



Skills Funding  
Agency

# 2014 Annual Review of Qualifications

Review of qualifications with no and low demand, and  
process for awarding organisations to request retaining a  
qualification

November 2014

Of interest to awarding organisations

# Purpose

1. Each year, we review the publicly-funded qualifications offer outside of apprenticeships. On 5 November 2014 we published a list of qualifications with [low demand](#) and a list of qualifications with [no demand](#). We do not intend to make these qualifications available for funding for new enrolments for the 2015 to 2016 funding year.
2. Please note that this does not relate to the use or availability of qualifications within an apprenticeship framework. If a qualification is in an apprenticeship framework it will continue to be available for delivery as part of that framework, regardless of demand outside of the apprenticeship.
3. This document focuses on one aspect of the annual review, where we look at qualifications with **low demand**. It explains how you (awarding organisations) can notify us of qualifications with low demand that you believe should remain eligible for public funding in 2015 to 2016, and the evidence we require to support this.

# Introduction

4. We define low-demand qualifications as ones that:
  - i. Are delivered through the Employer Ownership Programme, 24+ Advanced Learning Loans, Offender Learning and Skills Service, and Adult Skills Budget (outside of an apprenticeship).
  - ii. Were approved for funding on or before 1 August 2012.
  - iii. Are not in our automatically approved category.
  - iv. Have had fewer than 100 publicly-funded enrolments in the funding year 2012 to 2013 and fewer than 100 publicly-funded enrolments in the funding year 2013 to 2014.
5. We will remove these qualifications from the 2015 to 2016 publicly-funded offer unless there are clear, mitigating reasons and evidence as to why we should keep them.

6. So, for qualifications with low demand we have set out a process to give you the opportunity to provide us with evidence of why a qualification with low demand should be available for publicly-funded new starts in 2015 to 2016.

## **Notification process**

7. We are asking you and your colleges and training organisations to check the list of qualifications with low demand.
8. We are asking you to alert us to qualifications where you believe:
  - i. The qualification focuses on one specific job role or function, which requires a highly specialised/technical skillset, and where demand is likely to be low on the basis of limited employment opportunities in that sector.
  - ii. The qualification relates to a job role or function that has been identified by either the Industrial Strategy or a published sector strategy (that followed the Industrial Strategy) as a high priority, and there is no publicly-funded alternative.
  - iii. The qualification relates to an identified skills shortage or need at a local or regional level, where demand is clearly evidenced as part of a local or regional strategy, and there is no publicly-funded alternative.
  - iv. Removing public funding for the qualification will have an adverse impact on a particular group of learners or employers, and there is no publicly-funded alternative.
  - v. Demand for a qualification is expected to reach 100 or more publicly-funded adult enrolments in England, outside of an apprenticeship, in either the funding year 2014 to 2015 or the funding year 2015 to 2016.
9. We will only accept submissions from you, the awarding organisation that owns the qualification. To minimise bureaucracy we are asking you to consolidate feedback and evidence from the colleges and training organisations that use your qualifications, and then to provide us with a single request for each qualification.
10. To support you with this process, we will give each awarding organisation the number of publicly-funded enrolments that each qualification with low demand

has. This information will have been sent to you in the week beginning Monday, 3 November 2014.

