



Skills Funding
Agency

Qualifications Information Guide

Version 3

February 2015

Of interest to colleges and training organisations

Contents

Purpose and Scope	2
Introduction	3
Qualifications Advisory Group.....	4
Further Ahead.....	4
The Publicly-funded Offer	5
Our Business Rules for Approving Qualifications for Funding	7
The Approval Process	7
The Hub.....	9
The Annual Review.....	10
The Unit Offer	12
The Innovation Code	14
Non-regulated Provision	16
Annex A	18
Defining ‘Full’ Qualifications.....	18
English and maths	19
English for Speakers of Other Languages	20
Access to Higher Education Diploma.....	21
‘Standalone’ Qualifications and Licence to Practise	20
24+ Advanced Learning Loans	21
Personal Learning Record	22
Recognition of Prior Learning	23
Annex B	24
Overview of the Funding Approval Process	24
Annex C	25
Further Information	25
Useful Links	25

Purpose and Scope

1. This Guide covers the publicly-funded offer (the offer) within the Adult Skills Budget (ASB) and Offender Learning and Skills Service (OLASS).
2. The Chief Executive of Skills Funding designates qualifications eligible for a 24+ Advanced Learning Loan on behalf of the Secretary of State. We do this in line with the processes outlined in this document.
3. This Guide contains a summary of the rules we use to approve qualifications, **outside of apprenticeships**. For full details please refer to our [Technical Guide for Awarding Organisations](#). It also describes unit delivery, the Innovation Code, and how we fund non-regulated training provision. We publish it so you (colleges and training organisations) are clear about these processes.
4. Please read this Guide alongside our [Funding Rules](#). The Funding Rules set out in detail which learners are eligible for funding, and what training and learning they are eligible to receive funding for.
5. You can view the full range of training provision we currently fund in the Learning Aims search facility in the [Hub](#). During 2015 we will withdraw the [Simplified Funding Rates Catalogue](#). However, we will produce a version of the catalogue for regulated qualifications only.
6. The offer is drawn from:
 - a) qualifications and units from awarding organisations that the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual) regulates
 - b) Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) regulated Access to Higher Education (HE) Diplomas
 - c) Innovation Code training provision
 - d) non-regulated training provision (that is, not regulated by Ofqual or QAA)
7. The three Annexes contain further detail on aspects of the publicly-funded offer. Such as the adult entitlement, the qualification journey and links to further information on qualifications.

Introduction

8. The rules we use to approve qualifications for the offer use the principles of **rigour, recognition and relevance**, set out in the document [Getting the Job Done](#). Our approach builds on the principles for adult vocational qualifications set out in the [Review of Adult Vocational Qualifications](#). It also aligns with the reform of vocational qualifications that the Department for Education (DfE) has taken forward following the [Wolf Review of Vocational Education](#), which the DfE reflect in their [Technical Guidance for Vocational Qualifications](#).
9. **Rigorous:** We only approve qualifications that Ofqual and the QAA regulate.
10. **Recognised:** We only approve qualifications that have high demand from employers and individuals. A qualification we approve must act as a signal of meaningful skills achievement to employers or further and higher education institutions. It must allow an individual to:
 - demonstrate their achievement of the specialist knowledge and skills needed to carry out a specific job role
 - enter an apprenticeship or work in a specific industry, occupation or occupational area
 - progress to the next level of learning, including higher education
11. **Relevant:** We approve qualifications that enable learners to enter employment, or that support them on their journey towards employment. Qualifications we approve must respond to current and future skills needs and be relevant at sub-national level.
12. We will support every learner to progress towards achieving an English or maths GCSE at A* to C. To support this the offer includes qualifications in Functional Skills. We also include iGCSEs in maths and English Language that count in the English Baccalaureate measure as well as Free-standing Maths. We will continue to approve some Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) English and maths qualifications at Entry Level and Level 1, where they meet our rules.

