

## QCA Simplification Plan 2008-09 (including Ofqual)

Title and description of the initiative and how it will be delivered*	Outcome (including sector(s) to benefit)	Source of proposal (stakeholder, department, other)	Estimated cost savings and Impact Assessment status	Milestones/ deadlines for delivery
<p><b>Developing the Qualifications Credit Framework (QCF)</b></p> <p>I*</p>	<p><b>Outcome:</b> To establish a coherent, rational and integrated framework for units and qualifications.</p> <p><b>Anticipated Benefits:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greater flexibility for learning providers and individuals to develop learning programmes suited to individual needs</li> <li>• Common, easy to understand titling conventions for all qualifications based upon the challenge (level) and volume of learning (credit)</li> <li>• Learners achievements will be portable/transferable across learning providers and between awarding bodies</li> <li>• A single, authoritative and electronic record of all learners achievements will be available via the web</li> <li>• Common process will underpin the development of units and qualifications across the framework</li> <li>• A credit accumulation and transfer system that allows small steps of achievement towards qualification</li> </ul> <p>The cost benefit analysis completed by PWC focuses on the costs and benefits to the awarding bodies and to the regulators and is available upon request at <a href="mailto:juban@qca.org.uk">juban@qca.org.uk</a>. It does not cover learning providers. A separate piece of work has been completed by the LSC – commissioned by DIUS – to look at the costs and benefits to providers. The BRG should approach LSC if they require sight of it.</p>	<p>DIUS, DCSF and QCA</p>	<p>This will be evaluated during the life of the tests and trials and cannot be reported now. Regulatory Impact Assessments are planned into the programme as a critical element of work for the QCF. These will begin to unpack the cost/benefit issues.</p>	<p>Interim report to Ministers: <b>Summer 2007 - achieved</b></p> <p>Final report to Ministers: <b>Summer 2008</b></p> <p>On the basis of the final report, decisions will be made with regard to implementation.</p>

\* Please identify at what stage the initiative/policy is at i.e.: development (D), implementation (I) or review/evaluation (R)

<p><b>Reducing Administrative Burden (RAB)</b></p> <p><b>D</b></p>	<p><b>Outcome:</b> To reduce the administrative burden on examinations officers when applying for access arrangements for GCSE and A level candidates.</p> <p><b>Actions:</b> Currently, centres must make separate applications to each awarding body for learners who have a requirement for arrangements to allow them to access their examinations. The new centralised system will mean that centres make a single online application that is accepted by the unitary awarding bodies for general qualifications. It will deliver significant benefits to centres, bringing all access arrangements into one system reducing the multiple applications currently required for each candidate when taking examinations in different subjects from different awarding bodies.</p> <p>The new system will initially focus on general qualifications, but has the potential for extension to include national curriculum assessments and other qualifications. The solution will be robust and user friendly. There will be a full service contract for three years.</p>	<p>QCA, NAA</p>	<p>The reduction in repetitive labour is estimated as equivalent to £1.5m per annum, the benefit being delivered directly into centres.</p>	<p>Implementation <b>September 2008</b></p>
<p><b>Re-launch of an enhanced openQUALS website (NDAQ)</b></p> <p><b>I</b></p>	<p><b>Outcome:</b> To enhance NDAQ to increase its accessibility and to incorporate Diploma lines of learning.</p> <p><b>Actions:</b> The National Database of Accredited Qualifications (NDAQ) was redesigned in December 2007 to make it more accessible to users. NDAQ now complies with Web Content Accessibility Guidance as set by W3C (The World Wide Web Consortium).</p> <p>NDAQ now holds catalogues for the first five Diploma Lines of Learning, available for teaching at three levels from September 2008. Within each Diploma catalogue, users can view the principal learning and project qualifications available, as well as a full listing of the functional skills and additional and specialist learning options relevant to the specific Line of Learning and level.</p> <p>The catalogues enable centres to put together their Diploma offers, and learners to view what combinations of qualifications may be available as part of a Diploma package in their locality. (Local offers are detailed in local 14-19 learning prospectuses, which are listed on the <a href="http://www.accreditedqualifications.org.uk/index.aspx">http://www.accreditedqualifications.org.uk/index.aspx</a>).</p>	<p>QCA, DCELLS, CCEA</p>	<p>2007/2008 costs were as follows:</p> <p>Redesign £29,574.</p> <p>Development Costs £36,637</p> <p>On going Design £7,402</p> <p><b>Total £ 73,613</b></p>	<p>The redesign of NDAQ was delivered to schedule on <b>4 December 2007</b></p>

