



Skills Funding
Agency

Qualifications Information Guide

Version 3.1

October 2015

Of interest to colleges and other training organisations.



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Summary of Changes

1. The table below summarises the changes we have made to this document from the version dated February 2015. For full details, please read the main document and annexes.

<u>Introduction</u>
We reflect the policy development set out in the Productivity Plan. We have replaced the reference to the Qualifications Advisory Group with our new consultation forum: the Funding Reform and Localism Steering Group.
<u>The Publicly Funded Offer</u>
We have updated the list of qualifications we approve automatically.
<u>Our Business Rules for Approving Qualifications</u>
We have changed how we describe our business rules to reflect changes we have made to the process for approvals.
<u>The Unit Offer</u>
We confirm that we will update the unit offer for the funding year 2015 to 2016 once more.
<u>The 2014 to 2020 European Social Fund</u>
We have introduced a section on the latest programme and reference to the ESF Aims Catalogue.
<u>Non-regulated English and maths provision</u>
We have updated the description of this provision to resolve a possible contradiction with the 2015 to 2016 Funding Rules.
<u>Recognition of Prior Learning</u>
We have updated the description in line with the changes Ofqual have made to their General Conditions of Recognition.

Purpose and Scope

2. This guide covers the 2015 to 2016 publicly funded offer (the offer) within the Adult Skills Budget (ASB) and Offenders' Learning and Skills Service (OLASS).
3. The Chief Executive of Skills Funding designates qualifications eligible for an Advanced Learning Loan on behalf of the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills. To do this we use the processes set out in this document.
4. This guide is a summary of the rules we have used to approve qualifications, **outside of apprenticeships**. It also describes unit delivery, the Innovation Code, and how we fund non-regulated training provision. We publish it so you (colleges and other training organisations) are clear about these processes. For more detail, please refer to the [Qualifications](#) section of GOV.UK.
5. Please read this guide alongside our [Funding Rules](#). These set out in detail which learners and what training are eligible to receive funding from us.
6. You can view the full range of training provision we fund in the Learning Aims search facility in [the Hub](#). Alternatively, there is a summary of the regulated qualifications we will fund in the [Simplified Funding Rates Catalogue](#).
7. The offer is drawn from:
 - a) the Regulatory Framework for Qualifications that the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual) regulate
 - b) Access to Higher Education (HE) Diplomas that the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) regulate
 - c) Innovation Code training provision
 - d) non-regulated training provision (that is, not regulated by Ofqual or QAA)
8. The two annexes contain further detail on aspects of the publicly funded offer, such as the adult entitlement and links to further information on qualifications.

Introduction

9. The process we have used to approve qualifications for the offer follows the principles of **rigour**, **recognition** and **relevance**, set out in the document [Getting the Job Done](#):
- **Rigorous**: qualifications are regulated by Ofqual and the QAA.
 - **Recognised**: qualifications have high demand from employers and individuals. They act as a signal of meaningful skills achievement to employers or further education (FE) and HE institutions. They must allow an individual to:
 - demonstrate they have achieved 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 HE
 - **Relevant**: qualifications enable learners to enter employment, or support them on their journey towards employment. Those we approve must respond to current and future skills needs and be relevant at a local level.
10. Our approach builds on the principles set out in the [Review of Adult Vocational Qualifications](#). It also aligns with the Department for Education's (DfE) reform of technical and professional qualifications following the [Wolf Review of Vocational Education](#); the DfE reflects this in its [Technical Guidance for Vocational Qualifications](#).
11. 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 also include other English and maths qualifications which can act as 'stepping stones' for a learner to move towards a GCSE or Functional Skills qualification.

Further Ahead

12. During the funding year 2015 to 2016 we will look at how we can have a more locally responsive offer. We will take into account the direction of travel for the further streamlining of qualifications and the progression routes they support as laid out in the [Productivity Plan](#). As we move towards a simplified and localised skills system we will say more about the role of qualifications in the system.
13. We will continue to work with DfE to make sure that, where appropriate, the qualifications offers align for 16- to 18-year-olds and those between 19 and 23 years old.
14. We continue to work closely with Ofqual as they implement their [regulatory changes](#).
15. Before we introduce any changes we will consult our Funding Reform and Localism Steering Group. Members of the group include representatives from Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs), combined authorities and the FE sector. Dr Ann Limb CBE, chair of South East Midlands LEP, is chair of the group. This group will help us shape how adult skills, excluding apprenticeships, are funded, to meet local needs in a way that is simpler to operate.

The Publicly Funded Offer

17. Whilst regulation of a qualification is needed, it is not our only requirement. To be in the offer, qualifications must meet our business rules.

