



Education & Skills  
Funding Agency

# Qualification Eligibility Principles

For the 2017 to 2018 funding year (1 August 2017 to 31 July 2018)

## Version 1.0

## June 2017

Of interest to awarding organisations

# Contents

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Local flexibility</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Eligibility principles</b>	<b>4</b>
a. Available in England and for public funding.	5
b. Personal Learning Record	5
c. UK visa requirements	5
d. Licence to practise and/or stand-alone qualifications	6
e. Vendor qualifications	7
f. End-point assessment of apprenticeship standards	7
g. Appropriate content	7
<b>Applying the principles and adding qualifications and components to the local flexibility offer</b>	<b>9</b>
Figure 2: High level process	10
Components of qualifications	10
<b>Monitoring qualification changes</b>	<b>11</b>
Further information	12

## Introduction

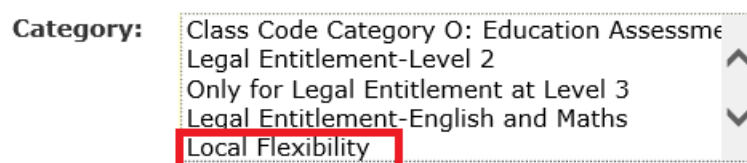
1. This document covers the 2017 to 2018 local flexibility offer in England within the adult education budget (AEB).
2. Local flexibility covers regulated qualifications, their components and some non-regulated provision from entry level to level 2. It is a broad offer to enable colleges and training organisations to be responsive to local skills and community needs. The focus of this document is on regulated qualifications and their components and how we make them eligible for delivery as part of local flexibility.
3. This document does not include the **Legal Entitlements for 2017 to 2018, Advanced Learner Loans, 16 to 19 funding** or **apprenticeships**.
4. Learner eligibility is set out in the **2017 to 2018 Adult Education Budget Funding Rules**.
5. For 2017 to 2018 we have made minimal changes to the qualifications and components that are available as part of the local flexibility offer within the AEB, or the eligibility principles we apply to make qualifications and their components available. We have taken this approach because:
  - we wish to stabilise the offer as we begin to prepare for the implementation of Technical Education (TE) reform and to manage the transition to a locally-driven skills system
  - in advance of TE reform, we will continue to align, as far as possible, the eligibility rules and processes we use to make provision available for all learners aged 16 and above
6. Qualifications eligible in 2016 to 2017 will continue to be made eligible in 2017 to 2018 as long as the qualification is available for delivery and is visible on **Ofqual's Register of Regulated Qualifications**.

7. We will fund the qualifications, and their components, delivered through the AEB using the Single Activity Matrix. More information is available in our **Funding Rates and Formula – 2017 to 2018**.

## Local flexibility

8. Local flexibility is about making a broad offer available. This is to support colleges and training organisations working with adults at lower levels who are seeking to re-engage with learning and/or their local labour market. Within local flexibility there is also the facility for colleges and training organisations to select to deliver non-regulated provision. We only require delivery of a qualification where a learner exercises their legal entitlement to a first full level 2 or first full level 3 and/or English and maths.
9. Where colleges and training organisations do wish to use qualifications and/or their components these must be from the **Regulated Qualifications Framework** (RQF), and be available on the **Hub**. Qualifications and components confirmed as eligible for local delivery can be identified using the “Local Flexibility” category as is shown in figure 1.

Figure 1: Category field on the learning aims search screen



10. Where colleges and training organisations wish to use non-regulated provision they must ensure there is appropriate and robust quality assurance in place. For instance, ‘The Recognising and Recording Progress and Achievement framework (RARPA) Cycle’. Further **information** is available from the Learning and Work Institute.

11. Irrespective of the type of provision used within the “local flexibility” offer, the outcomes must be the same – progression for the learner to further learning and/or into employment.

## Eligibility principles

12. The regulated qualifications in scope for local flexibility are those at entry level, level 1 and level 2.
13. Apart from the application of our eligibility principles, there is no approvals process or business rules for these qualifications. Our eligibility principles do mean, however, that not all qualifications (or their components) in the RQF are automatically available as part of local flexibility.
14. Not all learners accessing a qualification as part of local flexibility will be able to be fully funded. The ‘provision and individuals we fund’ section of the **Adult Education Budget Funding Rules for 2017 to 2018** identifies which learners are eligible to be fully or co-funded to undertake a qualification from the local flexibility offer.
15. We only make new qualifications eligible where you have clearly recorded the following on the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation’s (Ofqual) **Register of Regulated Qualifications**:
  - Guided Learning (GL) as a component of Total Qualification Time (TQT)
  - Sector subject area
16. In some cases, there may be qualifications with TQT but no GL. We do not expect there to be a significant number of these at entry to level 2. Where we find qualifications with TQT only, we will review these on a case-by-case basis.

