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NATIONAL TRAINING
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Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales (CQFW) Handbook for Work Based Learning (WBL) Providers



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Introduction/Foreword

The Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales (CQFW) was signed off by Welsh Ministers in 2002. In that period what was seen to be “*a visionary intention to embrace all types of learning within a common recognition framework*” has not only become part of the fabric of learning within Wales, but has also informed other UK developments, most notably the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF).

Although credit-based qualifications have been in existence for nearly a generation, the advent of the CQFW in Wales has been seen by many as a key enabler for other Welsh Government policies such as Learning Pathways 14-19, Skills That Work for Wales and For our Future – The 21st Century (HE) Strategy and Plan for Wales. Moreover as we endeavour to engage more individuals into learning in order that they can make a positive contribution to their community and the economy, the advent of flexible “*bite-sized*” learning could herald a new era in the delivery of learning at all levels.

Since my appointment as CQFW Project Co-ordinator for NTfW it has been my greatest pleasure to work with Providers’ from across Wales to fulfil the main aim of the project, which was “*to identify the impact and requirements of Work Based Learning (WBL) Providers, to successfully implement the introduction of the Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales (CQFW).*” During this time, it has become evident to me that the work-based learning sector is best placed to deliver on the aims and aspirations of the CQFW, partly due to our delivery methods but more importantly due to the responsiveness and professionalism of our workforce.

The aim of this resource is to bring together all that has been identified during the lifecycle of the project and to identify current and emerging best-practice in the use of credit-based qualifications across the work-based learning sector. However, as I write this foreword I am mindful that there is a current Review of 14-19 Qualifications in Wales and that the full effects of the Wolf Review, which although an England issue, could have effects in Wales. With these in mind, it is intended that the links in this resource be updated regularly to reflect developments.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who contributed in making this resource a reality. I would like to thank all those Providers’ who gave up their own time to contribute to the Case Studies, and Julie Hanson-Williams who was instrumental in pulling together all of the information into a coherent manner.

Jeff Protheroe

CQFW Project Co-ordinator

How to use this e-book

This e-book is designed to give guidance as to the practical implementation of credit solely in the context of WBL providers.

This document has been setup to provide a reference resource that enables the user to click on navigation links to find the relevant information quickly. As well as next and previous page buttons at the bottom of all pages there are sections navigation links to the top.

A breakdown of the contents are accessible from the top navigation bar and provide links to the each section.

The CQFW Fan Diagram on page 8 is interactive and information for each level can be revealed by selecting the appropriate segment.

The diagram for 'A rough guide to comparing qualifications in the UK and Ireland' on page 10 can be used to compare the qualifications for each of the countries by click on the colour coded blocks to the right, which reveal the appropriate information.

The Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales (CQFW) – What it is

The Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales (CQFW) was established in 2002 to develop and implement common principles and standards to measure, award and compare learning and training achievement across learning from the age of 14.

To avoid any confusion between the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) and the Credit and Qualification Framework for Wales (CQFW), it is important to stress that the QCF is not separate to, but forms part of, the CQFW.

The CQFW embraces all types of learning within a common recognition framework. This allows for a comparison of achievements from different education and training activities, recognition of full and partial completion of qualifications and brings together the vast range of education and training activity within and outside regulatory and funding arrangements.

The CQFW underpins five key goals:

- Enabling everyone to develop and maintain essential skills.
- Encouraging people to become lifelong learners.
- Exploiting the knowledge in business and educational institutions.
- Encouraging business and workers to gain new skills.
- Helping people within their communities to develop new skills.

The CQFW brings all recognised learning into a single unifying structure:

