

Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales

Delivering the Promise

Implementation Plan and Handbook 2009–2014

- Audience** This will be relevant to all those involved in post-14 education, training and employer training in Wales.
- Overview** This Implementation Plan and Handbook provides support and guidance for the effective delivery of the Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales.
- Further information** CQFW Secretariat, Tŷ'r Afon, Bedwas Road, Caerphilly, Bedwas CF83 8WT cqfwenquiries@wales.gsi.gov.uk
- Additional copies** This document can be accessed from the Welsh Assembly Government website www.cqfw.net
- Related documents** *One Wales*, Welsh Assembly Government (2007)
The Learning Country: Vision into Action, Welsh Assembly Government
Skills that Work for Wales, Welsh Assembly Government (2008)
Learning Coaches of Wales, Welsh Assembly Government (2008)
Reaching Higher, HEFCW

This Handbook is also available at:
www.wales.gov.uk/educationandskills

Mae'r Llawlyfr hwn ar gael yn Gymraeg hefyd yn:
www.cymru.gov.uk/addysgasgiliau

Please ensure you access the website when completing the application form for Recognised Body status.

Contents

	Page		Page
Ministers Foreword	3	3. Recognition and unit submission process	51
1. Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales Implementation Plan 2009–2014	5	Background	53
Mission and vision	7	Recognition process	54
Benefits of the Framework	9	• Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)	54
Scope	11	• Awarding Organisations (AOs)	54
Common principles	12	• Quality Assured Lifelong Learning (QALL)	55
CQFW European Qualifications Framework	13	Unit submission process	57
Policy and delivery – Key actions	15	Application form for Quality Assured Lifelong Learning (QALL)	61
Co-ordination Group	Annex 1A	CQFW Recognised Bodies	Annex 3B 97
2. CQFW Common Accord	27	4. Higher Education in Wales credit specification and Guidance	99
Introduction and definitions	29	Background	101
CQFW Common Accord Forum	Annex 2A 38	Benefits of a Credit Framework	102
CQFW Fan diagram	Annex 2B 40	Definitions	104
Ofqual level descriptors - January 2009	Annex 2C 41	Summary generic level descriptors	Annex 4A 111
Unit structure for submission	Annex 2D 50	Generic level descriptors	Annex 4B 113
		Guidelines – FHEQ 2008	Annex 4C 117
		5. Glossary of terms and definitions	121

Acknowledgements

The development of the Implementation Plan has been overseen by Welsh Assembly Government and HEFCW and developed in conjunction and consultation with awarding bodies, OCN Wales, WJEC, NLIAH, NIACE Dysgu Cymru, fforwm, National Training Federation Wales, training providers, further and higher education, Sector Skills Councils, CWWYS and other parties interested in developing the Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales.

For further details please contact:

CQFW Secretariat

e-mail: cqfwenquiries@wales.gsi.gov.uk

website: www.cqfw.net

You are welcome to copy this publication for internal use within your organisation.

Otherwise no part of this publication may be reproduced without prior permission of the copyright holder.

Minister's Foreword

Delivering the promise

I am delighted with the great progress on the development of the implementation of the Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales since 2002. What was then a visionary intention to embrace all types of learning within a common recognition framework has become part of the fabric of learning in Wales. The fundamental concepts of the CQFW have proved sound and the development work has yielded some great successes and much shared learning. Importantly the learning gained in Wales has informed other UK developments, notably the Qualifications and Credit Framework.

We have tested the features of the CQFW. Now we need to exploit the benefits and deliver the promise. The vision of the CQFW is that the framework will change people's understanding of learning and achievement for the long term. The strategic partners must continue to work closely together toward seamless delivery of common policy and implementation objectives.

Jane Hutt
Minister for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills
Welsh Assembly Government
March 2009

1

Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales
Implementation Plan 2009–2014

Mission and vision

This is the third Implementation Plan for the Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales. It covers a period of five years from March 2009 to December 2014. It is based on key strategic policies developed by the Welsh Assembly Government, HEFCW and our social partners.

A yearly operational plan will be produced and we will report annually on our performance.

The development of the Framework has proven at times to be challenging, however the introduction of the Qualification and Credit Framework (QCF), Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) guidance on academic credit arrangements in higher education in England, the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and introduction of national qualification frameworks throughout Europe are some examples of the wider adoption of the broad principles of the CQFW – level descriptors, learning outcomes and credit systems.

Key strategic documents have outlined the benefits of the Framework to learners, business and communities in Wales. The implementation plan sets out the new mission and vision for the Framework to become fully operational.

The mission of the Welsh Assembly Government is to lead on the implementation of the Framework. This work will not be carried out by the Qualifications, Curriculum and Learning Improvement Group, (Welsh Assembly Government) alone, but with our partner HEFCW and our external social partners located throughout Government departments, agencies, Awarding

Organisations, higher education and training providers.

In line with Welsh Assembly Government priorities, we will prioritise the recognition of learning in our hardest to reach and most disadvantaged groups of learners and communities and learning within the voluntary sector.

The Welsh Assembly Government will ensure that the following strategic goals are achieved.

1. The Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales is more fully implemented as the essential infrastructure to deliver flexibility, choice and progression for all learners in Wales.
2. Learning recognised within the Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales is more fully understood across the UK and Europe to contribute to mobility and a flexible labour market.
3. Maintaining internationally recognised quality assurance standards and processes for the framework.
4. Including quality assured lifelong learning into the Framework to facilitate learning and to recognise achievement across a far broader spectrum.
5. Promoting understanding and acceptance of the Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales amongst stakeholders, learners and employers.
6. Implementation of the Plan.

Extensive independent reviews of the impact of the previous Implementation Plan have clearly divided the next stages for the implementation into two broad strategic areas **policy** and **delivery**. The more detailed Implementation Plan will reflect this.

Benefits of the Framework

The CQFW envisages embracing all types of learning within a common recognition framework. This would allow, for the first time, comparison of achievements from different education and training activities, recognition of full and partial completion of qualifications and bring in the vast range of education and training activity within and outside the regulatory and funding arrangements.

The CQFW underpins five key goals:

- enabling everyone to develop and maintain essential skills
- encouraging people to become lifelong learners
- supporting the development of skills in businesses and educational institutions
- encouraging workers to gain new skills
- helping people within their communities to develop new skills.

This is achieved through:

- supporting the development of an inclusive society where everyone has the opportunity to fulfil their potential
- assisting in removing barriers to progression
- promoting recognition of the skills required to support economic growth in Wales
- offering parity in the recognition of achievement for learners of all ages, whether they are learning in the workplace, community, at school, college or university.

The CQFW allows **learners** to explain to others the relative value of their award, to transfer their knowledge and skills between career paths, providers and countries.

informing the development of new vocational qualifications, to ensure that they meet the needs of business; utilising credit as an integral element and forming part of the CQFW

Sector Skills Councils (SSC) Assessment & Relicensing September 2008

Employers gain a means of comparing the value of applicants' and employees' achievements and a clear way of expressing the skills and qualifications applicants need.

Employers benefit from:

- encouraging a greater number of people in Wales to develop the skills needed to meet employers' requirements and to overcome skill shortages
- the opportunities for staff to develop those skills needed for their work
- effectively matching learning and training requirements
- being able to see easily the amount and level of learning already achieved by potential employees, especially those without qualifications.

The framework provides a flexible structure that allows key players to:

- respond to change
- promote transfer and progression
- create relevant and tailor-made learning opportunities.

The framework delivers the means to measure and record recognised learning wherever and however it is achieved by:

- enabling the accumulation of learning achievement (credits) towards a qualification or learning programme
- enabling the accumulation of credits for their own value or to meet the specific needs of individuals.

In Wales, all higher education institutions have signed up to the CQFW Common Accord. Welsh Institutions are encouraged to read, in conjunction with the FHEQ, the recommendations and guidelines.

The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications EWNI, Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) August 2008.

Scope

The CQFW brings all recognised learning into a single unifying structure and embraces all credit-based learning recognised within:

- the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications, England, Wales and Northern Ireland (FHEQ EWNI)
- the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) known as Regulated General and Vocational Education and Training (Regulated GVET)
- Quality Assured Lifelong Learning (QALL) that uniquely in Wales takes place outside the regulated frameworks but is recognised through CQFW quality assurance mechanisms.

QALL includes bespoke provision recognised for adult and community learning, in-house company training, and other learning submitted for recognition as quality assured lifelong learning by CQFW Recognised Bodies. Many Higher Education Institutions and Awarding Organisations have developed customised or bespoke provision to meet the needs of clients. A number of organisations have high quality training and development frameworks that have been created independently of the HE regulatory frameworks but which are eminently suitable for recognition within CQFW.

... act to realise fully the planned credit based qualifications system to secure clear stepping stones to achievement and straightforward options for learners who wish to transfer between providers . . .

Reaching Higher 2003.

In all three contexts, units can be combined together to create a qualification (using the rules of combination appropriate to that qualification framework) or a coherent learning pathway/programme that meets an individual's needs or the training requirements associated with a particular job or role. One advantage of a unitised and credit-based approach is that recognition of partial achievement within qualifications becomes available for individuals who otherwise might be considered to have failed if they were unable to complete their studies.

Common principles

The CQFW utilises three common principles:

- expression of achievement as learning outcomes
- the demands made by that learning on the learner (level)
- the volume of learning achievements (credit).

Together, these create a model which is able to embrace and underpin all types and styles of learning in all sectors of the education and training environment.

The **CQFW Common Accord (CCA)** is the foundation document of the Framework that formalises agreement on terminology, design specifications, principles and systems required to ensure that the currency of assigned and awarded credit is fully quality assured. Adherence to these principles enables the Credit Value of a unit or qualification to be recognised for awarding purposes, used as a comparator with other learning and facilitate recognition of achievement and progression to the benefit of learners, providers, employers and other stakeholders.

The Framework has been intensively and extensively tested in a wide range of learning and training environments where the principles have proven to be appropriate and robust.



Policy drive

- Welsh Assembly Government
- Sectoral/lead bodies
- Other policy makers
- UK
- EU

The Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales

ALL LEARNERS

All learning programmes
including taught courses, distance learning, work-related training technology-enhanced learning and other education/training activities

All providers
including school, college, work based trainers, university, community, industry, voluntary and other activities



Ugymleith Cymuned Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

Understanding

- Learners
- Providers of education and training
- Curriculum developers
- Policy makers
- Education marketing

Principles

- Features
- Benefits
- Application
- Transferability

Higher education

Degree
Masters
Postgraduate studies
Doctorates

Lifelong learning

Adult and community learning
Company training
Voluntary sector
Wider learning 14+

General and vocational education and training

GCSE
A levels
S/NVQs
Welsh Baccalaureate qualification

Recognition

- Learners
- Employers
- Parents
- Society

Types of qualifications and learning opportunities

Learning and qualifications are organised into frameworks

Support

- Funding
- Technological
- Quality assurance and enhancement
- Knowledge management

Framework for Higher Education Qualifications **FHEQ**

Quality Assured Lifelong Learning **QALL**

National Qualifications Framework **NQF**
Qualifications and Credit Framework **QCF**
Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework **SCQF**

Adaptability

- Flexibility
- Advice and guidance
- Progression
- Achievement record

Learning opportunities and standards are quality assured by

Capability

- Expertise
- Systems and compatibility

QAA

CQFW

DCELLS, Ofqual, CCEA and SCQF partnership

Portability

- In UK
- Europe
- Wider

The Framework recognises the centrality of the learner, and the need for clarity and simplicity in making recognition and award systems work successfully. It is important that people can compare qualifications and form notions of equivalence between learning from different routes.

The Framework includes the familiar and established 14–19 qualifications (GCSEs, GCE AS and A2) alongside other credit-based provision. The Welsh Assembly Government's Learning Pathways 14–19 Guidance demands greater flexibility of entitlement, the Welsh Baccalaureate Qualifications provide a signature Welsh approach to inclusive qualifications, and *Skills that Work for Wales* policy demands greater flexibility in learning and recognition. The CQFW provides the common currency through which to achieve these aims.

The CQFW works closely with UK and EU colleagues toward mutual recognition and transferability of achievements using the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) as the shared benchmark.

Policy and delivery – Key actions

There have been many policy developments in education and training in Wales, the UK and Europe since 2003. The range of current Welsh Assembly Government policy documents that make reference to the CQFW: the *One Wales* agenda, *Working Across Boundaries*, *Promise and Performance* (The Webb Review of Skills), *Skills that Work for Wales*, *Learning Pathways 14–19 Guidance*, *Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship* and the *Adult and Community Learning Review*, exemplify the range and potential that the framework can be used to unlock.

Developments in training in the health services in Wales, led by NLIAH, incorporate credit-based learning in innovative practice in identifying training needs, delivery, assessment and awards.

The CQFW was established, and will continue, on the basis of partnership and consensus. This inclusive approach is a critical success factor. It is essential that in Wales we maintain the parity of esteem in the award of credit through different bodies from the various sectors that has been established and achieved to date.

The CQFW is both a policy and a practical means of recognising the benefits of learning. It is inextricably linked to, and underpins, the successful implementation of other policies. It incorporates other credit-based frameworks within its enabling structure. It is the only measure that works consistently across the whole range of academic, vocational and personal learning to provide for every individual learner a clear, coherent record of their education and training achievements. Full implementation will show the true range and extent of the success of learners and lifelong learning in Wales.

Policy Key Action 1

The Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales is more fully implemented as the essential infrastructure to deliver flexibility, choice and progression for all learners in Wales.

We will implement a fully operational Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales to enable all forms of learning to be recognised by 2013.

Skills that Work for Wales

The framework needs to be embedded throughout the Welsh Assembly Government activity, the public sector, key sectoral priorities, the Sectors Skills Councils Sector Qualifications Strategies, 14–19 learning and other Welsh education and training initiatives. We will continue with a consultative and collaborative approach through close working partnerships with key players.

Key elements

1.1 Implement Welsh Assembly Government policy

Implement a fully operational CQFW as defined by the *Skills that Work for Wales*.

Influence the recognition of 'non-traditional' learning on the 14–19 pathways within the CQFW.

Influence the recognition of all pathways in the Welsh Baccalaureate in the CQFW.

Influence the Welsh Assembly Government and Welsh European Funding Office (WEFO) sponsored learning programmes to embed quality assurance learning within the CQFW.

Influence the use of the Welsh Language Policy within the CQFW.

Target date 2012

Target date 2010

Target date 2010

Target date 2013

Target date 2012

1.2 Implement the UK Vocational Qualifications Reform Programme

• Qualifications and Credit Framework

Establish UKVQRB Board to ensure the effective delivery of the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) as the core regulated pillar in CQFW wider framework.

Target date 2009

• Funding

Influence the National Planning and Funding System to ensure policy enables the flexible delivery of a regulated credit and qualifications framework.

Target date 2010

Key elements

• **Managing Information across Partners (MIAP)**

An essential aspect of an effective flexible and responsive framework is the ability to ensure implementing commonality and consistency in recording, exchanging and presenting information for learners, providers, employers, funding bodies and other stakeholders. Stimulate effective implementation of the Unique Learner Number (ULN) and other MIAP services across Regulated General and Vocational Education and Training (GVET) and Quality Assured Lifelong Learning (QALL) learning and ensure the technical communication is appropriate and understood.

Target date from 2010

• **Learning delivery network**

Support the Learning delivery network, with due regard to the StWfW, Learning Pathways 14–19, configuration issues, transformation agenda and work based learning to sustain the introduction of a credit based qualification system.

Target date December 2010

1.3 Target setting and performance management

Ensure that all learning is recognised and valued by influencing WAG data and statistical analysis learning achievement reporting in CQFW principles.

Target date from 2011

Work with social partners and Careers Wales On-Line (CWOL) to develop the CWOL website to include validated individual achievements from QCF and other learning.

Target date from 2011

Investigate links between CQFW recognised achievement data and the HE e-portfolio developments, emerging personal developmental plan systems and Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR).

Target date 2011

1.4 Recognition of Prior Learning

Explore a policy and funding model for Recognition of Prior Learning and the European Union guidelines for recognition of Non Formal Learning (NFL).

Target date 2012

Policy Key Action 2

Ensuring National Qualifications Framework compatibility across the UK and Europe to contribute to mobility and the flexible labour market.

A CQFW hierarchy of accreditation is identified for supporting the further professional development of coaches.

Learning Coaches of Wales

The Welsh Assembly Government supports learners to achieve learning which is recognisable and transferable within the UK and Europe. We will work to ensure that the CQFW is compatible across the UK and Europe to contribute to mobility and the flexible labour market.

In Europe radical education reforms are taking place which build on policies to increase student mobility. It is important that Wales is fully engaged and continues to influence and implement the EU educational policy and, where appropriate, formally adopts the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and other associated programmes such as European Credit Transfer System (ECTS), the Bologna Process, Diploma Supplements, Europass, European Quality Assurance Reference Framework (EQARF) and the European Union (EU) guidelines for recognition of non-formal and informal learning.

Key elements

2.1 Articulation throughout the UK

Implementing the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) in Wales; benchmarking the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) and the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI) to the CQFW.