Qualifications Advisory Group

13. We seek advice on our work and processes from the Qualifications Advisory Group. It meets five times a year and has an independent chair from the education and skills sector. The Group advises us on qualification-related issues and policy. It works in tandem with our Funding External Technical Advisory Group, whose role is to advise us on the funding of the offer.
14. The Qualifications Advisory Group includes representatives from the Association of Colleges, Association of Employment and Learning Providers and HOLEX as well as employers and awarding organisation representative bodies. The Terms of Reference and membership are available on the [Qualifications Advisory Group](#) section of GOV.UK.

Further Ahead

15. We will take account the [regulatory changes](#) that Ofqual are making. This includes changes to the QCF.
16. In 2015 we will look at how we can have a more locally responsive offer. We will explore how we can work with Local Enterprise Partnerships, Industrial Partnerships and National Colleges, to make sure the offer supports delivery of their strategic plans, particularly in the context of current and future adult vocational qualifications.
17. We will review the business rules for QCF English and maths once the outcomes of the Education and Training Foundation's review of English provision are clear. We will make changes in line with their [recommendations](#).

The Publicly-funded Offer

19. Whilst regulation of a qualification is needed, it is not our only requirement. To enter the offer qualifications must meet our business rules.
20. Our business rules are now 'framework neutral'. This means we will now consider both QCF and non-QCF regulated qualifications for approval.
21. Before we consider a qualification we need to make sure it is in our remit to fund. We will **consider** qualifications that are:
 - a) 'live' on Ofqual's [Register of Regulated Qualifications](#) or on the QAA [database of Access to Higher Education \(HE\) Diplomas](#)
 - b) available in England
 - c) available for learners aged 19 and over
 - d) from Entry Level to Level 4
 - e) offered by an awarding organisation which has signed the Personal Learning Record (PLR) agreement and regularly uploads achievement data in line with the terms of the [Agreement](#)
22. We will not fund qualifications that are:
 - a) used as the end-point assessment of new apprenticeship standards
 - b) part of higher education provision where we do not have a remit to fund
 - c) required by a licensing authority so that an individual can operate in a regulated job role
 - d) used to recognise activity that would already be part of a learner's experience within further education (FE) – for example, college induction, preparing for work experience, or preparing for a skills competition
 - e) specific to one employer (unless due to statutory requirements they are the sole employer in a sector, such as the armed forces)
 - f) for a named product (for example a vendor-specific course)
 - g) vocational, but the title of the qualification does not reflect the specific sector or occupation or job activity covered
 - h) non-vocational and the content is not appropriate for public funding

23. Where a qualification meets all of the criteria, we may either approve it automatically, where it aligns with particular government priorities, or subject it to scrutiny through our business rules.

Qualifications we approve automatically

24. We approve automatically the following groups of qualifications:
- General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE)
 - Advanced Level and Advanced Subsidiary Level (GCE)
 - Functional Skills in English, maths and ICT from Entry Level to Level 2
 - QCF English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) qualifications
 - QAA Access to Higher Education Diplomas
 - iGCSEs in English and maths that are part of the [English Baccalaureate](#) (EBacc) measure grade A* to C
 - Free-standing Maths qualifications up to and including Level 2
 - Technical Certificates and Tech Levels which meet DfE requirements for inclusion in [16 to 19 Performance Tables](#)
 - Levels 3 and 4 Early Years Educator qualifications that the National College for Teaching and Leadership confirms as 'full and relevant'
 - Ofqual-regulated Level 2 Early Education and Childcare qualifications, including all Children's Care Learning and Development qualifications that provide progression routes to Level 3
 - Level 3 Diplomas for Residential Childcare (England)
 - Level 3 Awards in Education and Training and Level 4 Certificates in Education and Training
 - Specific qualifications in fork-lift truck, food hygiene, health and safety, first aid at work and security approved for certain groups of learners
 - The Princes Trust Employment, Teamwork and Community Skills qualifications

Our Business Rules for Approving Qualifications for Funding

25. Our model to approve qualifications for funding has three components:
- i. An approval process.
 - ii. A database of qualifications in the [Hub](#).
 - iii. An annual review of qualifications approved for public funding.

