

27 July 2016

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Dear Responsible Officer

Lord Sainsbury's Report and Unused Qualifications

We are writing to you following the comments made by Lord Sainsbury's independent panel about the qualifications market and the significant number of qualifications on offer.

The panel's report states that "...proliferation is a serious issue because it makes the system very confusing for individuals and employers"¹. The recommendations of the panel have been adopted in the government's post-16 Skills Plan.²

In response to these comments we have decided that we will remove from the visible Register all qualifications that have not been awarded for at least two years³ (excluding GCSEs and GCEs). We have identified that there are around 2,000 qualifications within this category.

We enclose a list of the qualifications that you have not awarded in the last two years according to the certification data you provided. We have concluded that, as these qualifications have not been awarded in the last two years, it is not appropriate for them to appear on the Register. It is important that the Register includes only up-to-date and accurate information so that it can be relied upon by those who use it.

You should withdraw these qualifications from our Register on or before 5pm on 30 September 2016. You are required to enter an operational end date onto our system of 30 September 2016 to indicate the qualification is withdrawn. If they are not withdrawn, we will take action so that they are not visible on the Register after 24 October 2016. Qualifications removed from the visible Register will remain regulated qualifications and you must ensure that they comply with our General Conditions of Recognition.

We have not included any qualifications on the list where you have already entered an operational end date in our system that is on or before 31 October 2016.

¹ Page 11, Report of the Independent Panel on Technical Education dated April 2016
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/536046/Report_of_the_Independent_Panel_on_Technical_Education.pdf

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/post-16-skills-plan-and-independent-report-on-technical-education>

³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/ofquals-response-to-governments-post-16-skills-plan>

As you will be aware, we share the Register with the Council for Curriculum, Examination and Assessment (CCEA) in Northern Ireland. CCEA have confirmed that they are supportive of the action we are taking.

Withdrawal of qualifications

When you withdraw these qualifications Condition D7 [Management of the withdrawal of qualifications] of our General Conditions of Recognition will apply. For the purposes of this exercise only, where a qualification on the enclosed list is withdrawn, we will not require a separate notification (see Condition D7.3), and we will waive the obligation to prepare a written withdrawal plan (see Condition D7.4(a)).

The obligation to provide clear and accurate information about the withdrawal to Centres and Learners (see Condition D7.4(b)) will be satisfied if you contact your Centres who are likely to be affected by the withdrawal to explain the action we are taking.

Representations to retain qualifications on the Register

We are taking this action on the assumption that a qualification that has not been awarded for two years is unlikely to be awarded in the near future. However we recognise that, in some cases, you might have evidence that learners are enrolled on a programme leading to assessment for one or more of the qualification(s) on the attached list. For this reason, we will not remove qualifications from the visible Register until 24 October 2016.

If you have evidence that learners are enrolled in a programme leading to assessment for one or more of the qualification(s) on the attached list, you should write to us with this evidence by 5pm on 30 September 2016. You should complete the appropriate column on the list and return it, together with any evidence, to regulatory.implementation@ofqual.gov.uk.

We will consider the evidence you have provided and will aim to respond to you by 21 October 2016 with our decision on whether the qualification will remain on the Register. Our decision will be final. Until our decision is made, your qualifications will be visible on the Register. Before writing to us, you should consider contacting your Centres who are likely to be affected, explaining the action we are taking to ensure that you are aware of any learners enrolled on a programme of study for these qualifications.

Where a decision is made to retain a qualification on the visible Register, we may undertake a subsequent audit of the reasons provided by awarding organisations for retention to ensure those reasons remain accurate.

Total Qualification Time allocation

In line with the arrangements set out in [RO39](#) and [RO43](#) we expect that you will be in the process of ensuring that before 31 December 2017 every qualification you

have submitted to the Register has a size allocation, in terms of Total Qualification Time (TQT) and Guided Learning (GL).

If it is necessary for Ofqual to remove any of the qualifications on the enclosed list from the visible Register, your obligation to allocate an appropriate TQT / GL value will be unchanged. Your obligation to allocate a size to the affected qualifications will be removed only if you withdraw the qualification. You will still be able to see qualifications that have been removed from the visible Register through the Portal.

Review

We will review the effectiveness of this exercise in the autumn. We will, in particular, consider whether it may be necessary to consult on the introduction of a new Condition to require unused qualifications to be withdrawn from the Register in the future.

If you have any questions on the contents of this letter please email regulatory.implementation@ofqual.gov.uk.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jeremy Benson', with a stylized flourish underneath.

Jeremy Benson
Executive Director for Vocational Qualifications