Target date 2013

2.2 Articulation with Higher Education Frameworks in the UK and Europe

Ensure comparability and compatibility between CQFW and the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications England, Wales and Northern Ireland (FHEQ EWNI), Framework for Qualifications European Higher Education Area (FQEHEA), Bologna and the Diploma Supplement in UK and Europe.

Target date 2013

Key elements

2.3 Articulation of National Systems throughout Europe

Articulate with the European Qualifications Framework and responsibility for the National Co-ordination Point (NCP) for Wales.

Target date 2010

Continue to work in partnership with European colleagues on the implementation of the EQF and on the EU Peer Learning Clusters.

Target date 2012

Ensure comparability and compatibility between European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) and other developments.

Target date 2012

Policy Key Action 3

Maintaining international quality assurance standards and processes for the Framework.

Mutual recognition of learning within frameworks and across UK and European frameworks is reliant on trust. In order to build trust, quality assurance standards and processes that are central to the integrity of the framework and are compatible and compliment each other need to be maintained.

The autonomous HEIs, utilising the FHEQ (EWNI), and the bodies within the regulated learning pillar have established different but equivalent quality assurance standards and processes. Standards have been developed for the QALL pillar and ensures that the quality assurance processes are comparable with the other learning pillars.

Within the implementation of the EQF there is a requirement to establish standards and processes that are in accord with the quality assurance principles of the CQFW.

These standards and processes will be through the:

- CQFW Common Accord (CCA)
- CQFW Recognition and Approval: Panel (RAP)
- CQFW EQF National Co-ordination Point (NCP).

Key elements

3.1 Establishment of Quality Assurance Standards and Processes

Establish a quality assurance strategy for Quality Assured Lifelong Learning (QALL).

Target date 2009

Influence Estyn and other quality assurance agencies to explore the impact on the delivery network of the implementation of the CQFW.

Target date 2010

Specify CQFW requirements in the QAA and HEFCW institutional review process.

Target date 2009

Work with the three country regulatory authorities Ofqual, Department for Education and Learning Northern Ireland (DELNI) and Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (DCELLS) and QAA to develop common regulatory requirements.

Target date 2011

Key elements

3.2 Implementing European Quality Assurance standards and processes

Establish quality digest which defines a set of standards and criteria for the implementation of the European Qualifications Framework through the National Co-ordination Point (NCP).

Establish standards for the adoption of EQARF for the framework.

Target date 2009

Target date 2012

Delivery Key Action 4

Enabling Quality Assured Lifelong Learning (QALL) into the framework to facilitate learning and recognise achievement across a far broader spectrum.

... the panel promotes the use of the Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales as a means by which the principles of recognition and reward for learning achievement can be delivered for the workforce.

NHS/National Leadership and Innovation Agency for Healthcare (NLIAH) Wales Accreditation Learning Panel

Implementation of Quality Assured Lifelong Learning is a priority for Wales. Unlike HE and GVET it does not have pre-existing regulatory or quality assurance arrangements, although as Welsh development it does build on over 20 years experience of recognising learning through the award of credit.

Key elements	
<p>4.1 Managing the recognition process for QALL: Ensure that all Recognised Bodies apply the CQFW principles and recognition standards to maintain:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• clarity, consistency and comparability in requirements for assigning• consistency and comparability in requirements for award.	Target date 2014
<p>4.2 Developing the IT infrastructure for the QALL Pillar:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• to be compatible with GVET within the MIAP agenda• to maintain appropriate validated records of the QALL Recognised Bodies, unit and qualification.	Target date 2012
<p>4.3 Establish structure to provide CQFW related services to include provision of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• advice and guidance to organisations wishing to become Recognised Bodies• capacity building• credit rating service• awarding and certification service• brokerage between organisations and services.	Target date 2010

Key elements

4.4 Ensure QALL incorporates all key Welsh Assembly Government priority areas

Work with significant employment sectors and key priority areas of the Welsh economy such as health, care, public sector, engineering and social justice.

Work with hard to reach learners group and communities for the recognition of learning.

Work with professional and sector bodies accrediting their provision into the CQFW.

Target date 2013

Target date 2013

Target date 2013

Delivery Key Action 5

Promoting understanding and acceptance amongst stakeholders, learners and employers.

Changes in educational systems are complex and involve numerous stakeholders. The development of an effective internal and external communication strategy is central to the development of the framework and is of critical importance to gaining acceptance and ownership of the framework.

Key elements

5.1 Plan and deliver communications and marketing strategy to widen understanding and acceptance

Part One:

Implement the marketing and communications strategy to Social Partners, Internal Welsh Assembly Government policy makers, Assembly Sponsored Public Bodies and Government Departments.

Plan a strategy to work with ambassadors in organisations to embed CQFW development.

Target date 2009

Part Two:

Implement the marketing and communications strategy for key stakeholders such as Awarding Organisations, Sector Skills Councils, learning provider network and higher education.

Target date 2010

Specifically target and provide appropriate information to careers advisors, University Admissions Tutors, information, advice and guidance.

Target date 2010

Part Three:

Implement the marketing and communication strategy for the external environment within the world of work, parents, teachers and the voluntary sector.

Target date 2012

To establish a pro-active and robust media and public relations strategy and web presence.

Target date from 2009

Annex 1A: Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales European Qualifications Framework Co-ordination Group

Background

The European Commission adopted the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) in June 2008. The EQF outlines an overarching framework to facilitate comparison of qualifications and qualifications levels in order to promote geographical and labour market mobility and lifelong learning. The core of the framework consists of eight qualifications levels described through learning outcomes (knowledge, skills and competence). Countries are invited to relate their national qualifications levels to the neutral reference established by the EQF. The key points are as follows:

- The implementation date for referencing is 2010.
- The implementation date for having certificates that carry the EQF level is 2012.
- There is a strong link to the validation of QALL, ECVET and the advantages afforded to disadvantaged groups by the EQF.
- Links to Bologna; quality assurance, validation of non-formal and informal learning, use of learning outcomes and the Framework of Qualifications for the European Higher Education Area (FQEHEA).

Establish a UK four country EQF Co-ordination Group

The four government administrations in the UK agreed that:

- each of the four frameworks in the UK would relate directly to the EQF
- a group would be established for these four frameworks to share developing practice and coordinate UK activities.

The European Commission is recommending that each member state should designate a National Co-ordination Point (NCP) to support and coordinate the relationship between its national qualifications system and the EQF.

The four frameworks in the UK are:

- Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales (CQFW)
- Framework for Higher Education Qualifications, England, Wales and Northern Ireland (FHEQ EWNI)
- Qualifications and Credit Framework for England, Wales and Northern Ireland (QCF EWNI)
- Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF).

CQFW EQF National Co-ordination Point

The role of this group is:

- Referencing levels of qualifications within the national qualifications system to the EQF.
- Promoting and applying the principles for quality assurance in education and training when relating the national qualifications system to the EQF.
- Ensuring the methodology used to refer national qualifications levels to the EQF is transparent and the resulting decisions are published.
- Providing guidance to stakeholders on how national qualifications relate to the EQF through the national qualifications system.
- Ensuring the participation of all relevant national stakeholders including, according to national legislation and practice, higher education and vocational education and training institutions, social partners, sectors and experts on the comparison and use of qualifications at the European level.

Membership CQFW EQF National Co-ordination Point

- Federation of Awarding Bodies
- fforwm
- Higher Education Funding Council Wales
- International Educational Expert
- National Union of Students Wales
- NILAH
- Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education
- Sector Skills Councils and Sector Alliance
- Trades Union Council for Wales
- Welsh Assembly Government
- Welsh Higher Education Credit Consortium
- Welsh Local Government Association

Further information can be found at
<http://ec.europa.eu.dgs/educationculture /index.en.htm>

2

CQFW Common Accord

Introduction and definitions

The Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales (CQFW) enables all learners to gain recognition for their achievements, including full qualifications, partial achievement of qualifications, and awards for other learning achievements. Recognition of all forms of achievement facilitates lifelong learning and can enable progression toward personal, educational, employment or other aims.

The CQFW Common Accord (CCA) states the agreed terminology, common principles and quality assurance arrangements to ensure stakeholders' and public confidence in credit as an award for assessed learning achievement.

The CCA was developed with the involvement of the regulatory authorities, Awarding Organisations, national and regional credit bodies and other organisations with an interest and expertise in credit matters throughout the UK so that credits would be recognised and valued by learners, providers, employers, Awarding Organisations and others.

The common principles of the CCA enable progressive application in Wales, with our UK partners in England, Northern Ireland and Scotland, and with our partners in the European Union.

It is essential that the core components of the Framework are implemented according to agreed principles to ensure and maintain parity of recognition and esteem of awards and promote public understanding and progressive implementation.

The Common Accord applies to CQFW Recognised Bodies who assign and/or award credit for any learning achievement. It applies to all credit assigned and/or awarded for learning outcomes in Wales, in Higher Education, regulated qualifications frameworks (National Qualifications Framework, Qualifications and Credit Framework) and other credit based quality-assured lifelong learning, in order to ensure that credit constitutes a common measure for learning outcomes and achievement.

The CCA Forum (CCAF) is the partnership of representative bodies formally endorsing the CCA. An overview of the CCAF role and remittance is included in Annex 2A.

The CQFW utilises three concepts:

- Expression of achievement as **learning outcomes**.
- The demands made by that learning on the learner referred to as **level**.
- Volume of learning achievements, referred to as **credit**.

Learning outcomes

Learning outcomes are statements of what a learner knows, understands and is able to do on completion of a learning process.

Learning outcomes are expressed in clear, unambiguous text such as:

The learner will:

Understand how members contribute to an effective council meeting.

Learning outcomes are supported by assessment criteria. These are the criteria used for judging whether the outcome has been achieved. A learning outcome may be achieved through a number of approaches. Assessment criteria are usually written without reference to specific assessment methodology unless there are technical requirements that can only be fulfilled in a certain way.

One of the assessment criteria for the learning outcome quoted above are:

The learner can:

Describe the main responsibilities of each committee member to include: Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, ordinary member.

The CQFW embraces the definitions of learning outcomes used within the European Qualifications Framework, the Higher Education Credit Specification and Guidance, the Quality Assurance Agency Guidelines, the Qualifications and Credit Framework and any other systems developed and/or used in Wales that align with these definitions.

Level

Also known as 'credit level'. Level is an indicator of the relative demand, complexity, depth of learning and of learner autonomy derived from agreed generic level descriptors.

The Common Accord embraces a range of definitions for level:

- The credit level is an indicator of the relative demand, complexity, depth of learning and learner autonomy derived from agreed level descriptors.
- Level is an indicator of the relative demand, complexity and/or depth of achievement, and/or the autonomy of the learner in demonstrating the achievement.
- Level is a determination of the challenge or difficulty faced by a learner in achieving a set of learning outcomes.

The CQFW incorporates nine levels – Entry level, which is banded into three sub-levels, plus levels 1–8. The levels are differentiated by sets of level descriptors. These descriptors of credit levels are accepted across Wales, Northern Ireland and England and ensure that any learning can be located at the correct level. The levels and their principle equivalences can be seen as a progressive framework. The diagram Annex 2B, illustrates this progression and examples of learning where each level is most commonly used.

Level descriptors

Level descriptors are the agreed generic descriptions of the relative demand, complexity, depth of learning and of learner autonomy required at each level.

The CQFW references the level descriptors of the European Qualifications Framework, and embraces the level descriptors used within the Higher Education Credit Specification and Guidance, Northern Ireland Credit Accumulation and Transfer System (NICATS), the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Guidelines, the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) and any other systems used in Wales that align with these definitions.

The CQFW recognises two sets of level descriptors:

- Qualifications and Credit Framework (Annex 2C).
- NICATS General Level Descriptors (Annex 4B)

Assigning a credit level to a unit/module of learning is undertaken by referencing the unit's learning outcomes and assessment criteria against the level descriptors.

Credit

Credit is a measure of the Learning Time assigned to a set of learning outcomes. The CQFW accepts a number of other, similar definitions of Learning Time within the overall framework; this is due to the different contexts and histories of development in different sectors:

- Learning Time is a measure of the learning substance of a module/unit or a whole qualification. It is related to the amount of time a typical learner might be expected to take to complete all of the learning relevant to the achievement of the learning outcomes.
- Learning time is the number of hours it notionally takes a learner, on average, to achieve a learning outcome.

Learning Time is related only to the achievement of the specified learning outcomes. Taught or contact time may vary according to the mode of delivery, but Learning Time will not. Learning Time should include all of the relevant learning activities, which it is expected that the learner will undertake in order to achieve the learning outcomes including, for example:

- structured learning (including classes, training sessions coaching, seminars and tutorials)
- practical work in laboratories or other locations
- information retrieval in learning resource centres, libraries or other locations

- expected private study and revision
- work-based activities which lead to assessment
- practice, gaining, applying and refining skills to achieve threshold level of competence
- relevant ICT activities
- all forms of assessment
- programme planning
- educational support and mentoring.

Learning Time excludes learner-initiated private study over and above that expected within the defined terms.

All learning is defined with suitably prepared learners in mind; therefore the Credit Value assigned would be based on professional judgement of the time a learner with the prerequisite prior learning would normally require to achieve the learning outcomes. Any prior skill or knowledge required of the learner should not be included in an estimate of Learning Time.

1 credit is assigned per 10 hours of Learning Time. This value does not vary according to individual circumstance.

It is neither necessary nor desirable to reduce all episodes of learning to single credit units. For example, higher education institutions commonly use 10 credits as a standard size for modules. The CQFW recognises that all the UK credit frameworks have agreed and adopted a similar model.

Credit Value

Recognised Bodies assign Credit Value using the formula:

Credit Value = Learning Time /10 @ credit level
For example: 40 hours Learning Time/10 @ credit Level 2
Credit Value = 4 credits @ Level 2

The award of credit

Credit is awarded for the achievement of learning outcomes that have been verified through reliable and valid assessment in line with current rules and regulations. This is done through the achievement of units.

Unit

The CQFW requires Recognised Bodies to develop sets of learning outcomes as 'units'. Higher Education Institutions often use the term 'module' synonymously with unit but module encompasses mode of delivery and referencing materials.

A unit is a coherent combination of learning outcomes, plus assessment criteria that have been given a level and Credit Value. A unit must contain at least one learning outcome and at least one assessment criterion. The CQFW makes no determination of the maxima, though curriculum designers and Recognised Bodies must bear in mind the practicalities of delivery, assessment and quality assurance arrangements.

Each unit or module of learning can only be assigned to one credit level. Units can be delivered and assessed independently, or brought together through rules of combination to create a rational programme of study or qualification.

CQFW minimum unit specification

- Recognised Body name
- Unit title
- Unit level
- Credit Value
- Recognised Body unit reference number
- Review date
- Ownership status (originator only, restricted, shared)
- Unit content:
 - Learning outcomes
 - Assessment criteria
 - List of qualification(s)/programmes (where appropriate)
 - Sector (refer to QALL application form)
 - Sub-sector
 - Sector subject code explanation.

The title of a unit should be self-explanatory.

A learner may achieve a number of unrelated units in pursuit of personal or vocational learning aims, or be progressing through a qualification where rules of combination determine the structure of mandatory and (where appropriate) optional units, that must be achieved to be awarded the qualification.

Unless specifically required, the language of the unit should not impose or require achievement following a specific methodology.

The CQFW unit template is shown in Annex 2C. The QCF unit template is accepted by CQFW.

Assigning credit

The Credit Common Accord (CCA) provides the principles for credit in the CQFW. It does not prescribe or offer specific guidance on the processes or methods of assigning credit to units of qualifications. This allows awarding bodies to develop methods based on their existing systems and processes for developing qualifications.

Although there is no prescribed process for assigning credit and level, the following features have been identified as common elements for any chosen method:

- Initial training and briefings.
- Guidance documents and tools to support people through the process. The following items provide useful resources for this, although many awarding bodies contextualised guidance for their own qualifications:
 - Credit Common Accord.
 - Checklist on assigning credit.
 - Unit template.
- A combination of individual and collective judgements to reach decisions on credit and level.
- Professional judgements drawing on a wide range of expertise and experience being key to reaching decisions.
- A clear auditable record of decisions and their rationale.

A number of different approaches **can be** applied for assigning credit:

- Use of expert panels followed by testing out decisions with centres. In these approach experts are asked to use guidance documents to reach individual decisions prior to a collective panel discussion and decision.
- Briefing of external consultants using a customised guide; followed by cross checking of decisions using internal expertise. In this approach external consultants submit decisions independently prior to internal scrutiny of those decisions and a review meeting chaired by a professional officer of the Awarding Organisation.
- Staff development for unit/qualification writers, followed by assigning credit in expert workshops, followed by cross-curricular internal scrutiny and regulator approval. This has similarities with a panel process but uses a workshop approach. Professional awarding organisation staff then scrutinise decisions across sectors/curriculum areas to ensure consistency.
- The Scottish Credit and Qualification Framework (SCQF) have developed an internal process using existing expertise and a scorecard approach. In this approach internal staff and assessors are given guidance documents and a scorecard.

