

# The Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF)

## Quick guide - helping you understand how QCF qualification structure will work

The QCF is the new framework for recognising achievement through accumulation of credits in England, Northern Ireland and Wales (as part of the CQFW in Wales). Regulators are looking at cross framework articulation with the *Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework* (SCQF).

**Credit value** (size) and **level** (complexity) are assigned to every unit. **Rules of combination** then indicate the credits that must be achieved, through particular units, in order for a qualification to be awarded. These 'rules' can only be specified by Awarding Organisations in consultation with SSCs or other relevant organisations.

### Flexibility

The QCF replaces the *National Qualification Framework* (NQF). It allows for smaller, more flexible routes to qualifications and progression across, or within, a given subject area.

Qualifications are now beginning to migrate from the NQF to the

For more detailed information, please visit

[www.cityandguilds.com/qcf](http://www.cityandguilds.com/qcf)

QCF as we enter controlled implementation, with a 'mixed economy' until mid 2010.

### Greater transparency

The QCF aims to create greater transparency and understanding of vocational qualifications by introducing a clear and consistent titling system.

The QCF removes 'types' and introduces

standardised titles which clearly indicate the level (1), the size (2), and content (3) of a qualification:

(1) **Levels** range from **entry to 8**. To gauge some equivalency of challenge: GCSEs (grade A\*-C) are level 2; A levels are level 3; and a PHD is level 8.

(2) The **size** (volume of learning) of a qualification is expressed using the terms: **Award** (1-12 credits); **Certificate** (13-36 credits) or **Diploma** (37 credits)

(3) Core **content** is indicated using agreed terms/phrases across awarding bodies (ABs).

Regulators are looking at how qualification purpose can also be integrated into titles.

### Some current examples:

- Level 3 Award in Retail Skills
- Level 2 Certificate in Retail Skills
- Level 2 Diploma in Business Skills

**Fig 1.** This chart shows how 'Award', 'Certificate' and 'Diploma' can be available at each level