18. We can only approve qualifications that are in our remit to fund. To create the offer for the funding year 2015 to 2016 we considered qualifications that were:
 - a) 'live' on Ofqual's [Register of Regulated Qualifications](#) or on the QAA's database of [Access to 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 (AO) that has signed the Personal Learning Record (PLR) agreement and uploads achievement data regularly in line with the terms of the [Agreement](#)

19. We do not fund qualifications that are:
 - a) used as the end-point assessment of new apprenticeship standards (except in certain instances)
 - b) part of HE 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 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

20. 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.

Qualifications we approve automatically

21. We approve automatically the following groups of qualifications:

- General Certificates of Secondary Education (GCSEs)
- Advanced Level and Advanced Subsidiary Level (GCE)
- Functional Skills in English, maths and Information and Communications Technology (ICT) from Entry Level to Level 2
- Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) qualifications
- QAA Access to HE 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, Tech Levels and Applied General qualifications 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 Prince's Trust Employment, Teamwork and Community Skills qualifications

Our Business Rules for Approving Qualifications for Funding

22. Below we summarise the process we used to build the offer. The process applies to qualifications we approved automatically and those that were subject to scrutiny. Our process has three components:

- a) An approval process
- b) A database of qualifications in [the Hub](#)
- c) An annual review of qualifications approved for public funding

The Approval Process

23. We review:

- a) amendments made to qualifications already approved for funding
- b) submissions from AO for qualifications that are:
 - new
 - to re-enter the offer after being removed due to low or no demand
 - exceptions to the size rule at Level 2 or above

The Business Rules

24. We scrutinise all qualifications we do not approve automatically. These need to meet the **size**, **purpose** and **recognition** business rules.

Size Rule

25. It is important that a qualification is of a suitable size to deliver sufficient learning and demonstrate gaining skills, knowledge and understanding. We use size thresholds to support these aims. The minimum thresholds are:

- a) Six credits or 60 guided learning hours (GLH) for Entry Level and Level 1 qualifications. In setting this threshold we recognise that the unit offer is available for the unemployed, including traineeships, and through OLASS.

- b) 15 credits or 150 GLH for Level 2 to Level 4 qualifications
- c) Three credits or 30 GLH for English and maths qualifications

Purpose Rule

- 26. It is vital that learners understand the content and outcome/s of a qualification. The qualification must have a clear statement of purpose so learners and employers understand what it will give them and how they can use it.
- 27. We require the purpose statement to be written for the learner. It must clearly state the qualifications rationale and primary purpose. It must give them all the information they need to make an informed choice of which qualification to do.
- 28. All purpose statements must include the following:
 - 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 qualification over others with the same or similar 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

- 29. It is important that qualifications allow learners to show others that they have achieved certain skills, knowledge and understanding at a given level. We only approve qualifications for funding where appropriate organisations indicate that the qualification demonstrates this. For qualifications that support:
 - a) Competency or entrance into a job role, occupation or occupational area, we seek employer recognition of the qualification. The employer/s must be representative of the areas the qualification relates to.

- b) Progression to the next level of learning we ask for letters from organisations that offer the higher level qualification
- c) Lower level learning we ask for letters from colleges and other training organisations that offer the qualification

30. Letters must provide evidence of, and support for, the qualifications outcomes and explain how achievement leads to these outcomes. They should not simply state that learners will achieve the outcomes or support public funding.

The Hub

31. 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.
32. When we approve a qualification we add it to the Simplified Funding Rates Catalogue and include its information on the Learning Aims search facility in [the Hub](#). We will 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

33. Before you use a qualification you must check that:
- a) it is on the Hub as approved for funding
 - b) it is available for learner registrations

The 2015 Annual Review

34. In October we will start to 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 Learning Record (PLR). When we start

the review process we will publish guidance for the sector.

Track Record

35. In the 2015 annual review we will review qualifications, outside of apprenticeships, that have been approved for two or more years:
 - a) No demand – those qualifications with no publicly funded enrolments
 - b) Low demand – those qualifications with 1 to 99 publicly funded enrolments in each of the last two years

Progression

36. In the 2015 annual review we intend to look at the impact of a qualification through a set of key performance indicators (KPI).
37. We are testing four KPI:
 - a) How effective the qualification has been at supporting individuals to progress into work or to a higher level of learning
 - b) The economic return of the qualification, in terms of changes to earnings
 - c) How the offer supports key national and/or local priorities and skills gaps
 - d) The achievement rate at qualification level
38. Work on new measures of success for the skills system is broader than our business rules. Our KPI are linked to the [Outcome-based Success Measures](#) that the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills is developing.

Personal Learning Record

39. For a qualification to remain in the offer, the AO offering it must have signed the AO Agreement. They must also regularly upload achievement data to the learner's PLR.

