



Skills Funding
Agency

Interim Arrangements for the Approval of new Qualification and Credit Framework Qualifications for Public Funding for Adult Learners in 2013/14

August 2013

Of interest to awarding organisations, colleges and training organisations

Purpose

1. This document explains how we will decide whether Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) qualifications which enter the Ofqual [Register of Regulated Qualifications](#) on or after **Wednesday, 7 August 2013** are approved for public funding through the Adult Skills Budget, 24+ Advanced Learning Loans and the Offender Learning and Skills Service.
2. From Wednesday, 7 August until autumn 2013, we will operate an interim process which is described in this document. During summer 2013, we will develop new business rules for the approval of regulated qualifications which we will operate from autumn 2013.
3. The process described in this document does not apply to the approval of qualifications for delivery in Apprenticeships.

Background

4. [Rigour and Responsiveness in Skills](#) (April 2013) sets out the need to ensure that the publicly-funded qualifications offer for adults is rigorous and responsive to employer needs.
5. To achieve this, we will consult with the sector to develop a set of new business rules for the approval of qualifications for funding. We expect that there will be business rules relating to **size, rationale, content** and **need**. Qualifications will need to satisfy these rules to enter public funding. We expect there will also be rules relating to **demand** and **outcomes** which qualifications will need to satisfy to remain eligible for public funding.
6. While the new business rules are being developed in consultation with the sector, we need to manage the volume of qualifications approved for public funding. Therefore, in the main, new qualifications that enter the Register will not be considered for public funding until our new business rules are implemented in autumn 2013.
7. However, we recognise that in some cases there may be a need for new qualifications to be approved for funding ahead of the introduction of the new business rules. Therefore, we have identified nine categories of qualifications which will be assessed against our existing criteria.

Interim Arrangements

8. From 7 August 2013 to autumn 2013, QCF qualifications which fall in one of these categories will be assessed against our existing criteria as set out in Annex A:
 - a. **QCF English and maths qualifications**
 - b. **QCF qualifications that fall into a sector subject area linked to the government's industrial strategy** and where sector strategies have already been agreed and published, such as advanced manufacturing, knowledge services and enabling sectors
 - c. **QCF qualifications in Teaching and Learning for the Further Education and Skills Sector** that have been developed using guidance from the Learning and Skills Improvement Service following the [Lingfield Review](#)
 - d. **QCF qualifications designated as 'full and relevant' Early Years Educator qualifications** that have been developed following the [Nutbrown Review](#)
 - e. **QCF English for Speakers of Other Languages** qualifications
 - f. **Replacement qualifications** - QCF qualifications which replace existing qualifications approved for funding that are nearing their operational end date. The **awarding organisation must confirm the operational end date of the existing qualification and** the operational start date of the new qualification
 - g. **Innovation Code** – QCF qualifications which have been developed through the Innovation Code
 - h. **Gap in provision** - where the QCF qualification has been developed because of a gap in provision and where there is no existing qualification that will recognise the learning or skills gain
 - i. **Re-entry** – where the qualification has not been approved for funding for 2013/14 following the recent exercise to review qualifications which had been available for two years but which had low or no publicly-funded enrolments and the qualification:
 - now has evidence of growth in demand from specific providers for publicly-funded enrolments
 - is in a government-identified growth sector and
 - is included in an Apprenticeship which is now under development.
9. Qualifications that fall outside of these qualification categories will be assessed against the new business rules when they are introduced in autumn 2013.

10. Awarding organisations (AOs) need to contact us using the application process described in paragraphs 12 to 19 if a qualification falls into category (f), (g), (h) or (i) of paragraph 8 above and is added to the Register of Regulated Qualifications on or after the 7 August 2013. We will then assess the qualification against our existing criteria as outlined in Annex A to determine whether it will be approved for public funding.
11. If a qualification falls into category (a), (b), (c), (d) or (e), we will not require AOs to contact us using this application process.

Process and Timescales for Applications

12. During this interim period, qualifications will be approved for funding on 23 August, 20 September and 21 October.
13. We will accept applications from AOs notifying us that particular qualifications are in one of the four categories listed in paragraph 10 by 17:00 on the following dates in order for the qualification to be considered and outcomes confirmed:
 - **21 August 2013** for consideration on 23 August
 - **13 September 2013** for consideration on 20 September
 - **14 October 2013** for consideration on 21 October.
14. AOs will need to submit a separate application for each qualification to be considered.
15. For each qualification, an awarding organisation will need to indicate the category which the qualifications fall into, and provide the relevant evidence:
 - **Replacement** - Provide details of the existing and replacement qualification in terms of qualification accreditation number (QAN), operational end date and operational start date and the reason for the replacement.
 - **Innovation code** - Provide evidence that the qualification has been developed from the Innovation Code.
 - **Gap in provision** - Identify the gap in provision that the new qualification is addressing.
 - **Re-entry into public funding** - Provide estimated publicly-funded enrolments (outside of an Apprenticeship) of 100 or more across the 2013/14 academic year from colleges or training organisations (on the Agency's Register of Training Organisations) and/or evidence that the qualification is in a sector where there is now investment/growth and/or Apprenticeship framework development.

How to Submit an Application

16. AOs should submit applications to qualifications@skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk .
17. You can download electronic versions of the application d from [our website](#) Evidence from colleges, training organisations, employers or employer representative bodies must carry the logo or watermark of that organisation.
18. We will confirm receipt of applications straightaway. We will confirm the outcome of the application within five working days after the approval date.

Annex A

1. This Annex sets out the existing criteria we use to approve qualifications for funding. Currently, we will not approve for funding:

- Qualifications at Level 2 and above which have a purpose linked to recognise growth and engagement in learning
- Qualifications which have a purpose linked to updating and continuing professional development
- Qualifications at Level 5 and higher
- Awards at Levels 2 and 3 unless they are part of the offer for the unemployed (including 19-24 Traineeships) and OLASS
- Qualifications which are linked to licence to practice or more generally intended to meet an employer's statutory and/or legal responsibilities, unless they are an exception such as those relating to food safety, health and safety, emergency first aid at work and forklift truck qualifications which have been approved for public funding for certain unemployed learners¹ and offenders in custody
- Qualifications offered by an AO which has either not signed the Awarding Organisation Personal Learning Agreement or has either not started uploading achievement data into the PLR or not indicated they have the capacity and capability to upload achievement.

¹ Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) or Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) in the Work Related Activity Group (WRAG), and also to learners receiving Universal Credit because they are unemployed and who are mandated to attend training.



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