



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

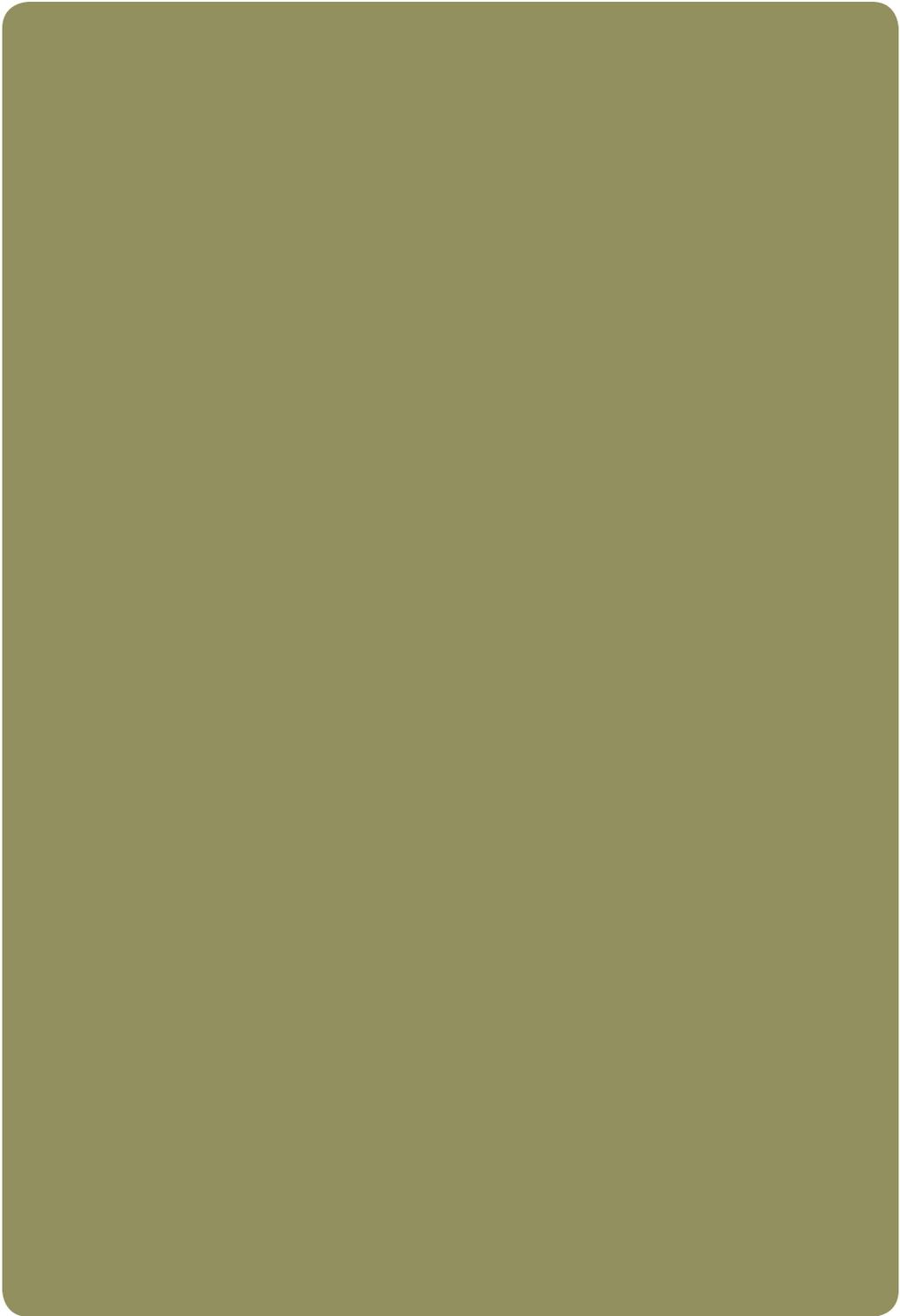
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Learning is changing

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Professionals:
General Information







Vocational qualifications in Wales

As a result of the UK vocational qualifications reform programme, vocational and work-related qualifications in Wales have changed to better meet the needs of employers and learners.

Industry, commerce and Sector Skills Councils, which represents employers, have been heavily involved in developing new qualifications to make sure they are

fit for their intended purpose. Some qualifications are based on national occupational standards.

An essential piece of the vocational qualifications reform programme is the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF), part of the wider Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales.

The Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales

All learners

All learning programmes

including taught courses, distance learning, work-related training, technology-enhanced learning and other education/training activities

All providers

including school, college, work based trainers, university, community, industry, voluntary and other activities

Types of qualifications and learning opportunities

Higher Education
Degree
Masters
Postgraduate studies
Doctorates

Lifelong Learning
Adult and community learning
Company training
Voluntary sector
Wider learning 14+

General and vocational education and training
GCSE
A levels
S/NVQs
Welsh Baccalaureate qualification

Learning and organisations are organised into frameworks

Framework for Higher Education Qualifications
FHEQ

Quality Assured Lifelong Learning
QALL

National Qualifications Framework **NQF**
Qualifications and Credit Framework **QCF**
Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework **SCQF**

Learning opportunities and standards are quality assured by

QAA

QCFW

DCELLS, Ofqual.
CCEA and SCQF partnership





Why the need for change?

It can be hard to understand all the different types of vocational qualifications:

- how challenging they are;
- how long they take to complete;
- what they cover; and
- how they are different from each other.

The Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales (CQFW) allows employers to compare all types of qualifications. Credit is a way of recognising all types of learning achieved – whether the learning is in college, the workplace, or in the community (for example, evening classes).

You can find out more by visiting the website at www.cqfw.net

What are the benefits?

All vocational qualifications and their units have a level and a credit value which:

- allows learners to build qualifications in ‘small steps’ – one unit at a time if they want;
- acknowledges that all learning could contribute towards a recognised qualification;
- motivates learners of all ages and helps them to get the skills and

qualifications that meet employers’ needs; and

- provides a way to recognise work-based learning and training that can be assessed and given a credit value.

The qualifications framework is endorsed by the Welsh Assembly Government. This means that the training or education programme has been through a quality-assurance process to make sure it meets a set standard.

The Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales has been aligned with the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). This means that the level of the qualification gained in Wales can be compared against a level in the EQF. This helps people and organisations understand achievements in other countries and work across the EU.



How does it work?

A qualification is described by its:

- **level** – how challenging it is;
- **size** – the credit value of the qualification; and
- **title** – the name of the qualification.

The title gives a brief description of the content of the qualification. The summary sets out the knowledge, understanding and skills a learner will gain and what they mean to an employer.

A unit is the smallest part of a qualification that can be achieved separately.

Each unit within a qualification measures a learner’s knowledge, understanding and skills in a particular subject. The units will build up step by step to a complete qualification.

What are credits?

A credit is given for every 10 hours of learning time. The course information will tell the learner how many hours of learning time their chosen course will take, and how many credits they will get when they successfully complete all the units.

Qualification (title)	Edexcel BTEC Level 2 Diploma in Applied Science (QCF)
Qualification Level (level)	Level 2
Qualification Size	Diploma
Qualification type	QCF
Qualification Summary (purpose)	This qualification provides much of the underpinning knowledge required for industry recognised qualifications. Units are signposted to National Occupational Standards. The units focus on the role of the science technician or assistant practitioner, their relationship with the scientific community and their responsibilities towards the community and the environment.
Progression	Learners can progress from Level 2 to Level 3 qualifications in Applied Science, GCE AS and A Level Science
Potential Job Occupations	100+ potential job occupations are listed in the full details
Qualification Structure summary	Consists of 3 mandatory units plus optional units
Credits Provided	60 credits for completed qualification
Guided Learning Hours	360
Overall Grading	Pass/Merit/Distinction/Distinction*

These are extracts from a current QCF qualification.





For example, if a unit is worth three credits, that is equal to 30 hours of learning time. It may take less time or more time to complete. A learner will not get more credits for taking longer to achieve the units, or fewer credits for completing the units more quickly.

Learning time may include time spent in the classroom, doing practical activities, carrying out research, doing homework, or on a work placement.

