

**2008 –  
2009**

**Committee Annual Summary Report**



**Joint  
Advisory  
Committee for  
Qualifications  
Approval**

# Joint Advisory Committee for Qualifications Approval Committee Annual Summary Report 2008-2009

## Contents

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The work of JACQA 2008-2009</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>JACQA outputs</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Priorities for 2010-11 and future programme of activities</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Appendix 1: Membership</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Appendix 2: Section 96 criteria</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Appendix 3: Key dates for awarding organisations submitting stand-alone qualifications for scrutiny</b>	<b>23</b>

To contact the Joint Advisory Committee for Qualifications Approval, please visit us at <http://jacqa.lsc.gov.uk/> or email the secretariat on [jacqa@qcda.gov.uk](mailto:jacqa@qcda.gov.uk).

## Introduction

- 1 The Joint Advisory Committee for Qualifications Approval (JACQA) has been established on a non-statutory basis, as a key delivery mechanism to help bring about a simplified and more rational 14-19 offer by advising the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families which qualifications should be eligible for public funding under Section 96 of the *Learning and Skills Act 2000*. JACQA is not a decision-making Committee; the Secretary of State retains the power to make the final decision on whether or not to approve eligibility for public funding for qualifications used by 14-19 year old learners.
- 2 This Committee Annual Summary Report provides:
  - an overview of the work of the Committee during 2008-09;
  - a detailed analysis of JACQA outputs including a comprehensive breakdown of qualification submissions and recommendations to the Secretary of State;
  - a summary of JACQA's priorities for 2010-11 and an outline of its future programme of activities;
  - conclusions and impact of JACQA's work during 2008-09.
- 3 As the first Committee Annual Summary, this report covers the 14 month period from the establishment of JACQA in October 2008 to the meeting of the Committee in December 2009. Future Committee Annual Summary Reports will cover 12 month periods from January to December.

## The Committee

- 4 The Committee is jointly chaired by the Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency (QCDA) and the Learning and Skills Council<sup>1</sup> (LSC). Membership is drawn from practitioners and representative bodies from Further Education, Higher Education and employers. The full list of Committee members is in Appendix 1. There is also a Wider Reference Group of stakeholders providing expert advice and guidance to JACQA on specific topics (for example Health and Safety legislation) and Biennial Review activities. JACQA is supported in the delivery of its activities by a joint secretariat provided by the QCDA and the LSC.

## The role of the Committee

- 5 The Government's plan for a streamlined and simplified qualification system for young people is set out in *Promoting Achievement, Valuing Success: A Strategy for 14-19 Qualifications. Delivering 14-19 Reform: Next Steps*, further introduced proposals for moving towards a more streamlined and coherent qualifications offer for 14-19 year olds.

---

<sup>1</sup> The Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 will transform the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) into the Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency (QCDA) and will also make the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual) a separate organisation. The Act also transforms the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) into the Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA) and Skills Funding Agency (SFA) as separate organisations. These changes will take effect from 1 April 2010; until this time both QCA and LSC remain the legal entities.

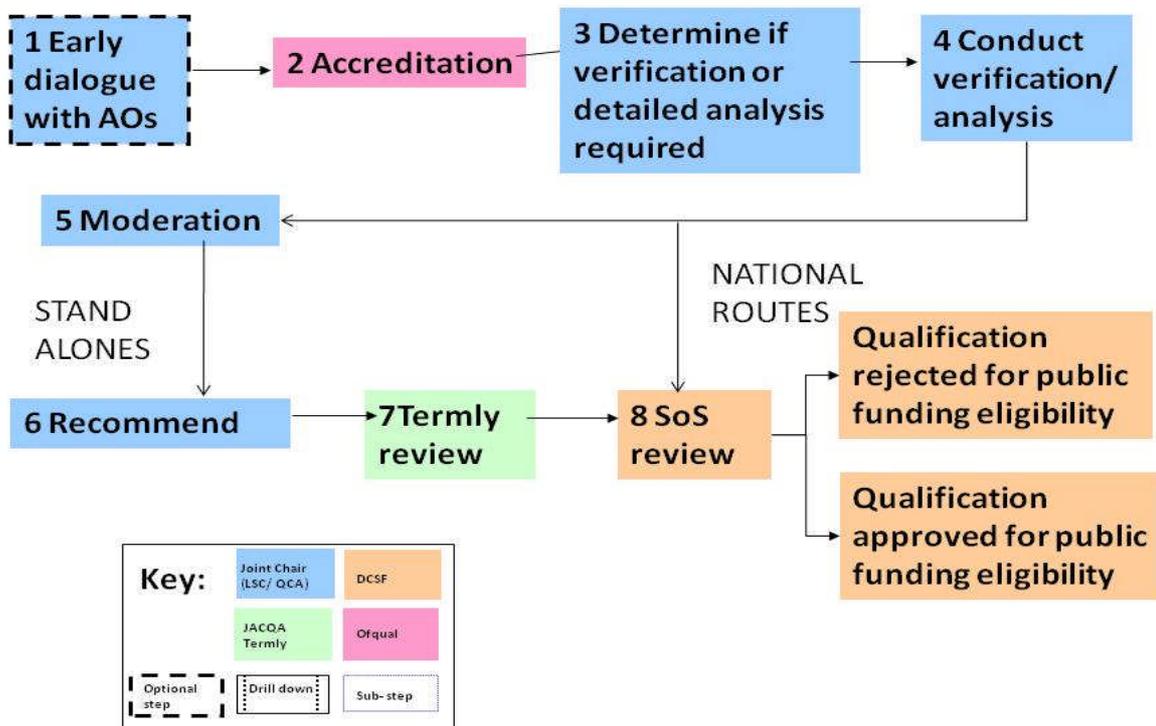
- 6 An integral part of the Government's 14-19 qualifications strategy was the development of a new process for recommending which qualifications should be publicly funded in the 14-19 phase – JACQA performs this function. The intention is that over time, public funding will be channelled towards qualifications that fall into one of the national routes:
- GCSEs and A levels;
  - Diplomas;
  - Apprenticeship frameworks;
  - Foundation Learning for 14-19 learners.
- 7 Qualifications not aligned to the national routes are known as 'stand-alone' qualifications and will only continue to be eligible for public funding in exceptional circumstances where a clear need has been identified and where learner needs cannot be met by an alternative qualification within the national routes.
- 8 JACQA has two core remits, which include both procedural and strategic objectives:
- **on a Termly basis:** review all qualifications for use by 14-19 year old learners that are submitted for eligibility of public funding and make recommendations to the Secretary of State based on the extent to which they satisfy the Section 96 criteria (see Appendix 2 for the Section 96 criteria). On a Termly basis, JACQA specifically scrutinises submission of Stand-alone qualifications for funding eligibility against the Section 96 criteria.
  - **on a Biennial basis:** carry out a full scale review of the overall qualifications system for young people and advise, where appropriate, on changes to the 14-19 qualifications offer that would ensure it continues to meet the needs of learners, employers and higher education institutions. Biennial reviews will be carried out in 2009 and 2011 and will inform a more fundamental review of qualifications in 2013.