<p><b>Diplomas</b></p> <p><b>D/I</b></p>	<p><b>Outcome:</b> To ensure that the new qualification is introduced as efficiently and effectively as possible and that the burden on stakeholders is minimised.</p> <p><b>Actions</b> QCA has a number of projects and initiatives in place to achieve this outcome including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Qualification development</b> – the new qualification has been developed in collaboration with employers and higher education to ensure that it is relevant and valued by these stakeholders. This approach means that the new qualification will meet the skills needs of employers and will provide progression to HE</li> <li>• The qualification provides an integrated programme of study that will allow students to apply their learning in a practical and relevant way, bringing together essential skills and knowledge required by employers and HE, opportunities for different styles of learning and the chance to get an insight into what work is really like</li> <li>• <b>A clear and flexible regulatory framework</b> – a clear regulatory framework has been developed in collaboration with awarding bodies. This includes operating rules, which establish the principles and describe the required regulatory outcomes for the Diploma. This approach avoids unnecessary prescription and provides awarding bodies with flexibility to work to the principles and required outcomes by determining processes that are most suitable for their own contexts</li> <li>• <b>Clear definitions of roles and responsibilities</b> – QCA is working with stakeholders to ensure a common set of definitions of roles and responsibilities to ensure clarity in the operation of the new qualification</li> <li>• <b>Consistency across awarding bodies</b> – the Diploma Operational Committee brings together regulators and principal learning and project component awarding bodies. This provides a constructive forum which aims to develop common actions and procedures across participating awarding bodies in order to:</li> </ul>	<p>DCSF, QCA 14-19 Diplomas are a core strand of the 14-19 Reform Programme</p>		<p>Two essential guides have been published: Making a difference – <b>October 2007</b></p> <p>Getting ready – <b>February 2008</b></p> <p>Version 1 of the Operating Rules were published – <b>July 2007</b></p> <p>A consultation on version 2 will take place <b>26 May – 30 June 2008</b></p> <p>Version 2 of the Operating Rules will be published <b>31 August 2008</b></p> <p>Essential guide to the Diploma Aggregation Service to be published <b>30 April 2008</b></p> <p>Diploma Aggregation Service support</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ avoid unnecessary proliferation of different procedures which would cause administrative complexity for centres</li> <li>❖ ensure comparability between awarding bodies' qualifications</li> <li>❖ maintain public confidence in the qualifications.</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Supporting centres</b> – the NAA is working with centres to ensure that they are properly prepared for the introduction of the new qualification. This work includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ guidance for centres about the Diploma and its role;</li> <li>❖ a series of information and training events designed to support centres in the introduction of the new qualification</li> <li>❖ guidance on arrangements that should be set in place to underpin internally assessed units.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>			<p>to centre support officers (CSOs) will take place in <b>June 2008</b></p> <p>The Diploma Operational Committee has held a series of meetings with component awarding bodies since <b>October 2007</b></p>
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<p><b>Establishing the interim Ofqual</b></p> <p><b>D</b></p>	<p><b>Outcome:</b> To establish an independent regulator that is committed to:</p> <p>a) high level strategic regulation based on the governments 5 principles of good practice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>proportionate</b> - regulators should only intervene when necessary. Remedies should be appropriate to the risk posed, and costs identified and minimised</li> <li>• <b>accountable</b> - regulators must be able to justify decisions and be subject to public scrutiny</li> <li>• <b>consistent</b> - government rules and standards must be joined up and implemented fairly</li> <li>• <b>transparent</b> - regulators should be open, and keep regulations simple and user-friendly</li> <li>• <b>targeted</b> - regulation should be focused on the problem and minimise side effects.</li> </ul> <p>b) minimising bureaucracy.</p> <p><b>Actions:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The process for recognising organisations as awarding bodies has been streamlined. The report is available at: <a href="http://www.ofqual.gov.uk/files/QCA_3569_Recognition_of_awarding_bodies_report.pdf">http://www.ofqual.gov.uk/files/QCA_3569_Recognition_of_awarding_bodies_report.pdf</a></li> <li>2. We are currently investigating the extension of the web based accreditation system (WBA) to cover the recognition of awarding organisations.</li> </ol>	<p>Ofqual</p>	<p>There will be additional costs in setting up the independent regulator. A budget of £5 million has been received from DCSF. Benefits will be judged by the ability of Ofqual to effectively and efficiently regulate the market.</p>	<p>Ofqual established April 2008.</p> <p>February 2008</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
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	<p>3. Risk based regulation: The fundamental principle of risk assessment is that scarce resources should not be used to inspect or request data from awarding bodies that are low-risk. As such, risk assessment is an essential means of directing regulatory resources where they can have maximum impact on outcomes. A risk-based approach provides the most efficient use of resources and provides protection for the consumer, whilst minimising burdens on compliant organisations.</p> <p>4. We are undertaking generic recruitment and training of staff as a more cost effective, efficient means of succession planning.</p>			June 2008 Onwards
<p><b>Centre Recognition Project</b></p> <p><b>R</b></p>	<p><b>Outcome:</b> To develop and implement a common process across awarding bodies for recognising centres that are capable of delivering accredited qualifications and units.</p> <p><b>Actions:</b> Standardised forms were made available to awarding bodies through the Federation of Awarding Bodies (FAB) for trial in November 2007. However only 3 awarding bodies contributed to the trial and subsequent evaluation.</p> <p>Ofqual to write to FAB requiring awarding bodies to incorporate data requirements of both centre recognition and qualifications approval forms into their own.</p> <p>Awarding Body monitoring activities to include review of awarding body forms for</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>incorporation of data requirements</li> <li>bureaucratic burden of additional data fields.</li> </ol>	Ofqual, DCELLS and CCEA	N/A	
<p><b>Reducing Monitoring Burden on Centres.</b></p>	<p><b>Outcome:</b> The reduction of the monitoring burden on centres with multiple awarding bodies relationships (approx 8% of FE Colleges).</p> <p><b>Actions:</b> Research by PKF in 11 colleges across England, Wales and Northern Ireland identified no common perception of the monitoring burden. Some duplication, overlap and repetition were reported at the central administration level within the Colleges.</p> <p>Ofqual to review the PKF recommendation and produce an implementation plan.</p>	Ofqual, DCELLS, SQA, CCEA, Awarding bodies, DIUS	N/A	<p>Report received from PKF– <b>March 2008</b></p> <p>Review of report – April - <b>June 2008</b></p>