The Unit Offer

40. We focus the unit offer on engagement, entry into and through work and progress to the next level of learning. It allows you to design and deliver activity which is flexible and respond to the needs of individuals and employers.
41. We make eligible units from approved 'QCF' qualifications, including English and maths qualifications, available in the offer for the unemployed, traineeships and OLASS. We also make available a small number of units as part of the offer for micro-sized businesses. We will not fund units:
 - at Level 4 or above
 - at Level 3 for learners aged 24 and over
 - that are in at least one qualification with a primary purpose of licence to practise, continuing professional development or a vendor qualification
 - where the content is inappropriate or of low skills value
42. 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
43. If you use units to support unemployed learners it is important that you offer them a coherent programme. The programme must contain a suitable balance between building confidence and the skills needed to prepare to enter work and the skills needed to get a job. This is especially true for disadvantaged learners and those who may not be able or prepared to immediately do a qualification.
44. We published the unit offer in April; we will make the final update in November.

The Innovation Code

45. The Innovation Code (the Code) is a mechanism that increases the flexibility and responsiveness of the ASB.
46. The Code helps you respond quickly to local business and employment needs. It allows you to claim funding for adult learners to enrol on a course that does not currently lead to a valid qualification.
47. Whilst delivering the course, you must work with an Ofqual-accredited AO to develop a qualification that will recognise the learning and skills the learner gains. This will allow different employers across the country to recognise the learner's achievement.
48. Learning aim reference numbers for the Code are available in the Learning Aims search facility in [the Hub](#).
49. As well as allowing you to respond to skills gaps, we expect the Code to improve the qualifications offer. It will do this by creating new qualifications that employers recognise and that we can regulate effectively.
50. It is important that you only use the Code for training that leads to a qualification we will eventually fund. Check the training provision against the summary of our business rules contained in this document to see if it is something we might approve.
51. You can only use the Code 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 refer to our [Funding Rules](#).
52. The Code is for training 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.

53. You can use the Code for both employed and unemployed learners; however, you cannot use it to deliver all or part of an apprenticeship.
54. You must not use the Code to:
- cover the costs of delivery of training provision that an employer already pays for
 - offer non-regulated versions of regulated qualifications
 - deliver a qualification we have not approved for funding
 - pay the costs of developing new qualifications
 - fund training provision at Level 3 and Level 4 for learners aged 24 or older
55. We have 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.
56. You must deliver the Code within your existing funding allocation. The existing funding, learner eligibility and entitlement rules apply.
57. Training provision delivered through the Code in the 2015 to 2016 funding year will not affect your Qualification Achievement Rate or Minimum Levels of Performance.
58. Further information to support you to use the Code is available on the [Innovation Code](#) section of our website on GOV.UK.

The 2014 to 2020 European Social Fund

Fund

59. The European Social Fund (ESF) Managing Authority has launched the 2014 to 2020 ESF programme.
60. Regulated qualifications and their components that we approve for funding as part of the ASB will be available for delivery as part of the ESF programme.
61. We will publish the regulated qualifications, their components (including units) and non-regulated training provision that will be available for delivery as part of the ESF programme in the [ESF Aims Catalogue](#). In due course we will add the information in this catalogue to the Learning Aims search facility within the Hub. When we do this we will withdraw the ESF Aims Catalogue.

Non-regulated Provision

62. We define non-regulated provision as learning that does not lead to a qualification accredited by an AO regulated by Ofqual or the QAA.
63. We focus most of our funding on regulated training 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 FE and HE providers. This is particularly relevant where learners are achieving technical and professional skills, knowledge and understanding to progress to the next level of learning or move into, or through, employment.
64. However, we know that for some learners and in certain circumstances there is a need for non-regulated training provision. Therefore, you may deliver non-regulated training provision:
 - a) to learners with learning difficulties or disabilities as part of a personalised learning programme
 - b) in ESOL, where there is no appropriate regulated qualification available
 - c) in the area of Preparation for Work to unemployed learners who are actively seeking work
 - d) to support learners re-engaging in learning and who are progressing to a full Level 2 qualification
65. For these groups of learners you can use non-regulated training provision that breaks down barriers to engagement with learning or work. Or to support individuals to operate independently and effectively.
66. You can deliver non-regulated English and maths provision to learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities as part of their personalised programme.
67. You may not use non-regulated training provision to deliver technical and professional training. The only exception to this is where you are using the Innovation Code and are working with an AO to develop a qualification to

recognise the learner's achievement.

68. 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.
69. 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.
70. You should note that non-regulated training provision is subject to our audit processes and is also included within Ofsted inspections.
71. We do not expect you to displace technical and professional training that leads to regulated qualifications with non-regulated training as described above. However, we do encourage you to take advantage of the broader flexibilities that we have introduced to offer non-regulated training at lower skill levels.

