

Changes to the web-based accreditation system for accrediting pilot qualifications

As a result of a consultation with awarding bodies in 2007/8, the regulators of external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland have made some changes to the questions within the web-based accreditation (WBA) system. The changes relate to the questions about pilot qualifications within the National Qualifications Framework, and they are effective from 12 March 2008. Details of the changes, along with advice and guidance for awarding bodies submitting proposals for pilot qualifications via the WBA, are available from the QCA website.

One of the changes introduced is a pilot evaluation protocol, which is also available from the QCA website. The protocol will also be available from the Ofqual website in due course. The protocol is a guidance document intended to help awarding bodies plan the evaluation of their proposed qualification pilot.

Details of the changes were outlined in the consultation document circulated in November 2007. The consultation was completed in January 2008 and no objections were raised to the proposed changes. Most of the changes were additional explanatory text for questions within the system.

The changes have been implemented to clarify the process of accrediting pilot qualifications and to promote best practice in the implementation and evaluation of these pilots by awarding bodies.

Accredited pilot qualifications offer awarding bodies the chance to deliver innovative qualifications, which may challenge existing accreditation criteria and models, to a restricted number of learners and/or centres, and evaluate the qualification prior to wider implementation.

At present, these arrangements for piloting only apply to the NQF. However, the arrangements have been designed to apply to the future piloting of qualifications within the Qualifications and Credit Framework after July 2008.