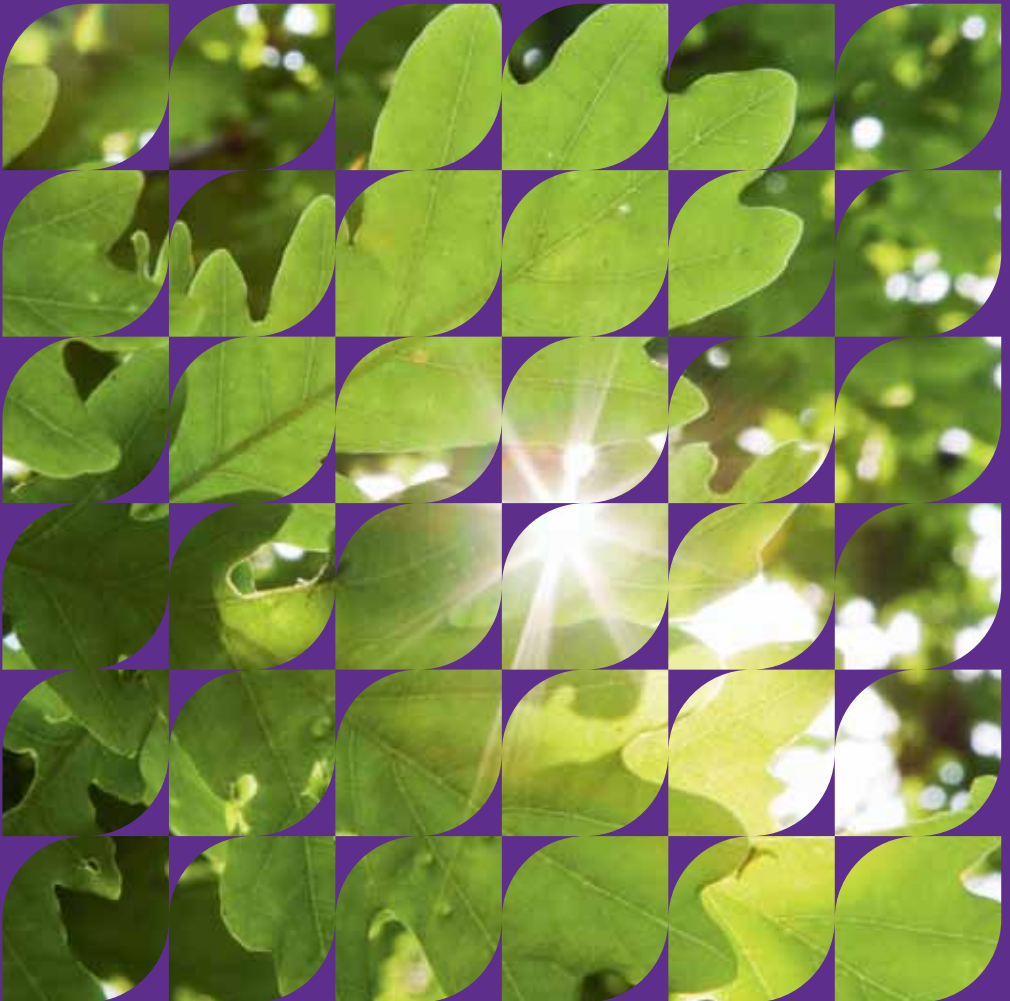




Qualifications  
& Credit  
Framework

# The Qualifications and Credit Framework: an introduction for employers



## About this leaflet

### Do you:

- struggle to understand how the qualifications system works?
- want to be actively involved in deciding what training and education is needed for your industry's future?
- want to get your in-house training recognised as a qualification in a national framework?
- want to tailor-make qualifications to suit your business needs?
- want to be able to quickly measure prospective employees' achievements?

### If you answered "yes" to any of these questions, please read on.

This leaflet tells you about the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) and gives you the information you need to understand how it works, and how it can benefit your company, your employees and your industry as a whole.

## What is the QCF?

The QCF is the new framework for creating and accrediting qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. It's at the heart of a major reform of the vocational qualifications

system, which will become simpler to understand and use, more accessible to a wider range of learners, and more relevant to learners' and employers' needs.

### The QCF:

- enables work-based training and learning to be recognised and formally accredited as a qualification
- actively involves employers in designing qualifications
- enables learners to work towards qualifications bit by bit, allowing them to shape their learning around their home and work lives.

## How will the QCF help me understand the qualifications system?

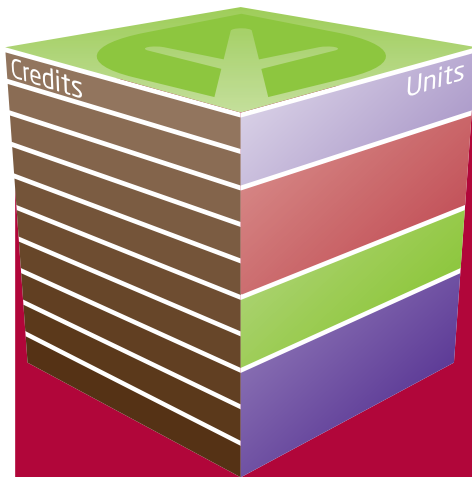
At the moment you might find it hard to understand all the different types of qualification that employees hold — how difficult they are, how long they take to complete, what content they cover, and how they compare to other qualifications.