## The work of JACQA 2008-2009

### The set-up of the Committee

- 9 The Committee was established in October 2008 following remit letters to the then Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) and the LSC from the Department for Children Schools and Families (DCSF). An introductory briefing on JACQA for awarding organisations took place in January 2009; this event was attended by over 140 representatives from awarding organisations and included keynote inputs from senior officials from the DCSF, the QCA and the LSC.
- 10 The first significant challenge for JACQA was the establishment of the processes and procedures required to support the delivery of the Committee's Termly remit and to ensure transparency and consistency. To do so, an end-to-end process for Termly work has been created, agreed and implemented to enable the scrutiny of qualifications in order to provide recommendations on their funding eligibility to the Secretary of State.
- 11 The end-to-end process comprises of eight high-level steps. These are set out in the recently published *JACQA Handbook for Awarding Organisations*. A diagram of the process is set out below.

Figure 1 JACQA scrutiny process



- 12 There is, however, an acknowledgement that this will need constant review to ensure that necessary changes to this are made as the work of the Committee evolves.

- 13 In setting up JACQA, the QCDA and the LSC have taken care to minimise bureaucracy and avoid unnecessarily increasing costs or burdens to awarding organisations or users of qualifications. JACQA has maintained regular dialogue with awarding organisations to ensure the processes and procedures are as streamlined as possible. In establishing and running JACQA, we have also consulted and continue to liaise closely with, amongst others, the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual), so that JACQA processes are aligned with the regulatory timetable wherever possible.
- 14 A technical feasibility study with regard to the impact of JACQA on existing QCDA and LSC systems was undertaken and four tactical solutions were implemented to address key issues and improve efficiencies and reduce any bureaucracy for awarding organisations. In particular, the revisions to the Web Based Accreditation (WBA) system to meet JACQA requirements have improved the efficiency of the submission process for awarding organisations both in terms of time and clarity of what is needed.
- 15 The process is now fully embedded within the JACQA Secretariat with new technology to enable an efficient scrutiny process; the process has been refined over the past year and will continue to be refined over the coming year to ensure efficient and effective practical operation.

### **Delivery of the Termly remit**

- 16 In JACQA's fourteen months it has reviewed and advised on funding eligibility for 14-19 qualifications that form part of one of the four national routes on a fortnightly basis. JACQA scrutiny for these qualifications is 'light touch' because there has been an explicit presumption in favour of funding qualifications that sit within the four national routes, based on their fit with the intent of the strategy and because they have already satisfied rigorous criteria to determine both quality and fitness for purpose.
- 17 During 2008-09, JACQA has not undertaken any detailed scrutiny for 'existing'<sup>2</sup> qualifications. This is in line with the Government's 14-19 qualifications strategy and an evolutionary approach to the qualifications landscape. It involves balancing the need to safeguard existing provision to ensure that gaps do not emerge (as the national routes mature), while moving over time towards a system that is more clearly understood and more clearly reflects the vision set out in the strategy.
- 18 As such, the primary role of JACQA over the last year has been to consider the eligibility for public funding of new stand-alone qualifications that do not sit within one of the four national routes; this occurs at each meeting of the Committee.
- 19 The JACQA Committee held its first meeting in December 2008 and four subsequent meetings have been held during 2009. As JACQA becomes more established, the volume of business to be dealt with at meetings has been increasing. The following section explores the outcomes from the Committee meetings in relation to the funding eligibility of stand-alone qualifications and also sets out the recommendations regarding the funding eligibility for qualifications that align to the national routes.

---

<sup>2</sup> Existing qualifications are those approved on Section 96 prior to the establishment of JACQA, but which are not aligned to national routes.

## Stakeholder engagement

- 20 JACQA's main stakeholders are awarding organisations and Sector Skills Councils/Standard Setting Bodies (SSCs/SSBs). A variety of different communication mechanisms have been used to engage awarding organisations and SSCs and these have included:
- briefing events to raise awareness and understanding of JACQA's remit, role and processes;
  - a *JACQA Handbook for Awarding Organisations* to provide information about JACQA, the processes for submission, and to help awarding organisations to understand the evidence needed to support submission of stand-alone qualifications. This includes principles that help to amplify the Section 96 criteria that are used to determine funding eligibility recommendations;
  - a letter to SSCs in July 2009 to advise on the implications for SSCs of the new Section 96 approval process
  - the Sector Qualification Strategy Action Plan database refresh taking account of JACQA requirements
  - the introduction of the JACQA website (<http://jacqa.lsc.gov.uk>) to help make the information more easily accessible; and
  - ongoing responses to individual enquiries from stakeholders.

## Delivery of the Biennial remit

- 21 Alongside the delivery of the Committee Termly remit, there has been significant work to deliver the first Biennial Review. Biennial Reviews provide a strategic and holistic review of the qualifications landscape; they also consider the impact and implications of funding decisions made during the previous two years and provide recommendations on the strategic direction for the funding of 14-19 qualifications.
- 22 JACQA has undertaken and now completed its first Biennial Review. The 2009 Biennial Review provides an early indication of the direction of travel across the qualification system towards the 2013 ambition and also provides a benchmark for the subsequent 2011 Biennial Review and the full review of qualifications in 2013, which will consider how publicly-funded qualifications are combining to meet the needs of young people, employers and higher education.
- 23 The 2009 Biennial Review also includes a set of recommendations which have been submitted to the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families for review. These recommendations, if agreed by the Secretary of State, will form the work plan for JACQA for 2010-11 and support the streamlining and simplifying of the qualifications offer enabling the 14-19 qualifications strategy to be realised.
- 24 The JACQA Biennial Review Report 2009 and the DCSF response will be published on the JACQA website <http://jacqa.lsc.gov.uk> during spring 2010.

