Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales (CQFW)

Content aimed at those working within the education/training and advice and guidance sectors
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Introduction

This e-brochure is designed to provide further information on the Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales (CQFW). Content is aimed at those working within the education/training and advice and guidance sectors.

This is not a regulatory document. The CQFW subscribes to a set of High Level Principles and does not prescribe an approach. Regulatory requirements take precedence and compliance with such requirements will result in qualifications and credit based accredited learning being acknowledged within the CQFW. Where there are variances in requirements across pillars these are clearly outlined.

What is the CQFW?

The CQFW is an all inclusive meta-framework designed to provide greater clarity on the qualifications system in Wales. It includes three pillars of learning, namely – higher education (HE), regulated qualifications which includes vocational and general qualifications and, in Wales, Quality Assured Lifelong Learning (QALL).

The CQFW encompasses a wide range of qualifications and other credit based accredited training that can be awarded to learners undertaking a wide range of learning, covering general and vocational training, including GCSEs, GCE A Levels, Welsh Baccalaureate (Welsh Bacc), specific skills and knowledge based vocational qualifications, vendor qualifications, Adult and Community lifelong learning, company training, voluntary sector training and all areas of higher education, including Degrees, Masters, postgraduate studies/programmes and Doctorates. Please see the CQFW Fan diagram on page 4 and Pillars diagram on page 5 for further information.

The CQFW is managed by a strategic operational partnership comprising the Welsh Government, Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) and Qualifications Wales. Other external agencies, awarding bodies, HE and training providers will be invited to join the Advisory Group as appropriate. All partners are supportive of the CQFW in aiding transparency and assisting learners in planning their progression pathways.

THE CQFW:

• IS an enabling tool in relation to Welsh Government’s economic and skills policies and goals
• OFFERS a national qualifications framework for learners in Wales of all ages and abilities
• PROVIDES a common currency for learning achievement
• SUPPORTS the recognition of credit and qualifications across all levels, enabling learners to progress
• FACILITATES providers to articulate pathways of progression that are easily understood and are transferable and consistent within Europe and the wider International community.
CQFW Fan diagram 2017

The Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales is a fully inclusive learning framework. The Levels capture all learning from the very initial stages (Entry 1, 2 & 3) to the most advanced (Level 8).

The Fan diagram below illustrates the levels and examples of qualifications and learning provision that are included in it.

For further details:
Visit: [www.cqfw.net](http://www.cqfw.net) or email CQFW.enquiries@gov.wales
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Credit & Qualifications Framework for Wales (CQFW) Governance 2017

**WELSH GOVERNMENT**
Oversight of the QALL Pillar

**QUALIFICATIONS WALES**
Oversight of the Regulated Pillar

**HEFCW**
Oversight of the Higher Education Pillar

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Welsh Government
Responsibility for CQFW Management and Governance Arrangements and EU VET

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CQFW Advisory Group
Annual review of the CQFW and its objectives

Membership: Welsh Government, Qualifications Wales, HEFCW, Careers Wales, ColegauCymru, Federation of Awarding Bodies, NUS Wales, Social Care Wales, National Training Federation for Wales and other potential partners to be agreed e.g. WLGA, NHS Wales, ACL Network.
History of the CQFW

The CQFW was formally adopted by the Welsh Government in 2002 and was launched in 2003. The implementation phase ran from 2003 to 2014.

Review of the CQFW

In July 2014, the Welsh Government commissioned and published a Review of the CQFW which made ten recommendations. It also identified the benefits of the CQFW as a tool for acknowledging learning outside more traditional areas, providing clarity, clearer pathways for progression and accrediting smaller volumes of learning. The review acknowledged that the CQFW supports the European Union Vocational Education and Training initiatives. See www.skillsforeurope.uk.

Operational Objectives

The CQFW Advisory Group agrees operational objectives www.cqfw.net on an annual basis.

Progression

The CQFW fan diagram illustrates the levels and examples of qualifications and learning provision.

Qualification frameworks are designed to help the learner and others make informed decisions about learning and potential progression pathways from one level to the next and to different types of learning, e.g. work based learning to further education to higher education. The levels capture all the learning from the initial stages (Entry) to the most advanced (Level 8), and are mapped to levels within the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) www.ec.europa.eu/ploteus/en.

