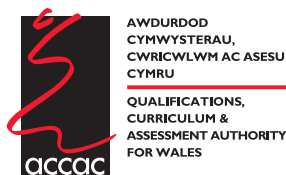


Learners, parents, teachers, trainers, lecturers, employers, awarding bodies

Changes to the National Qualifications Framework



The National Qualifications Framework (NQF) for England, Wales and Northern Ireland sets out the levels at which qualifications are recognised

The National Qualifications Framework (NQF) helps learners to make informed decisions about the qualifications they need. They can compare the levels of different qualifications and identify clear progression routes for their chosen career.

What are the changes?

Changes to the NQF take effect from 1 September 2004. These changes provide a broad indication of how levels of NQF qualifications compare with qualifications awarded by higher education institutions.

Entry level and levels 1 to 3 do not change in the revised NQF. Higher level qualifications at levels 4 and 5 will be assigned more precise levels (levels 4 to 8, as shown in the following table).

Level 4 qualifications in the original NQF are divided into the revised

NQF levels 4, 5 and 6. Level 5 qualifications in the original NQF are divided into the revised NQF levels 7 and 8.

The increased number of NQF levels does not mean that learners need to take more qualifications. Learners' progression routes do not necessarily involve qualifications at every level.

There will be a transition period during which the revised levels will be introduced and up-to-date information will be available on openQUALS, a free searchable database of all accredited qualifications in the NQF, www.qca.org.uk/openquals

The changes to the NQF will support the proposed new framework for achievement. For further information, please refer to the *New thinking for reform* brochure on the QCA website, www.qca.org.uk/qualifications/types/7918.html

The changes will also support the implementation of the Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales. Further details are available on www.elwa.org.uk

What will the revised NQF look like?

The following table illustrates how the revised NQF will work and provides examples of qualifications that can be achieved at each level.

It shows how the original and revised levels compare with each other. It also shows how the revised levels broadly compare with the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ).

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Comparison of original and revised NQF levels with broad indications of FHEQ levels

National Qualifications Framework		Framework for Higher Education Qualification levels (FHEQ)
Original levels	Revised levels	
5 Level 5 NVQ in Construction Project Management* Level 5 Diploma in Translation	8 Specialist awards	D (doctoral) doctorates
	7 Level 7 Diploma in Translation	M (masters) masters degrees, postgraduate certificates and diplomas
4 Level 4 NVQ in Advice and Guidance* Level 4 Diploma in Management Level 4 BTEC Higher National Diploma in 3D Design Level 4 Certificate in Early Years Practice	6 Level 6 Diploma in Management	H (honours) bachelors degrees, graduate certificates and diplomas
	5 Level 5 BTEC Higher National Diploma in 3D Design	I (intermediate) diplomas of higher education and further education, foundation degrees, higher national diplomas
	4 Level 4 Certificate in Early Years Practice	C (certificate) certificates of higher education
3 <i>(There is no change to Level 3 in the revised NQF)</i> Level 3 Certificate in Small Animal Care Level 3 NVQ in Aeronautical Engineering A levels		
2 <i>(There is no change to Level 2 in the revised NQF)</i> Level 2 Diploma for Beauty Specialists Level 2 NVQ in Agricultural Crop Production GCSEs Grades A*-C		
1 <i>(There is no change to Level 1 in the revised NQF)</i> Level 1 Certificate in Motor Vehicle Studies Level 1 NVQ in Bakery GCSEs Grade D-G		
Entry <i>(There is no change to Entry level in the revised NQF)</i> Entry Level Certificate in Adult Literacy		

*Revised levels are not currently being implemented for NVQs at level 4 and level 5. For up-to-date information please visit openQUALS, www.qca.org.uk/openquals