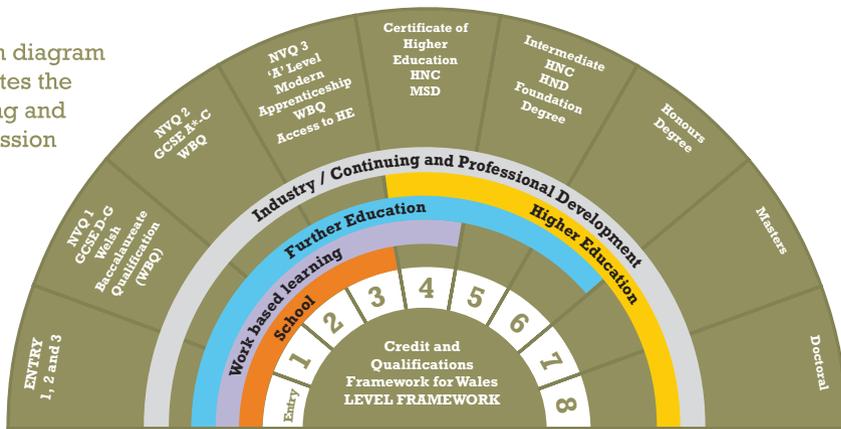
What do the levels mean?

The level of the qualification indicates how complex and in-depth the course, training or education programme is.

Level	Comparison
Entry Level	Entry Level 1,2 & 3
Level 1	NVQ 1, GCSE grades D to G
Level 2	NVQ 2, GCSE grades A* to C
Level 3	NVQ 3, GCE A level
Level 4	HE certificate
Level 5	HE foundation degree
Level 6	HE honours degree
Level 7	HE masters degree
Level 8	HE doctoral – PhD



The fan diagram illustrates the learning and progression routes.





Qualification sizes

There are three sizes of vocational qualifications – ‘award’, ‘certificate’ and ‘diploma’ – representing the size of a qualification, not how challenging it is. For example, a learner could get an award at **entry level** or an award at **level 8**.

Award	Certificate	Diploma
Entry Level - Level 8		
1-12 credits	13-36 credits	37 or more credits
10-120 hours of learning time	130-360 hours of learning time	370 hours or more of learning time

This table shows the breakdown of each qualification size.



Many companies have a programme of continued professional development for their staff. Employers can design their training using units from the framework. The Sector Skills Councils work with awarding organisations so that qualifications and units match the relevant national occupational standards.



Jenny's journey...



Jenny didn't want to stay on at school and left with poor GCSE results.

She was interested in working for a large local company of builders merchants - she had completed a successful work experience placement there, and got a part-time job out of it.

She discussed her ideas with a Careers Adviser at her local Careers Wales office. As a result she was able to negotiate a 'Business Administration Apprenticeship' with a training provider and support from the local college.

She was informed about QCF qualifications, which would give her credit for each of the required units as she achieved them. The units would build up, step by step, to a full qualification.

With support from her work-based assessor and college staff Jenny transferred some units and did

some additional work to achieve a customer care qualification.

During her apprenticeship Jenny successfully completed:

- NVQ Level 2 in Business Administration
- A Technical Certificate
- Key Skills Level 2 Communications, IT, Problem Solving and Working with Others
- Key Skills Level 1 Application of Number ...and a
- Customer Services qualification

After Jenny had completed her apprenticeship programme, she secured a full-time job with the builders merchant.

Because of her ability and commitment, her employer encouraged her to continue her professional development.

Jenny liked the flexibility to have the knowledge and skills that she was learning in the workplace formally recognised.

This encouraged Jenny to continue to gain further credits for 'Information Technology Units'; some of these were through the company's own 'in house' training scheme.





Rachel's journey...



Rachel was interested in going to University and studying for a career in either Science or Medicine.

Rachel's main academic programme was based on achieving AS and A Level qualifications.

However, the units that form the Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification gave Rachel the opportunity to gain credits which would add value to her academic qualifications.

Rachel's tutor encouraged her to take advantage of opportunities to recognise the range of learning activities that she had taken part in – alongside the credit that would be awarded for units within her Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification.

The Welsh Baccalaureate, CQFW and learning partnerships can really enhance and extend learning experiences by recognising formal, informal and non-formal learning.

Rachel gained credits for her additional learning, including:

- Maths Unit for Science Students Course
- European Computer Driving Licence in collaboration with the local FE college
- An extended project on the history of Welsh Music
- Two weeks work experience at her local hospital
- Conversational Spanish Class (and contact with a Spanish student with similar career aspirations)

Rachel achieved her Level 3 Welsh Baccalaureate Advanced Diploma and her Record of Achievement also included her CQFW Units which included:

- 5 Credits from her medically related work experience
- 5 Credits (RPL) for her Voluntary and Community work... and
- 3 Credits for her Language Studies.

The quality and diversity of Rachel's Record of Achievement contributed to her successful progression to study Medicine at University - along with her confidence in her own ability to succeed.





An employer's journey...



