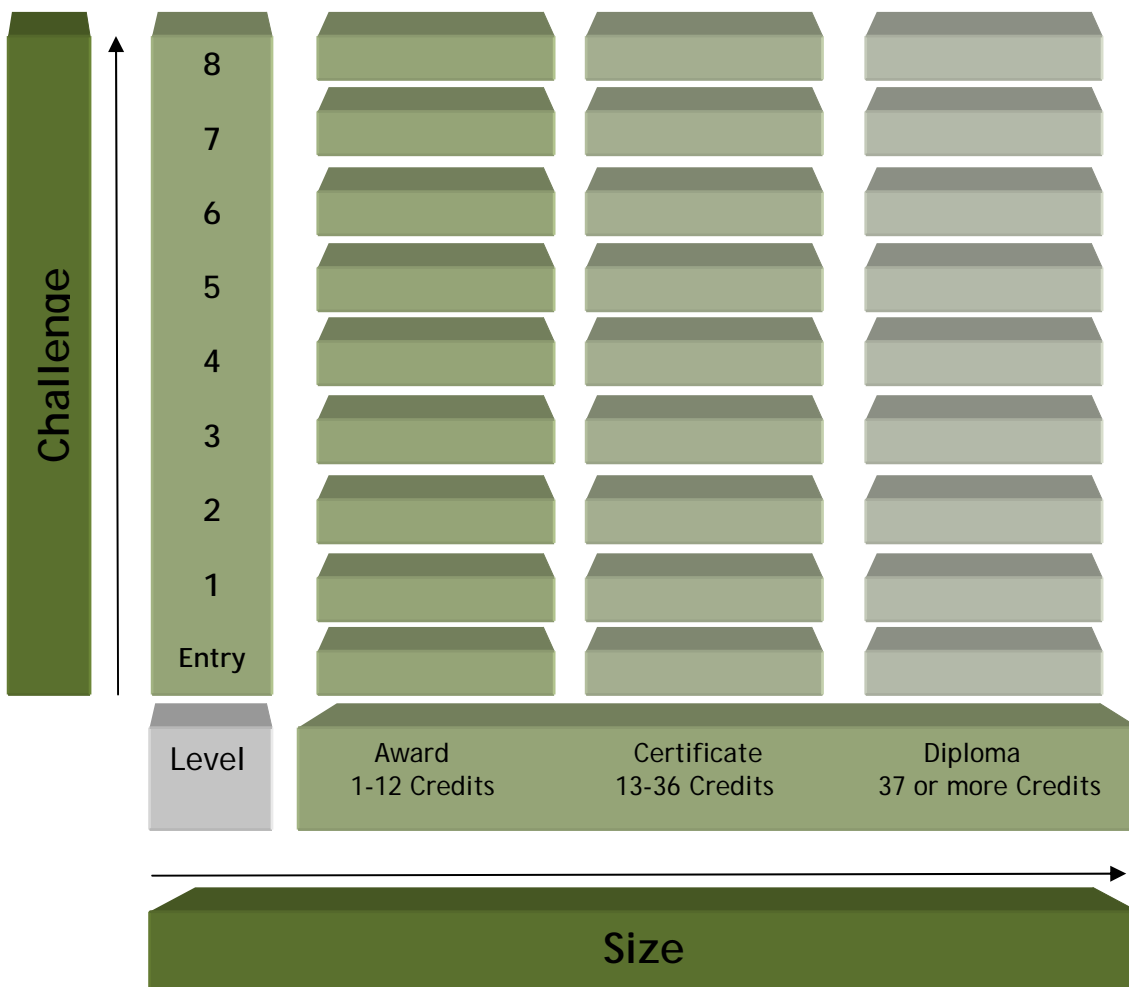
What is the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF)?

The QCF is a new framework for recognising and accrediting qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. The QCF is designed to make the whole qualifications system simpler to understand and use, as well as being more inclusive, in order to make it more relevant to the needs of employers and more flexible for learners.

In the QCF, learners are awarded credit for qualifications and units, and the design of the QCF enables people to gain qualifications at their own pace along flexible routes.

The QCF is now operating and will replace the current National Qualification Framework (NQF) from January 2011. Between now and January 2011, there will be a mixture of both NQF and QCF qualifications available.

QCF Structure



By looking at the title of a qualification in the new QCF, you can ascertain an indication of the following:-

Qualification Level

The QCF is made up of a number of levels that represent the depth and complexity of the learning to be undertaken. There are three levels for Entry level, which provides progression in the QCF. There are further levels from one through to eight.

To understand the level of difficulty of the units and qualifications in the QCF it may be helpful to know some comparisons, for example, GCSE's grade A*- C are level 2, A Levels are level 3 and a PhD is a level 8.