- Structured telephone interviews with staff from a range of centres, focusing on time taken on average to achieve units and their level, followed by an internal team analysis, review and decision. This approach was considered to work well for the qualification in question, however it was not regarded as suitable for new qualification development.

Who to consider involving in the assigning process:

- All staff involved need initial training and briefing.
- A project manager or lead person with understanding of issues and preferably some experience needs to be involved in the process.
- A range of experience and expertise, including qualification development, assessment, subject/sector expertise and delivery.

Assessment

Recognised Bodies have established policies and practice in relation to assessment and standards. In developing assessment strategies within a credit system key points to consider include:

- Fitness for purpose of assessment strategies and methods in a range of different contexts.
- Relationship of units to assessment.
- Impact of stand-alone and transferable units.
- Opportunities for introducing more diversity in assessment.
- Any impact on quality assurance systems and processes.

The quality assurance issues for Recognised Bodies to consider include

- The role of external quality assurance (QA) staff in pre and post approval processes.
- The experience and expertise of these staff makes a key contribution to the credit assigning process.
- They have a close understanding of assessment issues and it is also possible that centres will raise issues of curriculum and assessment with them.
- The possibility of using these staff for post approval monitoring and review of assigning decisions should be considered.

- Quality improvement and using centre and other feedback to support this.
- Implications for external moderation and verification systems when centres begin to customise unit combinations and offer units across a number of different subjects/sectors.
- Implications for Awarding Organisations relying on examinations and centralised QA systems.
- Dialogue with the CQFW and, where appropriate, good communications with staff in sector bodies are important.

Awarding credit

Issues for Awarding Organisations to address include:

- Using and managing credit information.
- Recording, notifying and certificating credit and unit achievements.
- Implications of rules of combination for qualification achievement.
- Standards and protocols for inter-operability with national information systems.
- Standards and protocols for inter-operability with provider/centre information systems.
- Preparing for potential shift in demand towards unit credit certificates and consequences of this shift.

Annex 2A

CQFW Common Accord Forum

Background

The CQFW was established in 2002 to develop and implement common principles and standards to measure, award and compare learning and training achievement across learning from the age of 14.

The CQFW Common Accord (CCA) is the foundation document formalising agreement on terminology, design specifications, principles and systems required to ensure that the currency of assigned and awarded credit is fully quality assured. The CCA principles enable the Credit Value of recognised learning to be used as a comparator and facilitate the operation of credit and qualification systems to the benefit of learners, providers, employers and other stakeholders.

The CQFW Common Accord Forum (CCAF) is the principal 'outward-facing' cross-sectoral committee of the CQFW. It is the policy forum through which to engage in dialogue and move forward the implementation plan through consensus and mutual understanding.

The CCAF exists to support, guide, give direction and facilitate access to wider expertise through members' networks, and contribute to the ongoing development, implementation and success of the CQFW.

The CCAF will:

- support and advise forward analysis and identification of policy, strategy or regulatory implications of the implementation of the CQFW
- support and advise in resolving issues as they arise during the implementation of the CQFW
- receive, consider and act upon reports and other papers brought to the CCAF
- consider and where appropriate endorse recommendations for the application and use of credit resulting from submissions to the CQFW
- receive and endorse decisions of the CQFW Recognition and Approvals Panel
- promote the concept and use of credit in Wales, the UK, Europe and wider as appropriate.

The CCAF will maintain oversight of:

- the terminology used throughout the CCA
- the principles, documentation and guidelines to be met by Recognised Bodies wishing to assign Credit Values to units
- the principles, documentation and guidelines to be met by Recognised Bodies wishing to award credit
- the quality assurance procedures to ensure adherence to the CQFW principles and promote public confidence in credit as an award for assessed learning.

The CCAF will meet three times a year in Wales.

Membership

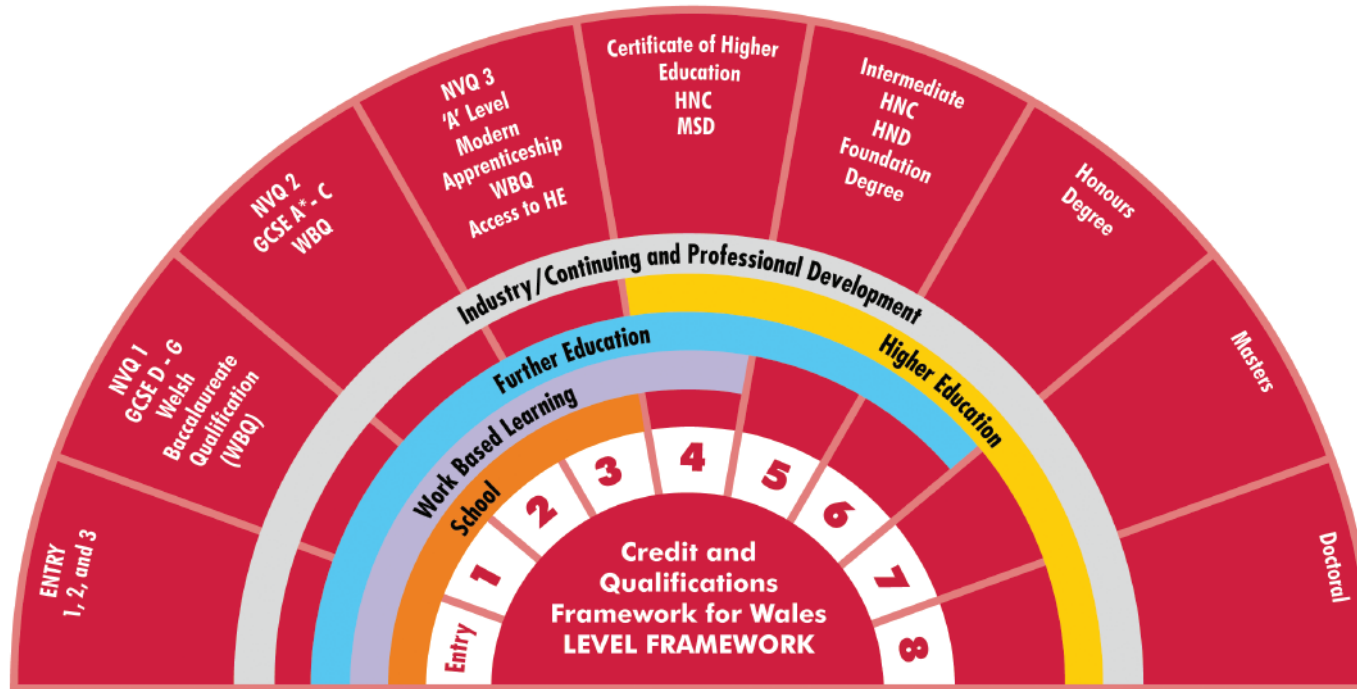
The members of the CCAF are representatives of their sectors or interest groups, not representatives of their organisation. The membership of the Credit Common Accord Forum includes various sectoral parties and reflects a balance of interests.

CCAF membership and representation

Adult and Community Learning
Awarding Organisations
Careers, Advice and Guidance
DCELLS
Estyn
Further Education
Higher Education
Learning Pathways 14–19
National Union of Students Wales
QAA – Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education
Sector Skills Councils and Sector Alliance
Trades Union Council for Wales
UK representation – England, Northern Ireland and Scotland
Voluntary services in Wales
Work-based learning
Youth services in Wales

Annex 2B: Fan diagram

Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales Learning and Progression Routes



The Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales was introduced in 2003 as a fully inclusive learning framework. The Levels capture all learning from the very initial stages (Entry) to the most advanced (Level 8). The Fan diagram illustrates the levels and examples of qualifications and learning provision that are included in it.

E-mail: cqfwenquiries@wales.gsi.gov.uk
Visit: www.cqfw.net

Cyngor Cyllido Addysg
Uwch Cymru
Higher Education Funding
Council for Wales

hefcw

CREDIT & QUALIFICATIONS
FRAMEWORK FOR WALES
FFRAMWAITH CREDYDAU
A CHYMYSTERAU CYMRU



Annex 2C

Ofqual level descriptors – January 2009



Level descriptors				
Level	Summary	Knowledge and understanding	Application and action	Autonomy and accountability
Entry Level	Entry 1 recognises progress along a continuum that ranges from the most elementary of achievements to beginning to make use of skills, knowledge, or understanding that relate to the immediate environment.			
	Achievement at Entry 2 reflects the ability to make use of skills, knowledge and understanding to carry out simple, familiar tasks and activities with guidance.	<p>Use knowledge or understanding to carry out simple, familiar activities.</p> <p>Know the steps needed to complete simple activities.</p>	<p>Carry out simple, familiar tasks and activities.</p> <p>Follow instructions or use rehearsed steps to complete tasks and activities.</p>	<p>With appropriate guidance begin to take some responsibility for the outcomes of simple activities.</p> <p>Actively participate in simple and familiar activities.</p>
	Achievement at Entry 3 reflects the ability to make use of skills, structured tasks knowledge, and understanding to carry out structured tasks and activities in familiar contexts, with appropriate guidance where needed.	<p>Use knowledge or understanding to carry out structured tasks and activities in familiar contexts.</p> <p>Know and understand the steps needed to complete structured tasks and activities in familiar contexts.</p>	<p>Carry out structured tasks and activities in familiar contexts.</p> <p>Be aware of the consequences of actions for self and others.</p>	<p>With appropriate guidance take responsibility for the outcomes of structured activities.</p> <p>Actively participate in activities in familiar contexts.</p>

Level	Summary	Knowledge and understanding	Application and action	Autonomy and accountability
Level 1	Achievement at Level 1 reflects the ability to use relevant knowledge, skills and procedures to complete routine tasks. It includes responsibility for completing tasks and procedures subject to direction or guidance.	<p>Use knowledge of facts, procedures and ideas to complete well-defined, routine tasks.</p> <p>Be aware of information relevant to the area of study or work.</p>	<p>Complete well-defined, routine tasks.</p> <p>Use relevant skills and procedures.</p> <p>Select and use relevant information.</p> <p>Identify whether actions have been effective.</p>	Take responsibility for completing tasks and procedures subject to direction or guidance as needed.
Level 2	Achievement at Level 2 reflects the ability to select and use relevant knowledge, ideas, skills and procedures to complete well-defined tasks and address straightforward problems. It includes taking responsibility for completing tasks and procedures and exercising autonomy and judgement subject to overall direction or guidance.	<p>Use understanding of facts, procedures and ideas to complete well-defined tasks and address straightforward problems.</p> <p>Interpret relevant information and ideas.</p> <p>Be aware of the types of information that are relevant to the area of study or work.</p>	<p>Complete well-defined, generally routine tasks and address straightforward problems.</p> <p>Select and use relevant skills and procedures.</p> <p>Identify, gather and use relevant information to inform actions.</p> <p>Identify how effective actions have been.</p>	<p>Take responsibility for completing tasks and procedures.</p> <p>Exercise autonomy and judgement subject to overall direction or guidance.</p>

Level	Summary	Knowledge and understanding	Application and action	Autonomy and accountability
Level 3	Achievement at Level 3 reflects the ability to identify and use relevant understanding, methods and skills to complete tasks and address problems that, while well-defined, have a measure of complexity. It includes taking responsibility for initiating and completing tasks and procedures as well as exercising autonomy and judgement within limited parameters. It also reflects awareness of different perspectives or approaches within an area of study or work.	<p>Use factual, procedural and theoretical understanding to complete tasks and address problems that, while well-defined may be complex and non-routine.</p> <p>Interpret and evaluate relevant information and ideas.</p> <p>Be aware of the nature of the area of study or work.</p> <p>Have awareness of different perspectives or approaches within the area of study or work.</p>	<p>Address problems that, while well-defined, may be complex and non-routine.</p> <p>Identify, select and use appropriate skills, methods and procedures.</p> <p>Use appropriate investigation to inform actions.</p> <p>Review how effective methods and actions have been.</p>	<p>Take responsibility for initiating and completing tasks and procedures, including where relevant, responsibility for supervising or guiding others.</p> <p>Exercise autonomy and judgement within limited parameters.</p>

Level	Summary	Knowledge and understanding	Application and action	Autonomy and accountability
Level 4	Achievement at Level 4 reflects the ability to identify and use relevant understanding, methods and skills to address problems that are well-defined but complex and non-routine. It includes taking responsibility for overall courses of action as well as exercising autonomy and judgement within broad parameters. It also reflects understanding of different perspectives or approaches within an area of study or work.	<p>Use practical, theoretical or technical understanding to address problems that are well-defined but complex and non-routine.</p> <p>Analyse, interpret and evaluate relevant information and ideas.</p> <p>Be aware of the nature and approximate scope of the area of study or work.</p> <p>Have an informed awareness of different perspectives or approaches within the area of study or work.</p>	<p>Address problems that are complex and non-routine while normally fairly well-defined.</p> <p>Identify, adapt and use appropriate methods and skills.</p> <p>Initiate and use appropriate investigation to inform actions.</p> <p>Review the effectiveness and appropriateness of methods, actions and results.</p>	<p>Take responsibility for courses of action, including where relevant responsibility for the work of others.</p> <p>Exercise autonomy and judgement within broad but generally well-defined parameters.</p>

Level	Summary	Knowledge and understanding	Application and action	Autonomy and accountability
Level 5	Achievement at Level 5 reflects the ability to identify and use relevant understanding, methods and skills to address broadly-defined, complex problems. It includes taking responsibility for planning and developing courses of action as well as exercising autonomy and judgement within broad parameters. It also reflects understanding of different perspectives, approaches or schools of thought and the reasoning behind them.	<p>Use practical, theoretical or technological understanding to find ways forward in broadly-defined, complex contexts.</p> <p>Analyse, interpret and evaluate relevant information, concepts and ideas.</p> <p>Be aware of the nature and scope of the area of study or work.</p> <p>Understand different perspectives, approaches or schools of thought and the reasoning behind them.</p>	<p>Address broadly-defined, complex problems.</p> <p>Determine, adapt and use appropriate methods and skills.</p> <p>Use relevant research or development to inform actions.</p> <p>Evaluate actions, methods and results.</p>	<p>Take responsibility for planning and developing courses of action, including, where relevant, responsibility for the work of others.</p> <p>Exercise autonomy and judgement within broad parameters.</p>

Level	Summary	Knowledge and understanding	Application and action	Autonomy and accountability
Level 6	Achievement at Level 6 reflects the ability to refine and use relevant understanding, methods and skills to address complex problems that have limited definition. It includes taking responsibility for planning and developing courses of action that are able to underpin substantial change or development, as well as exercising broad autonomy and judgement. It also reflects an understanding of different perspectives, approaches or schools of thought and the theories that underpin them.	<p>Refine and use practical, conceptual or technological understanding to create ways forward in contexts where there are many interacting factors.</p> <p>Critically analyse, interpret and evaluate complex information, concepts and ideas.</p> <p>Understand the context in which the area of study or work is located.</p> <p>Be aware of current developments in the area of study or work.</p> <p>Understand different perspectives, approaches or schools of thought and the theories that underpin them.</p>	<p>Address problems that have limited definition and involve many interacting factors.</p> <p>Determine, refine, adapt and use appropriate methods and skills.</p> <p>Use and where appropriate design relevant research and development to inform actions.</p> <p>Evaluate actions, methods and results and their implications.</p>	<p>Take responsibility for planning and developing courses of action that are capable of underpinning substantial changes or developments.</p> <p>Initiate and lead tasks and processes, taking responsibility, where relevant, for the work and roles of others.</p> <p>Exercise broad autonomy and judgement.</p>

Level	Summary	Knowledge and understanding	Application and action	Autonomy and accountability
Level 7	Achievement at Level 7 reflects the ability to reformulate and use relevant understanding, methodologies and approaches to address problematic situations that involve many interacting factors. It includes taking responsibility for planning and developing courses of action that initiate or underpin substantial change or development, as well as exercising broad autonomy and judgement. It also reflects an understanding of relevant theoretical and methodological perspectives and how they affect their area of study or work.	<p>Reformulate and use practical, conceptual or technological understanding to create ways forward in contexts where there are many interacting factors.</p> <p>Critically analyse, interpret and evaluate complex information, concepts and theories to produce modified conceptions.</p> <p>Understand the wider contexts in which the area of study or work is located.</p> <p>Understand current developments in the area of study or work.</p> <p>Understand different theoretical and methodological perspectives and how they affect the area of study or work.</p>	<p>Conceptualise and address problematic situations that involve many interacting factors.</p> <p>Determine and use appropriate methodologies and approaches.</p> <p>Design and undertake research, development or strategic activities to inform the area of work or study or produce organisational or professional change.</p> <p>Critically evaluate actions, methods and results and their short- and long-term implications.</p>	<p>Take responsibility for planning and developing courses of action that initiate or underpin substantial changes or developments.</p> <p>Exercise broad autonomy and judgement across a significant area of work or study.</p> <p>Initiate and lead complex tasks and processes, taking responsibility, where relevant, for the work and roles of others.</p>

Level	Summary	Knowledge and understanding	Application and action	Autonomy and accountability
Level 8	Achievement at Level 8 reflects the ability to develop original understanding and extend an area of knowledge or professional practice. It reflects the ability to address problematic situations that involve many complex, interacting factors through initiating, designing and undertaking research, development or strategic activities. It involves the exercise of broad autonomy, judgement and leadership in sharing responsibility for the development of a field of work or knowledge or for creating substantial professional or organisational change.	<p>Develop original practical, conceptual or technological understanding to create ways forward in contexts that lack definition and where there are many complex, interacting factors.</p> <p>Critically analyse, interpret and evaluate complex information, concepts and theories to produce new knowledge and theories.</p> <p>Understand and reconceptualise the wider contexts in which the field of knowledge or work is located.</p>	<p>Conceptualise and address problematic situations that involve many complex, interacting factors.</p> <p>Formulate and use appropriate methodologies and approaches.</p> <p>Initiate, design and undertake research, development or strategic activities that extend the field of work or knowledge or result in significant organisational or professional change.</p>	<p>Take responsibility for planning and developing courses of action that have a significant impact on the field of work or knowledge, or result in substantial organisational or professional change.</p> <p>Exercise broad autonomy, judgement and leadership as a leading practitioner or scholar sharing responsibility for the development of a field of work or knowledge, or for substantial organisational or professional change.</p>

Level	Summary	Knowledge and understanding	Application and action	Autonomy and accountability
Level 8 (cont)	It also reflects a critical understanding of relevant theoretical and methodological perspectives and how they affect the field of knowledge or work.	<p>Extend a field of knowledge or work by contributing original knowledge and thinking.</p> <p>Exercise critical understanding of different theoretical and methodological perspectives and how they affect the field of knowledge or work.</p>	Critically evaluate actions, methods and results and their short and long-term implications for the field of work or knowledge and its wider context.	Take responsibility for the advancement of professional practice.