The Approval Process

26. We review qualifications for funding every three months. This applies to those we approve automatically and those that are subject to scrutiny.
27. As part of our process we review:
- 1) amendments made to qualifications already approved for funding
 - 2) submissions from awarding organisations for:
 - new qualifications
 - a qualification to re-enter public funding where it has been removed due to low or no demand
 - exceptions to the size rule for qualifications at Level 2 or above

The Business Rules

28. We will subject to scrutiny all qualifications we do not approve automatically, these will need to meet the **size**, **purpose** and **recognition** business rules.

Size Rule

29. It is important that a qualification is of a suitable size to deliver sufficient learning and demonstrate attaining skills, knowledge and understanding. We use size thresholds to support these aims.
30. For English and maths qualifications the minimum threshold is three credits or 30 guided learning hours (GLH).

31. For qualifications at Entry Level and Level 1 we have a minimum threshold of six credits or 60 GLH. In setting this threshold we recognise that the unit offer is available for the unemployed, including traineeships, and through OLASS.
32. For qualifications at Level 2 to Level 4 the minimum threshold is 15 credits or 150 GLH.
33. We recognise that some vocational qualifications at Level 2 and above, that fall below the size threshold, will have strong support from employers or be specialist in nature. An awarding organisation may ask us to consider making an exception. We require the awarding organisation to give us a clear rationale for the exception. We also require the evidence for purpose and recognition.

Purpose Rule

34. It is vital that learners understand the content and outcomes of a qualification. The qualification must have a clear statement of purpose so that learners and employers understand what the qualification will give them and how they can use it.
35. We require the purpose statement to be learner-facing and to clearly set out the qualifications rationale and primary purpose. Written for the learner, it must cover all the information they need and help them make an informed choice about which qualification to take.
36. All purpose statements must include:
 - (a) a summary of the qualification's content
 - (b) what knowledge, skills and competencies the learner will develop
 - (c) enough information for the learner to understand why they should take this particular qualification when you offer the same or similar qualification titles
 - (d) whether the qualification is available in an apprenticeship and why they should take the qualification outside of the framework or standard
 - (e) an explanation of how the qualification will support the learner to achieve the outcome(s) it focuses on
 - (f) reference to the organisations that support the qualification

Recognition Rule

37. It is important that qualifications allow learners to demonstrate to others that they have achieved certain skills, knowledge and understanding at a given level. We will only approve qualifications for funding where appropriate organisations indicate that the qualification demonstrates these skills, knowledge and understanding.
38. For qualifications that support competency or entrance into a job role, occupation or occupational area we require employer recognition of the qualification. The employers must be representative of the job role, occupation or occupational areas to which the qualification relates.
39. For qualifications that support progression to the next level we require letters from organisations that offer the higher level qualification.
40. We require letters from colleges and training organisations that offer qualifications that help learners to:
 - overcome barriers to entering work
 - operate independently and effectively in life, learning and work
 - re-engage with learning
41. For QCF English and maths qualifications we require letters from organisations that offer the qualification at the next level the learner can progress to.
42. Letters must provide clear evidence of and support for the outcomes of the qualification, rather than simply support public funding. All letters must explain how achievement of the qualification leads to the stated outcomes, rather than simply state that learners will achieve the outcomes.

The Hub

43. We usually approve a qualification for the duration of the funding year. That is, from 1 August to 31 July. If we approve a qualification after 1 August, we backdate its approval to 1 August, or its operational start date if that is later.

44. After we approve a qualification we add it to Simplified Funding Rates Catalogue. We will also add the information on newly approved qualifications the Learning Aims search facility in the [Hub](#). We expect to publish the Catalogue on the following dates:

Update published:	
Initial 2015 to 2016 offer	5 February 2015
2014 to 2015 offer only	2 March 2015
2014 to 2015 and 2015 to 2016 offers	1 April 2015
2014 to 2015 and 2015 to 2016 offers	1 July 2015
2015 to 2016 offer	1 October 2015
2015 to 2016 offer	8 February 2016
2015 to 2016 offer	3 April 2016
2015 to 2016 offer	4 July 2016

45. Before you use a qualification you must check:
- a) that it appears on the Hub as approved for funding
 - b) with the awarding organisation that it is available for new learner registrations

The Annual Review

46. Each autumn, we review qualifications that have been in the offer for two or more years. We apply three business rules in the annual review: track record, progression and the Personal Learner Record.

