

# **First Annual Strategic Review of the Publicly-Funded Offer Post-19**

**Checking the Withdrawal of Funding for new starts in 2013/14 for Qualifications and Credit Framework qualifications with low or no enrolments**

**06 February 2013**

Of interest to colleges, training organisations and awarding organisations

## Purpose

1. This document explains the process for colleges, training providers and awarding organisations to review those Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) qualifications with no or low enrolments, which we intend to cease funding for new starts in 2013/14 across the Adult Skills Budget and Offender Learning and Skills Service (OLASS), and alert us to any such qualifications that should still be made available in 2013/14.
2. Please note that this only relates to public funding for new starts for adult learners (those aged 19 or older) in England in 2013/14. A learner who enrolls by 31 July 2013 on a qualification which will have funding withdrawn in 2013/14 will still receive support to complete their qualification.
3. The list of QCF qualifications with no or low enrolments for which we intend to stop funding was published on the [Implementation](#) section of the Agency's website on 6 February 2013.

## Background

4. We have reviewed the qualifications which are publicly funded for learners aged 19 plus in England. This review led to the publication of a 'refreshed' list of qualifications which are available for public funding for new starts in 2013/14, including their funding rates. This list was published on the [Funding Simplification](#) section of the Agency's website on 31 January 2013.
5. In refreshing the list of qualifications eligible for public funding, we removed qualifications that:
  - i. are above Level 4<sup>1</sup>
  - ii. belong to awarding organisations that have not signed the 'Awarding Organisation Personal Learning Record Agreement'
  - iii. belong to awarding organisations that have not begun uploading achievement for vocational qualifications onto the Personal Learner Record (PLR) by 30 April 2013<sup>2</sup>
  - iv. are related to licence to practise<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> As was stated in the Skills Funding Statement 2012-2015 (December 2012).

<sup>2</sup> Where an awarding organisation has not started uploading achievement for vocational qualifications by 30 April, and for general qualifications by 30 June, we will remove their qualifications from the approved list in advance of the start of the 2013/14 delivery year.

- v. will not be available for delivery in 2013/14<sup>4</sup>
  - vi. have been available for delivery on or before 31 December 2010, and have either no publicly funded enrolments, or fewer than 100 publicly funded enrolments in funding year 2011/12 or the first quarter of 2012/13 (1 August to 31 October 2012).
6. Based on the above criteria, we anticipate around 2,500 qualifications will no longer be eligible for funding for new starts in 2013/14. We believe this will lead to a more coherent and focused publicly funded qualifications offer that remains responsive to employer and learner demand.
  7. The sheer volume of qualifications available on the QCF means that we have needed to apply broad criteria to streamline the offer. We recognise that in some cases there may be a need to continue funding new starts in qualifications that have low enrolments, such as specialist sectors.
  8. Therefore, we have set out this process to give colleges, training providers and awarding organisations the opportunity to bring such qualifications to our attention. This can be done by providing us with evidence of why a particular qualification with low or no enrolments should still be available for publicly-funded new starts in 2013/14.

### **For which qualifications should you provide feedback?**

9. We are asking colleges, training providers and awarding organisations to check those qualifications for which we intend to remove funding on the basis that there have been no or low publicly-funded enrolments, where the qualification has been operationally available since 31 December 2010.
10. Where removal of funding for new starts for a qualification will have an adverse, unreasonable or uneven impact on an individual and/or organisation, we are asking for you to alert us to this.
11. An adverse, unreasonable or uneven impact on an individual and/or organisation can be defined as situations whereby the removal of funding of the qualification results in:
  - limited or no availability of, and access to, learning at that level in that sector when there is an identified need (for example, niche qualifications)

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<sup>3</sup> Qualifications formally linked to licence to practise are subject to review as announced in the Skills Funding Statement 2012-2015 and we will share further information on the funding approval status of these qualifications in due course.

<sup>4</sup> Please note that this is set by the awarding organisation.