## JACQA outputs

- 25 This section provides an overview of submissions to JACQA between December 2008 and December 2009, and the outcomes for qualifications that have passed through the JACQA process during this time. Alongside data and statistics there is additional contextualisation and commentary which discuss:
- submissions through JACQA for eligibility for public funding;
  - national route outcomes;
  - stand-alone outcomes;
  - withdrawals from stand-alone scrutiny;
  - qualifications not recommended eligible for public funding; and
  - qualifications recommended eligible for public funding.
- 26 The advice that JACQA provides to the Secretary of State is not published; nor are the minutes of Termly meetings. This is because recommendations relating to individual awarding organisation's qualifications are commercially sensitive. With this principle in mind, the outputs of the Committee's activities set out below do not refer to individual qualifications or identify awarding organisations.

### Submissions through JACQA for eligibility for public funding

- 27 Table 1 below shows the number of qualifications submitted for funding eligibility as stand-alone qualifications and those qualifications submitted for eligibility within the national routes. The 'Total' figure shows the total number of individual qualifications submitted. As some qualifications have been submitted for funding eligibility within more than one of the national routes, the sum of the submissions for the four national routes is higher than the overall number of qualifications submitted to national routes. The definition of a stand-alone qualification, as given in paragraph 7 above, means that a qualification cannot be both a stand-alone qualification and within a national route.

**Table 1 Submissions to JACQA December 2008 to December 2009**

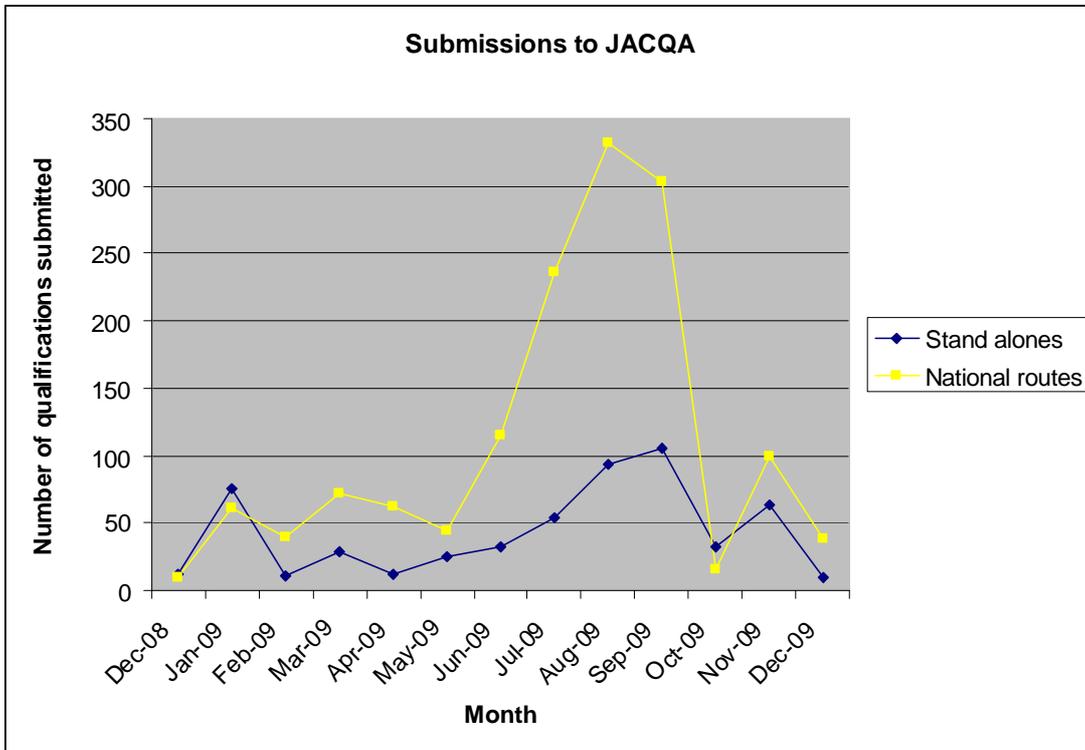
<b>Submissions to JACQA</b>	<b>Dec 08 - Mar 09</b>	<b>Apr 09 - Jun 09</b>	<b>Jul 09 - Sep 09</b>	<b>Oct 09 - Dec 09</b>	<b>Total</b>
Number of qualifications submitted as stand-alones	128	69	254	104	<b>555</b>
Number of qualifications submitted in one or more national routes	182	221	871	154	<b>1428</b>
Diploma	80	91	425	47	643
GCSE/A level	6	0	5	26	37
Foundation Learning	48	101	322	20	491
Apprenticeships	83	117	243	71	514
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>310</b>	<b>290</b>	<b>1125</b>	<b>258</b>	<b>1983</b>

- 28 Newly accredited qualifications submitted to JACQA for funding eligibility as stand-alone qualifications include new qualifications accredited within the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) but which are revised versions of qualifications previously accredited within the national Qualifications Framework (NQF). JACQA has clarified its policy for scrutiny of these

qualifications, and regards them as re-approvals, rather than new qualifications. As such, where awarding organisations have confirmed that they are revised versions of NQF qualifications and have provided supporting evidence, JACQA has recommended them for approval to 2012. Where this information is not sufficient to demonstrate new qualifications are comparable replacements for previous NQF versions, they are treated as new qualifications and are required to be submitted as part of the full JACQA scrutiny process.

- 29 Figure 2 below shows the total number of qualifications submitted for funding eligibility with the national routes and as stand-alone qualifications. The peak in submissions in the third quarter of 2009 represents the push for qualifications to be accredited and eligible for public funding in advance of the start of the new academic year. The graph also indicates the greater number and sharper rise in national route submissions in comparison to stand-alones, which suggests that awarding organisations are beginning to align their new qualifications to the national routes.