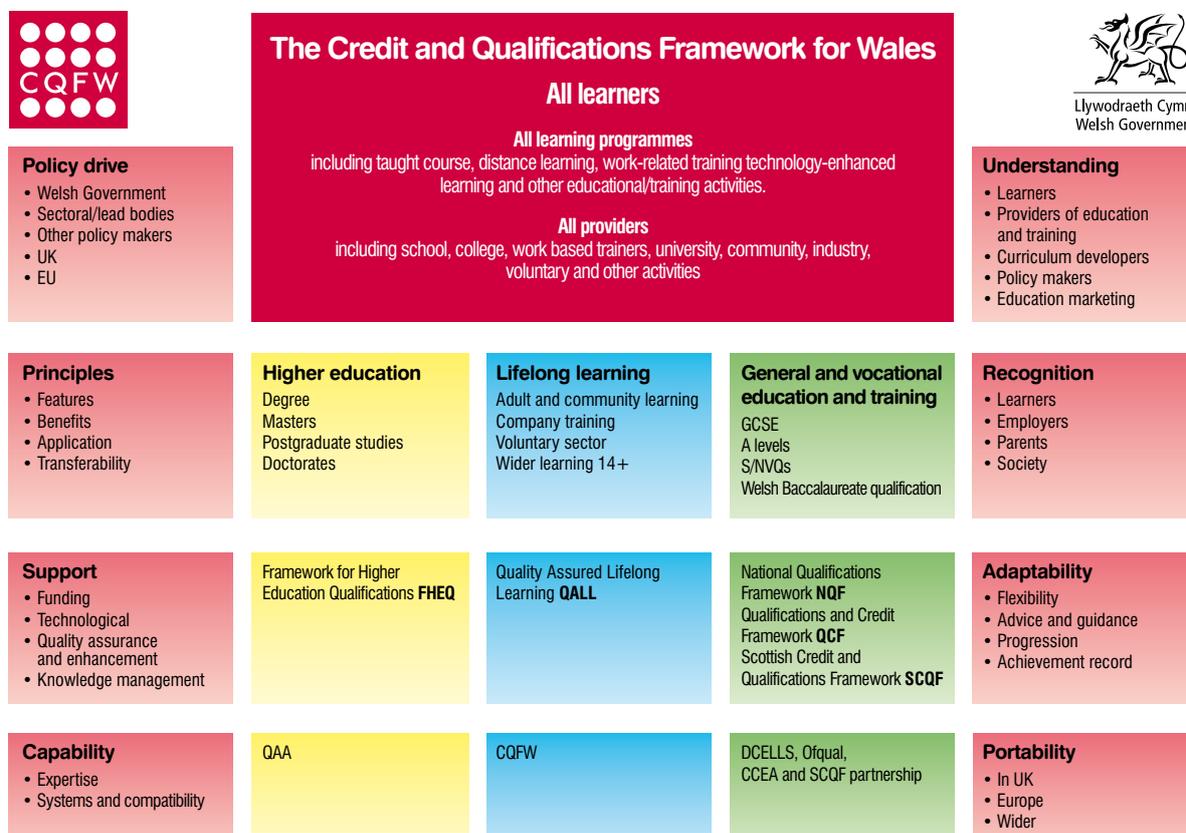


Figure 1: CQFW Structure – Pillars of Learning

The CQFW embraces all credit-based learning recognised within:

- The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications, England, Wales and Northern Ireland (FHEQ EWNI).
- The National Qualifications Framework (NQF), the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) known as the Regulated General and Vocational Education and Training (Regulated GVET).
- Quality Assured Lifelong Learning (QALL) that uniquely in Wales takes place outside the regulated frameworks but is recognised through CQFW quality assurance mechanisms.

In all three contexts, units can be combined together to create a qualification (using rules of combination appropriate to that qualification framework) or a coherent learning programme that meets the individual’s needs or the training requirements associated with a particular job or role.

Credits, Units and Qualifications

Credits

The key distinguishing feature of the CQFW compared to previous qualification frameworks is the use of credit as a currency of achievement. Learners achieve units of learning that are all assigned a credit value (1 Credit = 10 hours of learning). This credit can be accumulated and transferred by the learner, to build over time (and following the Sector Skills Councils’ (SSCs) and Awarding Organisations’ (AOs) agreed Rules of Combination (RoC)) towards a qualification.

Units

Every unit has a credit value indicating roughly how long it takes to complete. Each credit represents around 10 hours’ work, so a unit with a credit value of 5 will take around 50 hours’ work.

Every credit based qualification is made up of a number of units of study. For example, in the certificate in sport and active leisure, there is a unit on how the body works.

Through the CQFW, it is possible for individuals to accumulate credit in small steps by completing units, which can then build up into a full qualification

Different combinations of units can make up the same qualification. However, there are “rules” regarding the combination of mandatory and optional units to complete a qualification – which vary depending upon the qualification and subject area.

These rules have been developed to show which units can be put together to form full qualifications. They have been developed by Sector Skills Councils (SSCs), Awarding Organisations (AOs) and other approved organisations.

One of the key features of credit based qualifications and the “*Rules of Combination*” is the promotion of Credit Accumulation and Transfer (CAT) – enabling learners to transfer credit between qualifications to avoid having to repeat learning, e.g. transferring credits achieved at a lower level to a qualification at a higher level or to an alternative qualification.

Qualifications

Qualifications are made up of a number of units some are mandatory, some are optional, each unit has its own credit value.

To make it easier to understand what a qualification represents, the titles of all vocational qualifications will contain the same three elements – content, level and size:

- The content of subject studied/being studied:
The content tells you what the qualification is about. For example, It might cover retail, or leadership or maybe sport or health and social care.
- The qualification level:
The level explains how challenging the qualification is to achieve. There are nine levels – from Entry Level to Level 8.
- The size of the qualification:
The size tells you approximately how long the qualification will take to complete. There are three sizes of qualification, Award, Certificate and Diploma.

As shown in Figure 3 below, the total credit value of a qualification or unit determines its size.