- impact on a particular group of learners
  - destabilising and/or reducing the number of colleges and training organisations in a region or sector.
12. In bringing such a qualification to our attention, you need to provide evidence of why removal of funding will lead to such an impact. Please note that we are only looking to retain funding for qualifications where removing funding would lead to an impact as outlined in paragraph 11.
13. Evidence should take the form of letters of support from relevant organisations. By relevant, we mean that the organisation is linked to the purpose of the qualification. For example, if the qualification relates to educational progression, it should be from further or higher education institutions. If the qualification supports employment, it should be from employers, employer representative organisations or organisations that support individuals into employment.
14. Letters of support should explain why removal of the qualification will lead to one or more of the situations defined in paragraph 11 above. For example:
- there are no suitable alternative qualifications at that level in that sector (and why any alternative qualifications at that level and in that sector are not suitable)
  - a specified group of learners would suffer from the loss of that qualification
  - a particular college or training organisation will no longer be able to deliver that training provision
  - where a qualification for which we intend to remove funding makes up more than 10 per cent of a college or training organisation's total publicly funded adult enrolments.
15. You may also provide evidence that there is going to be a significant increase in demand for a particular qualification that currently has no or low enrolments. For example, entry data or letters of support from colleges and training organisations that they are looking to enrol a certain number of learners on a given qualification.

## **How to alert us**

16. To notify us of qualifications where removal of funding will lead to an adverse, unreasonable or uneven impact, you should complete and return the [Notification Form](#) and [Summary of Notification Form](#) to [qualifications@skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk](mailto:qualifications@skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk) by midday on Wednesday, 6 March 2013. You can download these forms from the [Implementation](#) section of the Agency's website.

17. Late submission of forms, evidence or other supporting information may mean we are unable to consider continuing funding new starts for that qualification in 2013/14.
18. If you are notifying us of more than one qualification, then use one notification form for each qualification you are alerting us to. In addition to the notification forms, please complete and return the form entitled 'Summary of Notifications'. The 'Summary of Notifications' form will allow us to check that we have received all notification forms.
19. We will confirm receipt of your notification within two working days. We will let you know within three working days of receipt of your notification if it can be considered. We can only consider notifications that meet the following criteria:
  - it is based on the criteria set out in paragraphs 10 and 11
  - the qualification is on the list of QCF qualifications with no or low enrolments
  - the qualification is currently in receipt of public funding for new starts
  - the evidence provided relates to funding for learners aged 19 and above.
20. If we can consider the notification, we will undertake a risk impact assessment which considers learner profile (gender, age, learning difficulties and disabilities and ethnicity) and provider profile.
21. If appropriate, we may seek external advice on the qualification. This may be the relevant Sector Skills Council (where it is a vocational or occupational qualification). We will ask them to provide in writing any relevant evidence against/supporting continuation of funding for the qualification.
22. We will submit details of notifications, evidence, the results of risk impact assessments and recommendations to a subgroup of the Agency's Qualifications Approvals and Governance Group. This subgroup will include bodies that represent awarding organisations and colleges and training organisations; it will report in to the main group on 15 April.
23. The subgroup will review the evidence and consider whether removal of funding for new starts in a qualification in 2013/14 will result in an adverse, unreasonable or uneven impact upon an individual or organisation (as defined in paragraph 11 above).
24. Taking into account the recommendations of the subgroup and the advice of the main Qualifications Approvals and Governance Group, the Chair will then confirm whether a qualification should still be available for funding for new starts in 2013/14. Where we decide that a qualification should still be available for funding in 2013/14, its funding will be extended to 31 July 2014 or its operational end-date (whichever is the sooner).

25. We will inform each organisation notifying us of the need to keep a qualification available for funding for new starts in 2013/14 of our decision by email by 17 April 2013.
26. Where an intention to remove public funding has been reversed, we will add such qualifications to the catalogue of the 2013/14 publicly-funded offer when it is updated.
27. Through this process, which invites input directly from awarding organisations, colleges and training organisations, and indirectly through their representatives on the Qualifications Approvals and Governance Group, we are seeking feedback from the sector. This will ensure that we avoid any adverse impact on individuals or organisations through this process of refocusing the qualifications offer. Once we have received this input from the sector, our decision on which qualifications are available for public funding for new starts in 13/14 will be final. There is no further mechanism for organisations to request that qualifications with no or low enrolments are made available for public funding in 2013/14. Therefore, it is important that organisations take this opportunity to inform us if a particular qualification should still be available for public funding in 2013/14.

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