When interpreting the CQFW it is important to note that whilst qualifications that share the same level are broadly similar in terms of the demand, complexity and learner autonomy, they can be very different in terms of content, duration and volume/size. Similarly, qualifications with different credit ratings can be of broadly similar demand.

Relationship between CQFW and Europe (Bologna, EQF)

Over recent years, CQFW partners have developed close working links with UK and EU colleagues towards mutual recognition and transferability of achievements using the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) www.ec.europa.eu/ploteus/en as the shared benchmark.

The EQF outlines an overarching framework and serves to show comparisons between different qualifications systems and their levels. It aims to improve the transparency, comparability and portability of qualifications and promote geographical and labour market mobility and lifelong learning. It has eight levels described through learning outcomes. Significant work has been done towards ensuring that the CQFW aligns with the EQF.

Links to the Bologna Process are via the HE sector and it has been verified that the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (FHEQ) is compatible with the Framework for
Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area, in particular relating to quality assurance, use of learning outcomes and formal/non-formal learning.

PDF resources on the Bologna Process:
- QAA
- EHEA
- UK HE Europe Unit

Recognition of prior learning (RPL)

Recognition of prior learning (RPL) is a method of assessment that considers whether a learner can demonstrate that they can meet the assessment requirements for learning through knowledge, understanding or skills they already possess and do not need to develop through a course of learning. It is one method of enabling individuals to claim credit where learning has taken place in the past. The terms recognition of prior learning (RPL), accreditation of prior learning (APL) and accreditation of prior experience (APEL) are used interchangeably.

Recognition of prior learning:
- is a valid method of enabling individuals to claim credit for learning irrespective of how their learning took place
- policies, processes, procedures, practices and decisions should be transparent, rigorous, reliable and fair and accessible to all learners
- is a learner-centred voluntary process. The learner should be offered advice on the nature and range of evidence considered appropriate to support credit through RPL
- the process of assessment is subject to the same quality assurance and monitoring standards as any other form of assessment
- assessment methods must be of equal rigour as other assessment methods, fit for purpose and relate to the evidence of learning
- helps to avoid the duplication and repetition of learning.

RPL is a benefit to:

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<tr>
<th><strong>Learners</strong></th>
<th><strong>Employers</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>Recognises skills and/or knowledge already gained</td>
<td>Fills skills gaps and shortages</td>
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<tr>
<td>Avoids duplicating learning</td>
<td>Validates on the job learning</td>
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<td>Boosts self esteem</td>
<td>Shows commitment to workforce development</td>
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<tr>
<td>Checks if skills are up-to-date</td>
<td>Checks knowledge, skills and competence of employees</td>
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Whilst the CQFW recognises the importance and benefits of RPL, there is currently no formal RPL policy in Wales. CQFW Competent Bodies (see page 22 for further information) should have established policies and practices in place in relation to RPL.
CQFW common values

The CQFW embraces the following concepts.

- Expression of achievement as learning outcomes.
- The demands made by that learning on the learner (level).
- Credit values can be applied.

Together, they create a model which can embrace and underpin all styles/types of learning in all sections of education and training.

High Level Principles

In order to be acknowledged within the CQFW, learning provision must be developed in accordance with its High Level Principles.

The application of the High Level Principles permits a degree of flexibility, to allow agencies across the three pillars to apply them within their own context. For example:

- Qualifications include learning outcomes, although agencies can deviate from this term by calling them something else.
- Vocational learning provision will normally be developed using recognised standards, for example, National Occupational Standards (NOS) for Vocational Qualifications and Specification of Apprenticeships Standards for Wales (SASW) Apprenticeship Frameworks where they exist. Where they do not, industry and professional or other standards may be used as an alternative.
High Level Principle 1: Credit

Credit is a measure of the notional* learning time which may be assigned to a set of learning outcomes. Credit may be awarded to a learner in recognition of the achievement of designated learning outcomes at a specified credit level. The amount of credit attributed is based upon an estimation of the learning time it would take the average learner to achieve the learning outcomes specified.