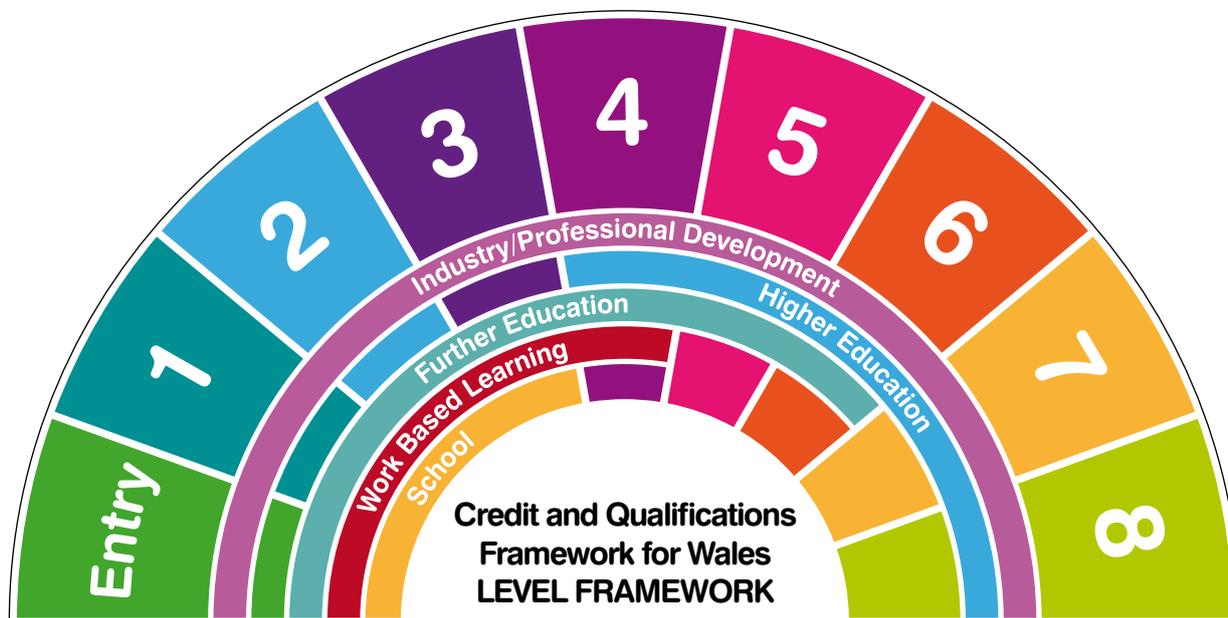


Figure 3: Qualifications Levels And Sizes

Here are some examples of qualification titles, showing how these elements are put together:

- Entry Level Award in An Introduction to the Hair and Beauty Sector (Entry 3)
- Level 1 Certificate in Basic Construction Skills.
- Level 2 Diploma in Health and Social Care.
- Level 3 Award in Colouring Hair.
- Level 4 Diploma in Retail and Merchandising for Fashion.
- Level 5 Certificate in Business Management Studies.
- Level 6 Diploma in Occupational Safety and Health.
- Level 7 Diploma in International Engineering and Manufacturing Management.
- Level 8 Award in Strategic Direction and Leadership.

Figure 2: CQFW “Fan Diagram” - Learning and Progression Routes



The European Qualifications Framework

Further to the development of the CQFW within Wales, a European wide initiative was launched some years ago to attempt to achieve a common approach to qualifications throughout all member countries.

Part of the concept was to ensure that qualifications could be portable, relevant and understood in each member country thus promoting mobility of labour and avoiding the need to re-qualify.

At the same time the qualifications would focus directly on the skills that employers want and be fit for purpose irrespective of the size of the organisation. The qualifications would also be designed in such a way to promote flexibility for individual learners so that they are able to learn in a way most suitable to them and importantly remove the need for them to repeat any part of a qualification already successfully completed.

The European Qualifications Framework (EQF)

The EQF is a common European reference framework which links countries' qualifications systems together in order to make qualifications more readable and understandable across different countries and systems in Europe.

Qualifications Can Cross Boundaries

To enable learners (and others) to identify how qualifications from the CQFW can “*translate*” to other countries' qualifications frameworks, the following leaflet has been produced (<http://www.ofqual.gov.uk/files/2009-03-qualifications-can-cross-boundaries.pdf>)

