

QCF Business Benefits



This QCF newsletter was produced by ALP on behalf of LSIS.



QCF Business Benefits

The Qualifications and Credit Framework 'QCF' potentially offers work based learning providers a range of benefits, including opportunities to:

- Engage hard to reach learners
- Improve progression and retention rates
- Collaborate and work in new, innovative ways
- Develop business relationships with employers
- Broaden their curriculum offer

The extent to which providers are beginning to realise the benefits of the QCF is something Stella Turner, Provider Liaison Manager at the Association of Learning Providers (ALP) has been finding out.

Stella said,
"It has been really exciting talking to providers based around the country who have started using QCF units and qualifications and discovering that many of them are already benefiting from the flexibilities inherent in the new framework and are starting to use QCF in a variety of different ways to help develop their businesses."

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QCF opens access to higher level learning

The QCF is changing the way work based learning providers design their curriculum, instead of organising the curriculum around particular qualifications they are beginning to take a more learner centred approach to curriculum planning.

By designing programmes around individual units or clusters of units they are able to meet the needs of learners at all levels who have been hard to engage within the past.

Training Plus, Merseyside and Care Training East Midlands are both using the flexibilities inherent within the QCF to meet the needs of learners who are reluctant to progress because they find it hard to combine studying with work and

home commitments.

Paula Hayes, Director of Training Plus Merseyside (TPM) said, *"In the past we have always found managers in nurseries reluctant to sign on to higher level child care programmes. Signing up for an 18 month programme is just too daunting for people who are already trying to juggle full time jobs with busy home lives. The cost of large programmes is also prohibitive in many cases.*

The QCF has allowed us to plan to offer learners small chunks of learning at level 4 that can be achieved within 3 to 4 months. Once learners have achieved the smaller level 4 Awards we are confident that they will be keen to progress on to Certificates and

possibly even level 4 Diplomas.

The smaller chunks of learning will also allow costs to be spread for the training provider and the learner."

Rita Ford, the Managing Director of Care Training East Midlands is making similar changes to the programmes offered at their centre based in the centre of Nottingham.

Rita said,

"The QCF is making higher level programmes more accessible to learners and enabling us to maintain our relationship with employers, who are keen to use individual units to provide ongoing CPD for all their staff. Individual units from the QCF can be sold to employers on a commercial basis."



Qualifications & Credit Framework



“It’s not what you can fund but what you can sell...”

...says Rita Ford Managing Director of Care Training East Midlands (CTEM), a successful training company based in Nottingham.

Rita is confident that the QCF will help her to grow the business she set up 14 years ago. She has invested heavily in preparing the organisation for the introduction of the new framework.

The company has moved to new premises which have been extensively refurbished to cater for the needs of the commercial market. Staff at all levels have been up skilled so that they have the skills required to adapt to a new way of working. The Innovation

Team have developed a new IT system to enable learners progress to be easily tracked.

Staff at CTEM share Rita’s enthusiasm for the QCF. Maria Cook, the NVQ Manager said, *“In the past there have always been one or two units of the NVQ that learners have struggled to complete - a bit like trying to ‘fit a square peg in a round hole’. The flexibility of the QCF will enable learners to work towards a qualification made up of units that exactly fit their job role.”*

Being able to offer a very flexible training programme is vital when meeting the needs of new, emerging industries. CTEM recently

won a contract with a large provider of social housing in Nottinghamshire with over 500 employees who require a training programme that combines advice and guidance, health and safety, security and the skills required to promote independent living.

Rita said, *“The housing association came to CTEM because we were able to demonstrate that we understood the needs of their business and could put together a programme that met those needs, but we wouldn’t have been able to do this without the flexibilities that the QCF offers.”*





QCF gives provider market advantage

The first learners in the country, to achieve the new Equality and Diversity Level 2 Award with EDI, as part of their Apprenticeship Framework with TPM

Training Plus Merseyside (TPM) is a vibrant, progressive training company set in the heart of urban Liverpool. They offer Apprenticeships, Train to Gain, The Diploma and bespoke courses. Their specialist areas are childcare, hairdressing and business administration sectors.

