

## The Qualifications and Credit Framework

The **QCF** is up and running now and will completely replace the current framework (NQF) from January 2011. Between now and then there will be a 'mixed economy' of both old and new.

**SDL Training Ltd. has been working with both systems and has been pro-active in leading this change over to the new QCF qualifications & completely supporting this – our team are:**

- \* fully aware & highly supportive of the changes**
- \* trained in the new system**
- \* skilled and qualified to provide Advice & Guidance and (CEG) Careers Education Guidance to learners of ALL ages**
- \* discuss & recognise/accredit prior learning of qualifications/units**

**...all part of our individualised service to learners and employers!**

## Qualification Level

The QCF is made up of a number of levels that represent the depth of learning and complexity.

Entry Level is made up of 3 levels which provide progression in the QCF

There are another 8 levels from Level 1 to level 8 (*see table*).

To understand the level of complexity for qualifications and units on the QCF it is useful to know some comparisons and these have been indicated e.g GCSEs (A\*-C) are Level 2 and GCE A Levels are Level 3 while a PhD is Level 8.

## Qualification Sizes

There are three (3) sizes of qualifications in the QCF and each 'credit' is equal to approximately 10 hours of learning:

### **\*Award:**

1 to 12 credits - 10 to 120 hours of learning;

### **\*Certificate:**

13 to 36 credits - 130 to 360 hours of learning;

### **\*Diploma:**

37 credits or more - 370 or more hours of learning;

## **Qualification titles**

Each qualification title contains the following:

- \*the level** of the qualification - (from Entry level to level 8);
- \*the size** of the qualification - (Award/Certificate/Diploma);
- \*details indicating the content** of the qualification;

## How does it work in practice?

Each unit has a credit value which represents how much time it takes a learner, on average, to complete that particular part of learning.

**1 credit = 10 hours of Learning\*.**

*\*‘**Learning**’ – this time includes all the time needed to achieve the unit including directed home study, homework, assessments, practical work and work experience.*

All qualifications in the QCF are made up of ‘rules of combination’. These rules show the credit and mandatory + optional units to be completed by the learner so they can achieve their qualification. Qualifications on the QCF can be made up of units from different levels. If units are from different levels, the level of the qualification will be determined by the majority of units.

Learners will be able to bank the credits they have achieved within a ‘**Learner Record**’, and when it is allowed by the rules of combination they will be able to transfer the credit and use it towards other rules of combination and potentially another qualification.

### **\*Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ)**

| <b><u>FHEQ</u></b> | <b><u>QCF</u></b> |
|--------------------|-------------------|
| D (Doctorate)      | Level 8           |
| M (Masters)        | Level 7           |
| H (Honours)        | Level 6           |
| I (Intermediate)   | Level 5           |
| C (Certificate)    | Level 4           |

### **What’s a Learner Record?**

The Learner record is individual to each learner and is an online system that records and tracks all unit and qualifications a learner has achieved.

By ensuring that all units of learning are recorded the QCF ensures that a wider range of learners’ achievements is recognised. This will make it much easier for learners and employers to understand!

Learners will be given access to their Learner Record using their Unique Learning Number (ULN) and they can access their records to:

- \* track their progress towards completing their qualification
- \* discover their progression opportunities & new routes to achievement
- \* give their permission to employers & learning providers to view certain sections of their record.

This means that **no learning is ever lost** – if a learner is not able to complete their full qualification for any reasons, they will still gain credit for the units they were able to complete.

This will be recorded on their Individual Learner Record and can be used at a later date when learning or training continues.