A rough guide to comparing qualifications in the UK and Ireland

Main stages of education/employment	Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales www.cqfw.net
	Level
Professional or postgraduate education, research or employment	8 Doctoral Degrees
Higher education Advanced skills training	7 Master's Degrees, Integrated Master's Degrees, Postgraduate Diplomas, Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE), Postgraduate Certificates
Entry to professional graduate employment	6 Bachelor's Degrees with Honours, Bachelor's Degrees, Professional Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE), Graduate Diplomas, Graduate Certificates
Specialised education and training	5 Foundation Degrees, Diplomas of Higher Education (DipHE), Higher National Diplomas (HND)
Qualified/Skilled worker Entry to higher education Completion of secondary education	4 Higher National Certificates (HNC), Certificates of Higher Education (CertHE), NVQ level 4, Essential Skills Wales (ESW), Wider Key Skills (WKS), Higher Apprenticeship Framework
Progression to skilled employment. Continuation of secondary education	3 NVQ Level 3, ESW, WKS, Vocational Qualifications Level 3, GCE AS and A Level, Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification Advanced, Apprenticeships Framework
Secondary education. Initial entry into employment or further education	2 NVQ Level 2, Vocational Qualifications Level 2, Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification Intermediate, GCSEs grade A*-C, ESW, WKS, Foundation Apprenticeship Framework
Qualifications can be taken at any age in order to continue or return to education or training	1 NVQ Level 1, ESW, WKS, Vocational Qualifications Level 1, GCSEs at grade D-G, Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification Foundation
	Entry Entry Level Qualifications, ESW

To view a comparison of qualifications around the UK click the links below:

The Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales (CQFW) – What it does

The credit-based format of CQFW encourages the development of qualifications and programmes of learning that are both relevant to learners and that support progression in a clearly understandable format for both the learner and the employer. The infrastructure of the CQFW provides flexibility, choice and progression, through:

- Recognition of achievement through the award of credit for units and qualifications.
- Enabling learners to build up qualifications through accumulating learning achievement (credits) towards a qualification or learning programme.
- Providing multiple routes to vocational qualifications.
- Helping learners achieve the skills and qualifications that employers need.
- Ensuring that vocational qualifications are more responsive to the needs of employers and learners.

The CQFW is unique to Wales and embraces:

- All learning programmes including taught courses, distance learning, work related learning, community related learning and other education/training activities.
- All providers including schools, colleges, work-based learning providers, community-based providers, industry, voluntary and other bodies offering learning or training.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

The 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 a unit through knowledge, understanding or skills they already possess and do not need to develop through a course of learning” (Ofqual).

Individuals can gain skills, knowledge and understanding in a variety of ways other than formal education, for example through practice within the workplace or through leisure activities. Learners could have their previous qualifications, skills, experience and understanding formally recognised. If learners can show that they have certain competencies, with appropriate evidence (valid, reliable, sufficient and current), they are not required to re-learn these or be assessed again.

Awareness and interest in RPL have been raised with the introduction of credit-based qualifications and many WBL providers recognise the increased opportunities to engage or re-engage potential learners.

RPL and Credit

- The introduction of credit facilitates the RPL process (it is easier to do this at unit level).
- All units in qualifications that are recognised in the credit framework are written with learning outcomes and assessment criteria which facilitate the use of RPL.
- RPL is obligatory for any qualification in the credit framework: it is part of the regulatory framework to ensure learners have prior learning formally recognised.
- All Awarding Organisations (AOs) within the UK require approved centres to offer RPL to any learner registered for an appropriate qualification.
- Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) and Awarding Organisations (AOs) issue guidance on how RPL is to be used in particular occupational areas or for particular qualifications.

Benefits of RPL

- Enables prior learning to be formally recognised. This can be particularly useful for employees/ redundant workers who have skills, experience and knowledge gained through their job role and/or in-house training but who do not hold any formal qualifications. Using RPL perhaps combined with some training, can:
- Enable their skills and experience to be formally recognised.
- Assist them to gain formal qualifications.
- Improve their job prospects.
- Enhance their chances of promotion.
- Enable them to change employment/career path.
- Eliminates repetition of learning (minimises duplication of training).
- Enables identification of gaps in skills, knowledge or understanding in relation to a particular qualification (can be used to support individual further development and/or improvement).
- Can reduce the amount of learning time and speed up the process of gaining a qualification (enables learners to fast-track).
- Enables individuals to take their learning further (for example, to another alternative unit, to a full qualification or to study at a higher level).

Good Practice

The introduction of credit at Powys Training has facilitated the recognition of prior learning (RPL) process and provided clear advantages in respect of the promotion of credit accumulation and transfer (CAT).

The ITQ now offers over 80 subject options across 3 levels. Learners may choose units from the ITQ framework and/or incorporate selected units/credits from other sectors.

This provides flexibility of choice, enabling learners to select a range of units from across the levels, building personalised qualifications which meet their needs and which are appropriate to their job role. The assessor works closely with each individual learner to select appropriate units and qualifications and an informed learning programme is drawn up which assists individual progression aims.

Good Practice

RPL has been built into Acorn Learning Solutions' initial assessment procedures to identify training that a learner has previously received in order to:

- Eliminate duplication.
- Accredite prior training.
- Identify any gaps.