TPM has provided its own equality and diversity training to learners and employers on Merseyside since 1999. The company has traditionally certificated this process internally. When Brian Quinn, Director at Training Plus, first heard about the new QCF he thought that it might provide an opportunity to gain national recognition for TPM's programme.

Brian said, *"We have trained and certificated young people in equality and diversity issues for years; it has long been our hope that we would eventually gain formal recognition and certification for the work of our students and staff alike."*

Brian approached EDI who were delighted to have the opportunity

to work with TPM in developing the new Equality and Diversity Level 2 Award and getting it accredited on to the QCF. TPM sold the intellectual property rights to the qualification and the accompanying support pack to EDI for three years to, what is proving to be, a popular qualification. It is used by a range of providers either as a standalone qualification, as an enrichment component of Apprenticeship frameworks or as part of the Additional Learning strand of the 14-19 Diplomas.

The photo above shows the first five learners at TPM to achieve the value-added qualification as part of their Apprenticeship framework.

TPM has generated some additional income by running 'train the trainer' courses designed to help staff from other providers explore effective teaching methods to use when dealing with issues of equality and diversity. During the two day course participants achieve the Equality and Diversity Award themselves and gain an insight into achieving Centre Approval from EDI to deliver the award in their

respective Companies. The collaborative work with EDI has been vital to the success of this project and illustrates the opportunities the QCF has created to change the way in which providers work with their Awarding Bodies.

Chris Bolton, EDI's Director of External Relations said, *"EDI have been really pleased to have had the opportunity to work with Brian and his team in developing a qualification that will give TPM a market advantage and provides an additional income stream."*

For further information about the QCF Equality and Diversity Level 2 Award please contact EDI at www.ediplc.com or email enquiries@ediplc.com or telephone 08707 202 909.

For more details about the Train the Trainer course please contact Training Plus Merseyside, www.tpmnow.co.uk or email Brian.Quinn@tpmnow.co.uk or telephone 0151 709 6000.



Meeting the needs of large employers



Images courtesy of Skillsmart Retail, the Sector Skills Council for the retail industry

QCF units and qualifications have enabled Elmfield Training, whose clients include many recognised household brands, to better tailor their training and assessment services to the needs of the large employers they work with.

The best example of how Elmfield is utilising the flexibility of the QCF is the work they are doing within the Retail Industry Sector. Working closely with the client's training team, Elmfield has mapped units from the new Retail QCF qualifications to the different job roles within the retail stores. Qualifications have been aligned to the job roles of staff working in 5 different departments. Working within the Rules of Combination, defined by Sector Skills Council, Skillsmart Retail, it has been possible to cluster units together to create QCF Level 2 Certificates in Retail that reflect the specific skills required within the departments.

The client was keen to ensure that there was differentiation within the

suite of qualifications offered to staff, a requirement Elmfield was easily able to meet by offering the Level 2 Diploma to departmental heads. Awards are made available to staff who, for various reasons, are unable to complete the Certificate, while a Level 3 is currently being developed to offer staff further opportunities for progression.

The new QCF qualifications were initially piloted with 350 learners, before being rolled out in January 2010 to 20,000 learners working in retail stores across the country.

Elmfield is expanding the range of QCF Retail qualifications it offers by mapping further units to job roles of staff in other areas of retail. Eventually they plan to be able to offer QCF qualifications to 100,000 learners working in the retail industry.

Andrew Mullaney, Elmfield's Standards and Curriculum Manager, said, "The QCF has opened up access to

qualifications. If we had been using the old Retail NVQ staff working in some departments wouldn't have had the opportunity to achieve a qualification because their job role wouldn't have had sufficient scope for them to demonstrate the required competences. Whereas the flexibility of the QCF has enabled qualifications to be tailored to individual job roles, giving more people the opportunity to be accredited for their skills".