17. We apply seven eligibility principles to qualifications to be included as part of local flexibility. A number of these align with those applied to approve qualifications for inclusion on **Section 96** and available to learners pre 19.
18. In some instances, we need to review the qualification specification so that we can check that the qualification meets the eligibility principles. Therefore, it is useful to have the link to the qualification specification included on Ofqual's Register of Regulated Qualifications for when we review the qualification.
19. The seven eligibility principles are:
  - a. Available in England and for public funding.**
    - i. An Ofqual recognised awarding organisation must offer the qualification. It must be flagged on Ofqual's Register of Regulated Qualifications as available for public funding in England for learners aged 19 and over.
  - b. Personal Learning Record**
    - i. The awarding organisation that offers the qualification must have signed the **Awarding Organisation Agreement**. They must regularly upload achievement data and adhere to the Learning Records Service (LRS) Data Management Policy.
    - ii. The Personal Learning Record is an online service that allows learners to view their achievement to date and identify the most suitable future learning. Further information is available on the LRS page of **GOV.UK**.
    - iii. To contact the LRS service desk, please telephone 0345 602 2589 or email **LRS Support**.
  - c. UK visa requirements**
    - i. The qualification must not link to **UK Visa requirements**, such as International English for Speakers of other languages (ESOL) or the International English Language Testing System.

- ii. This does not apply to ESOL Skills for Life. We recognise these qualifications support learners, whose first language is not English, to undertake other qualifications. We require ESOL Skills for Life qualifications to be modular to make them eligible for funding.

**d. Licence to practise and/or stand-alone qualifications**

- i. The qualification must not link to statutory employer requirements (including licence to practise).
- ii. We define licence to practise as where it is a legal (or statutory) requirement for all practitioners to obtain a licence that confirms the licence holder meets prescribed standards of competence, including situations in which it is unlawful to carry out a specified range of activities for pay without first having obtained a licence.
- iii. Certain qualifications that meet statutory employer requirements or a licence to practise are eligible for unemployed learners. This is defined in 'eligible qualifications' section of the **Adult Education Budget Funding Rules for 2017 to 2018.**
- iv. These qualifications are:
  - forklift truck, food hygiene, health and safety, and first aid at work
  - security guarding, door supervision and CCTV operations (public space surveillance), needed to obtain a Security Industry Authority (SIA) licence
- v. These qualifications can be identified in the Hub using the "Standalone and licence to practice" category.
- vi. We will only fund the security qualifications if one of the following commits to funding the SIA licence, which allows the learner to enter a job:

- a local employer
- individual
- work programme provider
- Jobcentre Plus

**e. Vendor qualifications**

- i. The qualification must not be a vendor qualification linked to a particular employer or commercial system.

**f. End-point assessment of apprenticeship standards**

- i. At level 2 only, where the end-point assessment of an apprenticeship standard has been designed as a qualification and is subject to Ofqual external quality assurance, it will not be eligible to be undertaken outside of that standard.

**g. Appropriate content**

- i. The qualification must not be used to recognise activity that might already be part of a learner's experience or is better delivered as non-qualification bearing activity. For example, we will not make eligible qualifications that serve as a record of:

- work experience
- college or other learning or training induction
- CV writing
- job search activities
- participating in interviews
- parenting skills
- babysitting

- ii. Where qualifications at entry level and level 1 support independent living skills, we expect these to focus on progression in education and into employment.



- iii. We support a broad range of qualifications in independent living skills and related areas at entry and level 1. However, at level 2 we expect qualifications to directly support the learner to acquire subject specific or occupational skills to help them progress into employment and/or further education. Therefore, at level 2 we will not make qualifications focussing on independent living, personal well-being, personal or social development or related areas eligible.
20. Within the local flexibility offer, we have included a number of competence-based qualifications where delivery and/or assessment may require a workplace setting. Colleges and training organisations must deliver these qualifications in line with the funding rules. This is set out in 'what we will not fund' section of the **Adult Education Budget Funding Rules for 2017 to 2018.**
21. Where a qualification is eligible for local flexibility, its components (units) may also be eligible and made available for delivery, however we do not do this automatically. In order to make components eligible we require you to confirm that:
- i. there is a facility for learners to be registered on the component
  - ii. the learners can achieve the component in a stand-alone context or as part of accumulating or transferring achievement towards a qualification
22. Once we have received confirmation from you, we will assess the component to ensure that it is eligible for funding.
23. Components at entry level to level 2 are eligible for funding offer where:
- i. they are part of a RQF qualification that has been confirmed as being eligible for local flexibility
  - ii. they meet qualification eligibility principles (d), (e) and (g)