Training/assessment of the gaps then takes place. This provides opportunities for accreditation through RPL of whole frameworks and in some instances learners can be registered and certificated on the same day.

Accrediting “in-house” Learning

A key opportunity for WBL providers in Wales is the ability to obtain recognition of in-house training undertaken by employers and other organisations through the Quality Assured Lifelong Learning (QALL) pillar. This presents opportunities for WBL providers to work even more closely with employers to develop their in-house programmes by examining relevant Sector Skills Councils’ (SSCs) assessment strategies and Awarding Organisations’ (AOs) qualification guidance to develop new delivery models which are fit for purpose.



Good Practice

Acorn Learning Solutions has maximised opportunities to respond to employer needs by putting employers in the “*driving seat*”.

Opportunities have been provided for the employer to have their high quality in-house staff training nationally recognised. Acorn train the employer to deliver and assess employees/learners, with Acorn providing administrative support; this ensures that delivery and training meets the employer’s assessment needs and standards.



Good Practice

North Wales Training has worked with the Local Authority to tailor-make qualifications for refuse collectors by offering team leading and management units – this would not have been possible prior to the implementation of credit.



Good Practice

ISA Training has taken steps to raise awareness of credit with both its learners and employers with whom it works. An exciting and innovative current development is the design of a new accredited programme within the Hairdressing sector aimed at learners completing Apprenticeships. Working closely with the NTfW and Awarding Organisations, arrangements are at the developmental stage at present.

The Learning Records Service

The Learning Records Service helps streamline how individual learning and achievement information is collected, handled and shared across the education sector. The Learning Records Service “is built on the principle of collect once, use many times and used by all that are entitled to do so. It supports the whole of the education sector” and “is designed to support learners at all levels to access, manage and use their own achievement information - such as qualifications, awards or training received as they progress through education, training and lifelong learning”.

The Learning Records Service will gather information and data through:

- The Learning Provider Register (LPR) and Provider Reference Numbers (UKPRNs).
- The Learner Register: Unique Learner Number (ULN) and Personal Learning Record (PLR).