* Notional learning time is the estimated number of hours which a typical learner (at a particular level) will spend on all of the learning activities required to achieve the specified learning outcomes at that level. It includes teaching contact time (lectures, workshops etc.), time spent on preparing and carrying out assessments (exams, coursework etc.) and time spent on private study.

1 credit is awarded for every 10 hours of learning time at a specified level.

In particular circumstances credit can be combined or utilised as RPL over a period of time to build into qualifications.

Gaining credit is dependent upon the learner completing assessment based learning outcomes, such as practical work, essays, presentations, reports, portfolios, project work, examinations or other relevant pieces of work.

Credit value

Learning may identify a credit value which specifies the number of credits that will be awarded to a learner who has achieved the specified learning outcomes of the unit.

Credit value must be based on:

- one credit for those learning outcomes achievable in 10 hours of learning
- learning time being defined as the time taken by learners at the level of the unit, on average, to complete the learning outcome of the unit to the standard determined by the assessment criteria
- the credit value remaining constant, regardless of the method of assessment used.

The minimum credit value that may be determined by a unit is one, and credits must be awarded in whole numbers.

Credit Value Definition

Credit value is equal to:

\[
\text{Credit value} = \frac{\text{Learning time (hours)}}{10}
\]

For example:

40 hours learning @ credit Level 2

\[
\frac{40}{10} = 4 \text{ credits @ Level 2}
\]

The award of credit

Credit can be awarded for the achievement of learning outcomes that have been verified through the appropriate rules, regulations and assessment for each of the pillars. This is done through the achievement of units certificated through a regulated recognised body.
High Level Principle 2: Learning time

Learning time is defined as the time taken by the learners at the level of the learning, on average, to complete the learning outcomes to the standard determined by the assessment criteria. It takes account of all learning not just contact time and/or guided learning.

For regulated qualifications learning time is expressed as ‘Total Qualification Time’ in addition to ‘Guided Learning Hours’.

High Level Principle 3: Recognised Standards

All learning must be based on recognised standards or criteria. This will ensure that the resulting assessment focuses on the appropriate knowledge, skills and understanding which, applied together, form the competence required by employers for certain roles and functions.

Learning that assesses the knowledge and skills specified for Vocational Qualifications and SASW apprenticeship frameworks must be developed using National Occupational Standards (NOS) where they exist, or industry or professional standards where they do not. Any learning that does not have such standards must be developed in association with experts from the relevant sector.

Underpinning vocational learning and apprenticeships via UK-wide standards provides portability and mobility for employers and learners across sectors, regions and nations. NOS can be accessed using the following link: ukstandards.org.uk

High Level Principle 4: Levels/Level Descriptors

Level is an indicator of the relative demand, complexity and depth of learning. Learning autonomy and accountability is also a component part of learning within the HE and QALL pillars.

The CQFW incorporates nine levels:

- Entry level, which is banded into three sub-levels
- Levels 1-8

The levels are differentiated by sets of level descriptors and are aligned to the European Qualifications Frameworks (EQF) levels.

Level descriptors are the agreed generic descriptions of the relative demand, complexity and depth of learning at each level. The CQFW maps to the level descriptors of the EQF and embraces the level descriptors used within other UK qualification frameworks. Assigning a level to learning is undertaken by referencing the learning outcomes and assessment criteria against the level descriptors.

For the regulated pillar, awarding bodies may reference the CQFW level descriptors linked to autonomy and accountability. Such reference must be in addition to, and not instead of the level descriptors outlined in Qualifications Wales ‘Qualifications and Component Levels’ www.qualificationswales.org.
High Level Principle 5: Title
The title must be clear, concise and reflect the content of the learning and be meaningful in its own right. Useful, precise titles are important and easier to find.

N.B. additional requirements are asked of awarding bodies in relation to the titles of regulated qualifications.

High Level Principle 6: Purpose
All learning must express its purpose for the learner and must contain one of the purposes stated below.

- Recognise personal growth and engagement in learning
- Prepare for further learning or training and/or develop knowledge and/or skills in the same or another subject area
- Prepare for employment
- Confirm occupational competence and/or ‘licence to practise’ (to perform a supporting role in the workplace)
- Updating and continuing professional development (CPD).