Track Record

47. At the start of the review we publish two lists of qualifications that have been approved for two or more years:
- i. Those with no demand. These qualifications have had no publicly-funded enrolments, outside of apprenticeships.
 - ii. Those with low demand. These qualifications have had 1 to 99 publicly-funded enrolments, outside of apprenticeships, in each of the last two years.

48. We give awarding organisations the opportunity to provide us with evidence that removing a qualification with low demand will have a negative impact on learners or employers.

Progression

49. In the 2015 annual review we intend to measure the impact of a qualification through a set of key performance indicators (KPI).
50. Work on new measures of success for the skills system is broader than our business rules. Our KPI development is closely linked to the [Outcome based Success Measures](#) BIS are developing.
51. We are exploring four KPI:
- 1) How effective the qualification has been in supporting individuals to progress into work or to a higher level of learning.
 - 2) What the economic return of the qualification is, as measured through changes in earnings.
 - 3) How far the offer responds to key national and/or local/regional priorities, and/or skills gaps.
 - 4) Review the learner success rate at qualification level rather than at the level of the college or training organisation.

Personal Learning Record

52. For a qualification to remain in the offer, the awarding organisation offering it must have signed the Awarding Organisation Agreement. They must also upload achievement data regularly to the learner's PLR.

The Unit Offer

53. The unit offer allows you to design and deliver programmes which are flexible and responsive to the needs of individuals and local employers.
54. As with the qualifications offer, we focus the unit offer on engagement, entry into and through work, and progress to the next level of learning.
55. A programme of units should offer the individual a coherent and meaningful learning experience which can:
 - result in short and focused interventions to update existing skills or to acquire skills in a new occupational area
 - enable an individual to move quickly into work
 - support progress in stages towards achieving full qualifications
56. We will fund units from approved QCF English and maths qualifications for eligible learners. We also make units available in the offer for the unemployed, traineeships and OLASS. We will make a small number of units available alongside apprenticeships as part of the offer for micro-sized businesses.
57. Where units are used to support unemployed learners it is important that they are offered a coherent programme. The programme should reflect both their vocational skills need and local employer demand.
58. It is important that the programme you offer contains an appropriate balance between building the confidence and skills needed to prepare to enter work and the skills needed at the appropriate level to get a job. This is especially true for disadvantaged learners and those who may not be able or prepared to immediately access a full qualification.
59. When we approve a qualification for funding, subject to the criteria below, we make the units within that qualification available as part of the unit offer.
60. To make sure we achieve a balance across the offer we do a manual check of the units. We may not make units available where the content is inappropriate or of low skills value in the context of the overall unit offer.

61. We will not make available units:
- at Level 4 or above
 - at Level 3 for learners aged 24 and over
 - that relate to or appear in the rules of combination of at least one qualification with a primary purpose of licence to practise, continuing professional development or a vendor qualification
62. We will confirm the 2015 to 2016 funding year unit offer at the end of April 2015. We will then update the offer at appropriate points during the year. We do not approve units automatically for the next year.
63. During 2015 we will review the unit offer in light of the outcomes of Ofqual's review of the QCF, and the broader work around the government's [Vocational Qualifications Reform Plan](#).

The Innovation Code

64. The Innovation Code (the Code) is a mechanism that increases the flexibility and responsiveness of the ASB.
65. The Code helps you to respond quickly to local business and employment needs. It allows you to draw down funding for adult learners to enrol on a course that does not currently lead to a valid qualification.
66. Whilst delivering the course, you must work with an Ofqual-accredited awarding organisation to develop a qualification that will recognise the learning and skills gained through the course. This will allow different employers across the country to recognise the learner's achievement.
67. Learning aim reference numbers for the Code are available in the Learning Aims search facility in the [Hub](#).
68. As well as allowing you to respond to skills gaps, we expect the Code to improve the qualifications offer through the creation of new qualifications that have both the recognition of employers and been subject to the rigour of regulation.
69. It is important that the Code is only used for training that leads to a qualification we will eventually fund. The best way to approach this is to check the provision against our [Technical Guide](#) to see if it is something we might approve.
70. The Code can only be used where learners are eligible for ASB funding and are entitled to funding for the size and level of the learning aim. For details of learner eligibility and entitlements, please see our [Funding Rules](#).
71. You must not use the Code to:
 - cover the costs of delivery of provision that an employer already pays for
 - offer non-regulated versions of regulated vocational qualifications
 - deliver a qualification we have not approved for funding
 - pay the costs of developing new qualifications
 - fund provision at Level 3 and Level 4 for learners aged 24 or older