Annex 2D

Unit structure for submission

CQFW unit template (minimum information) – all of the fields of information must be completed.

Recognised Body name:	
Unit title:	
Unit level:	
Credit Value:	<whole number>
Recognised Body unit reference number:	<unit ID>
Review date:	
Ownership status:	(originator only, restricted, shared)
Sector – Sub-sector/Sector subject code explanation This information should be provided wherever possible	

Learning outcomes	Assessment criteria
The learner will:	The learner can:
1. <Type outcome 1 here>	1.1. <Type criterion 1 for outcome 1 here> 1.2. <Type criterion 2 for outcome 1 here>
2. Type outcome 2 here	2.1. <Type criterion 1 for outcome 2 here> 2.2. <Type criterion 2 for outcome 2 here> 2.3. etc.
Where appropriate List of qualifications/ programmes	

3

Recognition and unit submission process

Background

The process of approval of Recognised Bodies, Qualifications and Units is coordinated by the Welsh Assembly Government Qualifications and Learning Division, working closely with teams and individuals with particular expertise, across the partnership through Recognition and Approvals Panel (RAP).

The role of this group is to:

- consider and make decisions on bodies to be recognised as having met the requirements of the Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales (CQFW) Common Accord
- consider and make decisions on the approval of units/qualifications for admission to the CQFW; on requests for extensions to approvals, and amendment to units/qualifications, including specifications, titles of units/qualifications or Recognised Body arrangements
- consider and make decisions on the withdrawal of approval and/or application of conditions
- provide full support to and cooperation with duly appointed independent reviewers in the event of a request by a Recognised Body for a review of the CQFW's decision. This may include receiving reports and recommending further action, as appropriate
- consider any other such matters as from time to time are deemed appropriate and/or necessary.

Membership Recognition and Approvals Panel

Vocational Qualifications and Credit Development Branch
Vocational Qualifications Regulation and Quality Assurance Branch
General Qualifications and Modernisation Branch
HEFCW
Secretariat

Recognition process

There are three pillars of learning within the CQFW:

1. Higher Education
2. General and Vocational Education and Training (GVET) through regulated Awarding Organisations in the (Qualification and Credit Framework, National Qualifications Framework and Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework)
3. Quality Assured Lifelong Learning (QALL).

All pillars have a process of quality assurance from design to delivery of qualifications and learning programmes. The process for recognising bodies has three discrete approaches. These processes have been ratified by the CQFW Common Accord (CCA) and the Recognition and Approvals Panel (RAP).

For a list of all Recognised Bodies see Annex 3B.

Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)

There are, within HEIs, extensive credit expertise and well-established quality assurance systems.

Quality assurance in HEIs

Following the establishment of a credit based funding system, the use of credit as a means of describing learning is well established within higher education in Wales.

The quality assurance systems which operate within the HEIs are certainly sufficient to ensure that credit is awarded within HEIs in

a way which formally accords with the CQFW expectations and there is no need for further, more elaborate procedures in this respect.

Recognition process for HEIs

This process entails no implications for cost or institutional autonomy.

HEIs will provide confirmation that they wish to become a Recognised Body within the CQFW through completion of the pro forma attached to the formal letter of invitation.

Awarding Organisations (AOs)

The recognition process for the GVET regulated pillar takes account of the quality assurance mechanisms built around existing statutory requirements that Awarding Organisations have met and are monitored on by the qualification regulators across England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

The introduction of the QCF has changed the context of qualification design and the impact of this is that the recognition requirements of AOs operating in the QCF cover all the credit principles in the CQFW. The qualification regulators will manage the recognition process and the ongoing quality assurance monitoring of the QCF.

The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) has similar arrangements for qualifications within Scotland.

Quality assurance in AOs

It is acknowledged that the QCF and the SCQF are regulated and/or quality assured credit frameworks. The scope of their regulatory arrangements provides a quality assured structure and system that supports the assigning and award of credit in accordance with the CQFW. This would also include credit rating any provision within the NQF and other provision such as customised awards and accredited company training. These arrangements provide the CQFW with the level of confidence that negates the need for any further information in relation to the recognition process.

Recognition process for AOs

There is no cost or need for further, more elaborate procedures in this respect. AOs will provide confirmation that they wish to become a Recognised Body within the CQFW through completion of the pro forma attached to the formal letter of invitation.

Quality Assured Lifelong Learning (QALL)

The process for the recognition of bodies from the QALL pillar to operate within the CQFW that wish to assign and/or award involves completion of the QALL application form (Annex 3A).

Quality assurance in QALL

The quality assurance standards for recognising non HE and non regulated bodies into CQFW have been based upon the formal regulation process for Awarding Organisations into the regulatory pillar.

These processes have been tested and the establishment of the RAP oversees the quality assurance of this activity.

Recognition process in QALL

Before submitting an application, a body must contact **cqfwenquiries@wales.gsi.gov.uk**. The body will then be linked to a member of the Vocational Qualifications and Credit Development (VQCD) Branch who will organise an inception meeting to discuss:

- intentions for becoming a Recognised Body
- benchmarking the potential of the body to complete the process successfully
- body systems and expertise for assigning and awarding credit
- the progression options
- the application process.

A development plan will be drawn up with the organisation to prepare for completion and submission of an application for recognition.

Capacity building and other forms of training are available.

The application form will be completed electronically **www.cqfw.net** (Downloadable Handbook). The 'Further Explanation and Guidance' notes on the electronic version are in the form of dialogue boxes linked to the relevant sections of the application form.

Once completed the application form must be submitted to **recognition@wales.gsi.gov.uk**.

An officer from the Vocational Qualifications Regulation and Quality Assurance (VQRQA) Branch of DCELLS will be allocated to the submitted application form. A review of the submission will be completed. The officer will then make a recommendation for recognition to the RAP.

There are three possible outcomes:

- Approval.
- Approval with conditions – where conditions are identified, an action plan will be agreed and met by the organisation before recognition is fully approved.
- Not approved – RAP may decide to decline the submission. If the body disagrees with this decision they have a Right of Appeal.

The organisation is logged on the CQFW database and the monitoring process ensues.

Unit submission process

Unit submission

Once a body has become recognised they are then able to submit units into the framework. The units must conform to the minimum CQFW specifications.

Unit recognition

All units must undergo a process of recognition:

1. Initial development.
2. Quality assurance within the Recognised Body.
3. Submission.
4. Acceptance.

Recognised Bodies will establish methodical measures for monitoring processes and reviewing consistency in assigning credit across the whole range of provision and over time.

Processes for monitoring and review should be integrated in a systematic manner within the Recognised Body's general arrangements for assuring quality and standards.

Recognised Bodies will be subject to audit and standardisation activity to monitor consistency of all credit assigned.

Unit recognition period

Units have a defined recognition period, which can be amended.

- Units can be recognised at any time during the course of the year.
- The Recognised Body developing the unit will be responsible for it throughout its operational life.
- The minimum recognition period of a unit will be one year.
- The maximum recognition period of a unit will be five years.
- The certification period of the unit will extend 12 months beyond the end of the recognition period.
- The Recognised Body will determine the lifespan of the unit within these limits.
- At the end of the recognition period of the unit, the Recognised Body responsible for the unit must undertake a review to determine whether the unit remains fit for purpose. If the review states the unit remains fit for purpose, the Recognised Body can request to extend the recognition period of the unit. If the unit is deemed no longer fit for purpose, or has been superseded by other units, the Recognised Body can 'retire' (withdraw) the unit. Once a unit is retired, it will not be possible to reactivate it under its original code number.
- There may be a need for interim review of the unit during its recognition period. Significant changes to the unit (e.g. the addition, alteration or removal of a learning outcome, the level assigned or changes to assessment criteria that affect the

- overall workload and hence Credit Value) will result in the original unit being retired, to be replaced by a new unit.
- In all circumstances the record of the unit will remain in the unit database, whatever the status of the unit. This is to ensure that credits awarded for achievement can be referred back to.
 - In all circumstances, credits awarded for achievement of a unit will stand as part of the learner's achievement record.
 - Some units will have different ownership status. This could mean that the units can only be used by the originator or restricted to certain specified organisations or open access and shared.

CQFW minimum unit specification

- Recognised Body name.
- Unit title.
- Unit level.
- Credit Value.
- Recognised Body unit reference number.
- Review date.
- Ownership status (originator only, restricted, shared).
- Unit content:
 - Learning outcomes
 - Assessment criteria
 - List of qualification(s)/programmes (where appropriate)

- Sector
 - Sub-sector (refer to Quality Assured Lifelong Learning (QALL) application form)
 - Sector subject code explanation

(this information should be provided wherever possible)

Higher Education – unit submission

Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) have a very extensively developed credit framework which is rigorously quality assured. To retain institutional autonomy the CQFW hosts direct web links to all of the HEIs via the central CQFW website, which allows the HEIs to retain all of their independent input and management responsibility.

For all HE units which are not held on any other database, RAP should receive the summary list of units:

Recognised Body name	Unit Title	Level	Credit Value	Recognised Body Unit Code

A complete unit structure should be attached for every unit title included in the summary.

These should be submitted electronically to **recognition@wales.gsi.gov.uk**.

The presentation of units must follow the CQFW template format (Annex 2C). Alternatively the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) unit format is acceptable. This can be accessed at **www.qca.org.uk**.

Awarding Organisations – unit submission

Awarding Organisations are subject to joint regulation through the Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (DCELLS), Ofqual and Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA).

For all units which are not held on any other database, RAP should receive the summary list of units:

Recognised Body Name	Unit Title	Level	Credit Value	Recognised Body Unit Code

A complete unit structure should be attached for every unit title included in the summary.

These should be submitted electronically to **recognition@wales.gsi.gov.uk**.

The presentation of units must follow the CQFW template format (Annex 2C). Alternatively the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) unit format is acceptable. This can be accessed at **www.qca.org.uk**.

Quality Assured Lifelong Learning (QALL) – unit submission

Recognised Bodies operating outside Higher Education and GVET would be recognised by CQFW through the QALL documentation and processes.

For all units which are not held on any other database, RAP should receive the summary list of units:

Recognised Body Name	Unit Title	Level	Credit Value	Recognised Body Unit Code

A complete unit structure should be attached for every unit title included in the summary.

These should be submitted electronically to **recognition@wales.gsi.gov.uk**.

The presentation of units must follow the CQFW template format (Annex 2C). Alternatively the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) unit format is acceptable. This can be accessed at www.qca.org.uk.

Queries

If you have any problems, technical or otherwise related to the submission of this form and/or accompanying documentation please contact cqfwenquiries@wales.gsi.gov.uk.

Monitoring and quality control – moderation and standardisation

A standardisation and moderation exercise of submitted units will take place to ensure correct and consistent applications of the CQFW CCA. There will be an ongoing review of recognised provision. This will operate to examine content of delivery and assessing appropriate Credit Value.

Certification design guidelines for QALL

Bodies must develop certificates that will ensure clarity and be fit for purpose for the learner. The body will be expected to submit a sample certificate during the Recognition Process.

The following details form the minimum requirements expected on a unit certificate.

- The full name of the Recognised Body.
- The recognised unit(s) title(s).
- Candidate name.
- The Recognised Body unique number(s) for the unit(s).
- Unique certificate number.
- Date.
- The authorised signature.
- Certificate details to be available in English and/or English and Welsh, when delivered bilingually.
- Unit Level.
- Credit Value.

Where details require multiple sheets for certification, the learner name and the unique certificate identifier should appear on every sheet.

Annex 3A

Application form for Quality Assured Lifelong Learning (QALL)

Application for recognition into the Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales (CQFW)

For further details contact:

CQFW Secretariat

e-mail: cqfwenquiries@wales.gsi.gov.uk

Visit: www.cqfw.net

You are welcome to copy this publication for internal use within your organisation.

Otherwise no part of this publication may be reproduced without prior permission of the copyright holder.

Contents: Application process for recognition

Introduction

Summary of application process

Principles

Section 3A

- Initial contact application
- Capacity building expectations
- Recognising the organisation application form

Section 3B: Recognition to assign credit

- Application form
- Explanation, guidance and information

Section 3C: Recognition to award credit

- Application form
- Explanation, guidance and information

Introduction

This document includes the forms, guidance and minimum standards to be used by organisations that operate outside the DCELLS/CCEA/Ofqual joint regulatory framework, the SCQF partnership and Higher Education, who wish to assign and/or award credit for Quality Assured Lifelong Learning (QALL) within the CQFW.

The purpose of this document is for the organisation to submit details of processes and associated quality assurance arrangements it has in place to assign and/or award credit. All the information used in the submission must be available on request to contribute to CQFW quality assurance processes.

CQFW does not ask for information about marketing, educational guidance, enrolment or student support as the learning may be delivered by diverse providers in very different contexts. However, the CQFW asks bodies who become recognised for assigning and/or awarding credit to bear in mind the importance of these factors in providing high quality learning and progression.

Summary of application process

Section A:

To be completed by all organisations seeking recognition to **assign credit** and/or to **award credit**.

This evidence is required in all organisation applications.

Section B:

To be completed by organisations seeking recognition to **assign credit**.

Application paperwork for the recognition of assigning credit.

Section C:

To be completed by organisations seeking recognition to **award credit**.

Application paperwork for the recognition of awarding credit.

It is essential that you have contacted the CQFW Team to discuss your intention to make such an application before submitting a recognition application using any part of this form.

To discuss your intentions contact cqfwenquiries@wales.gsi.gov.uk

All documentation must be submitted electronically to the CQFW secretariat recognition@wales.gsi.gov.uk

Hard copy submissions will not be accepted.

The chapter sections are colour coded:

Red and **white** is used on the application forms – questions and answers

All organisational responses should be included in the white boxes on the application forms.

Yellow is used to highlight further explanations, guidance and information.

It is recommended that you refer to this guidance before completing each section.

Principles

Organisations must demonstrate a **rigorous self-assessment** model to ensure that submitted policies and procedures are operating appropriately and subject to continuous improvement strategies.

Specifically:

- Organisations must provide information in their submission about how the processes to **assign and/or award credit** to units is undertaken and documented.
- Organisations must establish systematic measures for **monitoring processes** and **reviewing consistency** in assigning and/or awarding credit across the whole range of their provision and over time.
- Processes for monitoring and review must be integrated in a systematic manner within the organisation's general arrangements for **assuring quality and standards**.
- Once an organisation becomes approved as a Recognised Body it will be subject to CQFW **audit and standardisation** activity to monitor consistency of all credit assigned and/or awarded.

Providing supporting documentation

Certain sections of this form require you to provide essential information in support of your responses. Ensure that all documents are clearly titled and are correctly referred to in the appropriate white section(s) of the application form.

Please make sure that you include all the relevant documentation in the same e-mail as the application form. The documentation should be in Microsoft Word or Rich Text format only. If the resulting files are too large to email all at once, you may email them separately, but please ensure you have clearly referenced/titled them.

Queries

If you have any problems, technical or otherwise related to the submission of the form and/or accompanying documentation contact the CQFW secretariat **cqfwenquiries@wales.gsi.gov.uk**.