**Figure 2 National route and stand-alone submissions to JACQA**



**National route outcomes**

- 30 JACQA aims to process submissions which form part of national routes as quickly as possible once accreditation has been confirmed. In some cases verification and scrutiny can take time, as qualifications submitted for funding eligibility within one or more of the national routes are subject to a verification process, which confirms they indeed align to the Route to which they have been submitted.
- 31 Table 2 below shows the number of qualifications verified within each of the four national routes from December 2008 to December 2009. The data indicates JACQA have verified a total of 851 qualifications submitted between

December 2008 and December 09 within one or more of the national routes As with submissions, some qualifications are represented in more than one national route so the number of verifications shown in Table 2 (933) is higher than the number of individual qualifications (851). At the end of December 2009 there were still 577 qualifications awaiting verification in one or more of the national routes, the majority of these being qualifications for Additional and Specialist Learning (ASL) within the Diploma which are expected to appear in the February 2010 Diploma ASL Catalogue.

**Table 2 National route outcomes December 2008 to December 2009**

National route outcomes	Dec 08 - Mar 09	Apr 09 - Jun 09	Jul 09 - Sep 09	Oct 09 - Dec 09	Total
Verifications for each national route					
Diploma	13	37	186	12	<b>248</b>
GCSE/A level	6	0	2	26	<b>34</b>
Foundation Learning	28	55	380	22	<b>485</b>
Apprenticeships	13	11	88	54	<b>166</b>

### Stand-alone outcomes

32 Table 3 and Figure 3 below show the outcomes for all stand-alone qualifications that have passed through the JACQA process between December 2008 and December 2009. Not all qualifications submitted for stand-alone consideration are scrutinised by the JACQA Committee or are subject to a recommendation to the Secretary of State as they may have been withdrawn from the scrutiny process by the awarding organisation before these stages have been reached.

**Table 3 Stand-alone outcomes December 2008 to December 2009**

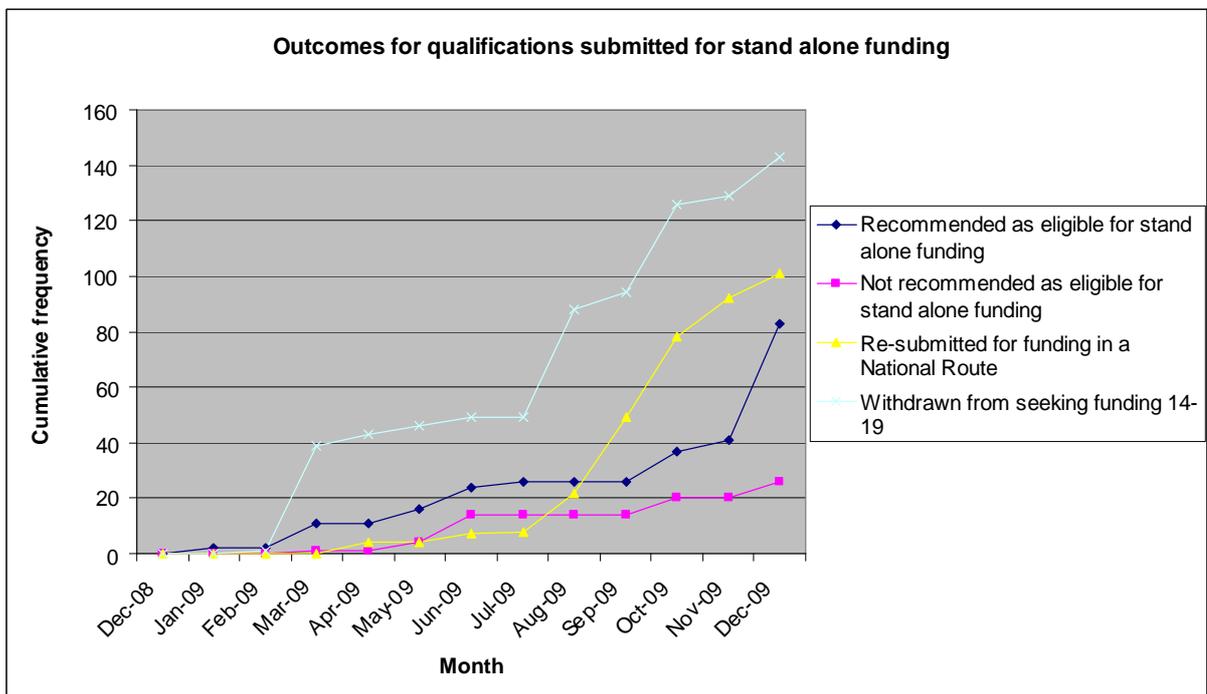
Stand-alone outcomes	Dec 08 - Mar 09	Apr 09 - Jun 09	Jul 09 - Sep 09	Oct 09 - Dec 09	Total
<b>JACQA recommendations made to the Secretary of State</b>					
Qualifications recommended as eligible for stand-alone funding	11	13	2	57	<b>83</b>
Qualifications not recommended as eligible for stand-alone funding	1	13	0	12	<b>26</b>
Qualifications not recommended as eligible for stand-alone funding by JACQA Committee, withdrawn by AO before a recommendation was made to the Secretary of State	0	2	0	26	<b>28</b>
NQF - QCF recommendations	0	15	18	81	<b>114</b>

33 Table 3 above shows that under the NQF to QCF process described in paragraph 28 above, JACQA has made recommendations for funding eligibility for 114 stand-alone QCF qualifications created to replace a previous NQF version. These NQF to QCF recommendations for funding eligibility represent

just over half of the total number of recommendations made to the Secretary of State (51% or 114 out of 223) and nearly 60% of qualifications (114 out of 197) recommended as eligible for public funding. Where new QCF qualifications can be moved into a national route, JACQA has encouraged this.

- 34 Figure 3 below illustrates how the numbers of stand-alone submissions which have subsequently been withdrawn from the stand-alone scrutiny process (either to be re-submitted within a national route, or which have been withdrawn from 14-19 funding eligibility consideration completely), has overtaken the number that have gone forward with recommendations to the Secretary of State.

