



Overview of the 2009 Review and Evaluation of the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF)



Contents

Aims	2
Background	3
Next steps	3

Aims

The evaluation will help the qualifications regulators judge whether the Regulatory arrangements for the Qualifications and Credit Framework and the mechanisms used to implement them are leading to effective regulation of the QCF.

That judgement will be made against the regulators' objectives for regulation and against the extent to which the regulations support the aims set out for the QCF.

The regulatory arrangements list the objectives for regulation as designing a regulatory framework to:

- Meet the needs of learners
- Maintain standards and comparability
- Promote public confidence
- Support equality and diversity
- Ensure efficiency and value for money

The aim of the QCF is to provide learners, learning providers and employers with an inclusive and flexible regulated qualifications framework. In particular:

- it introduces a stable currency for learner achievement across the qualifications system through the award of credit
- learners are given maximum flexibility and range of opportunities to progress and receive recognition for their achievements, including by having appropriate opportunities to transfer achievement between different qualifications and awarding organisations.

The scope of this evaluation is to assess the extent to which the regulation of the QCF has delivered these objectives and met the aim of the QCF.

Background

The regulators identified the need to evaluate the regulation of the QCF when the tests and trials of the QCF were concluded and the Regulatory arrangements were developed. The commitment to evaluate the regulation of the QCF was set out in a letter from the Chair of Ofqual, Kathleen Tattersall to David Lammy MP at DIUS on 9 July 2008. It was noted that:

We have produced a set of regulatory arrangements that we have confidence in. Nevertheless, it will still be vital to review their operation in practice through our planned evaluation. In particular, given that the QCF is the first credit and qualifications system to be subject to national regulation, there are some considerable challenges in ensuring its effective operation. For example, given that regulation of credit is a new role for Ofqual, there is a need for us to undertake particular, focused work in this area and to develop approaches that complement our existing regulatory tools.

It is important to note that the QCF is at an early stage in its life. The regulations have been in place for a very limited period of time. The Regulatory arrangements were published in August 2008 and the regulators wrote to recognised organisations in December 2008 to advise them that they were now fully implemented.

Therefore there will be a limited amount of evidence about how the implementation of the Regulatory arrangements is progressing in this first year. This means that this first year should be considered as an opportunity to establish a baseline position in relation to the regulation of the QCF. It will give an opportunity to identify any immediate issues preventing the QCF from being effectively regulated and to make any urgent adjustments to its regulation. It will also set the priorities for further development and investigation. However, it will not be the end of the process. This is the start of an evaluative process that will continue, with a further report planned in summer 2010. More detailed investigation with a more robust evidence base will be possible in that second report.

Next steps

The outcome of the first phase of the evaluation will be a report, produced in October 2009, that sets out initial findings of the evaluation. Based on these conclusions the regulators will set out the implications for the regulation of the QCF and what the priorities should be for further investigation in the second year of evaluation.

Ofqual wishes to make its publications widely accessible. Please contact us if you have any specific accessibility requirements.

Office of the Qualifications and Examinations Regulator
Spring Place
Coventry Business Park
Herald Avenue
Coventry CV5 6UB

Telephone 0300 303 3344
Textphone 0300 303 3345
Helpline 0300 303 3346

www.ofqual.gov.uk