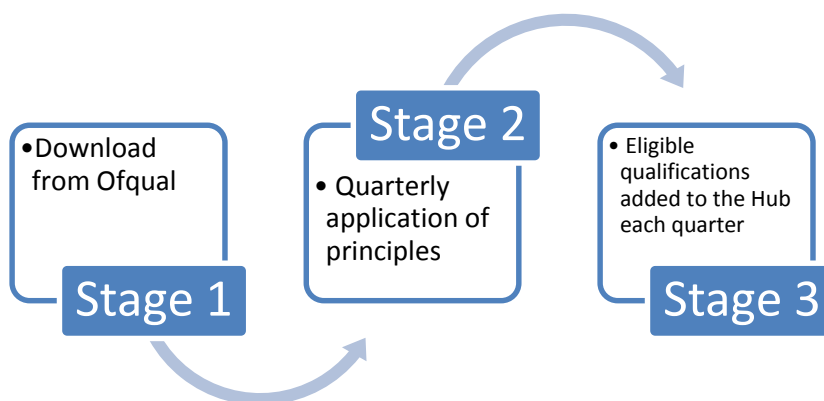
- iii. the component is not related to English and maths as only components that are part of approved English and maths legal entitlement stepping stone qualifications are made eligible
- iv. you have entered information about the component (including information about the qualification that it belongs to and the sector subject area, GLH and learning outcome of the component) in Ofqual's awarding organisation portal.
- v. you have confirmed to us there is a facility for learners to be registered on the component and the learners can achieve those components in a stand-alone context or as part of accumulating and transferring achievement towards a qualification.

## **Applying the principles and adding qualifications and components to the local flexibility offer**

24. We will add eligible qualifications to **the Hub** quarterly, in:
- i. July 2017
  - ii. October 2017
  - iii. January 2018
  - iv. April 2018
25. Figure 2 gives the high-level details of this process. We will consider, on an exceptional basis, updating the local flexibility offer outside the normal quarterly window. We will only review the qualification if it will be operational before the Hub is next updated and colleges and training organisations are waiting to deliver the qualification. Where this is the case you must email us at the **qualifications inbox** with the details of the qualifications (reference and title) and evidence that colleges and other training organisations have eligible learners waiting to start and register on the qualification.
26. For the 2017 to 2018 funding year, we will fund a qualification from 1 August 2017 to 31 July 2018, unless the:

- b. operational start date is later than 1 August 2017
- c. operational end date is before 31 July 2018

**Figure 2:** High level process



### Components of qualifications

- 27. For the 2017 to 2018 funding year we will update the local flexibility offer with new components on a quarterly basis.
- 28. To do this we need you to confirm those eligible qualifications whose components can be delivered in a standalone context using the **2017 to 2018 local flexibility component form.** Where some of the components in a qualification cannot be delivered in a stand-alone context, we will need you to confirm which components these are using the form. Once we have received this information we will apply the principles outlined in paragraph 23.
- 29. You must submit the 2017 to 2018 local flexibility component form by:
  - d. **11 July 2017** to be considered for the August update of the Hub
  - e. **7 November 2017** to be considered for the December update of the Hub
  - f. **6 February 2018** to be considered for the March update of the Hub
  - g. **1 May 2018** to be considered for the June update of the Hub

## Monitoring qualification changes

30. Every quarter, we will review significant changes to qualifications that may impact on their funding rate, to decide whether to change the funding.
31. We do not automatically change the funding rate of a qualification if you make a significant change to a qualification that results in the size of the qualification increasing or decreasing or the content or outcomes of the qualification changing. If you wish us to review the funding rate of the qualification you should contact us using the **qualifications inbox**.
32. In order to review your qualification, we will require the following:
  - Confirmation of what the change is and when you made the change
  - Why you wish us to review the qualification
  - The rationale for the change
  - supporting evidence (from colleges, training organisations, professional bodies, employers, learners)
33. Requests to review funding rates are considered on a quarterly basis by a governance board. The board meets in July 2017, October 2017, January 2018, April 2018. Requests with additional evidence should be sent by email to the **qualifications inbox** on the first working day of the month that the board is meeting for it be considered that quarter.
34. We will also monitor any changes you may make to a qualification's operational end date to inform colleges and training organisation of changes to the last date for enrolments. We use the operational end date and certification end date to manage funding dates for new and continuing learners. To ensure learners are not disadvantaged it is helpful that operational and certification end date changes are carried out in advance and multiple changes are not made for the same qualification in a short period of time. You should also ensure you inform your centres of any changes you make to a qualification's operational end date.

35. Where a qualification is no longer visible on **Ofqual's Register of Regulated Qualifications** the qualification will not be part of the 2017 to 2018 offer.
36. If Ofqual takes **regulatory action** against an awarding organisation, we will review what action we will take. We will do this on a case-by-case basis in respect of their qualifications approved for delivery.

#### **Further information**

37. If you are a college or training organisation and have any queries, please contact the **Service Centre** in the first instance.
38. If you are an awarding organisation and have any queries on the process, please email the **Qualifications team**.
39. For information about Section 96 approvals please email the **Section 96 mailbox**.