**Figure 3 Outcomes for qualifications submitted for funding eligibility as stand-alone qualifications<sup>3</sup>**



### Withdrawals from stand-alone scrutiny

- 35 Over the course of the past year, 244 of the 555 (44%) of the qualifications initially submitted for funding eligibility as stand-alone have subsequently been withdrawn from the scrutiny process by the awarding organisation following dialogue with the JACQA Secretariat, or after the Committee has decided not to recommend a qualification as eligible for public funding. As shown in table 4 below, of the 244 qualifications withdrawn from the scrutiny process, 101 have subsequently been resubmitted for funding eligibility with a national route and 143 have been withdrawn from the process completely. Of those withdrawn from the process completely, 123 withdrawals were before Committee consideration and 20 after the Committee had agreed a recommendation of not eligible, but before the submission of the recommendations to the Secretary of State.

<sup>3</sup> This graph does not show those qualifications which have been treated as re-approvals under JACQA's NQF-QCF policy.

**Table 4 Stand-alone qualifications withdrawn from stand-alone consideration**

<b>Stand-alone qualifications withdrawn from stand-alone consideration</b>	<b>Dec 08 - Mar 09</b>	<b>Apr 09 - Jun 09</b>	<b>Jul 09 - Sep 09</b>	<b>Oct 09 - Dec 09</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Withdrawn from seeking funding eligibility for 14-19 learners</b>					
before Committee recommendation	39	10	45	49	<b>143</b>
after Committee recommendation	0	2	0	18	20
<b>Sand-alone re-submitted to a national route</b>					
before Committee recommendation	0	7	42	52	<b>101</b>
after Committee recommendation	0	0	0	8	8

- 36 The number of withdrawals of qualifications prior to Committee scrutiny confirms the work the JACQA Secretariat is doing to engage with awarding organisations throughout the process and to encourage them to think about how the qualifications they are developing might fit within one or more of the national routes.
- 37 A number of the qualifications that have been withdrawn from the stand-alone scrutiny process have not been resubmitted for funding eligibility within a national route. In many cases these are qualifications which are primarily designed for post 19 learners, which were initially automatically submitted for 14-19 funding eligibility by the awarding organisation but then withdrawn when challenged to consider whether they were appropriate qualifications for pre-19 learners.

### **Qualifications recommended eligible for public funding**

- 38 Of the 555 submissions received for funding eligibility as stand-alone qualifications, 197 (35%) of these have been recommended eligible for funding; that is 114 (20%) through the NQF to QCF process and 83 (15%) as new stand-alone qualifications. Of the 137 submissions that have been scrutinised by the Committee, 83 (60%) have been recommended as eligible for funding as new stand-alone qualifications.
- 39 A detailed submission was made for all these qualifications, and in all cases, the awarding organisation made a clear case as to how their qualification met the Section 96 criteria, in particular criteria B and E (Appendix 2). Qualifications from a broad range of Sector Subject Areas have been recommended eligible for public funding. Table 5 below shows a breakdown of qualifications recommended between December 2008 and December 2009 by Sector Subject Area.

**Table 5 JACQA recommendations by Sector Subject Area**

Sector Subject Code	Sector Subject Area	No. of qualifications recommended eligible	Percentage of total recommendations
1	Health, Public Services and Care	13	16%
4	Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies	12	14%
7	Retail and Commercial Enterprise	6	7%
12	Languages, Literature and Culture	16	19%
13	Education and Training	15	18%
14	Preparation for Life and Work	14	17%
15	Business, Administration and Law	7	8%

- 40 The number of qualifications is not at a significant enough volume to assert that there are strong trends in favour of certain Sector Subject Areas. We can however begin to identify why certain Sector Subject Areas have had more qualifications recommended as eligible for public funding.
- 41 The largest number of qualifications recommended eligible from any single Sector Subject Area fall within Languages, Literature and Culture. This results from a trend in this area for packages of related qualifications as opposed to individual qualifications. With all of these qualifications, the Committee recommended that funding eligibility be time-limited to provide an opportunity for the awarding organisation to align the qualifications within a national route.
- 42 Of the 14 qualifications recommended within the Preparation for Life and Work Sector Subject Area, the majority are qualifications which have a Government commitment to funding eligibility in place prior to the inception of JACQA, and as such will be reviewed in line with the wider review of qualifications in 2013, but until that time JACQA will continue to recommend these eligible for public funding.
- 43 Qualifications within the Education and Training Sector Subject Area together represent over 18% of the positive recommendations made. These are typically areas for which there is no established national route (Diploma or Apprenticeship).
- 44 In reviewing new stand-alone qualifications, JACQA has taken care to discriminate between the age categories within the 14-19 range (these are: pre-16, 16-18, and 18+) to ensure that the purpose and content of qualifications is appropriate for the intended age cohort. This has resulted in JACQA recommending that a restriction is placed on funding eligibility to specific age categories; for example, eight qualifications initially submitted for the 16-18 age group had a recommendation from the Committee for eligibility for the 18+ age group only, this is because the qualifications were not considered appropriate for 16 and 17 year olds. Seven of these eight qualifications are either in teaching or working with parents, the other one is in Road Passenger Transport Operations.
- 45 JACQA has recommended a number of qualifications in the Health, Public Services and Care Sector Subject Area. Half of these are Complementary

Therapies qualifications designed for practitioners and therefore are not suitable for ASL within Diplomas, and do not fit into an existing Apprenticeship Framework. The SSC responsible for this area also supports this type of qualification for funding eligibility as stand-alone qualifications, and has given strong endorsement to these submissions.

- 46 Other qualifications recommended eligible for funding were in areas such as engineering, manufacturing, transport, logistics, and business management. These recommendations represent specialist or niche qualifications offering learning that is not currently covered by provision within national routes, for example Specialised Plant and Machinery Operations, Shoe Repair and Key Cutting, Commercial Moving and Road Passenger Transport Operations. For some of these qualifications, evidence presented to JACQA demonstrated the plans for Apprenticeship Frameworks to incorporate some of this learning within national routes in the future, and stand-alone funding eligibility has been recommended as an interim measure to ensure continuity of provision while the appropriate new frameworks are being developed.

