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Department for Work and Pensions

Innovation Fund Live Running Memo

To: Innovation Fund Providers (Rounds 1 & 2)

From: Innovation Fund Project Team

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Memo Serial No: IF LR 04 **Date:** 21 March 2014

Subject: Innovation Fund: Clarification of definition for
'Achievement of First NQF Level 2 qualification'

Action: For Information and action

Timing: Immediate

Background

1. This memo seeks to provide further clarification of the definition of achievement of a 'First National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Level 2 qualification'.
2. Providers will be aware that the DWP Innovation Fund policy team has been considering what, if any, clarification was needed to the current Provider Guidance in relation to the definition of 'Achievement of First NQF Level 2 Qualification', and which qualifications could be accepted for a Level 2 outcome payment to ensure the guidance supported the detail contained within the Innovation Fund contracts.
3. Providers should note the clarity provided and adopt this approach when submitting a claim for payment from the date of this live running memo until such time as the Innovation Fund Provider Guidance is amended.

Summary

1. For clarity the following information is provided to explain how Level 2 qualifications achieved under the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) qualify as an 'equivalent' achievement as they are structured differently.

2. Every unit and qualification in the QCF has both a credit value and a level.
 - One credit represents 10 hours of average learning time and so the credit value shows how much time it takes to complete
 - The level shows how difficult the unit or qualification is
3. There are also three categories of qualification in the QCF:
 - Award (1-12 credits)
 - Certificate (13-36 credits)
 - Diploma (above 37 credits)
4. Innovation Fund contracts expect 'Achievement of a First NQF Level 2 more than 325 guided learning hours, any equivalent QCF qualification also is expected to provide this minimum level of support.
5. Providers are required to check the [Ofqual website](#) before submitting a claim for payment to ensure that the level of the QCF is correct and that the width (i.e. learning hours/credits) is equivalent to 325 guided learning hours or above.
6. It is worthy of note that whilst the majority of Level 2 Principal Learning courses are in excess of 325 guided learning hours and meet the requirements for a Level 2 outcome, they are listed in the Key Stage 4 performance tables as equating to just one GCSE. However, for the purposes of the Innovation Fund, if these courses provide the above minimum level of support for the achievement of Level 2; i.e., over 325 guided learning hours, they will be deemed as an 'equivalent' qualification.

Action

1. Any qualifications claimed for must be accredited and have a Qualification Accreditation Number (QAN) that can be checked on [Ofqual Register of Regulated Qualifications](#) database.
2. Before submitting a claim for payment, please use the course number to check the course level on the [Ofqual Register of Regulated Qualifications](#) database.
3. Check the number of guided learning hours to ensure that they meet the requirements outlined in the [Provider Guidance](#).
4. Check you have provided the required information and evidence required for payment validation purposes as outlined in [Annex 1 \(Outcomes\) of the Provider Guidance](#)

Information required:

- participant's name and date of birth;
- age participant was recruited to provision;
- name, occupation and contact details of person verifying the information;
- the qualification achieved and grade if appropriate;
- the date of achievement/award;
- the Awarding Body;
- number of guided learning hours;
- The qualification accreditation number which can be checked on the [Ofqual Register of Regulated Qualifications](#) database.

Evidence required for payment validation purposes:

- a signed and dated confirmation letter on official headed paper from school/ teacher/ home tutor covering all the information required; or
- exam results slips or notifications; or
- a copy of the certificate showing the participant's name and date of birth, the Awarding Body, the date of achievement/award and/or course completion date and the qualification accreditation number

5. Claims that cannot be validated by the payments team will be rejected.

Further information and contact details

1. The Provider Guidance will be updated to incorporate this clarification in due course.
2. All enquiries on the subject of this memo should be raised with your Performance Manager in the first instance.

Regards

Non-Work Programmes Division Team