

15 June 2018

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Our Ref: RO60/2018

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## **Information submitted for the Register of Regulated qualifications - Qualification Type**

Dear Responsible Officer

We have been reviewing the quality of the data submitted through the Portal and, as part of this work, have looked specifically at the qualification type assigned to qualifications. We have found that similar qualifications are routinely assigned to different qualification types, depending on the approach taken by different awarding organisations. This problem has increased following the removal of the Qualification and Credit Framework and its associated qualification type, which masked many of the inconsistencies.

Much of the data we gather is published on the Register of regulated qualifications and is used by the Education and Skills Funding Agency to inform funding decisions, by the Department for Education to inform performance table decisions, and to inform Ofqual's Official and National Statistics publications. Correct type allocation also allows users to find your qualifications more easily. We therefore want the Register to provide an accurate and useful representation of your qualifications.

As a result, we intend to revise the list of qualification types available in the Portal, visible on the Register and against which we publicly report. We have discussed an approach with a number of awarding organisations (facilitated by FAB and JCQ) and other stakeholders, including CCEA Regulator with whom we share the Portal and Register. We are now seeking your feedback on our proposed approach.

We plan to request that awarding organisations consider the types assigned to your qualifications, and amend them where necessary to fit with our revised list of qualification types. The proposed timeline for these changes is illustrated in Annex A. We note that for many this falls during a busy period given summer awarding, and would like to reassure you that for those qualifications where there are qualification-specific regulatory requirements, there will be no change required. This includes, but is not limited to, GCSEs, GCEs, Functional Skills, and End-Point Assessments (please see Annex D for further clarification).

We consider the quality of data in the Portal to be important, but also want to minimise the burden we place on awarding organisations. Where qualifications are already being withdrawn, with operational end dates on or before 31 August 2018, we would not expect awarding organisations to revise the associated qualification type. We expect any qualification with an operational end date after this date to have the correct type assigned. As you review your qualifications you may decide to withdraw them and apply an operational end date on or before 31 August 2018, in which case it won't be necessary to change the type.

In December 2017, we wrote a [Portal article](#) concerning qualification titling and assignment of type to qualifications. If you still have qualifications with 'QCF' in their titles we will expect this to be removed as part of the qualification type updates. The only exception where 'QCF' may still be used in a qualification title is for Applied General and Technical Qualifications, where appropriate, as described in our letter to responsible officers on 25 July 2017.

We would like to know what awarding organisations think about our intention to help us improve the assignment of qualification types, in particular:

1. Is the list of revised qualification types and supporting information likely to lead to improved assignment of qualification types within and between awarding organisations? Are there any specific revisions that could be made to improve this?
2. Are there any particular difficulties you will have in meeting the timelines? We understand updating the types assigned to your qualifications generates a certain level of effort. We have proposed a timeline that works within the constraints of our vocational quarterly data collections which go on to inform our Official and National Statistics, so that our statistics will reflect the revised qualification types without disrupting the scheduled publication timescales. We also intend to inform our statistics users about the revised qualification types and their potential impact on the statistics in these publications.

We attach four annexes to this letter:

**Annex A**, of this letter is a proposed timeline. We intend to consider your responses to the questions above before either amending or confirming it. The timeline proposes that awarding organisations have from 20 July to 17 August to consider the types assigned to your qualifications, using annexes B and C to guide your decisions. We suggest awarding organisations do this before making the changes to qualifications in the Portal. Our intention is to release the new qualification types in the Portal on 17 August and for awarding organisations to make the changes in the following two weeks, by the end of August. We appreciate that these are demanding timelines; accurate reporting in our statistical releases and minimising the period of change for organisations who use the qualification data dictate a small window

during which changes can be made. Please contact us if you require further advice or support to implement these changes.

**Annex B** of this letter contains a diagram showing the proposed qualification types going forward. We are removing those that do not identify a coherent group of qualifications, cut across other types or describe a qualification property which is available from other information in the regulatory framework. We have added types where necessary to cover the broadest range of qualifications that we regulate.

**Annex C** is supporting information to help you decide which type to assign to your qualifications. The document poses a series of questions to be stepped through for each qualification. Having stepped through the questions, if it appears that multiple types may be appropriate for the qualification, you should use the type that appears first in the document.

**Annex D** gives an indication of the changes in type we would expect to see from the existing to new values. Please use this with Annex C to help you choose the most appropriate type for the qualification.

If, as a result of your review, you find that you have qualifications assigned to a type that is not reflected in your current scope of recognition, please inform us so we can discuss appropriate changes to your scope of recognition.

If you have any suggestions, concerns or questions about the proposed approach I would be grateful if you or your teams could respond to this letter, through the Portal, by **6 July 2018**, in line with the timeline at annex A. We will then consider responses and write out with the final approach on **20 July 2018**.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Phil Beach', written in a cursive style.

**Phil Beach**

Executive Director of Vocational and Technical Qualifications

#### Annexes

- A: Timeline slide with detail of steps awarding organisations are expected to undertake
- B: Diagram of qualification types
- C: Flowchart with descriptions
- D: List of expected type changes