Annex A

Defining 'Full' Qualifications

72. A learner may be entitled to full funding for their first 'full' Level 2 or Level 3 qualification. Where we approve technical and professional qualifications for funding they will be in scope for this entitlement.
73. 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
74. At Level 3 we designate the following qualifications as full:
- QAA Access to HE Diplomas
 - two A-levels
 - Tech Levels and Applied General qualifications in the DfE [16 to 19 Performance Tables](#)
 - qualifications at Level 3 that are 30 credits or 300 GLH or more
75. 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.
76. For full details of the funding entitlements, please refer to our [Funding Rules](#).

Small Qualifications at Levels 2 and 3

77. We will only approve technical and professional qualifications at Level 2 and above that are below the size threshold on an exceptional basis.

78. If we do approve a qualification 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, we will not designate the qualification as 'full'.

English and Maths

79. Our approach is in line with the [ministerial statement](#) (July 2014). This will ensure that colleges and other training organisations focus clearly on GCSEs and Functional Skills in English and maths up to Level 2.
80. You can only deliver non-regulated English and maths to learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities as part of a personalised programme. The provision must be based on the National Literacy and National Numeracy Standards, and must enable the learner to progress to a regulated qualification.
81. 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,
Free Standing Maths	Entry, 1, 2

82. The new GCSEs in English Language and maths are now available for teaching. We have approved them for funding and mark them as 'GCSE 1-9' in the Simplified Funding Rates Catalogue. You should note that these are two-year GCSEs. The first examination series for the qualifications is in June 2017.
83. '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

84. In 2013 we set out principles to shape a suite of new ESOL Skills for Life qualifications. Where an AO has developed these qualifications we approve them automatically.
85. We expect all learners to use these regulated qualifications; however, we will allow you to use non-regulated ESOL.
86. Non-regulated training provision must be based on the National Literacy Standards. It must enable the learner to progress to a regulated qualification.
87. 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.

‘Stand-alone’ Qualifications and Licence to Practise

88. We approve certain ‘stand-alone’ 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.
89. 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
- c) have been released from custody on temporary licence and are following learning outside a prison environment not funded through OLASS

90. We approve certain qualifications at Level 2 in security guarding, door supervision and CCTV operations (public space surveillance), which are necessary to obtain a Security Industry Authority (SIA) licence. These are only available for the unemployed learners described in paragraph 89a.
91. 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.
92. Outside of this we do not approve qualifications with: a primary purpose of licence to practise; training to support employers carry out their statutory responsibilities; continuing professional development; or 'vendor qualifications'.

Access to Higher Education Diploma

93. 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. This 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.

Advanced Learning Loans

94. Advanced Learning Loans (Loans) are available for eligible learners aged 24 and above studying at Level 3 or Level 4. For further information refer to the [Advanced Learning Loans](#) section of our website on GOV.UK.
95. Loans do not cover advanced and higher apprenticeships. The types of courses eligible for Loans are:
- A-levels/AS levels (learners may take up to a maximum of four A-levels)
 - QAA Access to HE Diploma

- Certificate and Diploma qualifications at Levels 3 and 4

96. We publish the qualifications we designate for Loans on [the Hub](#).

Personal Learning Record

97. The PLR is an online service that allows learners, colleges and other 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.
98. Data available on the PLR includes: subject, level, grade, credit, source, start date, end date, award date, reference code, AO, grading type and minimum GLH. The PLR is particularly useful in the context of unit delivery. All colleges and other training organisations delivering units must use the PLR to support learners in understanding routes to achievement.
99. You must make sure that every learner has a Unique Learner Number (ULN) to support the AO to upload achievement data accurately 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 AO and provide the ULN
 - 2) The AO uses the Learning Records Service (LRS) to verify the ULN against learner details
 - 3) If the ULN cannot be verified:
 - a. the AO 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 AO
 - 4) On successful completion:
 - a. the AO uploads the learner's achievements to the PLR

100. The National Careers Service allows learners to access their PLR online. You can find more detail on the [LRS](#) section of GOV.UK.

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

Recognition of Prior Learning

102. Ofqual's [General Conditions of Recognition](#) define Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) as the:

- a) identification by an AO of any learning undertaken, and/or attainment, by a learner:
 - i. prior to that learner taking a qualification which the AO makes available or proposes to make available, and
 - ii. which is relevant to the knowledge, skills and understanding which will be assessed as part of that qualification, and
- b) recognition by an AO of that learning and/or attainment through amendment to the requirements which a learner must have satisfied before the Learner will be assessed or that qualification will be awarded

103. RPL is different from credit transfer and exemption as it does not relate to learning already assessed or formally certificated. It allows learners to have unrecognised learning contribute towards achieving a qualification.

104. We encourage colleges and other 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.

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

Annex B

Further Information

106. 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 our Central Delivery Service (CDS) Service Desk at servicedesk@sfa.bis.gov.uk or on 0370 267 0001.

Useful Links

107. 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 HE
 - 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