Our experience of working with large employers over many years has clearly shown that the closer the fit between the job role and the qualification the more positive the outcomes in terms of learner achievement, reduced attrition rates and, ultimately increased productivity.

We are looking forward to the Customer Service, Management and Team Leading vocational qualifications being accredited on to the QCF so that we are able to work with other clients in the same way."

QCF helps improve retention rates

Providers using QCF qualifications as part of the Foundation Learning pilot have found that the flexibilities of the QCF have helped them engage with learners working at Entry and Level 1.

Aaron Denton, a Lead Tutor at Rathbone's Derby centre, one of 6 Rathbone centres involved in the Foundation Learning pilot said, *"Working towards units and credits really motivates the learners, they respond well to being able to achieve bite sized chunks. Increased motivation has in turn led to improvements in retention and achievement."*

Aaron's experiences have been shared by Central Training Group which is also involved in the Foundation Learning pilot, Elaine Moreline, Director of Quality at Central Training Group said; *"The flexibility that the QCF provides has enabled us to offer our learners a personalised programme that really does meet their needs, which has had a positive impact on both retention and achievement rates."*

Improvements to retention rates can have a dramatic impact on the bottom line. Over the last two years the Senior Management Team at Academy Training, an independent provider based in Plymouth, have introduced a range of measures to tackle retention issues which has resulted in a 35% improvement in profit.

Chris Jeffery, the Managing Director at Academy of Training said, *"Clearly identifying the financial implications of losing learners has made us focus on developing a range of strategies that have improved our retention rates. We are confident that the flexibilities of QCF will help us with this work, the more closely training programmes can be tailored to individual job roles the more likely young people are to complete their programme and be keen to progress on to further training."*



One of the Academy Training's training centres in Plymouth



Students attending one of TPM 'Aim Higher' briefings, about higher level industry qualification and career pathways



Katie Harrison is progressing on to a career in hairdressing, having completed training at a Rathbone Derby centre and a city centre salon, Kieran Mullin.



Driving business forward with QCF

Autopeople (UK) Ltd who specialise in providing training and development services within the automotive industry, have used the QCF to improve the service they offer to their biggest client, Honda.

The 'parallel curriculum', which to date has been unaccredited, covers drugs awareness, first aid, personal finance awareness as well as Honda specific modules such as Honda customer care and the environment.

accredited.

Dean Hooton, the Operations Manager at Autopeople said, *"Autopeople are always looking for ways to add value to the service we offer our customers, so we were*



Honda Apprentices chosen to participate on the Honda show stand at the British Superbikes Championship Round at Brands Hatch in 2009.

Throughout their apprenticeship Hondas technical apprentices attend various residential courses held at the Honda Institute near Slough. During the day apprentices are busy working towards different components of the apprenticeship framework, then in the evening they follow a 'parallel curriculum'.

Over the last year Autopeople have been working with City and Guilds, mapping the content of the 'parallel curriculum' to existing units already on QCF and going through the processes required to accredit the specialist Honda units on the framework, so that the whole programme can be

keen to add an accredited course to the apprenticeship we manage on behalf of Honda. We also wanted to maximise the opportunities the apprentices have to gain credits and to get national recognition for the hard work that many of them put into the 'parallel curriculum.'

QCF helps provider achieve TQS

Market Driven Training Ltd (MDT), a training provider based in Birmingham who specialise in delivering vocational qualifications to the textile industry have been involved in the development of the new QCF Level 2 Certificate in Manufacturing Sewn Products. They have worked closely with the Sector Skills Council, Skillfast-UK, the awarding body, ABC, and employers.

The new qualification contains sector-specific unit pathways which are far more relevant and tailored to employer needs, it includes new units that relate specifically to the equipment and machines used by dye-houses and screen printers.

The additional units have enabled MDT to engage with employers operating in niche areas within the industry, such as United Creations Limited and Digital Trading Limited.

It was MDT's ability to meet the needs of specialist employers that really impressed the TQS inspectors when they inspected the provider in January.