Possible requirements under the Freedom of Information Act

Material provided by organisations to CQFW will be handled in accordance with relevant legislation, including the Data Protection Act. Organisations should be aware of the duties on the CQFW partners under the Freedom of Information Act to disclose information that they hold in response to requests from individuals. Organisations must provide reasonable and timely co-operation to enable CQFW to determine, within the timescales for compliance with the Act, whether consent can be obtained to disclosure and/or whether any exemption to disclosure applies.

Where organisations consider that material they are providing to CQFW is commercially or otherwise confidential, this should be clearly stated at the time it is provided, together with the reasons for that view. If CQFW agrees that the material is confidential in character, they will not include that information in a published report and may seek to apply the relevant exemption(s) under the Freedom of Information Act to any request from a third party for disclosure of the material, unless the organisation consents to the disclosure. Organisations should be aware of the fact that CQFW may ultimately be required to comply with the determinations of the Information Commissioner and the courts as to disclosure of information notwithstanding any view as to confidentiality, which is agreed with the organisation.

Section 3A

To be completed by all organisations seeking recognition to assign credit and/or award credit.

This evidence is required in all organisation applications.

Initial contact

Contact with CQFW

Provide details of the initial contact, with date, and the specific person with whom discussions took place at the CQFW regarding this proposal.



Capacity building

Your organisation will be required to attend capacity building session(s) and recognition application form training for discussion of the paperwork completion ready for submission.

All capacity building sessions and meeting dates, along with submission deadline requirements can be found on the website **www.cqfw.net**.

Complete the attendance form as required.

These sessions are compulsory for submission to assign and/or award of credit.

Recognising the organisation

This section provides essential organisational information and a statement of commitment to the principles of the CQFW.

Organisation name	
Acronym/Abbreviation or other 'trading name'	
Main address and postcode	
Main telephone number	
Main fax number	
Main/general email address	
Main website address	
Primary contact – please provide the full name of the most senior member of staff who is accountable for the quality of the credit-based learning	
Job title	
Address and postcode	

Telephone number	
Fax number	
Email address	
Describe legal status of organisation, e.g. Ltd Co., PLC, registered charity, not-for-profit organisation, association etc.	
Provide details of any formal relationships or partnerships that your organisation has developed for the processes to assign and/or award credit.	
If you are seeking to be recognised only to assign credit: explain any arrangements that your organisation will establish for the award of credit.	
If you are seeking recognition only to award credit: explain the arrangements that your organisation will establish for awarding the assigned credit on behalf of other Recognised Bodies.	

Code	Organisation sector subject area	Tick
1	Health Public Services and Care	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	Science and Mathematics	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Care	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	Construction, Planning and the Built Environment	<input type="checkbox"/>
6	Information and Communication Technology	<input type="checkbox"/>
7	Retail and Commercial Enterprise	<input type="checkbox"/>
8	Leisure, Travel and Tourism	<input type="checkbox"/>
9	Arts, Media and Publishing	<input type="checkbox"/>
10	History, Philosophy and Theology	<input type="checkbox"/>
11	Social Sciences	<input type="checkbox"/>
12	Languages, Literature and Culture	<input type="checkbox"/>
13	Education and Training	<input type="checkbox"/>
14	Preparation for Life and Work	<input type="checkbox"/>
15	Business, Administration and Law	<input type="checkbox"/>
16	Other (Specify) check with the QCA website for Sector Specific list www.qca.org.uk	<input type="checkbox"/>

Organisational links – if appropriate. Give an explanation of the links that your organisation has with any relevant Sector Skills Councils, Standard Setting Bodies and, or professional bodies.

The primary contact identified is the single named person, responsible across the organisation and accountable to the CQFW for ensuring that the organisation:

- adheres to the principles of the CQFW Common Accord
- operates within the guidelines of the CQFW to assign and/or award credit
- maintains systematic arrangements for ensuring quality, rigour and comparability in the application, use and provision of information on credit, as detailed in this submission.

I agree on behalf of the organisation:

- To conform to the principles to assign and/or award credit as identified in the CQFW Common Accord;
- To up date information and inform your main contact at CQFW of any key or significant changes to include:
 - Ownership
 - Partnership arrangements
 - Corporate or Governance structure
 - Legal identity
 - Key personnel in the operation and delivery of the service provided

- To adhere to the operational guidelines of the CQFW for assigning and awarding credit;
- To provide access to premises, meetings, documents and data regarding the assigning and/or awarding of credit; and
- To promote the CQFW.

Signed:	
Date:	

An electronic signature is acceptable.

Section 3B: Recognition to assign credit

To be completed by organisations seeking recognition to **assign credit**.

Complete all of the sections in this application form.

Red and white is used on the application form – questions and answers respectively.

- Organisational explanatory responses should be included in the white boxes on the application forms.
- Certain sections in the application form list the essential information which must accompany the application.
- Where appropriate, the organisation should reference its responses to these documents in the spaces provided.
- When quoting from the relevant document the organisation should clearly cross-reference to the appropriate page(s), paragraph(s) and section(s).

For extended rationalisation notes refer to the hover help on the website www.cqfw.net or the **yellow coloured further explanations and guidance documentation following the application form.**

Application form for recognition to assign credit

Organisational structure, aims and expertise

Essential information required:

- Overview (e.g. organisational chart) of the key personnel involved in the assigning credit process.
- Responsibilities of key members of staff involved in the assigning of credit process.
- Overview of processes for appointing, training and monitoring specialists (internal staff and external consultants) involved in constructing units.

Describe:

- (a) how the development and submission of units fits in with the organisation's aims and purposes.
- (b) how the principles for assigning credit as laid out in the CQFW Common Accord and the CQFW Handbook are embedded within the organisation.
- (c) how the organisation ensures it has the appropriate skills, knowledge and expertise to develop and submit units into the CQFW.

Organisational evidence and response:

External reviewer comments:

Internal reviewer comments:

Identification of need for unit/programme/framework

Essential information:

- Summary of the unit identification process.

Describe:

- (a) the processes the organisation uses to identify the need for a unit(s).

Organisational evidence and response:

External reviewer comments:

Internal reviewer comments:

Design and development process

Essential information required:

- Summary of the unit(s) development process.

Ensure you describe how the organisation:

- (a) manages developmental activity
- (b) ensures learning outcomes and their attendant assessment criteria are clear and unambiguous
- (c) determines the appropriate level for the unit(s)
- (d) determines the appropriate Credit Value for the unit(s)
- (e) specifies any particular assessment requirements for a unit(s) where this is appropriate.

Organisational evidence and response:

External reviewer comments:

Internal reviewer comments:

Relationship of unit content to relevant national/industry standards and legislation

Essential information required:

Provide details of how the organisation:

- (a) identifies and incorporates legislation relating to the relevant sector, diversity and equality, and the Welsh language if appropriate, into units
- (b) if applicable, identifies the relationship between units and industry/learning sector standards
- (c) if applicable, references unit content to the relevant Basic and Key Skills standards.

Organisational evidence and response:

External reviewer comments:

Internal reviewer comments:

Quality assurance: consistency and reliability in the internal design, development and approval process for units, programmes and frameworks

Essential information required:

- Summary of the organisation's standardisation process and naming the team/post(s) involved.

Describe how the organisation:

- (a) ensures consistency and reliability between units as they are produced
- (b) evaluates the application of the quality assurance procedures described in the sections above.

Name the team/post(s) responsible for:

- (c) ensuring that quality assurance procedures are applied
- (d) checking that the unit pro forma is submitted accurately to CQFW.

Organisational evidence and response:

External reviewer comments:

Internal reviewer comments:

Review processes

Essential information required:

- Summary of review process.

Describe how the organisation:

- (a) reviews the ongoing relevance of units/programmes/frameworks in relation to sectoral and learning contexts
- (b) maintains a self-assessment process.

Name the team/post(s) responsible for:
(c) the review process.

Organisational evidence and response:

External reviewer comments:

Internal reviewer comments:

Explanation, guidance and information for Section 3B

This form is designed to be viewed, completed and submitted electronically. All completed forms should be sent to your main contact person.

The purpose of this section is to allow the organisation to provide details of its unit development and associated quality assurance processes to assign credit.

Where appropriate the sections within the forms will list the essential policies and information that is required to accompany the application form. All of this information should be clearly cross-referenced within the application documentation.

Please note as the form is to be completed electronically that the information below has been designed to be in the form of a hover help. For the purposes of this paper copy, the information has been boxed so that it can be cross-referenced to the appropriate sections of the application within section 3B.

Assigning credit (further explanation, guidance and information)

Organisational structure, aims and expertise

An organisation seeking recognition must be able to demonstrate that it has the relevant expertise and a thorough knowledge and understanding of the principles of assigning credit to include:

- Understanding the benefits of and reasons for using credit for learning in the organisation's area(s) of activity.
- Understanding and use of the technical elements or components of a unit – expressing learning in terms of learning outcomes and assessment criteria (including understanding the functions of LOs and AC in assessment practices for credit-based learning), levels and Credit Value/size.
- Writing and constructing units.
- For framework development, understanding and using credit units within a designed framework.

The fundamental principles of CQFW are contained within the CQFW Common Accord and the CQFW Handbook should be used to guide the submission. Use of the credit principles contained within the QCF and SCQF are of equal merit.

It is important that an organisation utilises staff and/or external consultants with a range of skills, knowledge and experiences, including subject/sector expertise, assessment, qualification development and learning delivery. Include opportunities for training and development.

In practical terms an organisation must be able to demonstrate the sustainability of knowledge and expertise in assigning credit, so the competencies required to assign credit are embedded throughout the organisation's principles and practices (i.e. not 'in the head' of an individual). The detail that should be in the application would include:

- Overview (e.g. organisational chart) of the key personnel involved in the assigning credit process.
- Responsibilities of key members of staff involved in the assigning of credit process.
- Overview of processes for appointing, training and monitoring specialists (internal staff and external consultants) involved in constructing units.
- Staff/consultant development and briefing programmes on credit principles and unit development.
- Supervision and monitoring of staff and consultants.

Identification of need for unit/programme/framework

An organisation seeking recognition must demonstrate that:

It has a process, which is formally documented, whereby the rationale and need for a new unit, programme and/or framework are established and duplication with existing units, programmes and frameworks is avoided wherever possible.

Design and development process

An organisation seeking recognition must demonstrate that it has a process(es) for:

- managing the development activity
- generating learning outcomes and assessment criteria in a clear and unambiguous way
- determining the appropriate level for units
- determining Credit Values for units
- specifying any assessment requirements for units.

The organisation should ensure that the design and development process is underpinned by a clear audit trail which illustrates the decision making and consistency required for effective unit construction in relation to the CQFW's credit principles.

The information contained in the submission should cover the design and development approach(es) adopted by the organisation which could possibly include:

- separate staff/consultants – assigning credit levels and values independently, results compared and a decision reached
- 'Rater and Vetter' – the rater will assign the credit and the vetter will vet the decision
- team approach to assigning credit.

The organisation must clearly demonstrate that any unit submitted to CQFW has been through a formal and recorded process of scrutiny that is independent of the originating person or team, and which forms part of the overall quality assurance processes.

Whatever methods are used there should be a final validation of the results. The application will need to provide details of the mechanism(s) the organisation uses, which could include:

- validation panels made up of credit 'experts' independent of the development of the units presented to the panel
- quality 'arbiter' – a credit expert who has been independent of the development of the unit(s) presented to them.

Relationship of unit content to relevant national/industry standards and legislation

The organisation must demonstrate it is conversant with current legislation when developing the content of units.

An organisation must demonstrate that it has mechanisms for identifying and where necessary incorporating any relevant sector legislation (including Health & Safety), diversity and equality and the Welsh language into units. With regards to diversity and equality, the organisation should include race, ethnicity, gender, disability, sexual orientation, and religion in its considerations when determining unit content so that it can not be construed as discriminatory.

An organisation should demonstrate that it has mechanisms, where applicable, for:

- identifying the relationship between units and industry/learning sector standards
- referencing unit content to the relevant Basic, Key and similar Skills standards.

This may require explanation of the process of how the organisation references and keeps up-to-date with sector standards – such as NOS (National Occupational Standards) or industry specific and Basic and Key Skills. (Please note that from 2010 Basic and Key Skills will be replaced by Essential Skills Wales qualifications – please see Welsh Assembly Government website for more details www.wales.gov.uk/educationalskills.)

There could also be links to show how the organisation gains or brings in this sector expertise to develop unit content. Are there links with the relevant Sector Skills Councils (SSCs), Standard Setting Bodies (SSBs) and other professional sector bodies? If appropriate, state whether there is a mechanism for cross-referencing to Basic and Key Skills/Essential Skills.

Quality assurance: consistency and reliability in the internal design, development and approval process for units, programmes and frameworks

An organisation seeking recognition must demonstrate that it has and will maintain rigorous quality assurance arrangements in relation to developing units in line with principles for assigning credit and these should include:

- a standardisation process which systematically monitors the consistency between units
- a process that evaluates the application of the quality assurance procedures and activity described in the previous sections.

All the above processes should be documented and have the relevant audit trails. These should be used to support regular self-assessment.

The recognised body must clearly demonstrate that any unit submitted to CQFW has been through a formal and recorded process of scrutiny that is independent of the originating person or team, and which forms part of the overall quality assurance processes.

Organisations must provide information in their submission about how monitoring and quality assurance arrangements are undertaken to ensure that the assigning of credit is applied in a consistent manner. The organisation should give consideration to the people chosen for this role in terms of their knowledge of the subject, principles of CQFW and the context(s) the unit is likely to be used in. The degree of independence of quality assurance personnel from developers is an issue which requires careful consideration by the organisation in order to ensure integrity within the assigning process.

There should be a senior member of staff with responsibility for overseeing the quality assurance procedures listed in this section and ensuring that the processes described in the other sections are applied.

There should be a designated postholder with a clear responsibility for ensuring that unit submission is accurate and ongoing links with CQFW recognition requirements are maintained.

Review processes

The organisation seeking recognition must show evidence of:

- the review process, which is formally documented and has an audit trail that monitors the ongoing relevance of units/frameworks in relation to sectoral and learning contexts, and their ongoing rationale
- sustainability of this review process – so that it is embedded in the organisation's self-assessment processes.

Section 3C: Recognition to award credit

To be completed by organisations seeking recognition to **award credit**.

Complete all of the sections in this application form.

Red and white is used on the application form – questions and answers respectively.

- Organisational explanatory responses should be included in the white boxes on the application forms.
- Certain sections in the application form list the essential information which must accompany the application.
- Where appropriate, the organisation should reference its responses to these documents in the spaces provided.
- When quoting from the relevant document the organisation should clearly cross-reference to the appropriate page(s), paragraph(s) and section(s).

For extended rationalisation notes refer to the hover help on the website www.cqfw.net or the **yellow coloured further explanations and guidance documentation following the application form.**

Application form for recognition to award credit

Organisational aims, structure and relationships

Essential information required:

- Overview (e.g. organisational chart) identifying the key personnel involved in the awarding of credit process.
- Responsibilities of key members of staff involved in the awarding of credit (assessment, awarding, certification, quality assurance and contact with centres) process.
- Overview of processes for selecting staff and consultants with appropriate expertise in the award of credit.

Describe:

- how the awarding of units fits in with the organisation's aims and purposes.
- how the principles for awarding credit as laid out in the CQFW Common Accord are embedded within the organisation.
- how the organisation ensures it has the appropriate skills, knowledge and expertise to award credit.
- the arrangements for ensuring a clear distinction between the award of credit function and other functions within the organisation.

Organisational evidence and response:

External reviewer comments:

Internal reviewer comments:

Centre administration

Essential information:

- The process for Centre approval.
- Centre approval criteria.
- Guidelines defining a Centre's role, responsibility and accountability

Describe the organisation's:

- processes for approving and managing centres
- monitoring the above arrangements.

Organisational evidence and response:

External reviewer comments:

Internal reviewer comments:

Assessment and verification of achievement

Essential information required:

- Assessment policy/guidelines.
- Assessment guidance issued to centres (if different from above).
- Summary detailing external verification process of registered centres, where appropriate.
- Verification policy.
- Internal and external verification guidance provided to centres, including sampling and monitoring expectations.

Describe how the organisation's methods to assess evidence will ensure:

- validity
- authenticity
- sufficiency
- fit for purpose
- inclusiveness

Organisational evidence and response:

External reviewer comments:

Internal reviewer comments:

Diversity and equality

Essential information:

- Diversity and equality policy.
- Welsh language policy.

Ensure you explain how will the organisation ensure that its activities to award credit comply with:

- Diversity and equality legislation
- Welsh language legislation, or any other relevant language protocols.

Organisational evidence and response:

External reviewer comments:

Internal reviewer comments:

Learner credit history

Essential information required:

- The internal recording process.

Describe how the organisation will ensure that:

- learners are registered for unit(s) assessment
- learner records are accurate and up-to-date
- where appropriate, there are effective and compatible links with MIAP, PLASC and LLWR data requirements
- learner records are retained and retrievable for a justified length of time.

Organisational evidence and response:

External reviewer comments:

Internal reviewer comments:

Production and security arrangements for certificates and/or credit transcripts

Essential information:

- Sample certificate and/or credit transcript.