### **Qualifications not recommended eligible for public funding**

- 47 Of the qualifications put to the JACQA Committee for scrutiny, 54 were not recommended eligible for public funding. This includes 26 qualifications for which a recommendation went to the Secretary of State and 28 qualifications which were withdrawn from the scrutiny process after the Committee had made a recommendation, but before JACQA sent its advice to the DCSF.
- 48 As JACQA undertakes the scrutiny process, a number of regularly occurring themes have emerged in qualification submissions that lead to a recommendation of 'not eligible'. The most common issues relate to:
- insufficient evidence to justify eligibility for public funding;
  - inappropriate content or level for the age range specified (Criterion B);
  - duplication of provision already available within qualifications offered as part of a national route (Criterion E); and
  - lack of evidence of alignment with Sector Qualification Strategies and support from SSCs.

### **Insufficient evidence**

- 49 For a number of the qualifications which JACQA has reviewed over the last year, evidence provided by the awarding organisation has not been sufficient or robust enough for JACQA to make a fully informed recommendation on funding eligibility. Criterion E of Section 96 makes it clear that for qualifications seeking funding eligibility as stand-alone qualifications, there should be a presumption against funding unless a clear case for eligibility has been made.
- 50 As part of the scrutiny process, the Secretariat reviews an initial submission, gives feedback, and provides the awarding organisation with a further opportunity to provide additional evidence or documents to support their submission. Currently 15 qualifications have received not eligible recommendations from the Committee due to insufficient evidence; this is where the awarding organisations had either not responded at all to requests for additional evidence, or had responded but their response had still not addressed all the points raised in the feedback. Of these 15, all but one went

forward as 'not recommended eligible' to the Secretary of State, the other qualification was withdrawn by the awarding organisation after the Committee meeting.

### **Suitability for the age range (Criterion B)**

- 51 Criterion B of Section 96 requires evidence that qualifications are suitable for the age ranges for which they have been put forward. In some cases, the Committee has not been satisfied by evidence demonstrating suitability of qualifications for age range. For some qualifications, this has resulted in recommendations for funding eligibility on the condition that the age range is revised upwards; for example, this includes those qualifications referenced in paragraph 44. For others, qualifications have been recommended not eligible for the 14-19 age range completely. In 2008-09, only two qualifications have been rejected by the Committee purely on the basis of Criterion B. One was a Level 6 qualification, which was considered too high a level to be appropriate for 14-19 learners. The other was a Level 4 NVQ which is only supported by the SSC for learners over the age of 19.

### **Duplication of national route provision (Criterion E)**

- 52 Criterion E of Section 96 requires evidence that stand-alone qualifications meet a learner or employer need that is not already met or cannot be met within a national route. Failure to demonstrate that qualifications do meet the requirements of Criterion E has been, by far, the most common reason for the Committee to make a recommendation of 'not eligible'. A total of 32 of the Committee's decisions not to recommend were made on the basis that evidence did not meet Criterion E; 11 of these qualifications went on to be submitted to the DCSF as not recommended eligible for public funding, the other 21 were subsequently withdrawn from the stand-alone scrutiny process by the awarding organisation. Of these 21 qualifications, 8 were planned to be resubmitted for national routes, 12 were withdrawn completely from scrutiny, and one will be resubmitted as a stand-alone qualification with new evidence at the next Committee meeting. In many cases it appears that awarding organisations may not have done sufficient research to identify where other similar qualifications fit into the 14-19 qualifications framework.
- 53 As part of the initial scrutiny process, checks are made against a number of qualifications databases including the National Database of Accredited Qualifications, the Learning Aims Database and the Sector Qualification Strategies Action Plan database, to identify whether similar qualifications already exist and whether they are funded within one of the national routes. Where similar qualifications are identified, awarding organisations are asked to provide additional evidence to show how their particular qualification differs from the national route provision and why it is not suitable for inclusion within the same national route. In many cases, even additional evidence provided by the awarding organisation has not satisfied the Committee that a qualification genuinely meets a unique need, or is sufficiently different from existing provision to justify it being recommended as eligible for funding as a stand-alone qualification.

### **Lack of evidence of Sector Skills Council support**

- 54 The principles which amplify the Section 96 criteria clearly state that support from the SSC/SSB must be provided for vocational qualifications. Over the past year this has frequently been the area in which submissions lack evidence for the awarding organisation, with either inadequate information on SSC/SSB support or no information about the support of the SSC/SSB provided at all. JACQA has sought to remedy this by engaging with SSCs/SSBs, providing information setting out JACQA's expectations for supporting letters and attending SSC events to raise awareness of JACQA and its requirements. The development of the Sector Qualification Strategy Action Plan Database, with fields specifically for JACQA information will also help to support SSCs/SSBs with the process.

## Priorities for 2010-11 and future programme of activities

- 55 During 2010-11 JACQA will seek to clarify and develop its ways of working and underpinning processes and procedures. These refinements are not only intended to make the process more efficient, but to enable JACQA to manage the anticipated increase in the volume of stand-alone qualifications being submitted and any extension to the role and remit that the implementation of the JACQA Biennial Review Report might necessitate.
- 56 At the time of writing, the implementation and therefore impact of the JACQA Biennial Review Report is unknown, as the response from the Secretary of State to the findings, conclusions and recommendations is currently awaited. In 2010 however, it is already confirmed that JACQA will begin the scrutiny of existing stand-alone qualifications with the aim of significantly reducing the number of qualifications that are eligible to receive public funding outside of the national routes.
- 57 The previous sections set out some of the key findings and outputs of JACQA activities. Based on these key findings and experiences of this first year of operation, the following changes and actions will occur in 2010.
- The date of final submission of evidence for qualifications being scrutinised by the Committee will be brought forward from the current deadline of four weeks before the meeting to six weeks. To facilitate the change in the timescales, and to reduce the impact on awarding organisations, the number of Termly meetings planned for 2010 will increase from three to four.
  - Confirmation of the principle that component parts of QCF qualifications (that is those developed in suites comprising an Award, Certificate and Diploma of the same name) will not be recommended for eligibility for stand-alone funding where the larger qualification already sits within one of the national routes.
  - Confirmation of the principle that the urgent submissions process is not suitable for resubmissions and previous 'not eligible' decisions made by the Secretary of State prior to the establishment of JACQA. This will be complemented by a revised resubmissions policy clarifying timescales for resubmissions and the number of resubmissions permissible.
  - JACQA will work with Ofqual to consider how the Ofqual definitions of 'qualification purpose' should be developed further and used as a basis for clarifying the scope of the SSC's role in approving qualifications for use by 14-19 year old learners.
  - JACQA has previously committed to reviewing its approach to early dialogue with a view to working with awarding organisations on their longer term strategies for 14-19 qualification reform. As part of this review, there will be an alteration of the JACQA terminology of 'early dialogue' to 'initial discussion' to prevent confusion with similarly named activities undertaken by awarding organisations during the accreditation process. The initial discussion phase will continue to aim to maximise the benefits from the approach of early engagement for both awarding organisations and JACQA.