N.B. Additional requirements are asked of awarding bodies in relation to the purpose of regulated qualifications.

High Level Principle 7: Learning outcomes
Learning outcomes are statements of the knowledge, skills and understanding which will be assessed as part of a learning experience. Learning outcomes are supported by assessment criteria. These are used for judging whether the outcome has been achieved.

- For every learning outcome, assessment criteria is usually specified either as an integral part of the outcome statement or separately.
- Learning outcomes will usually specify the minimum achievement required at the point of assessment.

High Level Principle 8: Assessment criteria
Assessment criteria are descriptions of what the learner is expected to achieve in order to demonstrate that a learning outcome has been met. It is the responsibility of the competent body to have established policies and practices in place in relation to assessment and standards.

Assessment criteria would ordinarily:

- specify the standard a learner is expected to meet to demonstrate that the learning outcomes have been achieved
- relate to an individual learning outcome in language consistent with it
- are sufficiently detailed to support reliable, valid and consistent judgments that a learning outcome has been achieved, without creating an undue burden for learners or assessors
- do not include any explicit references to the methods or instruments of assessment to be used.

For some learning, assessor requirements should also be in place, for example, in order to protect vulnerable learners.
### Higher Education Pillar

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### Universities in Wales

Higher education in Wales is offered mainly through Wales’ eight universities – HEIs, and the Open University in Wales.

HE provision is also offered in a number of further education colleges.

Visit [www.hefcw.ac.uk](http://www.hefcw.ac.uk)

1. Aberystwyth University  
   [www.studyinwales.ac.uk/university/aberystwyth-university/](http://www.studyinwales.ac.uk/university/aberystwyth-university/)

2. Bangor University  
   [www.studyinwales.ac.uk/university/bangor-university/](http://www.studyinwales.ac.uk/university/bangor-university/)

3. Cardiff University and University of South Wales (Cardiff campus)  
   [www.studyinwales.ac.uk/university/cardiff-university/](http://www.studyinwales.ac.uk/university/cardiff-university/)  
   [www.southwales.ac.uk/](http://www.southwales.ac.uk/)

4. Glyndwr University  
   [www.studyinwales.ac.uk/university/glyndwr-university/](http://www.studyinwales.ac.uk/university/glyndwr-university/)

5. Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama  

6. University of Wales Trinity Saint David (Swansea campus)  

7. Swansea University  
   [www.studyinwales.ac.uk/university/swansea-university/](http://www.studyinwales.ac.uk/university/swansea-university/)

8. University of Wales Trinity Saint David (Carmarthen campus)  
9. University of South Wales  
   (Treforest/Pontypridd/Merthyr Tydfil campus)  
   www.southwales.ac.uk/

10. Cardiff Metropolitan University  
    www.studyinwales.ac.uk/  
    university/cardiff-metropolitan-university/

11. University of Wales Trinity Saint David (Lampeter campus)  
    www.studyinwales.ac.uk/  
    university/university-of-wales-trinity-saint-david/

12. University of South Wales  
    (Newport campus)  
    www.southwales.ac.uk/

N.B. The Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama is part of the University of South Wales.

Outline of HE system in Wales

Higher education is a devolved area, which means that most decisions about HE policy in Wales are taken by the Welsh Government.

HEIs are private bodies which are independent of government. They can receive their funding from a number of sources – from student fees, through research projects, and business generation. They also receive a portion of their income from public funds. HEFCW distributes these funds from Welsh Government and acts as an intermediary between HE and the Government.

The Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) is a Welsh Government Sponsored body, and regulates fee levels at universities, ensures a framework is in place for assessing the quality of higher education and scrutinises the performance of universities and other designated providers.


CQFW www.gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/qualificationsinwales/creditqualificationsframework/?lang=en

UCAS www.ucas.com/

The CQFW may be described as a national qualifications framework which facilitates links with the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ).

