UK Vocational Qualification Reform Programme

Trials of Publicly Funded Provision in the Qualifications and Credit Framework - Guidance for Providers on Recording the Participation of Learners on the Individualised Learner Record

Purpose
1. This note is for providers participating in publicly funded trials of provision in the Qualifications and Credit Framework in England in 2007/08. It sets out how providers will need to record data in the LSC Individualised Learner Record (ILR) during 2007/08.

Background
2. The LSC is a partner in the UK Vocational Qualification (VQ) Reform Programme (UKVQRP). It leads on Sub Programme 3 (Planning, Funding and Delivery of Provision to Learners), working closely with the planning and funding agencies in Wales and Northern Ireland and other bodies such as Sector Skills Councils (SSC) and the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA). Our shared vision is that by July 2008 planning, funding and delivery systems across the UK will have driven forward and be actively supporting the outcomes of VQ reform.

3. The UKVQRP includes the testing and trialling of the proposed Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) in 2006/07 (phase one) and 2007/08 (phase two). Part of the LSC’s commitment is to fund 25,000 learners on trials of QCF provision in England by July 2008.

4. From August 2008 the QCF will become operational and gradually the current National Qualifications Framework (NQF) will be closed down with all future qualifications being accredited into the QCF.

5. The funding of learners on trials is part of a programme of work to ensure that planning and funding in England helps to drive and support VQ reform, now and in the future. This includes:
   - Funding learners on trial provision in 2006/07 and 2007/08, including learners on the new Full Level 2 Design Principles, which will contribute to the LSC’s targets and priorities (to ensure learners are count appropriately towards the target please ensure the correct valid entry is recorded in the Aim record, please see below).
   - Establishing the role of credit value in the new funding approach(es) emerging through the DfES/LSC Demand Led system consultation document in January 2007.
   - Establishing how VQ reform can help to drive data simplification through links with the data theme of LSC agenda

1 Scotland has observer status in the programme.
for change and the Managing Information Across Partners (MIAP) programme.

- Modelling and evaluating how a qualifications and credit framework can better deliver government targets and priorities – such as the Level 2 PSA target (a process for defining QCF level 2 provision as target bearing from phase one has been agreed, please see http://qfr.lsc.gov.uk for more details).
- Identifying and resolving any barriers to the cross-border transfer of credit.
- Establishing how funding can help to accelerate and drive Sector Qualification Reform through mechanisms like Sector Qualification Strategies.

Publicly Funded Trials in England in 2006/07 and 2007/08

Range of trials

6. A sub-set of the tests and trial projects approved by QCA involve publicly funded trials with learners in England in 2006/07 and 2007/08. It is a sub-set, rather than all projects being in receipt of public funding, for a number of reasons including;

- Only some projects included the stage of trialling with learners
- Of those that did, not all sought public funding in England.
- Not all trials met LSC priorities, targets and requirements.

7. A full list of the approved trials can be found at http://qfr.lsc.gov.uk.

Funding of Trial Provision

Agreement of funding

8. The eligibility of provision for funding does not guarantee funding. Providers will need to agree any funding with their local partnership team. The trials have been identified as priority provision for public funding within existing LSC funding streams and agreed allocations and no additional money is available to the LSC specifically to support the QCF tests and trials.

9. The majority of QCF tests and trials provision should either displace existing provision delivered by a provider in the relevant sector or displace other low priority provision.

Funding methodology

10. As 2007/08 is a transitional year before the introduction of demand-led systems in 2008/09, and because the QCF is still at a developmental stage, the funding for the QCF tests and trials will operate within the existing funding methodology and guidance, including the fees policy and existing learner eligibility rules. Therefore trial provision, where supported through public funding will be in line with the existing guidance and practice for FE, WBL, Train to Gain, ACL or ESF funding as appropriate.
11. When trials qualifications are accredited into the QCF by QCA the LSC will be automatically notified – as is the case with new qualifications currently. The qualification will either be assigned an agreed listed value or it will be loadbanded (paid according to the planned duration of study) on the Learning Aim Database (LAD).

**Funding from 2008/09**

12. Funding will be important to the realisation of the benefits of QCF. Independent of the UKVQRP the LSC had already begun a major reform of funding under LSC *agenda for change*. This has since been informed by the FE Reform White Paper and a consultation paper entitled *Delivering World Class Skills in a Demand-Led System* was issued in January 2007. The *demand-led system* is therefore the driver of funding reform, not the UKVQRP.

13. During the consultation of *Delivering World Class Skills in a Demand-led System* stakeholders were consulted on the following areas of the UKVQRP:
   - the suggested proposals to fund the QCF
   - alignment of sector qualifications strategies, the QCF and public funding of provision
   - key factors to take into account in developing an initial impact analysis in preparation for withdrawing funding from certain qualifications and for the introduction of the QCF.

14. The consultation ended in March 2007 and the methodology for funding the QCF from 2008/09 will be agreed as part of the overall funding methodology for a demand-led system.