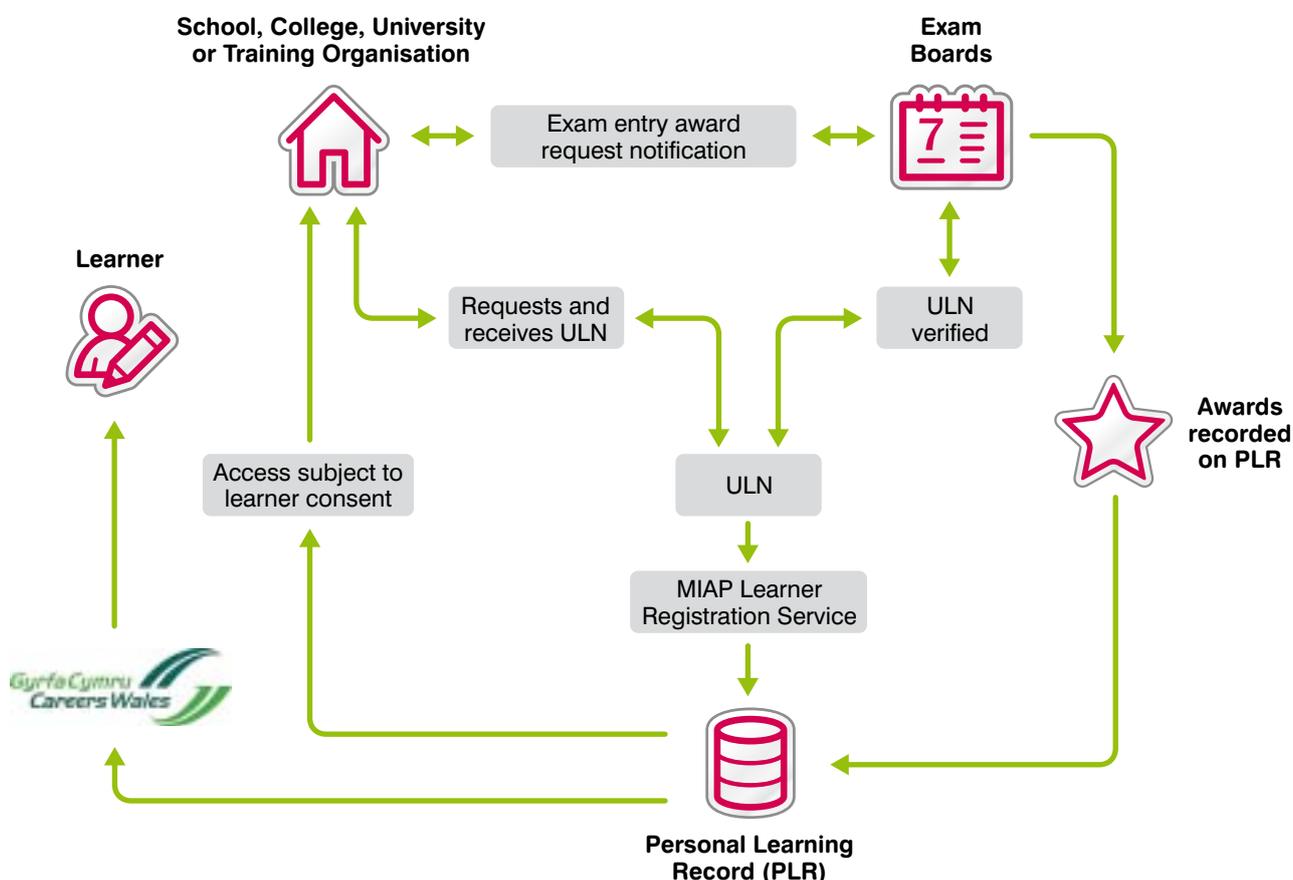


Figure 4: Learning Records Service data flow diagram

The Learning Provider Register (LPR) and Provider Reference Numbers (UKPRNs).

All providers are required to register as a learner registration body through the Learning Provider Register (LPR) (formerly the UK Register of Learning Providers – UKRLP). The LPR holds and shares information about learning and training organisations in the UK. More information including how to register can be obtained from the Learning Provider Register website. Once registered with the LPR each provider is allocated with a Provider Reference Number (PRN). The Provider Reference Number acts as a single common identifier for UK learner registration bodies.

Benefits/Opportunities

The CQFW provides a system for valuing different qualifications in a consistent and standardised way – whether learning takes place in the workplace, in the community, at school, college or university. It offers a number of benefits for learners, employers, providers and other key players such as awarding organisations. The implementation of the credit infrastructure and qualifications provides flexibility, choice and progression, facilitating:

- New pathways and multiple routes to vocational qualifications.
- Opportunities to be more responsive to needs of individual learners, employers and employees: enabling learners to achieve skills and qualifications that employers need.
- Opportunities to create tailored programmes by the building up of units that may be able to meet a specific need in the local or regional area.
- Bite sized training.
- Formal recognition for all types of learning or training.
- The measurement and recording of recognised learning wherever and however it is achieved by:
- Enabling the accumulation of learning achievement (credits) towards a qualification or learning programme.
- Enabling the accumulation of credits for their own value or to meet the specific needs of individuals.



Good Practice

Educ8 felt that with so much potential variety, it was important to provide learners with a choice of units which reflected their current job role rather than “pigeon-holing” them, thereby tailoring each qualification to individual employment requirements. They developed a “skills scan” which enabled the provider to highlight the differences between the levels of qualifications and to identify the most appropriate level and units for each individual learner through completion of the skills scan during induction.



Good Practice

At North Wales Training a whole organisation audit of credit was carried out. This was utilised as a benchmark and provided the organisation with a base on which to build and progress.

Learners can

- Get qualifications more flexibly through credit for smaller units of learning.
- Fit their learning around their home and work life.
- Complete units and qualifications that employers want and need.
- Understand more easily how hard each qualification is and how much work it involves.
- Take smaller steps of learning:
- Depending on the rules of combination learners can take qualifications unit by unit at their own pace until they have achieved the credits needed for a whole qualification, or they can ‘bank’ the units and put them towards a complete qualification at a later date.
- Put what they’ve already learnt towards recognized qualifications and not have to repeat their learning:
- Be assessed and awarded through “*recognising prior learning*” (RPL) for other learning and achievements that haven’t been certificated.
- Claim ‘exemption’ if they already have the skills and knowledge for a unit.
- Transfer credits between units and qualifications.
- Progress to a higher level with a skill by carrying forward appropriate credits already achieved.
- Change direction and put their learning to a new use.
- Transfer their knowledge and skills between career paths, providers and countries.

Employers can

- Be actively involved in deciding what training and education is needed for their industry’s future.
- Get their in-house training recognized as a qualification in a national framework.
- Tailor qualifications to suit the company’s needs.
- Join forces with other employers to create qualifications relevant to their sector.
- Identify more easily the amount and level of learning already achieved by applicants and employees.
- Target their training to individual employee needs, providing opportunities for staff to develop those skills needed for their work.

**Good Practice**

The introduction of credit-based qualifications has prompted ISA Training to further develop learner knowledge books for each individual unit eg Health & Safety, Consultation. The workbooks provide all the knowledge and preparation required for assessment and at the same time provide clear explanations about units and credit. The result has been increased awareness and understanding of credit (learners and employers) and a much clearer picture of “*where they are going*”. Learners are able to see the units building up and motivation has increased.



Good Practice

Learners at Powys Training enables learners to fast-track or to take their learning further (eg to another alternative unit, to a full qualification or to study at a higher level). The transfer of credit between qualifications enables certification for those who move from one level to another eliminating repetition of learning and duplication of training. It is much fairer on the learner and has resulted in improving the learner experience and motivating learners to progress to further learning.