Types of learning available in HE

HE in Wales provides learning programmes (including research opportunities) in a wide range of academic and vocationally oriented subject areas which lead to qualifications such as HNCs, HNDs, Certificate of HE, Foundation Degrees, Bachelor Degrees, Masters, Postgraduate Certificates/Diplomas, Doctorates.

All higher education institutions in Wales are signed up to the CQFW. It allows learners/students to gain credit and accumulate credits to gain qualifications.
The Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) guidance

This guidance is about the implementation of the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (FHEQ). The FHEQ acknowledges that it is a constituent part of The Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales (CQFW).


It applies to Degrees, Diplomas, Certificates and other academic awards (other than Honorary Degrees and Higher Doctorates) granted by a higher education provider in the exercise of its degree awarding powers. The framework is an important reference point for providers of HE.

The document identifies the purposes and benefits of credit and credit frameworks, pointing out their potential roles in supporting progression into and within higher education, and transfer between programmes, by indicating the volume and intellectual demand of learning.

The FHEQ framework:

- comprises a table of the credit values typically associated with the design of programmes leading to the main HE qualifications in England; these are expressed, for each qualification, both as the minimum total credits and the minimum credits at the level of the award

- includes the England, Wales and Northern Ireland generic credit level descriptors which may be used as a reference point.

The document refers to national contexts within the UK and also international aspects, describing the relationship between UK credit and the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System. The relationships between credit and qualifications frameworks and the setting and assuring of academic standards are also discussed.
Regulated Qualifications Pillar

Qualifications Wales is the independent regulator of non-degree qualifications and the regulated qualifications system in Wales. For further information see Qualifications Wales.

www.qualificationswales.org

Overview of the system

The regulated pillar identifies general and vocational education and training leading to regulated qualifications:

- Entry level qualifications
- Essential Skills qualifications
- General qualifications (GCSEs, AS/A levels)
- Vocational qualifications
- Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification (Welsh Bacc).

Vocational qualifications are classified as IVET and CVET (initial and continuing vocational education and training).

Regulated qualifications are categorised as approved, designated or other regulated.
Approved Qualifications are defined as:
Regulated qualifications eligible for use on publicly funded programmes of learning that are approved under Part 4 of the Qualifications Wales Act 2015, awarded in Wales and that have met approval criteria. Approved qualifications will have been allocated an identified approval number.

Designated Qualifications are defined as:
Regulated qualifications that are designated as eligible for use on publicly funded programmes of learning for learners under the age of 19, as defined under section 29 of the Qualifications Wales Act.

Other regulated qualifications
Are those qualifications awarded in Wales by recognised awarding bodies, which have not been designated or approved by Qualifications Wales, and which awarding bodies have not surrendered from the scope of their recognition.

The regulatory system in Wales operates on an opt-out basis.
All qualifications offered by a recognised awarding body are therefore regulated unless they have been exempted from regulation, or because recognition for a qualification or qualification type has subsequently been surrendered by the awarding body.

In practice this means that all qualifications offered by recognised awarding bodies are regulated and therefore subject to the Standard Conditions of Recognition unless Qualifications Wales has been informed by awarding bodies that specific qualifications should be excluded. For further information www.qualificationswales.org/regulation/awarding-body-recognition/?lang=en
Audiences and providers
The provision covered in the regulatory pillar is available for full-time and part-time learners, work based learners and apprentices.

Awarding bodies
Awarding bodies develop and award qualifications to meet the needs of learners, employers and other stakeholders. They can be:

- registered charities
- chartered institutes
- commercial businesses
- employers who have established their own awarding body
- small sector specific bodies or large cross-sectoral bodies.

Awarding bodies focus on:

- developing qualifications that meet the needs of employers and learners
- approving centres and working with them to ensure high-quality assessment of qualifications
- carrying out activity designed to assure the quality of the qualifications awarded
- developing innovative products and services to support their centres and learners.
Recognition, Approval and Designation

Many awarding bodies are ‘recognised’ by the UK regulatory organisations in Wales, Scotland, England and Northern Ireland. In order to offer regulated qualifications in Wales an awarding body must be recognised by Qualifications Wales. Before an awarding body can be recognised, it must meet Qualifications Wales’ statutory recognition criteria, and, once recognised, must demonstrate ongoing compliance with the Standard Conditions of Recognition.