72. The Code is for provision that has the support of businesses but that is not currently a qualification. If a qualification is available that would recognise the skills and learning, then you must enrol the learner on that qualification.
73. There is no formal application process for the Code. To use the Code you must be on our [Register of Training Organisations](#) and currently deliver ASB or OLASS provision. You may contact us to discuss use of the Code.
74. You must deliver the Code within you existing funding allocation. The existing funding, learner eligibility and entitlement rules apply.
75. You can use the Code for both employed and unemployed learners. But you cannot use it to deliver all or part of an apprenticeship.
76. Training provision delivered through the Code in the 2015 to 2016 funding year will not affect your Qualification Success Rate or Minimum Levels of Performance.
77. Further information to support you to use the Code is available on the [Innovation Code](#) section of GOV.UK.

Non-regulated Provision

78. We define non-regulated provision as learning that does not lead to a qualification accredited by an awarding organisation regulated by Ofqual or the QAA for Higher Education.
79. We focus most of our funding on regulated provision because it is part of a national quality-assured regulatory framework. Achievement within that framework is transferrable, and can be demonstrated to employers and further and higher education providers. This is particularly relevant where learners are achieving vocational skills, knowledge and understanding in order to progress to the next level of vocational learning or to move into, or through, employment.
80. However, we know that for some learners and in certain circumstances there is a need for non-regulated provision. Therefore, you may deliver non-regulated training provision to learners who have learning difficulties or disabilities, are unemployed and actively seeking work, or need smaller packages of tailored support to re-engage with learning.
81. For those groups of learners you will be able to use non-regulated training provision that break downs barriers to engagement with learning or work. Or to support individuals to operate independently and effectively.
82. You may not use non-regulated training provision to deliver vocational training. The only exception to this is where you are using the Innovation Code and are working with an awarding organisation to develop a qualification to recognise the learner's achievement.
83. You need to record non-regulated training provision on the Individualised Learner Record (ILR) using the class codes set out in [Appendix H](#) of the ILR Specification.
84. The delivery of non-regulated training provision must be of the highest quality. For this reason it is mandatory for you to use the Recognising and Recording Progression and Achievement (RARPA) [standards](#), and to meet other requirements set out in the [Funding Rules](#) for non-regulated training provision.

85. You should note that non-regulated training provision is subject to our audit processes and is also included within Ofsted inspections.
86. You should also note that we do not expect you to displace vocational training that leads to regulated qualifications with non-regulated training as described above.
87. In 2016 to 2017 funding year we may increase this flexibility further, by no longer defining a list of non-vocational qualifications, linked to the outcomes above at Entry Level and Level 1.

Annex A

Defining 'Full' Qualifications

88. A learner may be entitled to full funding for their first 'full' Level 2 or Level 3 qualification. Where we approve vocational qualifications for funding they will be in scope for this entitlement.
89. At Level 2 we designate the following qualifications as full:
- five GCSEs at A* to C
 - Technical Certificates in the DfE [16 to 19 Performance Tables](#)
 - qualifications at Level 2 that are 15 credits or 150 GLH or more
90. At Level 3 we designate the following qualifications as full:
- QAA Access to Higher Education Diplomas
 - two A-levels
 - Tech Levels in the DfE [16 to 19 Performance Tables](#)
 - qualifications at Level 3 that are 30 credits or 300 GLH or more
 - Early Years Educator qualifications that are 30 credits or 300 GLH or more
91. As part of their entitlement, a learner can enrol on a higher-level qualification without achieving a lower-level qualification. For example, enrolling on a full Level 3 qualification without first achieving a full Level 2. We will only fully fund approved Level 4 qualifications of 30 credits or 300 GLH or more for learners enrolling on a Level 4 qualification without first achieving a full Level 3.
92. For full details of the funding entitlements, please refer to our [Funding Rules](#).