Example: a recent example is a learner who achieved the IT User Level 2 Certificate. The learner had excelled in certain software and was therefore able to achieve the IT User Level 3 Award (which would not have been possible in the past). This resulted in the learner obtaining a qualification to recognise his true abilities without having to repeat learning.



Good Practice

Within the business administration route, the implementation of credit has provided opportunities for North Wales Training to tailor training to match individual job roles. This not only widens the scope for each individual learner, but also enables the provider to meet employer needs in accrediting tailor made qualifications reflecting the diversity of people's roles, widening scope, meeting job requirements and ensuring a multi-skilled workforce.

Example: Learners following business administration qualifications could not previously gain accreditation for other aspects of their job role eg front of house activities. With the implementation of credit, the learner can now choose from a wide range of units eg retail, customer service, ICT.

Providers can

- Tailor-make relevant learning programmes by the building up of units to suit individual learners, employers and employees and/or specific needs in the local or regional area.
- Develop closer working links with employers especially by accrediting employer in-house training through the Quality Assured Lifelong Learning (QALL) pillar.
- Easily see what learners have already achieved and how that learning can be put towards units and qualifications.
- Present programmes/courses and qualifications in a way that everyone understands.
- Offer quality assured qualifications as it is a regulated framework.
- Provide flexible delivery of qualifications, with multiple entry points and bite-sized training.
- Share delivery among partnerships.
- Introduce new learner groups to vocational qualifications.
- Improve the learner experience and motivate learners to progress to further learning.
- Promote transfer and progression.



Good Practice

The introduction of credit has enabled Powys Training to provide more flexible delivery of qualifications, with multiple entry points and bite-sized training.

The ITQ framework enables learners to put units achieved at lower levels towards qualifications at higher levels. It is now much easier for the assessor to recognise prior learning by examining individual qualifications and mapping across. If the previous qualification is a credit based qualification, then the “*Rules of Combination*” indicate clearly to the assessor which units/qualifications can be used, together with the associated credit values.



Good Practice

Educ8 has gained commercial advantages through identifying and mapping commercial courses/employer mandatory training across to credit based qualifications.

Learners are offered the incentive to achieve formal recognition of units and the opportunity to progress to full qualifications.

The Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales (CQFW) – How to use it

The introduction of a credit-based framework provides opportunities to develop a more flexible and responsive provision and encourages innovative qualification design and delivery.

However, whilst some learners may accumulate knowledge and skills through credits and units rather than whole qualifications, many learners, including the majority of learners on employability programmes and Apprenticeships, will continue to sign up for and aim to complete a whole qualification.

Learning with credit-based qualifications is flexible. It provides opportunities for learners to achieve qualifications in different ways, with more than one provider. The flexibilities afforded by credit-based qualifications mean that learners can:

- Study at pace which suits them.
- Accumulate credit in small steps by successfully completing units.
- Units will build into a full qualification.
- In some cases, units achieved within the education system can be added to units achieved at work to complete a whole qualification.

Units can be delivered and assessed independently, or brought together to create a rational programme of study or qualification. Some units are common to a range of qualifications and Awarding Organisations (AOs). This enables the planning and delivery of an individual unit, or several units, to learners who are following different pathways and/or programmes. For providers of work-based learning this could reduce delivery costs, increase the range of pathways on offer, and provide opportunities to respond to learner and employee needs more effectively.



Good Practice

Motivation for lower level learners has improved at Educ8. Learners feel more confident, they can see the end of each unit and are more focussed and driven to complete their qualification.

Delivery and completion of units have become shorter and sharper, resulting in learners seeing end results quicker.

Within the CQFW learners can transfer the credit received from one unit into another qualification in some instances.

One example might be if an individual successfully completed a unit on health and safety at one place of work, they won't need to do the same unit again at a different place of work or learning provider. This means that learning is not lost as people move in and out of education and training or between jobs.

Credit can come from more than one level. This provides opportunities for WBL providers to design programmes to suit individual needs. For example, selecting units from a higher level for more able learners, or selecting lower level units within areas of a programme where learners struggle – which can motivate and improve outcomes for learners.

Good Practice

A learner at Educ8, who had completed a level 2 qualification, was eager to progress to a level 3 qualification. Her current job role does not provide the opportunity to work at level 3. However, because the qualifications are unit based, she has been able to commence the level 3 knowledge-based units and when she progresses to a level 3 position she will be able to develop her competence-based units enabling her to up-skill and complete the level 3 qualification.

Good Practice

Learners at Powys Training, following the IT User Qualifications (ITQ), are encouraged to put units achieved at lower levels towards qualifications at higher levels.