## Criteria for keeping a qualification

11. We will consider keeping a qualification that currently has low demand if it meets one of the criteria set out in paragraph 8.
12. Please note that where the qualification is also in an apprenticeship framework we will need a rationale for retaining that qualification for funding outside of the apprenticeship, in addition to evidence described in paragraphs 13 and 14.
13. When bringing a qualification to our attention, you will need to provide appropriate evidence to support retaining the qualification for the funding year 2015 to 2016. Your evidence should take the form of a clear statement identifying why the qualification should be considered for the funding year 2015 to 2016 on the basis of one or more of the criteria in paragraph 8. You must also provide evidence such as links to skills strategies and/or evidence from employers, colleges and training organisations that supports the criteria in paragraph 8 that you believe applies to the qualification.
14. Where there is an anticipated demand for the qualification, the statement must be accompanied by letters from colleges or training organisations on the [Register of Training Organisations](#). The college or training organisation must currently have an Adult Skills Budget allocation and have committed to enrolling learners on the qualification for the funding year 2014 to 2015 or 2015 to 2016. The letters must reflect a commitment to 100 or more publicly-funded adult learners in England, outside of an apprenticeship. The letters must confirm that the college or training organisation has demand to enrol adult learners on the qualification, and that they will fund them through their contract with us.
15. When we receive your request we will check to see if it is eligible for consideration. We will let you know if we require any further clarification relating to your request. We can only consider a request that meets the following criteria:
  - It is based on the criteria set out in paragraph 8.

- The qualification is on the list of qualifications with low demand.
- The evidence relates to funding for learners aged 19 and older in England and outside of an apprenticeship.

## How to notify us

16. To notify us of qualifications you wish us to consider keeping you must complete a **notification form** for each qualification and the **summary of notification form**. Both of these forms are available on the [Qualifications approved for public funding](#) page of our website. Please email these, together with the evidence, to [qualifications@sfa.bis.gov.uk](mailto:qualifications@sfa.bis.gov.uk) by 5.00pm on Thursday, 4 December 2014.
17. Please use one notification form for each qualification you are alerting us to. Please also complete the summary of notifications form, so that we can check to make sure we have received all of the relevant documents from you.
18. When you send your request you will receive an automatic email confirming that we have received your email. If you do not receive this confirmation, please email the requests separately, since your original email may have been rejected due to size restrictions.
19. We will not accept any forms, evidence or other supporting information submitted after the deadline of 5.00pm on Thursday, 4 December.
20. Please note that due to the timescales for this review, we will **not** consider submissions on 6 February 2015 for qualifications to re-enter the offer for the funding year 2015 to 2016. The next window for re-entry submissions for 2015 to 2016 is 6 May 2015.

## Assessing qualifications

21. If we can consider your request, we will undertake an impact assessment to consider the learner profile (gender, age, learning difficulties and disabilities and ethnicity) and provider profile.
22. Where appropriate, we will seek external advice on the qualification. This may be an appropriate employer-led body where it is a vocational or occupational

qualification. We will ask them to provide in writing any relevant evidence regarding continuation of funding for the qualification.

23. We will also consider the qualification against the findings of our reviews of Entry and Level 1 qualifications and of employability qualifications at Level 2 and above. We will not keep any qualifications that these two reviews remove from the offer.
24. We will submit details of notifications, evidence, the results of impact assessments and recommendations to our Qualifications Advisory Group (QAG). This group includes bodies that represent awarding organisations, colleges and training organisations, and employers. For more information on QAG, please refer to the [Qualifications Advisory Group](#) page of our website.
25. QAG will review the evidence and consider whether removal of funding for new starts on a qualification in the funding year 2015 to 2016 will result in an adverse, unreasonable or uneven impact upon an individual or organisation.
26. We will listen to the advice of the group and confirm whether a qualification will be available for funding for new starts in the funding year 2015 to 2016. Where we decide that a qualification will be available for funding in 2015 to 2016 it will be included in the initial 2015 to 2016 offer, which is published at the end of January 2016.
27. In advance of publication of the initial 2015 to 2016 offer we will write to each awarding organisation that submits a notification form to advise them of the outcome for their qualifications.
28. This process allows us to take feedback directly from the sector, and indirectly through QAG to minimise the risk of an adverse impact on individuals or organisations.

# Useful links

[Note to sector outlining this process](#)

[Technical Guidance for awarding organisations](#)

[Qualifications Information Guide](#)

[Register of Training Organisations](#)

[Funding Rules](#)

[Notification Forms](#)

[Information on funding for learners with learning difficulties and or disabilities](#)



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