Small Qualifications at Levels 2 and 3

93. As indicated in paragraph 33, we will only approve vocational qualifications at Level 2 and above, that are below the size threshold on an exceptional basis.
94. If we do approve a qualification at Level 2 which is below the size threshold we will approve it for funding as part of the offer for the unemployed, traineeships

and OLASS. We will consider making it available on a co-funded basis to other learners. However, these qualifications will not be designated 'full'.

English and maths

95. Our approach is in line with the [Ministerial statement](#) (July 2014). This will ensure a clear focus by colleges and training organisations on GCSEs and Functional Skills in English and maths up to Level 2.
96. We continue to approve QCF English and maths qualifications at Entry Level and Level 1 alongside GCSE and Functional Skills. However, we will not approve any QCF English and maths Level 2 qualifications.
97. We will allow you to deliver non-regulated provision to learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. This provision must be based on the National Literacy and National Numeracy Standards. It must also enable the learner to progress to a regulated qualification.
98. The table below shows the English and maths qualifications that, if approved for funding, will be available on a fully funded basis to all eligible learners.

Qualification	Level
GCSE English Language	1/2
GCSE maths	1/2
iGCSE English or maths	2
Functional Skills English or maths	Entry, 1, 2
QCF English and maths	Entry, 1, 2
Free-standing Maths	Entry, 1, 2

99. From September 2015 new GCSEs in English Language and maths are available for teaching. We have approved them for funding. They are marked as 'GCSE 1-9' in the Simplified Funding Rates Catalogue. You should note that these are two-year GCSEs. The first examination series for these qualifications will be in June 2017.
100. 'Legacy' GCSE English and maths qualifications continue to be available for the 2015 to 2016 funding year. Learners taking these GCSEs can only be entered for the 2016 examination series. Although there will be a resit facility in November 2016, you should not start learners on these qualifications unless

the learner intends to complete the qualification within the 2015 to 2016 funding year. You can read about these changes on the [Ofqual](#) section of GOV.UK.

English for Speakers of Other Languages

101. In 2013 we set out principles to shape the suite of new English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Skills for Life qualifications. Awarding organisations have now developed these qualifications. We approve these automatically.
102. We expect these regulated qualifications to be used for all learners. However we will allow you to use non-regulated ESOL.
103. Non-regulated training provision must be based on the National Literacy Standards. It must enable the learner to progress to a regulated qualification.
104. The table below shows the types of English training provision we fund:

Qualification	Level
GCSE English Language	2
Functional Skills English	E, 1, 2
ESOL QCF Skills for Life Qualifications*	E, 1, 2
Non-regulated ESOL learning aims*	pre-entry level, E, 1, 2

* These qualifications are co-funded unless a learner is eligible for full funding.

‘Standalone’ Qualifications and Licence to Practise

105. We approve certain ‘standalone’ qualifications in fork lift-truck, food hygiene, health and safety, and first aid at work. This is on the basis that achieving these qualifications provides unemployed learners with a ‘passport’ into work.
106. These qualifications are available to learners who need help to move into work, or remove a barrier to getting into work, and who:
 - a) receive Jobseeker’s Allowance, Employment and Support Allowance and are in the work-related activity group, or Universal Credit because they are unemployed and mandated to undertake skills training
 - b) are in custody, or released from custody on temporary licence following learning outside a prison environment not funded through OLASS

107. We also approve certain licence to practise qualifications at Level 2 in security guarding, door supervision and CCTV operations (public space surveillance) which are needed to get a Security Industries Authority (SIA) licence. These qualifications are available for the unemployed learners described in paragraph 106a. They will not be available within OLASS.
108. We will only fund these qualifications where there is a commitment from a local employer, individual, work programme provider or Jobcentre Plus to fund the SIA licence which will allow a learner to enter a job.
109. Outside of this we do not approve qualifications with a primary purpose of licence to practise, training provision to support employers discharge their statutory responsibilities or continuing professional development for funding. Nor do we approve 'vendor qualifications'.