- Promotion of the early submission of full evidence for stand-alone qualifications and to support this, a principle that incomplete submissions will no longer be reviewed by the Committee.
  - Revision of and refinement to the NQF to QCF policy (qualifications being approved under Criterion F) to ensure appropriate scrutiny especially where there is low take-up.
  - Increasing the level of scrutiny, where appropriate, of amendments made to existing qualifications; for example, where an amendment is made to increase the eligible age ranges; in this circumstance, the qualification is effectively new and it is necessary to ensure the qualification meets Criterion B of Section 96 in being suitable for the age group.
- 58 The above and any further proposed amendments to the JACQA ways of working will be informed by consultations with awarding organisations, and where appropriate, Sector Skills Councils and other stakeholders. The *JACQA Handbook for Awarding Organisations* will be updated in the spring to reflect and confirm all the updates to the JACQA processes and procedures. This will further confirm the dates from which these changes will apply.
- 59 During 2010-11, JACQA will also focus on adopting a more targeted approach to both strategic and operational communications activities to ensure these effectively support JACQA to fulfil its roles and responsibilities; a schedule of workshops with awarding organisations has already been published and meetings with Sector Skills Councils and others already arranged.
- 60 In addition, as part of its future activities, JACQA will ensure linkages with the new arrangements from the Skills Funding Agency regarding the process of confirming qualifications for post-19 learners in England.
- 61 JACQA has also revised its 2010 meeting schedule to ensure sufficient opportunities for awarding organisations to submit qualifications. The key dates for awarding organisations submitting stand-alone qualifications for scrutiny are given in Appendix 3.

## Conclusion

- 62 At the outset of this report, it states that JACQA was established to act as a key delivery mechanism to help bring about a simplified and more rational 14-19 offer by advising the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families on funding eligibility. A central output of that role is to enable the Government to implement its strategy of developing a comprehensive offer for young people focused on four national routes and rationalising what may be available as stand-alone qualifications outside of those Routes.
- 63 An important measure of JACQA's impact and current role in supporting the delivery of the 14-19 qualifications strategy is in terms of understanding the extent that new qualifications are aligned to the national routes, the volume of stand-alone qualifications and supporting the shaping of a learning offer genuinely targeted at 14-19 year olds.
- 64 It should be recognised that the majority of new qualifications are aligned to the national routes. This results from two key factors; the first is the existing commitment of awarding organisations to align their qualifications to a national route; and the second is the work of JACQA to build on that commitment to further help shape behaviour to support alignment to national routes (where it is appropriate to do so).
- 65 Up to December 2009, over two thirds (72% or 1,428 out of 1,983 submissions) of qualifications initially submitted to JACQA for funding eligibility have been submitted as being eligible within a national route. In addition, a further 101 qualifications (18%) of the submission for stand-alone funding eligibility have subsequently been resubmitted for funding eligibility within a national route. The majority (92% or 93 out of 101) of resubmissions to a national route have occurred prior to Committee scrutiny; this confirms the work JACQA is doing to engage with awarding organisations throughout the process and to encourage them to think about how the qualifications they are developing might fit within one or more of the national routes. These two factors together indicate that an increasing number of awarding organisations are engaging more proactively in the reform process, and also show that JACQA is beginning to establish itself as a key driver for rationalising 14-19 provision.
- 66 137 qualifications were considered by the Committee for eligibility for stand-alone funding; 83 were recommended as eligible. These represent 60% of those qualifications considered by the Committee but only 15% of the total number of submissions received for stand-alone funding eligibility. Many of the 83 qualifications recommended as eligible for public funding were given recommendations with time-limited eligibility for funding; this reflects that the Committee were satisfied these qualifications meet needs that cannot yet be met through the national routes but anticipated that these needs would be met through the national routes in future. This approach further mirrors the Government approach that in implementing the Strategy the need for a gradual and managed transition is recognised so that gaps in the offer are not created.
- 67 JACQA is further beginning to help shape the age appropriateness of qualifications. This is reflected in recommendations which limit funding eligibility to learners aged 18 and recommendations not to fund qualifications designed for post 19 learners; these qualifications have previously also been automatically submitted for funding eligibility for 14-19 learners. This should be

recognised as a success for JACQA, as it contributes to the streamlining of 14-19 provision and shows that qualifications inappropriate for this age range are being challenged.

- 68 In summary, JACQA has had an early and measurable impact on the qualifications landscape in its first year of operation and has made a central contribution to driving forward the implementation of the 14-19 reform agenda. The establishment of JACQA represents a significant step towards realising the vision for a better qualifications system for 14-19 year olds. JACQA recognises the challenge in achieving the recommendations that will emerge from the Biennial Review. In doing so, however, it looks to the coming year to further refine and enhance its delivery of its role and remit to further support the implementation of the vision for a streamlined, simplified and more coherent 14-19 phase to the benefit of the system, providers and above all young people.