Sally-Anne Brown, MDT's Business Operations Manager said,

"The inspectors were impressed by the way in which the team at MDT

have been able to work with Skillfast UK and our awarding body ABC, to develop qualifications that really do meet the needs of the employers we work with.

The new units have allowed screen printers and dye houses to access sector specific training for the first time. We are currently contributing to the development of units in knitting which we are confident will enable us to begin working with another group of employers within the textile sector"

The feedback from employers about the impact of the new training programmes has also been extremely positive.

MDT's Business Development Executive, Sarbjit Johal commented, *"It is fantastic to see how appreciative employers are when employees achieve the new QCF qualifications. The textiles industry is really struggling in the current economic climate and employers understand that it is the companies who invest in their workforce and the development of skills who will come out of the recession in a stronger position".*



Sally-Anne Brown, MDT Business Operations Manager, with United Creations Ltd's employees receiving their certificates

United's MD Abdussamad Dookanwala said, *"Our employees enjoyed the training which was delivered efficiently and worked around busy production schedules. We are happy that our employees achieved and think the QCF qualification will be very helpful to the company"*

In their feedback to MDT United Creations said that productivity, quality and underpinning knowledge had increased by 20% as a direct result of MDT training and that skills had improved by 30%.

Below from left to right: The MDT Team; Gurjit Gill, Fiona Cole, Harbans Kaur, Jasvinder Sandhu, Sally-Anne Brown, Sarbjit Johal, Lisa Hewitt, Harminder Johal, Giano Johal and Ravinder Dhami'





Broadening the curriculum offer

Peter Wilson, author of 'Big Idea, Small Steps – The Making of Credit Based Qualifications', who was involved in the early work on credit based systems and was a Principal Advisor to QCDA on the design of the QCF, suggests ways in which providers can use QCF to change the way they plan their curriculum.

Traditionally providers have planned their training programmes around particular qualifications, but the QCF allows the planning to be done around individual units, or clusters of units, which contribute to a range of different qualifications.

Peter said, *"By working in this way providers are able to use resources efficiently, putting together units from different qualifications and awarding bodies, crossing traditional boundaries."*

As a starting point providers need to look carefully at the Rules of

Combination (ROC) for each of the QCF qualifications they plan to deliver and identify common units, which could make up the core offer to learners. On completion of the core units learners will be able to follow a number of different routes to final assessment and achievement of a full qualification, if appropriate. This approach gives learners greater scope to change their minds if they find that the programme they have chosen initially does not suit them. Helping to ensure that if learners change direction they stay in learning.

Providers also need to look at the exemptions within the Rules of Combination and consider whether they are able to put together programmes that give learners opportunities to 'top up' their existing qualifications by gaining individual units or clusters of units.

Peter explained, *"If learners have existing qualifications that give them*



exemptions from significant parts of a new QCF qualifications they can be offered short programmes that focus on the additional units required to achieve the new qualification. This type of programme is likely to be particularly relevant to qualified people who just need an opportunity to update their skills. Potentially this could enable providers to engage with groups of learners that they haven't previously worked with e.g. learners from Eastern Europe."

Peter's book which traces the development of the QCF and its future impact is available to purchase from NIACE £29.95 (+P&P) at <http://shop.niace.org.uk> or by calling 0870 600 2400.

HELP IS AT HAND

The Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS) has published a range of materials and interactive online tools to help learning providers implement the QCF and Foundation Learning provision, including an online action planner, CPD activities, guidance documents and case studies.

These resources are all available at <http://www.excellencegateway.org.uk/qcf> and <http://www.excellencegateway.org.uk/foundationlearning>, where consultancy support for organisational planning or in-house training for Foundation Learning or QCF implementation can also be booked.

Work based learning providers can arrange a **FREE** QCF support visit by contacting ALP's Provider Liaison Manager, Stella Turner on 07920 161685 or email sturner@learningproviders.org

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www.learningproviders.org.uk



<http://www.qcda.gov.uk/qualifications/60.aspx>

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alp association of learning providers

One voice, representing providers' views, protecting providers' interests

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