Access to Higher Education Diploma

110. The Access to HE Diploma has been redesigned to meet [a new specification](#). We approve automatically qualifications which meet this new specification and satisfy QAA recognition. QAA recognition can only be confirmed when a licensed Access Validating Agency has approved the Access to HE Diploma and they have added it to the QAA [database](#) of Access to HE Diplomas.

24+ Advanced Learning Loans

111. 24+ Advanced Learning Loans (Loans) are available for eligible learners aged 24 and above studying at Level 3 or Level 4. More information about Loans is available on the [24+ Advanced Learning Loans](#) section of GOV.UK.
112. The types of courses eligible for Loans are:
- A-levels/AS levels (to enable learners to undertake up to a maximum of four A-levels)
 - QAA Access to HE Diploma
 - Certificate and Diploma at Levels 3 and 4

113. We publish the qualifications we designate for Loans with their maximum Loan amount on the [Hub](#).

114. Loans do not cover advanced and higher apprenticeships.

Personal Learning Record

115. The PLR is an online service that allows learners, colleges and training organisations to view their achievement to date and identify the most suitable future learning. You can use the PLR as a guide in forming a logical learning programme that enables credit accumulation towards full qualifications.

116. Data available on the PLR includes: subject, level, grade, credit, source, start date, end date, award date, reference code, awarding organisation, grading type and minimum GLH. The PLR is particularly useful in the context of unit delivery. All colleges and training organisations delivering units must use the PLR to support learners in understanding routes to achievement.

117. You must make sure that every learner has a Unique Learner Number (ULN) to support awarding organisations accurately upload achievement data to the PLR. There are several stages to the correct use of the ULN:

- 1) You:
 - a. get the individual learner's ULN
 - b. register the learner with the relevant awarding organisation and provide the ULN
- 2) the awarding organisation:
 - a. uses the Learning Records Service (LRS) to verify the ULN against learner details
- 3) if the ULN cannot be verified:
 - a. the awarding organisation alerts you
 - b. you work with the LRS to establish the correct ULN
 - c. once the correct ULN is confirmed, you update and resubmit the learner data to the awarding organisation
- 4) on successful completion:

- a. the awarding organisation uploads the learner's achievements to the PLR

118. The National Careers Service allows learners to access their PLR online. You can find more detail on the 'How do I find my PLR and ULN?' of the [LRS](#) section of GOV.UK.

119. The LRS customer support desk is available on 0845 602 2589 or at lrsupport@sfa.bis.gov.uk.

Recognition of Prior Learning

120. The [Ofqual Regulatory Requirements](#) for the QCF define Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) as:

"...an assessment method that considers whether a learner can demonstrate that they can meet the requirements for a unit or qualification through knowledge, understanding or skills they already have and so does not need to develop through a course of learning."