Describe how the organisation will ensure that:

- the design of unit certificates meets the requirements set out by the CQFW Common Accord and the CQFW Handbook.
- unit certificates are issued in a timely, accurate and secure fashion to learners in line with its customer service standards.
- requests for replacement certificates are dealt with in an appropriate manner.
- there are safeguards against fraudulent and mistaken claims for certificates.
- there are security arrangements for the storage, issue and recording of blank certificates.

Organisational evidence and response:

External reviewer comments:

Internal reviewer comments:

Management of data systems

Essential information:

- Policy on data management.

Ensure you describe how the organisation ensures that its:

- data procedures comply with statutory requirements
- reporting of data to CQFW, WAG and others as required
- data systems are reliable and secure
- data systems are provided with adequate back-up and contingency arrangements
- hardware and physical infrastructure has backup
- disaster recovery plan is up to date.

Organisational evidence and response:

External reviewer comments:

Internal reviewer comments:

Malpractice and maladministration

Essential information:

- Malpractice and maladministration policy.
- Malpractice and maladministration procedures.
- Sanction procedures for Centres.

Explain how the organisation will:

- ensure that Centres will report instances of malpractice and/or maladministration
- investigate reported cases of malpractice and/or maladministration
- deal with instances of malpractice and/or maladministration rigorously
- provide information on alleged cases of malpractice and/or maladministration and final investigation reports to CQFW
- effectively monitor and evaluate the above arrangements.

Organisational evidence and response:

External reviewer comments:

Internal reviewer comments:

Customer service standards for administration of credit

Essential information:

- Policy on customer service.
- Copy of the complaints procedure.
- Copy of the appeals procedure.

Ensure you detail the organisation's minimum specifications in relation to:

- the quality of service a client can reasonably expect
- pricing structure for services provided
- complaints procedure
- appeals procedure.

Organisational evidence and response:

External reviewer comments:

Internal reviewer comments:

Self-evaluation and continuous improvement

Essential information:

- Self-evaluation model.
- Quality improvement plan.

Ensure you detail the organisation's overarching self-evaluation model for its policies and procedures.

Explain the processes the organisation uses for evaluating :

- the quality and consistency of assessment within and between centres.
- the effectiveness of verification processes.
- review of services offered.
- review of communications methodologies.
- review of the way policies are implemented in this context.
- the effectiveness of the management of this continuous improvement process.

Organisational evidence and response:

External reviewer comments:

Internal reviewer comments:

Explanation, guidance and information for Section 3C

This form is designed to be viewed, completed and submitted electronically. All completed forms should be sent to your main contact person.

The purpose of this application form is to allow the organisation to provide details of its quality assurance processes to award credit.

Where appropriate the sections within the forms will list the essential policies and information that is required to accompany the application form. All of this information should be clearly cross-referenced within the application documentation.

Please note as the form is to be completed electronically that the information below has been designed to be in the form of a hover help. For the purposes of this paper copy, the information has been boxed so that it can be cross-referenced to the appropriate sections of the application within section 3C.

Awarding credit (further explanation, guidance and information)

Organisational aims, structure and relationships

An organisation seeking recognition must be able to demonstrate that it has the relevant expertise and a thorough knowledge and understanding of the principles of awarding credit contained in the CQFW Common Accord in particular:

- Only Credit Values assigned to units in accordance with the CQFW Common Accord should be awarded.
- Credit is to be awarded on the basis of successful achievement in the assessment of a unit's learning outcomes. However within Higher Education compensation and practices to condone are well established quality assured practices and this practice will continue, subject to individual institutional arrangements.
- Credit is not to be awarded for achievements of sub-components of a unit.
- The award of credit does not reflect any grade achieved. The candidate is awarded either all the credit available, for achieving a pass in the unit, or none of the credit for not achieving the unit.
- Credit is to be awarded after all quality assurance and other Recognised Bodies awarding processes (e.g. assessment, moderation, verification, aggregation of components, setting grade boundaries, marking review) have been completed for any one unit.
- With regard to units of qualifications that are issued at a grade, credit is to be awarded to all candidates who achieve units of qualifications at the pass/threshold grade.

The fundamental principles of Credit are contained within the CQFW Common Accord and the CQFW Handbook should be referenced in the submission. Application of the credit principles contained within the QCF and SCQF are of equal merit.

It is important that an organisation utilises staff (and outside consultants) who have a range of experiences, including qualification development, assessment, subject/sector expertise and learning delivery. In particular organisations should be using personnel already familiar with credit principles and for personnel unfamiliar with credit build that expertise through workshops, training and professional development.

In practical terms an organisation must be able to demonstrate the sustainability of knowledge, experience and expertise in awarding credit, so that they are embedded in the organisation (i.e. not 'in the head' of an individual). The detail that should be in the application would include:

- Organisational structure (e.g. a chart of the key personnel involved in the awarding of credit process).
- Person specifications and job descriptions for key members of staff involved in the awarding of credit (assessment, awarding, certification, quality assurance and contact with centres) process.
- Processes for selecting staff and consultants with appropriate expertise.
- Staff/consultant development and briefing programmes on credit principles and unit development.
- Supervision and monitoring of staff and consultants.

The clear identification of the governance and management of the awarding function as separate to that of other functions of the organisation must be documented to deliver transparency and avoid any potential conflict of interests. The organisation should ensure that multiple roles do not constitute a barrier to access or promote restrictive practices, by having in place effective measure to manage any potential for these occurrences.

Centre administration

Delivery of its units/learning programmes by centres/providers is for the organisation to arrange.

An essential part of that arrangement is a centre recognition process whereby a centre wishing to offer the organisation's recognised units is confirmed as being able to maintain the required quality and consistency of assessment for learning outcomes specifications. This section does cross-reference with Assessment and Verification of Achievement, Diversity and Equality and Self-evaluation and Continuous Improvement but an organisation needs to detail its:

- processes for approving centres
- mechanisms for communicating with centres
- mechanisms for on-going management of centres

Evidence of effective communication policy application for both internal and external contacts should be documented.

Essential information to support and referenced to the narrative would be the following:

- Flowchart detailing the process for Centre approval.
- Centre approval criteria.
- Guidelines defining a Centre's role, responsibility and accountability.

Guidance and advice documentation should be discussed and evidenced.

Assessment and verification of achievement

Throughout this section the quality assurance processes should be detailed with specification of application, monitoring and review.

A key element in the award of credit is the assessment of learner achievement. Assessment is all about the judgement of evidence showing that learning has taken place and confirming that a learning outcome or part of a learning outcome has been achieved. Therefore, Credit is awarded to a learner in recognition of the achievement of designated learning outcomes at a specified level – the learner will need to have satisfied all of the assessment criteria to receive the award.

Organisations when developing their assessment policy to guide the assessment strategies of the respective learning programmes and units they are developing should seriously consider these principles when considering fitness for purpose:

- Assessment strategy must be clearly linked to the aim of the programme and the learners.
- Assessment activities used should be appropriate to the learner, the learning and the level.

Any assessment strategy should include a variety of assessment methods appropriate to the target group and subject.

It is the responsibility of the organisation to ensure that its methods to assess evidence produce results that are reliable and consistent based on the following key points:

- Validity – evidence is directly related to learning outcomes and assessment criteria.
- Authenticity – evidence is a result of the learners own work.
- Sufficiency – sufficient evidence to enable an assessor to make a consistent and reliable judgement about achievement.
- Fit for purpose – must be appropriate and relevant to the target group of the learners and the context the learning takes place.
- Inclusive – must provide equality of opportunity and allow for all learners to achieve regardless of individual need. (It is important to link to the requirements of Diversity and Equality).

The organisation would need to describe how it ensures that its methods to assess evidence that will ensure that the key points above will be met. When considering the key points the following guidelines should be considered.

In the delivery of assessment the organisation should ensure that there are no barriers to entry to the learning programmes to which it will award credit (links with the section 'Diversity and Equality'.) In particular, organisations:

- must have in place the necessary systems and procedures to allow the provision of access arrangements, including reasonable adjustments. These should reflect the needs of individual learners and must also ensure that assessment continues to enable valid, reliable and consistent judgements to be made about achievement of all learning outcomes against the stated assessment criteria.
- must also arrange for special consideration to be given to learners that experience temporary illness, injury or indisposition at the time of an assessment. This should allow them to demonstrate the achievement they are capable for the units that are subject to special consideration.

Use of language is also an important issue for the organisation to consider and this again links in with the section 'Diversity and equality'. In particular:

- 1) Learning programmes to which organisations will award credit must provide specifications that are expressed in Welsh or English, or in Welsh and English; specifications must state explicitly in which language(s) assessment is available.
- 2) Organisations may also allow assessment in a language other than English or Welsh, provided that:
 - a) it ensures that the assessment is comparable to that offered in English or Welsh
 - b) in learning programmes designed for the workplace, lack of proficiency in English and Welsh does not prevent the candidate from properly carrying out the role that is supported by the learning programme.
- 3) Where more than one language is used, the organisation must put mechanisms in place to ensure that assessments carried out, and awards made to learners, in different languages are comparable.
- 4) In accordance with the above arrangements an organisation may also allow assessment in British Sign Language.

Explanations of the roles and responsibilities of any associated delivery centres should be clearly documented and discussed.

An essential component in ensuring quality of the award of credit is the verification of learner achievement. It is the organisation's responsibility to ensure that its verification processes are rigorous in ensuring assessment standards have been applied correctly and consistently between assessors, between Centres and over time.

At a centre level the organisation needs to ensure that the Centre's assessors carry out accurate and consistent standards of assessment. Therefore, the organisation will be seeking to ensure that:

- Centres have the appropriate internal verification/moderation and assessment systems – trained assessors and internal verifiers; sufficient resources especially competent and trained personnel to carry out assessment/internal verification; appropriate assessment/verification records are used and retained. Personnel are familiar with organisation’s assessment/verification procedures.
- Centre assessment and internal verification activity is conducted in accordance with its procedures – process for centre approval, external verification visits.
- Assessment and verification criteria and procedures are consistently applied on a national level – organisation’s deployment and monitoring of external verifier’s, standardisation and sampling activity, communication and information briefing of Centres, ensuring that the principles of the CQFW Common Accord are adhered to.
- The structure and context for the units to be awarded have been subject to a validation process. Where there is separation of the assigning and awarding bodies, the validation process is mutually co-ordinated and applied.
- There are arrangements in centres to consider the transfer of units for APL purposes.

Diversity and equality

Explain the organisation’s strategies for diversity and equality supported by relevant procedures and policies on equal opportunities, special assessment arrangements and reasonable adjustments.

Any statements and/or explanations should be shown to be compliant with all current legislation for those areas which diversity and equality covers – race, ethnicity, gender, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, age and language (especially the Welsh language).

The organisation needs to demonstrate that issues of diversity and equality are incorporated into its quality assurance mechanisms. This is important as the organisation needs to give due consideration to how it can ensure equality for all learners.

Evidence of staff training both internally and externally with regards to the above will also be important.

Learner credit history

The organisation is required to identify how accurate and up-to-date records of units/frameworks/learning programmes/individual learner achievement (as appropriate) are monitored. It needs also to explain its systems for the retrieval of all individual learner achievement records, as far as can be reasonably guaranteed, from the date of recognition by CQFW.

Within the narrative, where appropriate, make specific references to links/protocols with national databases, such as Managing Information Across Partners (MIAP) standards and Unique Learner Number information, links to funding systems, e.g. PLASC, LLWR and costing regime(s) for non-funded learning.

Discuss the management of records for partial achievement and/or full achievement to include the methodologies for electronic tracking for records of credit achievement recorded and stored over time. (This should also contribute to the discussion within ongoing quality assurance).

Rationalise and/or justify the length of time for which learner records are retained for retrieval purposes.

Production and security arrangements for certificates and/or credit transcripts

Explain the processes in place to ensure clear and consistent quality standards for processing information in line with CQFW requirements.

Include a detailed narrative of explanations in relation to the standard format(s) for certification that are available, consistency of compliance with CQFW requirements, description of how certification is checked for accuracy and how this is monitored and reviewed over time.

Organisations must develop certificates that will ensure clarity and be fit for purpose for the learner. Organisations must submit a sample certificate and/or credit transcript with their submission for recognition.

Organisations must include the following details on all unit certificates in order to meet the minimum requirements of the CQFW:

- The full name of the Recognised Body.
- The recognised unit(s) title(s).
- Candidate name.
- The unique number(s) for the unit(s).
- Unique certificate number.
- Date.
- The authorised signature.
- Certificate details to be available in English and/or English and Welsh, when delivered bilingually.
- Unit Level.
- Credit Value.

- Where details require multiple sheets for certification, the learner name and the unique certificate identifier should appear on every sheet.

Security arrangements for certificate design and issue should be defined in the submission for recognition to award credit.

The awarding body must ensure that there is a secure system for handling certificates and their issue is covered by an audit trail.

Specifically detail the security arrangement(s), responsibility, policy and process either internally and/or externally. This must include reference to reliable and secure information management systems with adequate back-up and contingency arrangements, whether in-house or via contract.

Explain how security is checked and maintained over time and detail the mechanisms for the issue of replacement certificates. Include the measures that the organisation has in place to protect against fraudulent or mistaken claims for certificates.

Management of data systems

Organisational policy/regulation(s) relating to learner credit history.

Detail how data is stored and protected and explain how the recognised awarding body will ensure data management in relation to organisations and legislation (e.g. Data Protection Act, Freedom of Information Act, and Welsh Language Act).

This should include detailed explanations for the implementation of:

- data procedures comply with statutory requirements
- reporting of data to CQFW, WAG and others as required
- data systems are reliable and secure
- data systems are provided with adequate back-up and contingency arrangements
- hardware and physical infrastructure backup
- a disaster recovery plan.

Malpractice and maladministration

One of the key requirements of recognition is to secure the award of credit.

Evidence and explain the organisation's malpractice policy in relation to learners, the learning deliverers, the assessment and verification processes and internal organisational practices. Any relevant legislation should be included and referenced to.

All investigated cases of malpractice should have an auditable trail of evidence in place and communication pathways clearly stated.

Customer service standards for administration of credit

Include a detailed narrative of how the customer service statement/policy and procedure(s) are implemented to include reference to timescales.

Include details of how the quality service, pricing structure, appeals and complaints statements or policy and procedure(s) are implemented. Also detail the procedures for developing and monitoring the overall quality of service provided.

Explanations of how these are managed and monitored with reference to staffing and departmental responsibilities.

Self-evaluation and continuous improvement

In this section the organisation must demonstrate that it has a rigorous self-evaluation model to ensure that submitted policies and procedures are operating appropriately and subject to continuous improvement strategies. Part of the model would include a Quality Improvement Plan highlighting the organisation's current priorities for continuous improvement.

Therefore, the organisation is required to describe its overarching self-evaluation model and also to provide more specific commentary on the processes to evaluate the following activities:

- The quality and consistency of assessment within and between centres.
- The effectiveness of verification processes.
- Review of services offered.
- Review of communications methodologies.
- Review of the way policies are implemented in this context.
- The effectiveness of the management of this continuous improvement process.

All sections should have quality assurance processes highlighted throughout as standard practice(s).

Annex 3B: CQFW Recognised Bodies

Awarding Organisations, HEIs and Regulated Bodies have specific responsibilities within their stated areas (pillars) but can operate across areas (pillars) within the CQFW, particularly within the area (pillar) of QALL.

Aberystwyth University www.aber.ac.uk
Bangor University www.bangor.ac.uk
Cardiff University www.cardiff.ac.uk merged with the University of Wales College of Medicine www.uwcm.ac.uk
Glyndŵr University www.glyndwr.ac.uk
Open University www.open.ac.uk
Swansea Metropolitan University www.smu.ac.uk
Swansea University www.swan.ac.uk
Trinity College Carmarthen www.trinity-cm.ac.uk
University of Glamorgan www.glam.ac.uk strategic alliance with Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama www.rwcmd.ac.uk

University of Teeside www.tees.ac.uk
University of Wales www.wales.ac.uk
University of Wales College, Newport www3.newport.ac.uk
University of Wales Institute, Cardiff www3.uwic.ac.uk
University of Wales, Lampeter www.lamp.ac.uk
1st 4 Sport www.1st4sportqualifications.com
AAT www.aat.org.uk
AMSPAR www.amspar.co.uk
ASET www.aset.ac.uk
BIIAB www.biiab.org

CACHE www.cache.org.uk
Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH) www.cieh.org
City and Guilds www.cityandguilds.com
CPCAB www.cpcab.co.uk
EDEXCEL www.edexcel.org.uk
EMTA Awards Ltd www.eal.org.uk
E-Skills UK www.e-skills.com
IAB www.iabuk.net.org.uk
ILM www.i-l-m.com
IMI www.motor.org.uk
LA www.lantra.co.uk

NCFE www.ncfe.org.uk
NOCN www.nocn.org.uk
NPTC www.nptc.org.uk
OCN Wales www.ocnwales.org.uk
OCR www.ocr.org.uk
The Open University Awarding Body www.open.ac.uk
SEMTA www.semta.org.uk
VTCT www.vtct.org.uk
WAMITAB www.wamitab.org.uk
WJEC www.wjec.co.uk

4

Higher Education in Wales credit specification and guidance

Background

The CQFW has its origin in the higher education credit framework that has been in use in Wales from the mid-1990s.