## Appendix 1: Membership

<b>Committee Members</b>		
<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Acronym</b>
Alliance of Sector Skills Councils	Anne Seaman	Alliance
Association of Colleges	Joy Mercer (from Dec 2009 meeting)	AoC
Association of Colleges (Practitioner)	Ian Pryce (from Sept 2009 meeting)	AoC
Association of Directors of Children's Services	Paul Brennan	ADCS
Association of Learning Providers (Practitioner)	Linda Martin	ALP
Association of Learning Providers	Paul Eeles (from June 2009 meeting)	ALP
British Chambers of Commerce	Christine Barton (from Dec 2009 meeting)	BCC
Higher Education Funding Council for England	Ruth Tucker	HEFCE
Learning and Skills Council	Rob Wye (Joint Chair)	LSC
Local Government Association	John Freeman	LGA
Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency	Sue Georgious (Acting Joint Chair)	QCDA
Workforce Monitoring Group	Kathryn James	WAMG
Workforce Monitoring Group	Darren Northcott	WAMG
Skill: National Bureau for Students with Disabilities	Barbara Waters	Skill
UK Commission for Employment and Skills	Geoff Fieldsend	UKCES

<b>Former Committee Members</b>		
<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Acronym</b>
Association of Colleges	Maggie Scott (to Sept 2009 meeting)	AoC
British Chambers of Commerce	John Lucas (to Sept 2009 meeting)	BCC
Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency	Mary Curnock Cook (Joint Chair) (to Dec 2009 meeting)	QCDA

<b>Termly Observers</b>		
<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Acronym</b>
Office of the Qualifications and Examinations Regulator	Tina Issacs	Ofqual
Department for Children Schools and Families	Fiona Jordan	DCSF
Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills	Graham Pickering	DCELLS
Department for Business, Innovation and Skills	Paul Cohen	BIS
Skills Funding Agency	Janet Ryland	SFA
Council for the Curriculum Examinations and Assessment	Roger McCune	CCEA

JACQA Secretariat leads:

LSC – Kully Jones: Senior Policy Manager – Qualifications and JACQA  
 QCDA – Jonathan Price Marlow: Head of Policy Articulation and Regulation

## Appendix 2: Section 96 criteria

### Criterion A: Prior accreditation by a regulatory body

- Only qualifications that meet high-quality standards shall be eligible for public funding. Accreditation by Ofqual (or a regulatory body recognised by them) will be expected to provide these assurances.

### Criterion B: Suitability for the age group

- Account will be taken of whether the qualification is suitable for the age-group in terms of maturity, social well-being and health and safety requirements.

### Criterion C: Fit with the National Curriculum

- Where it is proposed to offer qualifications at Key Stage 4 in a National Curriculum subject, to be eligible for funding, qualifications must meet the requirements of any relevant programmes of study.

### Criterion D: Criteria for qualifications forming part of one of the national suites or frameworks

- Qualifications that form part of one of the following national routes will generally be approved for funding: i) GCSEs and A levels; ii) Diplomas; iii) Apprenticeship frameworks; iv) Foundation Learning for 14-19 learners

However, these qualifications will generally be approved to be offered only within the programme or programmes of which they form part, unless they also meet the criteria for free-standing (stand-alone) qualifications.

### Criterion E: New free-standing (stand-alone) qualifications

- There is a presumption against beginning for the first time to approve (as free-standing (stand-alone) qualifications outside the national routes) qualifications which have not previously been approved for use. Only where the introduction of the new qualification would meet the specific needs of a group of learners, employers or higher education institutions whose needs cannot be met by the national routes, would the Secretary of State approve the new qualification as a free-standing (stand-alone) qualification.

This presumption applies to new qualifications within existing national routes, but not to re-developed versions of pre-existing qualifications coming forward for re-approval.

### Criterion F: Criteria for re-approved free-standing (stand-alone) qualifications

- To continue to be approved as a free-standing (stand-alone) qualification, an awarding organisation must demonstrate that a qualification has significant uptake for the under 19 age-group (typically, this will mean at least 100 certifications per year). Or if not, that there is a clear case that the qualification meets a specific need (of a group of learners, employers or higher education institutions) and which cannot be met in other ways.

### Appendix 3: Key dates for awarding organisations submitting stand-alone qualifications for scrutiny

This information sheet provides important information about the timing of the submissions to JACQA of 14-19 qualifications that are intended for use as stand-alones.

All 14-19 qualifications that are intended for use as stand-alones will be scrutinised closely by JACQA to ensure that they meet the criteria set out in the revised administrative arrangements for Section. 96 and reflect and respond to funding and learning priorities. To ensure there is sufficient time for JACQA secretariat to complete the scrutiny process, the qualification must be submitted for final review at least six (6) weeks prior to the next Termly review meeting.

The dates of the 2010 JACQA Termly review meetings and the cut off dates for the submission of qualifications for final review are as follows:

<b>JACQA Termly review meetings</b>	<b>Cut off date for submitting qualifications to JACQA for final review</b>	<b>Dates JACQA's advice will be sent to DSCF following Termly meetings</b>
17 March 2010	17 February 2010	24 March 2010
6 July 2010	25 May 2010	14 July 2010
29 September 2010	18 August 2010	6 October 2010
7 December 2010	26 October 2010	15 December 2010

Awarding organisations are advised to be mindful of these dates when planning their submissions for accreditation and subsequent dialogue with JACQA.

Further information on JACQA can be found at the following website:  
<http://jacqa.lsc.gov.uk>.

For further information, please contact [jacqa@qcda.gov.uk](mailto:jacqa@qcda.gov.uk).

Learning and Skills Council  
National Office

Cheylesmore House  
Quinton Road  
Coventry CV1 2WT

Telephone 0845 019 4170  
Fax 024 7682 3675

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

Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency

Earlsdon Park  
53–55 Butts Road  
Coventry  
CV1 3BH

Enquiry Line 0300 303 3011  
Textphone 0300 303 3012  
Fax 0300 303 3014

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

*The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) is currently operating certain of its non-regulatory functions under the name Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency (QCDA). The legal entity remains QCA, established under the Education Act 1997. QCA is an exempted charity under the Charities Act 1993*

© LSC February 2010

Published by the Learning and Skills Council and  
the Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency

Extracts from this publication may be reproduced for non-commercial educational or training purposes on condition that the source is acknowledged and the findings are not misrepresented.

This publication is available in electronic form on the Learning and Skills Council website: [www.lsc.gov.uk](http://www.lsc.gov.uk).

If you require this publication in an alternative format or language, please contact the LSC Help Desk: 0870 900 6800.

Learning and Skills Council Publication reference: LSC-P-NAP-100503  
Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency Product Code: QCDA/10/4748