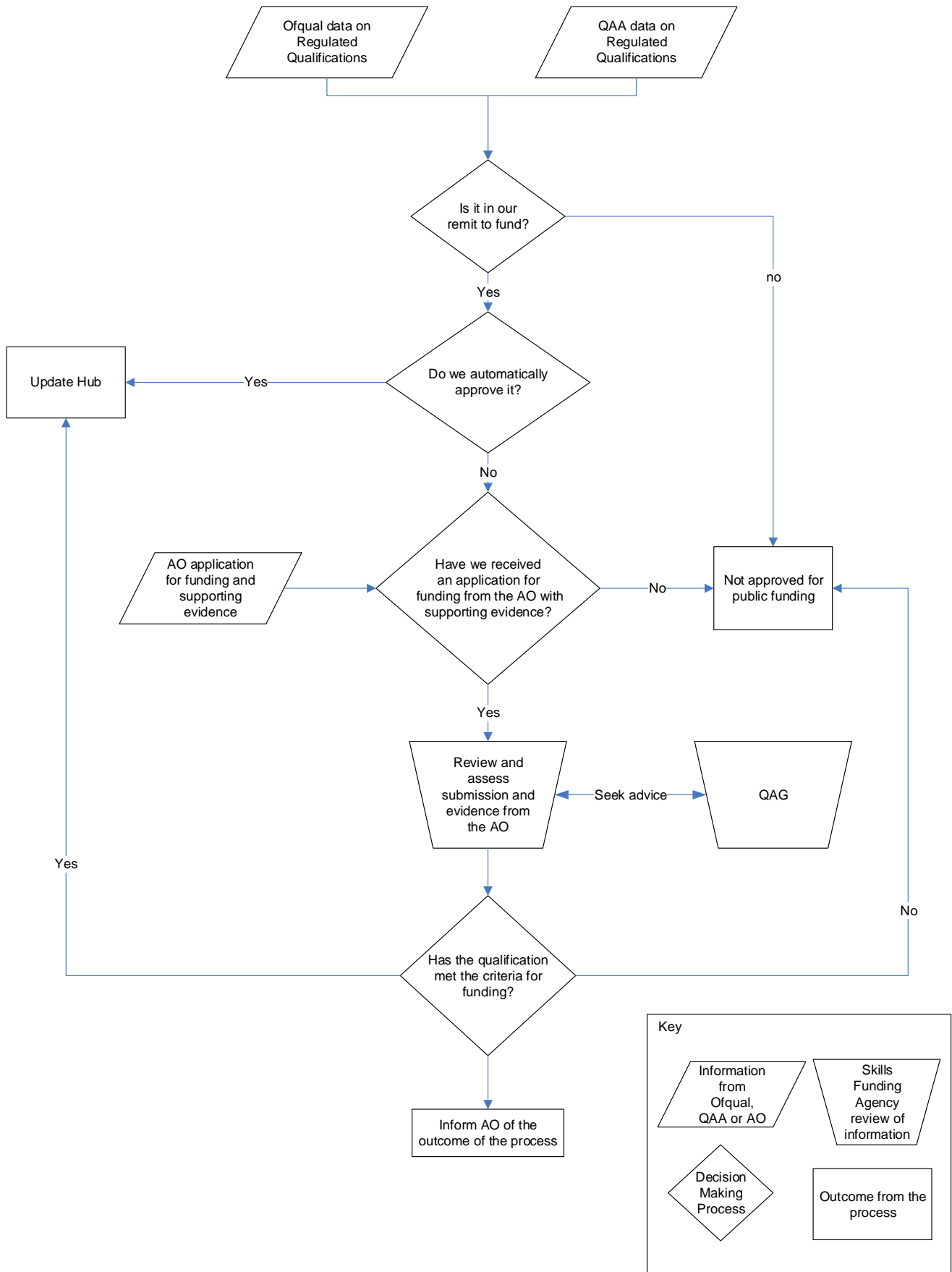
121. RPL is different from credit transfer and exemption because it does not relate to learning that has already been assessed or formally certificated. RPL allows learners to have unrecognised learning contribute towards the achievement of a qualification.

122. We encourage colleges and training organisation to make use of RPL for adults where the learner has learning that has not been certificated and can therefore be subject to assessment. Whilst we support RPL, it is important to note that we will not pay for achievement which has already been certificated.

123. You can find more information on RPL in our [Funding Rules](#).

Annex B

Overview of the Funding Approval Process



Annex C

Further Information

124. If you have any questions about the publicly-funded offer or how we approve qualifications for funding that are not answered in this Guide, please contact the CDS Service Desk at servicedesk@sfa.bis.gov.uk or on 0370 2670001

Useful Links

125. Below are useful links that provide further information on both the publicly-funded offer and qualifications more generally:

- National Apprenticeship Service
 - www.apprenticeships.org.uk
- Access to Higher Education
 - www.accesstohe.ac.uk
- The Simplified Funding Rates Catalogue
 - www.gov.uk/government/collections/qualifications-approved-for-public-funding
- Ofqual
 - www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofqual
- UK Commission for Employment and Skills
 - www.ukces.org.uk/
- Department for Education
 - www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-education
- Department for Business Innovation & Skills
 - www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-business-innovation-skills



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