A training provider working with apprentices at a medium sized local company was approached by a company training manager wanting to look at further training requirements.

They agreed to meet and to invite representatives from:

- Sector Skills Council (SSC)
- Local college and
- Awarding Organisation (AO).

Prior to the meeting, the employer was briefed about the opportunities to formally recognise the skills and knowledge of the workforce.

During the meeting they explored:

- Opportunities available to the employer to have their 'in house' training entered into CQFW and formally recognised for the Award of Credit. It was agreed that the SSC and AO would explore this further with the employer (as it could have a wider application with other similar companies.)

- The possibility of adding new elements to their Apprentice programme to reflect the company's use of new technology and procedures - this training need could be met by the training provider adding other QCF units, which could be included in the training framework

- Basic Skills and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) provision through the Employer's Pledge, using appropriate CQFW units relevant to the workplace/workforce - the college would work with the employer to seek funding to offer this to employees

- Employees to have any appropriate skills/experience recognised as prior learning (RPL) within the CQFW - the training provider offered to undertake supervisory training and assessment in the workplace to recognise prior learning

The costs of the programme were put forward to the employer and a plan to undertake some initial training and RPL agreed.





An employee's journey...

Sharon is a young supervisor who has gained promotion to become a trainee junior manager.

Her employer worked with the Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM) to identify QCF units that met her training requirements.

Sharon worked with her line manager and an ILM Assessor to agree how the programme of ILM units would be achieved to meet the employer's requirements and Sharon's own training needs.

The ILM Assessor suggested that Sharon worked on a combination of management units:

- some would be assessed in the workplace
- some would require formal training and assessment.

It was clear that Sharon already had the skills and knowledge required for some of the units, and so she would have her prior learning assessed.

The assessor briefed Sharon and her line manager on the recognition of prior learning (RPL) process - the evidence required to have units recognised:

- a presentation that Sharon delivered for a team briefing
- a witness testimony from her Line Manager
- evidence from Sharon's appraisal
- Paper evidence on in-house training and how Sharon has applied that to her work



Sharon attended the required ILM training sessions. She could see how the units fitted into her new role and how they would help her develop the necessary skills and knowledge. She was really enthusiastic about her training and talked about it with other managers, who gave her the benefit of their experience - that was valuable too.

The remaining units were directly relevant to her daily work and the ILM Assessor agreed how the assessment for these might be completed in the workplace.

When the units from her employer's training were completed, the ILM assessor worked with Sharon to agree how to take her award of credits forward to complete the management qualification.

Sharon completed the training as specified by her employer. Whilst she acknowledged that it was challenging she feels that she has accomplished something that has given her great satisfaction and confidence in her new role - as well as a pay increase.





Special features of QCF qualifications

- All QCF qualifications have rules of combination, which state the set of units that must be achieved to get a qualification. This could mean, for example, a combination of mandatory units (ones which have to be achieved) and optional units.
 - Not all of the units within a QCF qualification need to be at the same level - some units might be a higher level, some might be a lower level. However, 50% or more of the credit value of a qualification must be at the same level as the qualification.
 - As a learner successfully completes each unit they are awarded credits. They may be able to transfer credits between QCF qualifications. Whether credits achieved for a unit can be transferred and counted towards another QCF qualification is decided when the qualification is designed. Units that can be transferred from another QCF qualification are explained in a qualification's rules of combination.
- Learners with certificated achievements outside the QCF, but who already have the skills and knowledge needed for a unit, can claim **exemption** from that unit in a QCF qualification. This means that they do not have to repeat their learning. Awarding organisations may plan exemptions when the qualification is being designed, or learners can ask for an exemption.
 - Other learning and achievements that have not been certificated can be assessed and awarded through **recognition of prior learning** (previous learning being recognised).
 - Qualifications under the QCF are recorded on an electronic **personal learning record (PLR)**. The awarding organisations are responsible for putting information about achievements on the PLR. The individual learner controls who can see their PLR.

Examples

- Credits achieved for a health and safety unit within a catering qualification might be transferred and counted towards a separate qualification in hospitality.
- Credits achieved for a spreadsheet software unit within a level 3 award in progression might be transferred and count towards a level 3 diploma for IT Users (ITQ) or a level 3 diploma in ICT professional competence.

You can find out more about the Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales by visiting the website at:
www.cqfw.net

For enquiries email:
cqfwenquiries@wales.gsi.gov.uk



CREDIT & QUALIFICATIONS
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