Qualifications Wales approves and designates qualifications that awarding bodies wish to be eligible for funding for learners under the age of 19 in Wales, against specified criteria. Approved qualifications are usually only awarded in Wales and will have met approval criteria that ensure they meet the needs of learners in Wales. Designated qualifications are not necessarily unique to Wales and are usually available to learners in other countries of the UK.

Related organisations

The Federation of Awarding Bodies (FAB) is a trade association, representing organisations that award vocational qualifications in the United Kingdom. It represents the interests of over 110 awarding bodies by liaising with key stakeholders including the regulators, government departments and funding agencies. It provides information, advice and guidance to its members to support them in providing high-quality and valued vocational qualifications. See the FAB website www.awarding.org.uk/ for more information.

The Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) is a membership organisation representing the seven largest awarding bodies offering qualifications in the UK, including GCSEs, A levels as well as vocational qualifications. See the JCQ website www.jcq.org.uk/.
QALL Pillar

The focus of the QALL pillar is to acknowledge and accredit learning provision from outside of the HE and regulated qualifications pillars of the CQFW. It is about free-standing units of achievement. It does not stipulate how units of achievement should be combined, nor does it specify that units will lead to qualifications. If organisations wish to design units into qualifications, then the expectations of regulation would be applied to the qualifications submitted for consideration as part of either the HE or the Regulated pillar, depending on the type of qualification.

Vendor/Industry/Professional (VIP) learning includes provision such as vendor/professional courses, continuing personal and professional development – delivered by higher education (HE) and further education (FE) institutions, training providers, professional bodies and vendor bodies. Such provision tends to be stipulated by employers who require the workforce to undertake sector/industry specific training as part of ongoing professional development.

Unitised accredited learning (UAL) comprises small bite-sized QALL units – delivered by FE/HE institutions, third sector organisations, training providers and employers. It is generally undertaken by learners on short introductory or refresher courses, for the purposes of either personal development or to improve their occupational competencies.

Informal learning is outside of the scope of the CQFW, as by its nature it does not comply with the high level principles. It is generally referred to as learning by experience, e.g. through social interaction – learning by ‘pitching in’, getting involved in a task/activity. Frequently, it occurs ‘accidentally’ and is unplanned. It has no set objectives in terms of learning outcomes.

QALL Curriculum planning benefits

- A way of reducing duplication of training/repetition of learning by using QALL units to acknowledge the learning and skills acquired through the award of credit.
- The quality endorsement of the content and level of the unit, its delivery and assessment through awarded credit.
- Allows a wider range of accredited provision to meet specific learning needs, for example units can be brought together from unitised accredited learning and vendor/industry/professional learning to create a rational programme of study.
- Enables providers to develop innovative and quality assured curriculum offers for non-traditional groups, e.g. those not in employment, education or training group (NEETs).
- Where units are common to a range of qualifications, this enables planning and delivery of an individual unit/units to learners who are following different pathways and/or programmes of learning.

Work-based learning providers can design programmes to meet individual needs by selecting units from vendor/industry/professional and unitised accredited learning and perhaps from a higher or lower level, as appropriate.
Unitised Accredited Learning

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<th>Quality Assured Lifelong Learning</th>
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<tr>
<td>Example type of learning</td>
<td>CQFW units of credit</td>
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<tr>
<td>Information source</td>
<td>Lifelong learning units on HEI, FEI and AB websites</td>
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<td>Oversight</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Unitised accredited learning (UAL) is unit-based provision which is based upon assessment evidence and has a credit value. This can be applied to many learning environments, such as:

- in-house company training
- adult and community learning, including learning to assist adults to return to learning
- introductory or additional learning undertaken by all types of learners that might help them to progress in the same or another subject or move into regulated units or qualifications
- learning which is additional to qualifications
- training the individual might do as part of a job which is not formally recognised currently
- specialist, hobby-based learning provided by a variety of organisations, such as libraries, museums, unions and voluntary organisations.

The UAL pillar facilitates development of direct relationships between FEIs/HEIs/awarding bodies and employers and learners. Any UAL provision that is available should be accessed via the relevant Awarding Body or HE/FE provider.