The QCF presents qualifications in a way that is easy for everyone to understand.

## How does it work?

In the QCF, everything learnt is valuable. All qualifications in the QCF are made up of smaller units of learning. Every unit and qualification has a credit value (showing how much time it takes to complete – one credit represents 10 hours) and a level between Entry level and level 8 (showing how difficult it is).

## The structure of a QCF qualification

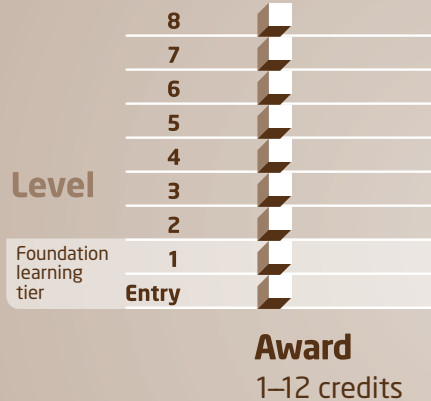


In the QCF, learners can accumulate credit in small steps by completing units, which can then build up into a full qualification.

There are three sizes of qualification in the QCF:

- **Award** (1 to 12 credits)
- **Certificate** (13 to 36 credits)
- **Diploma** (37 credits or more).

## CHALLENGE



The qualification name – Award, Certificate or Diploma – represents the size of a qualification, not how difficult it is. To understand how difficult a


## Each qualification title contains the following:

- the level of the qualification (from Entry level at the bottom to level 8 at the top)
- the size of qualification (Award/Certificate/Diploma)
- details indicating the content of the qualification.

This consistent way of describing what subject the qualification covers, how difficult it is and how much work it involves will help learners and employers compare different qualifications.

## Examples of QCF qualifications

Level 1	Certificate	in sport and active leisure
Level 4	Diploma	in buying and merchandising for fashion retail
Level 8	Award	in strategic direction and leadership



**Certificate**  
13–36 credits

**Diploma**  
37+ credits

## SIZE

unit or qualification is, it might be helpful to know that GCSEs (grades A\* to C) are level 2, A levels are level 3, and a PhD degree is equivalent in difficulty to level 8.

## Who's already involved?

### McDonald's: awarding their own qualifications

McDonald's invests £15 million each year into its long-running in-house training scheme.

To take its in-house training to the next level, McDonald's got involved with the QCF to become an awarding organisation that can develop and award its own nationally recognised qualifications.

Creating its own nationally recognised qualifications means McDonald's employees now have their hard work and skills recognised across the organisation and by other employers in the service and hospitality sector – making working at the company more attractive to potential recruits, aiding retention and helping to provide continued professional development.

### PLASA: awarding qualifications for sector employers

The Professional Lighting and Sound Association (PLASA) is a trade organisation set up 30 years ago to look after the interests of the entertainment, conference, architectural and communications industries.

Leading players in the rigging industry asked PLASA to help develop a qualification that met the industry's increased health and safety regulations. PLASA then became an official awarding organisation itself, so that it could create quality-assured qualifications that meet the direct needs of its members.

This means that all the association's members, whatever their size, can get involved in designing qualifications directly relevant and specific to their business.

## What are the benefits of the QCF?

**Units and qualifications in the QCF are beneficial to all of its users as they're:**

- transferable
- flexible
- quality assured
- easy to understand
- geared towards progression.

### **For employers the QCF:**

- actively involves you in deciding what training and education is needed for your industry's future
- enables you to join forces with other employers to create qualifications relevant to your sector
- lets you get your in-house training recognised as a qualification within a national framework
- can be tailored to suit your company's needs – you can get single units of training recognised as well as whole qualifications
- can improve employee satisfaction, motivation and retention, and lead to better trained staff
- increases the quality of your training and assessment
- helps you quickly measure the level and size of prospective employees' achievements
- makes training options and pathways clear, helping you and your employees find the right training for your business and their learning needs
- enables you to target your training to the needs of your employees.

## For learners the QCF:

- enables them to use their learning and achievement towards recognised qualifications that meet industry needs
- allows them to build up all their learning towards units and qualifications, and avoid repeating what they've already learnt
- lets them complete units at a pace and in a way that fits around their home and work lives
- makes it easy to compare how hard each qualification is and how much work it involves
- has smaller steps of learning that make it possible to take new paths to success, either by progressing further with a skill or by changing direction and putting the learning to a new use.



## Where to get more information

To watch an animation on how the QCF works, and for all sorts of other useful information about the new framework, visit [www.qcda.gov.uk/qcf](http://www.qcda.gov.uk/qcf).

Subscribe to monthly email updates at [www.qcda.gov.uk/subscribe](http://www.qcda.gov.uk/subscribe).

If you would like to speak to the QCF team dedicated to helping get employers involved in the QCF, email [recognition@qcda.gov.uk](mailto:recognition@qcda.gov.uk).

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Find out how the QCF is being implemented in Wales and Northern Ireland at:

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