Qualification Size

There are three sizes of qualification in the QCF, which represents the total volume of learning, there are as follows:-

- Awards 1 to 12 credits
- Certificates 13 to 36 credits
- Diplomas 37 credits or more

Qualification Content

Awarding Organisations (the new name for Awarding Bodies) will work closely with the Sector Skills Councils and Standard Setting Bodies to determine the content of qualifications.

By using shared units, the core content of a qualification may be common across awarding organisations. Shared units can be accessed and used by any awarding organisation and used within the rules of combination for a qualification.

How will the QCF work in Practice?

Each QCF unit has a credit value which represents how much time it takes a learner, on average to complete that particular part of learning. One credit is equal to 10 hours of learning.

Learning time is different from Guided Learning Hours (GLH). Learning time includes all the time needed to achieve the unit including directed study, homework, assessments, practical and work experience.

All qualifications in the QCF are made up using "rules of combination". These rules show the credit and mandatory and optional units to be completed by the learner in order for them to achieve their qualification.

Qualifications on the QCF can be made up of units from different levels. If units are at different levels, the level of the qualification is determined by the level of the majority of units.

Learners will be able to "bank" the credits they have achieved within a "learner record", and when it's allowed by the rules of combination, they will be able to transfer that credit and use it towards other rules of combination and potentially another qualification.

What is a Learner Record?

One of the key features of the QCF is the introduction of an online Individual Learner Record (ILR). This records and tracks all the units and qualifications a learner has achieved.

By ensuring that units of learning are recorded on an Individual Learner Record, the QCF ensures that a wider range of learners' achievements is recognised, which is simple for all learners and employers to understand.

Learners will be given access to their Learner Record using their Unique Learner Number (ULN). They will be able to access their records to:-

- Track their progress towards completing a qualification
- Discover progression opportunities and new routes to achievement
- Give permission to third parties (employers and learning providers) to view certain sections of their record.

This will mean that no learning is lost, if a learner is not able to complete their full qualification for any reason, they will still gain the credit for the units they were able to complete. This will be recorded on their Individual Learner Record and can be used at a later date when learning or training continues.

What is WAMITAB doing about the QCF?

WAMITAB is working very hard to develop the processes and procedures to be able to operate as an Awarding Organisation within the QCF; this means changes for WAMITAB and its Centres. We are in the process of ascribing credit to our qualifications and we will be transferring our existing NQF qualifications as soon as possible. Our aim is to have our qualifications available on the QCF by March 2010.

While the content of most of our NQF qualifications will be transferred across to the QCF, we will need to make some changes to bring our qualifications in line with requirements for the framework.

WAMITAB will be running a number of training events specifically for Centres in early 2010 to enable Centre personnel to understand the procedures, roles and responsibilities and data flows between the Centre, WAMITAB and other partners in the QCF.

What do WAMITAB Centres need to do?

We will do all that we can to support WAMITAB Centres and make the transition from NQF to QCF as smooth and seamless as possible for you.

We will be keeping all WAMITAB centres informed of our progress and plans for moving qualifications onto the QCF. Our Website will have a section devoted to the QCF, which will provide further updates. We will also keep you informed of our plans for introducing new QCF qualifications and for existing qualifications, whether they are being extended on the NQF or transferring onto the QCF.

All training providers including WAMITAB Centres will need to register for a user account with the MIAP Learner Registration Service ((LRS). You will need to use the LRS to request a ULN for your candidates. Centres will need to inform learners of their ULN, as they will need this for future registrations and to access their LAR.

WAMITAB Centres will also need a learner provider account for the LAR learner provider site. Once the Centre has received a User ID and Password for the site, they can use the site to create new LAR's for each of their learners. WAMITAB Centres can use this account every time they wish to create a new LAR, so centres only need to apply for an account once.

Jargon Buster

CAT	Credit Accumulation & Transfer
IAG	Information, Advice & Guidance
ILR	Individual Learning Record
LAR	Learner Achievement Record
LRS	Learner Registration Service
ULN	Unique Learner Number
MIAP	Managing Information Across Partners
MIS	Management Information System
QCDA	Qualifications & Curriculum Development Agency
QCF	Qualifications and Credit Framework
OFSTED	Office for Standards in Education
OFQUAL	Office of the Qualifications and Examinations Regulator
ROC	Rules of Combination

Useful Websites

www.miap.gov.uk - The learner Registration Service

www.qcda.gov.uk - General Information about the QCF

www.excellencegateway.org.uk/page.aspx?o=qcfprovidersupport - support for Training Providers on the QCF.

www.ofqual.co.uk