**Recording Trial Provision**

**Learning Aim Database (LAD)**

15. Each of the trial qualifications have a Learning Aim Reference – this will distinguish the trial qualifications from a preceding qualification such as an NVQ, where there is one. In addition a trial qualification can be identified by:
   - Using the QCF search engine on the main LAD search page
   - Learning aim title as it has “QCF” in the title
   - QCF type field on LAD

16. It is very important that the Learning Aim Reference for the trial qualification is used. If not, data analysis on the trials will be inaccurate or incomplete. The LSC National Office will do manual checking to identify any use of trial aim references by providers not involved in the trial.

**Individualised Learner Record (ILR)**

17. The ILR documents for 2007/08 are available on the LSC website at: [www.lsc.gov.uk/providers/Data/Datacollection/ILR/](http://www.lsc.gov.uk/providers/Data/Datacollection/ILR/)
18. For the QCF a valid entry already exists and a further two have been added to the ILR field A46 – National Learning Aim Monitoring (please see Annex O) in 2007/08 to identify trials involving provision from:
   • Phase one of the tests and trials which has been assigned a full level 2 status
   • Phase two of the tests and trials based on the full level 2 design principles.

19. The appropriate valid entry should be used from the list below to confirm that learners are participating in the QCF trials. Annex A details helps to determine which valid entry is appropriate to use.

Valid entry: 69 – Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) - Use this code where the aim is a QCA accredited qualification or unit from the QCF, the learner is not following a Full Level 2 Qualification (further codes to record these learners can be found below) and the provider is participating in the trials in 2006/07 or 2007/08.

Valid entry: 90 - QCF Test and Trials Phase One – Full Level 2 - The first phase of the QCF Test and Trials (2006/07) began in advance of the work on design principles for full Level 2. As a result, the principles have not been able inform first phase QCF Test and Trial provision focussing on Level 2. The LSC has agreed a procedure for assigning ‘full Level 2’ status to provision in phase one of the QCF Test and Trials. Details of provision in phase one which has been assigned a full Level 2 status can be found http://qfr.lsc.gov.uk. This code should therefore be used where the aim is a QCA accredited qualification or unit from phase one of the QCF Test and Trials (2006/07) and has been assigned a ‘full Level 2’ status by the LSC.

Valid entry: 91 - QCF Test and Trials Phase Two - Full Level 2 Design Principles - This code should be used where the aim is a QCA accredited qualification or unit from phase two of the QCF Test and Trials (2007/08), the qualification forms part of an approved part of a Full Level 2 Specification and the learner is enrolled on the whole specification. Details of provision in phase two which are based on the design principles for a full Level 2 can be found

Targets

20. Only learners flagged with either valid entry 90 or 91 will be counted towards the LSC’s PSA target.

Unique Learner Numbers

21. All learners on publicly funded trial provision in 2006/07 must have a unique learner number (ULN), generated by MIAP’s prototype Learner Registration Service. Separate guidance is available on working with the Learner Registration Service and ULNs.
Evaluation and Reporting

Evaluation

22. An independent evaluation of the tests and trials is being undertaken by QCA under Strand 2 of the VQRP.

23. The LSC is separately assessing the impact on business process and implications for performance measures, priorities and targets of the move towards a unit based qualification system with credit accumulation and transfer. This may require contact with the providers and others involved but the LSC is committed to ensuring that it does not duplicate what is already being done through the independent evaluation or could be done through an analysis of available data. The impact assessment must add value by focusing on those issues that particularly affect public funding provision in England, giving the trial participants an opportunity to inform the debate.

Reporting

24. The organisations leading trials also have contractual obligations to report on progress to QCA. The LSC is not asking for any additional progress reporting from the trials that are in receipt of public funding in England. Only what is normally required through the ILR and any regular regional or local LSC planning and monitoring arrangements.
Annex A – A46 National Learning and Monitoring Field and QCF Valid Entries

The flow diagram below can be used to determine which of the three valid entries for QCF in the A46 National Learning and Monitoring field should be used.

Is the learning aim part of the QCF test and trial?

NO

Please see the ILR Guidance for 2007/08

YES

Is the learning aim at Level 2?

NO

Please use valid entry 69 from the A46 National learning aim monitoring field

YES

Is the learning aim part of phase one of the QCF Test and Trials and been assigned a full Level 2 status?

Please see X for a list of phase one QCF Tests and Trials which have been assigned a full Level 2.

YES

Please use valid entry 90 from the A46 National learning aim monitoring field

NO

Is the learning aim part of phase two of the QCF Test and Trials (i.e. based on design principles for Level 2)?

Please see X for a list of phase two QCF Tests and Trials which are based on design principles for Level 2.

NO

Please use valid entry 90 from the A46 National learning aim monitoring field

YES

Please use valid entry 91 from the A46 National learning aim monitoring field