Specification and guidance for use of credit in higher education was first published in the *Welsh Higher Education Credit Framework Handbook* Higher Education Credit Initiative Wales (HECIW 1996) and was later revised for the publication of *Benchmarking Credit Ratings for Professional Qualifications* (HECIW 1999).

The Welsh funding bodies initiated a project in 2001 to develop the CQFW to cover all post-14 learning. It is built on the success of the principles of the credit framework accepted by HE in Wales and relates closely to the credit guidelines for HE qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (EWNI), *Credit and HE Qualifications* published jointly by the EWNI Credit Bodies in November 2001.

Three complementary processes underpin its establishment:

- The Higher Education Credit Initiative Wales, adopted progressively by HEIs in Wales since it was developed in the mid-1990s.
- The *Implementation Plan* (originally developed in 2003 with the new plan developed for 2009–2014) whereby all qualifications in Wales will be continually incorporated.
- The *CQFW Common Accord* (2003), established to formalise agreement on terminology, design specifications, principles and systems required to ensure that the currency of assigned and awarded credit is quality assured.

Through the establishment in 1994 of HECIW and its successor the Welsh Higher Education Credit Consortium (WHECC) in 2002, all of the aspects of the Credit Framework for Higher Education have been subject to full institutional consultation. All Welsh HEIs have formally endorsed the CQFW and continue to work collaboratively on its implementation through the WHECC group.

The higher education qualifications in the CQFW reflect those defined by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) in the publication *The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ EWNI) (QAA 2008) and encompass the expectations of the Bologna agreement.

Benefits of a Credit Framework

Since 2003 all accredited learning, including mainstream qualifications, has been gradually brought into this single unifying meta-framework. It merges the concepts of volume of learning achievements (credit) and the demands made of that learning on the learner (level) to create a system that is able to include all types and styles of learning and all qualifications.

The context of learning will continue to increase in complexity in its content, form and location. The trend towards lifelong learning with closer links to the workplace, the need to recognise work-related and informal non-certificated learning and the demands of technology-enhanced-learning place new demands on institutions. Increasingly institutions need a 'common language' to describe all the learning for which they are responsible. With the use of the Bologna Self-Certification process and the alignment of the Framework of Qualifications in the European Higher Education Area (FQ EHEA) the transportability which credit offers is ever more important.

At the request of the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS), the Welsh Assembly Government and the Department for Employment and Learning in Northern Ireland, QAA completed the self-certification of the second edition of the FHEQ against the FQ EHEA in February 2009, which is an important part of the Bologna Process.

The Steering Group on Measuring and Recording Student Achievement, chaired by Professor Robert Burgess, Vice Chancellor of the University of Leicester, produced recommendations in October 2007 for the UK HE sector on degree classification in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. The Group recommended the development of a Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR), which will incorporate and build upon the Diploma Supplement. The HEAR is commended as providing students with a complete and comprehensive record of all their educational achievements. It gives employers more detailed information on the skills, progress and attainment of prospective employees. It provides the opportunity to record workplace learning and higher-level skills developed as part of higher education programmes, and thereby support the skills agenda and flexible and lifelong learning.

By combining the higher education transcript with the European Diploma Supplement, the HEAR will also encourage compatibility with the Bologna Process and lead to wider understanding and recognition of UK qualifications within Europe and beyond by making it easier to compare qualifications gained in higher education systems across Europe, facilitating mutual recognition of qualifications and lead to greater transparency and mobility.

The Bologna Process is an intergovernmental initiative, which aims to create a European Higher Education Area (EHEA) by 2010 and to promote the European system of higher education worldwide. The broad objectives of the Bologna Process became to:

- remove the obstacles to student mobility across Europe
- enhance the attractiveness of European higher education worldwide
- establish a common structure of higher education systems across Europe, and for this common structure to be based on cycles.

The CQFW places learners at its centre, enabling them to gain credit for their learning whatever the level, the time taken, the volume of learning, or the location. By studying in smaller units and avoiding unnecessary repetition, learning is planned more effectively and the learner's motivation can be maintained. A credit framework also provides the mechanism by which individuals can have their relevant prior learning recognised by an institution for transfer between programmes within an institution, and transfer between institutions.

To achieve its potential, preserve institutional autonomy and ensure articulation with credit and qualifications frameworks in use in other countries of the United Kingdom and developments in Europe, the framework specification and the guidance are deliberately confined to the minimum required to ensure that consistency and coherence is maintained. HEIs are able, at their

discretion, to utilise the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS), which has developed into a credit accumulation system to be implemented at institutional, regional, national and European level. Both the CQFW and the Bologna Process have made attempts to establish broad equivalencies with the objective of establishing a system of credits useable across the European Higher Education Area.

Visit www.cqfw.net for diagrammatic interpretation of progression, examples of learning and the structure of the CQFW.

Definitions

Credit

Credit is an award made to a learner in recognition of the achievement of designated learning outcomes at a specified credit level.

The amount of credit attributed is based upon an estimation of the learning time it would take the average learner to achieve the learning outcomes specified.

Credit provides a currency which can relate academic and vocational learning, both in terms of the level of learning outcomes achieved and the volume of the learning undertaken (learning time). It is important that the components of this definition of credit are also defined as precisely as is possible.

Award of credit

Credit is awarded by HEIs for the achievement of learning outcomes that have been verified through reliable and valid assessment in line with current rules and regulations. Credit awarded is independent of grading.

Institutions are responsible for securing the quality and standards of their awards in line with the QAA academic infrastructure and this includes the assurance of credit.

Credit is awarded to individuals when they can demonstrate that the learning outcomes have been achieved according to the

assessment criteria at the requisite level.

Additional credit cannot be awarded for exceptional achievement; outcomes are achieved or not achieved. If there is a requirement to recognise grades of achievement, a separate grading system must be adopted.

Decisions about grading systems, schemes and criteria are a matter for individual institutions, which have autonomy to award credit. The CQFW does not encompass a grading scheme.

General and specific credit

General credit refers to the credit attributed to a group or cluster of learning outcomes; specific credit refers to that amount of general credit which can be accepted as contributing to a particular programme.

In the case of student transfer it is, therefore, the responsibility of the receiving institution to establish that portion of the general credit presented by any individual which it will consider relevant to be counted as specific credit within the context of the programme of study for which that individual wishes to register. Some credit, for the purpose of the receiving institution, may be time limited. It may be necessary to scrutinise the learning outcomes against which this credit was awarded in order to facilitate such decisions.

For the purpose of credit accumulation and transfer, it is important to recognise that, whilst all learning may be accredited, not all credit can or will be accumulated towards any specified overall programme of award.

Learning outcomes

Learning outcomes are statements of what a learner can be expected to know, understand and/or do as a result of a learning experience.

For every learning outcome, assessment criteria must be specified either as an integral part of the outcome statement or separately.

Learning outcomes should specify the minimum achievement required at the point of assessment. Credit should only be awarded if these outcomes are achieved.

Learning outcomes provide a clear statement of achievement.

The inclusion of learning outcomes in module specifications promotes the development of coherent learning programmes and, by making the learning involved more evident, greatly assists student guidance. Credit accumulation and transfer (CAT) is facilitated when clear learning outcomes are available to indicate, with precision, the achievements for which any award of credit is awarded.

Assessment criteria

Assessment criteria are descriptions of what the learner is expected to achieve in order to demonstrate that a learning outcome has been met.

Assessment criteria should not be confused with methods of assessment.

Assessment criteria have a direct relationship with learning outcomes. The purpose of assessment criteria is to establish clear and unambiguous standards of achievement in respect of each learning outcome.

Learning Time

Learning Time is a measure of the learning substance of a module/unit or a whole qualification. It is related to the amount of time a typical learner might be expected to notionally take to complete all of the learning relevant to achievement of the learning outcomes when progressing from one level to another.

Taught or contact time will, of course, vary according to the mode of delivery, but learning time will not. All learning relevant to the learning outcomes should be considered when Learning Time is being assessed.

Consideration should also be given to the level at which the

learning is being offered and any assumed prior skill or knowledge required of the learner. Whatever learning activities are appropriate should be included in the equation, e.g. formal learning, essential practical and visits, project work, private study, assessment, work based learning, educational support, etc.

Notional learning time is not equivalent to the actual time that any particular learner needs to spend in order to acquire the learning outcomes. The real time will vary according to the individual's capability, degree of prior experiential or other learning, any associated learning required within the workplace, etc.

It is important that there is some concept of the volume of learning related to the achievement of specified outcomes. The amount of credit allocated to any particular achievement must also be independent of the mode of the learning. Time provides the customary measure; however, there is great variation in the real time taken by the individual learner. Current practice in all HEIs is that 10 hours = 1 credit.

Within this concept of Learning Time, the award of credit is possible via a process of accreditation of prior learning (APL) or experiential learning (APEL). Such processes take account of learning outcomes assessed and deemed to have been achieved through prior learning. Thus, although assessment may appear to be based on achievements of learning outcomes alone, time has been invested in a learning process prior to the assessment.

Credit level

The credit level is an indicator of the relative demand, complexity, depth of learning and learner autonomy derived from agreed generic level descriptors.

There is a single hierarchy of levels embracing all post-compulsory learning.

Within HEIs there are three levels corresponding broadly with the current system of conventional undergraduate study: Levels 4, 5 and 6 (the 1st Bologna cycle) and two postgraduate levels: Level 7 (the 2nd Bologna cycle) and Level 8 (the 3rd Bologna cycle).

Levels are not intrinsically related to years of full-time study, the previous learning achieved and/or experience of the learner. Credit level relates to modules and units of learning rather than whole awards and modules relate to a single credit level.

As defined above, levels are indicative and are thus different from the specific learning outcomes and associated assessment criteria, which specify the threshold standards required for the award of credit for any specific module or unit.

Originally credit systems operating within institutions of higher education were derived from the level of any learning by its relationship to years of study for an Honours degree. The development of level descriptors, which define levels of learning

by reference to the development of knowledge and skills, ensure that any module can be located at the correct level by relating its learning outcomes to the level descriptors (Annexes 4A and 4B)

Within the meta-framework there are nine levels including four pre-HE levels, three undergraduate levels and two postgraduate levels. The single hierarchy of levels gives formal recognition to the levels of pre-HE learning. This facilitates the incorporation, where appropriate, of some modules at these levels into programmes of study offered by HE institutions (see Annexes 4A and 4B).

Level descriptors now developed should enable all learning, irrespective of mode, to be incorporated within this system of levels.

It is not appropriate to continue to use separately identified levels for learning which is work-based, experiential or undertaken during a sandwich year.

Subject to limits specification (Annex 4C) postgraduate qualifications consist of modules normally at levels 7 and 8.

Establishing level

The level of modules/units is determined by the degree of correspondence between the stated learning outcomes and the level descriptors in Annex 4B.

HEIs may wish to establish a minimum requirement for credit achievement at the qualification level, whilst allowing flexibility for inclusion of a limited number of credits to be gained through study of relevant modules at levels higher or lower than that of the overall qualification (Annex 4C).

In accepting the specification of a module and a unit it is implicit that each module, to which credit has been ascribed, must have a designated level.

Organisation of learning

If provision of accessible and flexible learning opportunities is the goal, then it is essential that credit can be applied both to whole programmes of learning leading to qualifications and to any smaller 'building blocks' of learning which may be discrete parts of larger programmes.

There are already a number of terms used, often interchangeably, to describe blocks of learning. The following proposals and guidance attempts to rationalise this terminology in order to ensure consistent use both within and across sectors and award hierarchies.

Module and unit

In the CQFW a module is a discrete and coherent block of learning. It may form a part of a programme of learning towards an overall qualification or stand alone. The module title should be descriptive of the content. The learning outcomes, indicative content and delivery and the assessment methodology must be defined such that the appropriate credit and level can be ascribed. A unit is the smallest part of learning that can be separately certificated. It is an explicit and coherent set of learning outcomes and assessment criteria and may be of any size.

Each module should be separately assessed as a discrete block of learning. Such assessment should seek to provide suitable evidence of achievements for the award of credit assigned to that module.

Some institutions use the term unit synonymously with module, or describe groups of units as a module. Some externally validated qualifications offered by HEIs (for example National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) and some other vocational and professional awards) are made up of 'units' and are seen as distinct from modules.

The CQFW distinguishes unit from module. Units are independent of the mode of delivery and do not therefore prescribe delivery or assessment methodologies. One or more

may be grouped, with additional information on delivery and assessment methodologies, to form a module.

Programme

Modules may be grouped into coherent programmes of study, often leading to the award of a recognised qualification. Programmes may be standard or specific to a particular learner or group of learners.

Modularised provision enables learners to tailor their programme of study to meet perceived needs. It is important, however, to ensure that such provision is coherent and leads towards a relevant outcome. Learner guidance and support will, therefore, be an essential adjunct to the modularised curriculum.

Credit and qualification

Credit is an award in its own right and can be accumulated towards qualifications under specified criteria.

The criteria for credit accumulation towards any qualification will be specified by the appropriate awarding body.

Whilst a programme of learning, which is credit bearing, may lead to a qualification, the credit itself is not a qualification, but simply recognition of achievement.

All modules/units must be assigned to a single level but may

contribute towards programmes leading to awards or qualifications at a different level. Any changes in learning outcomes and assessment criteria will result in the creation of a different module/unit, which will be assigned another level. A module/unit may be utilised in various programmes of study. Its level as defined in relation to the level descriptors will always be the same, regardless of its position for any particular programme.

N.B. Documented systems to condone and/or compensate may be considered within the definition of assessment, thereby enabling the award of a declared maximum of credit through such mechanisms as determined by institutional regulations.

Credit rating of external awards

Individual universities should work together to establish equivalent levels and credits for similar professional or other external awards.

Qualification level

The level of any qualification is established by matching its overall learning outcomes to the Qualification Descriptors in the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (FHEQ EWNI) QAA 2008.

Qualification level should be seen as a series of levels, informed by the academic credit levels contained within the qualification.

In a modular programme the modules that make up the qualification are likely to have credit level that is equal to, lower, or higher than that of the qualification itself, in accordance with any criteria established by the regulations of the HEI or relevant awarding body. (Annex 4C).

Accumulation of credit towards specified awards

The following defines the minimum number of credits, required to be pursued, for the award of the main qualifications:

Undergraduate	
Certificate	120 credits
Diploma	240 credits
Honours Degree	360 credits
Postgraduate	
Certificate	60 credits
Diploma	120 credits
Masters	180 credits

The requirements, in terms of amounts of credit to be achieved at each level, must be specified.

Specifications of the credit requirement at each level may be best expressed in terms of minimum or maximum allowed. It is possible that a small number of credits at levels prior to HE may be included.

An agreed credit specification will assist in clarifying relationships between the various awards. Credit acts as a currency, which can be used to assess relative values, but credit can also be accumulated towards overall awards according to criteria specified by the awarding body.

There are a growing number of awards at HE levels. If an Awarding Organisation adopts the credit framework specifications, it will be up to that Organisation to define, in terms of credit and level, what learners will be required to achieve in order to attain their particular award.

The QAA published the guidelines for Credit in HEIs in England in 2008. (HE Credit Framework 2008). It can be found at **www.qaa.ac.uk**.

Annex 4A:

Summary generic level descriptors in accordance with those developed by NICATS

The level descriptors should be seen as a developmental continuum in which preceding levels are necessarily subsumed within those that follow.

Learning accredited at the following levels will reflect the ability to:

Entry Level: employ, recall and demonstrate elementary comprehension in a narrow range of areas, exercise basic skills within highly structured contexts and carry out directed activity under close supervision.

Level 1: employ a narrow range of applied knowledge, skills and basic comprehension within a limited range of predictable and structured contexts, including working with others under direct supervision, but with a very limited degree of discretion and judgement about possible action.

Level 2: apply knowledge with underpinning comprehension in a number of areas and employ a range of skills within a number of contexts, some of which may be non-routine and undertake directed activities, with a degree of autonomy, within time constraints.

Level 3: apply knowledge and skills in a range of complex activities demonstrating comprehension of relevant theories; access and analyse information independently and make reasoned judgements, selecting from a considerable choice of procedures in familiar and unfamiliar contexts and direct own

activities, with some responsibility for the output of others.

Level 4: develop a rigorous approach to the acquisition of a broad knowledge base; employ a range of specialised skills; evaluate information, using it to plan and develop investigative strategies and to determine solutions to a variety of unpredictable problems; operate in a range of varied and specific contexts, taking responsibility for the nature and quality of outputs.

Level 5: generate ideas through the analysis of concepts at an abstract level, with a command of specialised skills and the formulation of responses to well defined and abstract problems; analyse and evaluate information; exercise significant judgement across a broad range of functions; and accept responsibility for determining and achieving personal and/or group outcomes.