<p><b>R</b></p>	<p>PKF recommendations:</p> <p><b>Short term:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• facilitating communication between the qualifications' regulators, awarding bodies and centres</li> <li>• the introduction of central portals at centres to manage monitoring activity with awarding bodies</li> <li>• a review of the number of awarding bodies relationships at centres;</li> <li>• the introduction of a customer satisfaction and good practice survey.</li> </ul> <p><b>Long term:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• review of the drivers of regulation to ensure that they remain relevant in the ever changing further education sector</li> <li>• review of the recognition requirements for awarding bodies to ensure that actions can be enforced by the qualifications' regulators to facilitate more efficient monitoring practices</li> <li>• approve the standardisation of centre approval and post approval monitoring requirements to avoid duplication at a centre level.</li> </ul>			<p>Ofqual Management Group to make recommendation to Ofqual Committee – <b>July 2008</b></p>
<p><b>Examination Fees</b></p> <p><b>I</b></p>	<p><b>Outcome:</b> To ensure that awarding bodies fees are fair and clear to centres.</p> <p><b>Actions:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A review of fees charged for GCSE and A levels</li> </ol> <p>A requirement for awarding bodies to publish GCSE and A level fees a year in advance, thus enabling centres to budget for exam fees more accurately and reduce budget variance.</p>	<p>Ofqual</p>	<p>It is estimated that publicly funded centres (LEA and grant maintained schools and further education colleges) will be spending up to £1.5m less in 2008/09 and up to £3m less in 2009/10 on A level entry fees in England alone.</p>	<p>QCA report on awarding bodies fees for the revised GCE A levels - published <b>4 April 2008</b>.</p> <p>PKF review of awarding bodies' fees ([this report was completed in 2006 and reviewed GCSE and A level fees] - publication of the executive summary of the report <b>7 April 2008</b>).</p>

				Awarding bodies to publish their GCSE and A level fees one year in advance of them coming into effect - from <b>September 2008</b>
<b>Efficiency Study of the Qualifications System</b>  <b>D</b>	<b>Aim:</b> To establish the efficiency and cost effectiveness of the qualifications market.  <b>Actions</b> Conduct appropriate studies into the qualifications market's efficiency and recommend actions and identify areas for further investigation.  <b>Outcome:</b> An efficiency study which provides a baseline for further work by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ establishing an improved understanding of how the qualifications market works; and</li> <li>▪ identifying areas for further investigation.</li> </ul>	Ofqual	Impact Assessments will be conducted as required regarding implementation of any actions recommended by the work.  Where possible, efficiency improvements will be identified	Report on the Efficiency of the Qualifications System completed by end of <b>February 2009</b>