Units

A unit (sometimes called module) of learning is a coherent combination of learning outcomes, plus assessment criteria that have been given a level and credit value. A unit must contain at least one learning outcome and at least one assessment criterion, and be equivalent to a minimum of 10 hours of learning. The CQFW makes no determination of the maxima, though curriculum designers and recognised bodies must bear in mind the practicalities of delivery, assessment and quality assurance arrangements.
Each unit or module of learning can only be assigned to one credit level. Units can be delivered and assessed independently, or brought together through structures to create a rational programme of study or qualification.

CQFW UAL unit specification:
- Unit title and Unit level
- Credit value
- Recognised body unique unit reference number
- Regulated qualification/unit reference number (where applicable)
- Review date
- Last registration date (where appropriate)
- Purpose/aim
- Unit content:
  - learning outcomes
  - assessment criteria
- List of qualification(s)/programmes (where appropriate) and whether the unit forms part of one or more regulated qualification
- Sector
- Sub-sector
- Sector subject code explanation
- Any age restriction applicable to the unit achievement
- Mapping to NOS or other professional standards (where applicable).

Audiences and providers

Audiences interested in stand-alone units of accredited learning may include employees undertaking continuous professional development, either in-house or externally led to enhance their workplace skills and knowledge, those returning to learning in preparation for re-entering employment, adult and community learners and those who may take up programmes of special personal interest.

Accredited learning programmes may be delivered by employers, HEIs, FEIs, private training providers and third sector organisations.

CQFW Competent Bodies

Unitised accredited learning will only be recognised within the CQFW if it has been developed by a CQFW ‘competent body’. Within the bounds of the UAL pillar, a competent body is deemed to be any UK regulated awarding body (that is recognised by a UK qualifications regulator) or a Further Education Institution or Higher Education Institution in Wales, which is recognised to credit-rate and award unitised accredited learning programmes.

Organisations that are not CQFW ‘competent bodies’ but wish to provide UAL are advised to build relationships with existing CQFW competent bodies.
Quality assurance

It is important to note that there is no regulatory process in place for UAL learning. CQFW competent bodies should undertake to adopt the CQFW high level principles and will determine the appropriate quality assurance arrangements for the learning. This decentralises the responsibility of recognition and provides greater flexibility and a more responsive approach for engaging learners.

Case studies and examples


- P 75: Case Study 3: Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board: using CQFW project in NHS Wales (Mental Health and Learning Disabilities), 2013.
- P 80: Case Study 5: Clwyd Alyn Association, 2013.
Vendor/Industry/Professional learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Assured Lifelong Learning</th>
<th>Vendor/Industry/Professional Learning</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Example type of learning</td>
<td>Vendor/Professional courses, Continuous Personal and Professional Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information source</td>
<td>Professional Body websites, University websites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delivery</td>
<td>HEIs, FEIs, Training Providers, Professional Bodies, Vendor Bodies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Standards</td>
<td>NOS, Industry/Professional Standards</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quality assurance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Awarded by</td>
<td>HEI or Awarding Body, Professional Body, Vendor Body</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guidance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oversight</td>
<td>Sector, Industry or Professional Body</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overview of competent authorities

There are approximately 100 known ‘competent authorities’ who regulate in the region of 600 professions within the EU.

Sector Representative Bodies

Sector representative bodies are independent, employer-led UK wide organisations. They aim to develop high quality skills standards with employers which support productivity, profitability, growth and enhance competitiveness in the UK and overseas markets.

Sector representative bodies work with employers of all sizes from across the UK to define:

- occupational standards and job competencies. These are used in many different ways by employers.
- the qualifications which make up an apprenticeship framework. This framework is then used by employers to enable them to select the qualification structure most appropriate for each individual apprentice.
- skills needs and skills standards in their industry.
Wales/UK professional bodies and trade associations

There are many trade associations and professional bodies operating in Wales. A trade association, also known as an industry trade group, is an organisation founded and funded by businesses that operate in a specific industry.

A professional association (also called a professional body, professional organisation, or professional society) is a non-profit organisation seeking to further a particular profession, the interests of individuals engaged in that profession, and the public interest.

Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) are organisations which are authorised to accredit, approve or recognise specific programmes, some of which have a statutory or regulatory responsibility, and/or can determine the academic standards and professional or vocational components of such programmes.

Quality Assurance

Vendor, industry and professional learning is subject to existing quality assurance developed by the sector or industry body.

Apprenticeships

Sector representative bodies advise employers about the qualifications that are best suited for apprenticeships, and may have available a list of training providers that can deliver those qualifications. In addition to, and in accordance with the Welsh Government’s Apprenticeships Policy, Higher Education Institutions are also involved in the development of higher level and degree apprenticeships.

For more information visit The Federation for Industry Sector Skills and Standards (FISSS) www.fisss.org/.

Standards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National Occupational Standards (NOS)</th>
<th>Industry standards</th>
<th>Professional standards</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Specify UK standards of competent performance that people are expected to achieve in their work, and the knowledge and skills they need to perform. For further information see <a href="http://www.ukstandards.org.uk">www.ukstandards.org.uk</a>.</td>
<td>May be defined as the technical and procedural rules that are generally followed by members of an industry. They govern the way an industry operates. They also refer to the body of knowledge and skills required by employees to operate effectively in a particular area of work.</td>
<td>May be defined as statements of employees’ professional values and ethics, skills, knowledge and understanding required for an occupation. They set out clear expectations about effective practice at each stage of an employee’s career and how the employee should fulfil his/her role effectively.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Quality Assured Lifelong Learning (QALL) Flowchart 2017

Workforce development need identified

Will a full (regulated) qualification meet the need?
- **Y**: Deliver full regulated qualification
- **N**: Will a single or multiple unit/module from an existing regulated qualification meet the need?
  - **Y**: Deliver single or multiple unit/module from regulated qualification
  - **N**: Will a unit/module/programme developed from elements of an existing regulated qualification meet the need?
    - **Y**: Deliver a unit/module/programme from elements of an existing regulated qualification
    - **N**: Can a unit/module/programme be developed from performance and knowledge indicators from NOS to meet the need?
      - **Y**: Develop a unit/module/programme from performance and knowledge indicators from existing NOS
      - **N**: Unit or module developed by a non CQFW competent body* (e.g. in house company training, adult & community learning)

Complies with CQFW High Level Principles and is recognised within the Regulated Pillar

Has it been credit levelled and is it compliant with CQFW High Level Principles?
- **Y**: Complies with CQFW High Level Principles and is recognised within the QALL Pillar
- **N**: Not currently recognised within the CQFW. Contact a CQFW competent body* to apply for credit levelling and assurance of compliance with CQFW High Level Principles.
  - **N**: Contact a regulated Awarding Body if wish to have accredited and ‘badged’

* Within the bounds of the CQFW a competent body is deemed to be any UK regulated Awarding Body or a Further Education Institution or Higher Education Institution in Wales, which is recognised to credit rate and award unitised learning programmes. NOS – National Occupational Standards www.ukstandards.org.uk
Relevant contacts and links

Relevant national organisations and documentation may be accessed via the following links.

- Higher Education Funding Council in Wales (HEFCW)
  www.hefcw.org.uk/

- Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF)
  www.scqf.org.uk/

- Northern Ireland Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA)
  www.ccea.org.uk/

- Quality Assurance Agency (QAA)

- Office of Qualifications and Examination Regulation (OFQUAL)
  www.register.ofqual.gov.uk/

- Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) – Department of Education
  www.qqi.ie

- England: Education and Skills Funding Agency
  www.gov.uk/government/organisations/skills-funding-agency

- Qualifications Wales
  www.qualificationswales.org/

- Credit & Qualifications Framework for Wales (CQFW)
  www.gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/qualificationsinwales/creditqualificationsframework/?lang=en

- Welsh Government
  www.gov.wales/splash?orig=/

- UK Naric
  www.naric.org.uk/naric/

- EQF
  www.ec.europa.eu/ploteus/search/site?f%5B0%5D=im_field_entity_type%3A97

Contact

For further information contact:
cqfw.enquiries@gov.wales