Level 6: critically review, consolidate and extend a systematic and coherent body of knowledge, utilising specialised skills across an area of study; critically evaluate new concepts and evidence from a range of sources; transfer and apply diagnostic and creative skills and exercise significant judgement in a range of situations; accept accountability for determining and achieving group and/or personal outcomes.

Level 7: display mastery of a complex and specialised area of knowledge and skills, employing advanced skills to conduct research, or advanced technical and professional activity;

accepting accountability for all related decision making including use of supervision.

Level 8: make a significant and original contribution to a specialised field of inquiry demonstrating a command of methodological issues and engaging in critical dialogue with peers; accepting full accountability for outcomes.

Annex 4B: Generic level descriptors

	Intellectual skills and attributes	Processes	Accountability
Entry	Employ recall and demonstrate elementary comprehension in a narrow range of areas with dependency on ideas of others. Exercise basic skills. Receive and pass on information.	Operate mainly in closely defined and highly structured contexts. Carry out processes that are repetitive and predictable. Undertake the performance of clearly defined roles. Assume a limited range of roles.	Carry out directed activity under close supervision. Rely entirely on external monitoring of output and quality.
1	Employ a narrow range of applied knowledge and basic comprehension. Demonstrate a narrow range of skills. Apply known solutions to familiar problems. Present and record information from readily available sources.	Show basic competence in a limited range of predictable and structured contexts. Utilise a clear choice of routine responses. Co-operate with others.	Exercise a very limited degree of discretion and judgement about possible actions. Carry restricted responsibility for quantity and quality of output. Operate under direct supervision and quality control.
2	Apply knowledge with underpinning comprehension in a number of areas. Make comparisons. Interpret available information. Demonstrate a range of skills.	Choose from a range of procedures performed in a number of contexts, some of which will be non-routine. Co-ordinate with others.	Undertake directed activity with a degree of autonomy. Achieve outcomes within time constraints. Accept increased responsibility for quantity and quality of output subject to external quality checking.

	Intellectual skills and attributes	Processes	Accountability
3	Apply knowledge and skills in a range of complex activities, demonstrating comprehension of relevant theories. Access and evaluate information independently. Analyse information and make reasoned judgements. Employ a range of responses to well defined but often unfamiliar or unpredictable problems.	Operate in a variety of familiar and unfamiliar contexts using a range of technical or learning skills. Select from a considerable choice of procedures. Give presentations to an audience.	Engage in self-directed activity with guidance/evaluation. Accept responsibility for quantity and quality of output. Accept limited responsibility for the quantity and quality of the output of others.
4	Develop a rigorous approach to the acquisition of a broad knowledge base. Employ a range of specialised skills. Determine solutions to a variety of unpredictable problems. Generate a range of responses, a limited number of which are innovative, to well defined but often unfamiliar problems. Evaluate information, using it to plan and develop investigative strategies.	Operate in a range of varied and specific contexts involving creative and non-routine activities. Exercise appropriate judgement in planning, selecting or presenting information, methods or resources.	Undertake self-directed and a limited amount of directive activity. Operate within broad general guidelines or functions. Take responsibility for the nature and quantity of outputs. Meet specified quality standards.

	Intellectual skills and attributes	Processes	Accountability
5	Generate ideas through the analysis of information and concepts at an abstract level. Command wide ranging, specialised technical, creative and/or conceptual skills. Formulate appropriate responses to resolve well-defined and abstract problems. Analyse, reformat and evaluate a wide range of information.	Utilise diagnostic and creative skills in a range of technical, professional or management functions. Exercise appropriate judgement in planning, design, technical and/or supervisory functions related to products, services, operations or processes.	Accept responsibility and accountability within broad parameters for determining and achieving personal and/or group outcomes.
6	Critically review, consolidate and extend a systematic and coherent body of knowledge. Utilise highly specialised technical or scholastic skills across an area of study. Utilise research skills. Critically evaluate new information, concepts and evidence from a range of sources.	Transfer and apply diagnostic and creative skills in a range of situations. Exercise appropriate judgement in a number of complex planning, design, technical and/or management functions related to products, services operations or processes, including resourcing.	Accept accountability for determining and achieving personal and/or group outcomes.
7	Display mastery of a complex and specialised area of knowledge and skills. Demonstrate expertise in highly specialised and advanced technical, professional and/or research skills.	Conduct research, or advanced technical or professional activity. Design and apply appropriate research methodologies. Communicate results of research to peers.	Accept accountability in related decision-making including use of supervision.

	Intellectual skills and attributes	Processes	Accountability
8	Make a significant and original contribution to a specialised field of inquiry.	Demonstrate command of methodological issues. Communicate results of research to peers and engage in critical dialogue.	Accept accountability in related decision-making including use of supervision.

Annex 4C: Guidelines – FHEQ 2008

The guidelines, which follow, are designed to complement the FHEQ England, Wales and Northern Ireland published by the QAA, August 2008.

The general approach in devising these guidelines

The EWN credit bodies have recommended, within the FHEQ, a minimum number of criteria necessary to secure the standard of each award. The over specification of qualifications could place restrictions on programme designers and students. There are four general criteria:

1. The recommended minimum overall credits for a qualification.
2. The range of levels encompassed by the qualification.
3. The recommended number of credits at the highest credit level.
4. The recommended maximum number of credits at the lowest level.

The fourth criterion helps to ensure that the standard is not compromised by the inclusion of excessive numbers of credits at the lowest level.

The Credit Value of the programme to be studied

In the table below, we offer guidance on the minimum Credit Value of each HE qualification. Institutions are not obliged to adhere to these minimum Credit Values for the programmes that students undertake. They may choose to validate programmes of

study that exceed the minimum Credit Values in terms of the number of credits needed or in terms of the levels at which the credit is attained.

Examples of postgraduate and graduate qualifications

The table sets out the recommended minimum Credit Values of postgraduate and graduate qualifications. In each case there is an allowance of a small number of credits at a level lower than that normally associated with the award. This is intended to facilitate the inclusion of relevant ancillary studies within the validated programme. It is recommended that programmes leading to the Integrated Master's Degree reflect planned progression and credit attainment through the levels spanned by the qualification.

Undergraduate and associated qualifications

The table sets out the recommended minimum Credit Values for undergraduate and associated qualifications. In each case there is a small allowance of 30 credits at Level 3, which is intended to allow the inclusion of relevant ancillary studies within the validated programmes leading to the qualification.

It is recommended that programmes leading to the Bachelor's Degree with Honours and the Bachelor's Degree reflect planned progression and credit attainment through the levels spanned by the qualification.

Qualification	HEQF Qualification Level	Min overall credits – Wales	The range of levels No of credits at highest level	Max credits at lowest level	Corresponding FQ-EHEA cycle
Postgraduate PhD/DPhil – not typically credit based					
Professional Doctorate	8	540 credits	Levels (6), 7, 8 Min 360 credits at Level 8	Max 30 credits at Level 6	Third cycle (end of cycle) qualifications
Masters Degree	7	180 credits	Levels (6), 7 Min 150 credits at Level 7	Max 30 credits at Level 6	Second cycle (end of cycle) qualifications
Masters in Research	7	180 credits	Levels (6), 7 Min 150 credits at Level 7	Max 30 credits at Level 6	
Integrated Masters Degree	7	480 credits	Levels (3), 4, 5, 6, 7 Min 120 credits at Level 7	Max 30 credits at Level 3	
Postgraduate Diploma	7	120 credits	Levels (6), 7 Min 90 credits at Level 7	Max 30 credits at Level 6	
Postgraduate Certificate in Education – QTS	7	120 credits	Levels (6), 7 Min 40 credits at Level 7	Max 80 credits at Level 6	
Post-Graduate Certificate	7	60 credits	Levels (6), 7 Min 40 credits at Level 7	Max 20 credits at Level 6	
Bachelor's Degree with Honours	6	360 credits	Levels (3), 4, 5, 6 Min 90 credits at Level 6	Max 30 credits at Level 3	

Qualification	HEQF Qualification Level	Min overall credits – Wales	The range of levels No of credits at highest level	Max credits at lowest level	Corresponding FQ-EHEA cycle
Bachelor's Degree	6	300 credits	Levels (3), 4, 5, 6 Min 60 credits at Level 6	Max 30 credits at Level 3	
Professional Graduate Certificate in Education – QTS	6	120 credits	Levels (3, 4, 5), 6 Min 90 credits at Level 6	Max 30 credits at Level 3	
Graduate Diploma	6	120 credits	Levels (3, 4, 5), 6 Min 90 credits at Level 6	Max 30 credits at Level 3	
Graduate Certificate	6	60 credits	Levels (3, 4, 5), 6 Min 40 credits at Level 6	Max 20 credits at Level 3	
Foundation Degree	5	240 credits	Levels (3), 4, 5 Min 90 credits at Level 5	Max 30 credits at Level 3	Short cycle (within or linked to the first cycle) qualifications
Diploma HE	5	240 credits	Levels (3), 4, 5 Min 90 credits at Level 5	Max 30 credits at Level 3	
HND	5	240 credits	Levels (3), 4, 5 Min 90 credits at Level 5	Max 30 credits at Level 3	
HNC	4	150 credits	Levels (3), 4, 5 Min 30 credits at Level 5	Max 30 credits at Level 3	
Certificate HE	4	120 credits	Levels (3), 4 Min 90 credits at Level 4	Max 30 credits at Level 3	

Acknowledgements

The Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW), acknowledges the contribution of the Welsh Higher Education Credit Consortium, which reports to Higher Education Wales, in the development of the CQFW Higher Education in Wales Credit Specification and Guidance.

HEFCW also expresses its appreciation to the body formally known as Northern Ireland Credit Accumulation and Transfer System, for the use of the level descriptors of which the top level descriptors are now known as the UK Credit Accumulation and Transfer System. HEFCW also expresses thanks to the England, Wales and Northern Ireland Credit Bodies for some of the credit definitions and for *A Guide to the Credit Values of HE Qualifications* from Credit and HE Qualifications (EWNl Credit Bodies 2001).

This document takes account of the second edition of the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications England, Wales and Northern Ireland (QAA August 2008) and the completion of the Bologna Self-Certification process statement through alignment with the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area.

5

Glossary of terms and definitions

Accreditation: the process through which the recognised bodies confirm that the qualification, module, award and unit and their associated specification conform to the CCAF criteria.
Assessment criteria: a description of what the learner is expected to achieve, in order to demonstrate that a learning outcome has been met.
Assessment of learning outcomes: the process of appraising knowledge, skills and/or competences of an individual against predefined criteria specifying learning methods and expectations. Assessment is typically followed by validation and certification.
Award: confirms that a person has achieved credit for a unit(s), module(s) or qualification(s).
Awarding Organisations: these are organisations which are recognised within the QCF, formally known as Awarding Bodies but now encompass a wider range.
Certificate: an official document, issued by an awarding body, which records the achievements of an individual following a standard assessment procedure.
Credit: an award made to a learner in recognition of the achievement of designated learning outcomes at a specified credit level. Credit is only awarded following quality assured assessment of achievement. No additional credit can be awarded for achievement over the threshold level (established by the learning outcomes and assessment criteria) although such achievement can be recognised through the award of marks or grades. No credit should be awarded for units where the learning outcomes have not been achieved.
Credit Accumulation and Transfer System (CATS): a system based on a set of agreed specifications and procedures, which facilitates learners to accumulate and transfer the credit they have gained within and beyond the providing institution, awarding organisation or recognised body.
Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales (CQFW): an established framework for all learning in Wales including schools and Higher Education.
Credit level: an indicator of the relative demand, complexity, and depth of learning and of learner autonomy derived from agreed generic credit level descriptors.
Credit transcript: a summary of individual learner achievements expressed in terms of credit award and level.

Credit Value: the value of a unit, based on the Learning Time attached to the learning outcomes and credit level. One credit is assigned to learning outcomes achievable in 10 hours of Learning Time. Within the Credit and Qualification Framework for Wales, the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework, the Qualifications and Credit Framework and across Higher Education in the UK, one credit is assigned per 10 hours of Learning Time.

Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA): the regulator for external qualifications in Northern Ireland.

Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (DCELLS): the Welsh Assembly Government regulator for external qualifications in Wales.

European Qualifications Framework (EQF): this eight level reference framework used to provide a benchmark for comparison of qualifications across Europe, rather than directly as a framework.

Learner Achievement Record (LAR): a web-based individual transcript that holds a record of the credit a learner is awarded when they complete QCF units and qualifications.

Learning outcomes: statements of what a learner can be expected to know, understand and/or do as a result of a learning experience.

Learning Time: a measure of the learning substance of a unit or whole qualification. It is related to the amount of time a typical learner might be expected to take to complete all of the learning relevant to achievement of the learning outcomes.

Taught or contact time will vary according to the mode of delivery, but learning time will not. All learning relevant to the learning outcomes should be considered when Learning Time is being estimated. Consideration should also be given to the level at which the learning is being offered when reaching this judgement.

Learning Time should include all of the learning activities which it is expected that the learner will undertake in order to achieve the learning outcomes including, for example, as appropriate:

- formal learning (including classes, training sessions coaching, seminars and tutorials)
- practical work in laboratories or other locations
- relevant ICT activities
- information retrieval in libraries/learning resource centres

- expected private study and revision
- work-based activities which lead to assessment
- practice, gaining, applying and refining skills to achieve threshold level of competence
- all forms of assessment
- programme planning
- educational counselling and mentoring.

Learning Time excludes learner-initiated private study over and above that expected within the defined terms. Any prior skill or knowledge required of the learner should not be included in an estimate of Learning Time.

Level: an indicator of the relative demand, complexity, depth of learning and of learner autonomy derived from agreed generic credit level descriptors.

Level descriptors: designed to allow broad comparisons to be made between the outcomes of learning.

Managing Information Across Partners (MIAP): the Learner Registration Service (LRS) will be capable of issuing a Unique Learner Number (ULN) to every person aged 14 and over in education and training, allowing them to build a lifelong record of their participation and achievements.

Module: a discrete and coherent block of learning. It may form a part of a programme of learning towards an overall qualification or stand-alone. The learning outcomes, indicative content and delivery and assessment methodology must be defined such that the appropriate credit and level can be ascribed.

National Qualifications Framework (NQF): an instrument for the development and classification of qualifications (e.g. at national or sectoral level) according to a set of criteria (e.g. using descriptors) applicable to specified levels of learning outcomes. There are no agreed criteria for the titling or size of qualifications.

QCF Award: within the QCF a term used to describe the size of a qualification. An Award is a qualification of 1 to 12 credits. One credit has a value of 10 hours of Learning Time.

QCF Certificate: within the QCF a term used to describe the size of a qualification. A Certificate is a qualification of between 13–36 credits. One credit has a value of 10 hours of Learning Time.

QCF Diploma: within the QCF the term used to describe the size of a qualification. A Diploma is a qualification of 37+ credits. One credit has a value of 10 hours of Learning Time.

Ofqual: the new regulator of qualifications, examinations and tests in England.

Qualification: a certificate of achievement or competence specifying awarding body, qualification-type and title. It would normally be that which makes a learner eligible for consideration for entry, advancement or progression in an academic, vocational or professional context.

Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF): framework for recognising and accrediting qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland that will replace the NQF. The QCF will form part of the CQFW.

Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA): responsibility to develop and modernise the curriculum, assessments, examinations and qualifications in England. Legislation will change the name of the QCA to the Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency (QCDA). The QCDA will be the national agency that creates, develops and delivers the Government's programmes for the management and reform of qualifications, curriculum and assessment.

Quality Assured Lifelong Learning: all learning activity undertaken throughout life, which results in improving knowledge, know-how, skills competences and/or qualifications for personal, social and/or professional reasons and is measurable and recordable using learning outcomes.

Recognised Bodies: in the CQFW this refers to Higher Education Institutions, QCA/ DCELLS/CCEA/SQA recognised Awarding Organisations, OCN, Sector Skills Councils or their equivalent. Other organisations recognised to assign and/or award credit within CQFW.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL): the term used to include Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL), Accreditation of Prior Experience and Learning or Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL), and Validation of Acquired/Actual Experience (VAE).

Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF): a descriptive framework supporting lifelong learning.

Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA): the regulator for qualifications in Scotland.

Sector Skills Councils (SSC): these are state-sponsored, employer-led organisations that cover specific economic sectors in the United Kingdom. There are currently 25 SSCs, covering about 85 per cent of the British workforce. SSCs are licensed by the Secretary of State for Innovation, Universities and Skills, in consultation with Ministers in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Unique Learner Number (ULN): allocated to every person undertaking education and training. The 10-digit number will remain with a learner for life and will not be recycled.

Unit: an explicit and coherent set of learning outcomes and assessment criteria given a level and a Credit Value. The smallest part of a qualification that can be separately certificated. The minimum size of the unit is 1 credit.

These terms have been agreed through the Credit Common Accord and have been taken from the QCF, the SCQF and the CEDEFOP multilingual glossary.

These terms will be subject to review of the regulatory authorities' codes and criteria.