This enables learners to “fast-track” or to take their learning further, eliminating repetition of learning and duplication of training. This has resulted in improving the learner experience and motivating learners to progress to further learning.

Example: A learner who wanted to sign up onto the Foundation Apprenticeship programme had already completed an ECDL qualification, which is a credit-based qualification. She was able to use the credits from her previous qualification which had been achieved with one Awarding Organisation and by adding a mandatory unit and a couple of optional units she was able to achieve the Level 2 Diploma for IT Users with a different Awarding Organisation. For both the provider and the learner this proved to be a very straight forward process.

Good Practice

Acorn Learning Solutions is developing its learner induction programme to include accreditation of units of credits from a sustainability award. The evidence is gathered during the mandatory induction process to becoming an apprentice and will provide added value and outcomes to learners without additional training. Learners will be given the option to continue to complete the full sustainability qualification.

Ten Top Tips from the Case Studies

1 Take a holistic view to ensure a consistent and coherent approach to the implementation of credit across the organisation

- Allocate responsibility to oversee developments.
- Utilise key staff to act as ambassadors within the organisation.

2 Conduct a whole organisation audit to examine work with credit on the ground and use as a base on which to build and progress

- Use information gathered through the audit to provide a benchmark for future comparison.
- Plan development work and time for embedding.
- Allocate time to examine and discuss how credit might be used and its potential impact.

3 Review existing practices to identify whether credit requirements are being met and to develop a more flexible and responsive provision

- Consider changes you need to make to delivery and assessment of qualifications in order to comply fully with new requirements.
- Take advantage of the opportunity to come up with a wider range of ideas for using credit.
- Map standards across to new qualifications.
- Examine the National Occupational Standards (NOS) database and the Register of Regulated Qualifications to identify suitable units to match requirements.
- Liaise and exchange ideas with Awarding Organisations and Standards Verifiers.

4 Identify any areas where staff need to up-skill; provide training and support

- Plan staff development and CPD at all levels.
- Provide training and time to bring staff “*up to speed*”.
- Invite specialists in to talk about how credit works.
- Allocate members of each team to attend training and awareness-raising events.
- Cascade any information collected at events to all staff eg during team meetings.
- Store training materials from events in a central credit file which all can access, ensuring all staff have the same information.
- Support staff and keep them informed about developments.

5 Review and develop strategic working links and partnerships

- Maximise opportunities to respond to employer needs by putting employers in the “*driving seat*”.
- Encourage employers to influence the content of training programmes, in order to provide appropriate, relevant, customised training for employees tailored to meet company needs and job role requirements.
- Identify and map suitable units and qualifications against individual job roles to create delivery provision that meets their requirements.
- Develop programmes and qualifications that employers need and are prepared to fund.
- Create bespoke Apprenticeships for employers by adding credit based units into a framework.

6 Work with employers to examine opportunities for recognising and accrediting in-house training

- Examine in-house training and identify in-house training aims and objectives.
- Design and accredit in-house training and development that meets specific business needs.
- Investigate potential alternative methods of matching activities and learning to credit qualifications.
- Map and deliver mandatory training to increase commercial opportunities by offering the incentive to achieve formal recognition of units, the opportunity to progress to full qualifications, minimise repetition of learning and speed up the process of qualification completion.
- Explore potential implications for learning partnerships and the opportunities to add value to collaborative working.
- Set up regular meetings with other providers to take a united approach to credit implementation, eliminate duplication of work and secure a common accord.

7 Develop recognition of prior learning (RPL) further and credit accumulation and transfer (CAT) to take into account other training already completed in order to eliminate duplication, accredit prior training and identify any gaps

- Build RPL into initial assessment procedures.
- Provide the necessary individual support which may be required for further development, progression and/or improvement.
- Encourage learners to put units achieved at lower levels towards qualifications at higher levels.

8 Maximise opportunities to develop a more flexible and responsive provision with greater flexibility, choice and progression for learners, including multiple entry points and bite-sized training

- Give learners flexibility of choice eg units from the framework and/or incorporate selected units/credits from other sectors and from across the levels, building personalised qualifications which meet their needs and which reflect the diversity of their current role, thereby widening scope, meeting job requirements and ensuring a multi-skilled workforce.
- Work closely with each individual learner to select appropriate units and qualifications.
- Where appropriate, build in recognition of wider skills.
- Where current job role does not provide the opportunity to work at a higher level, consider commencement on the knowledge-based units.
- Draw up an informed learning programme which assists individual progression aims.
- Motivate learners by focussing on smaller units, so that they can see the end of each unit and become more focussed and driven to complete.

9 Develop and implement LRS/ULN procedures

- Use ULNs/LRS to raise awareness to stakeholders of its functionality.
- Put in place procedures to identify ULNs and to ensure the smooth-running of the system including amending application forms to include identification of existing ULNs and creating a recording form to accompany starter packs.

10 Recognise success to date with credit implementation

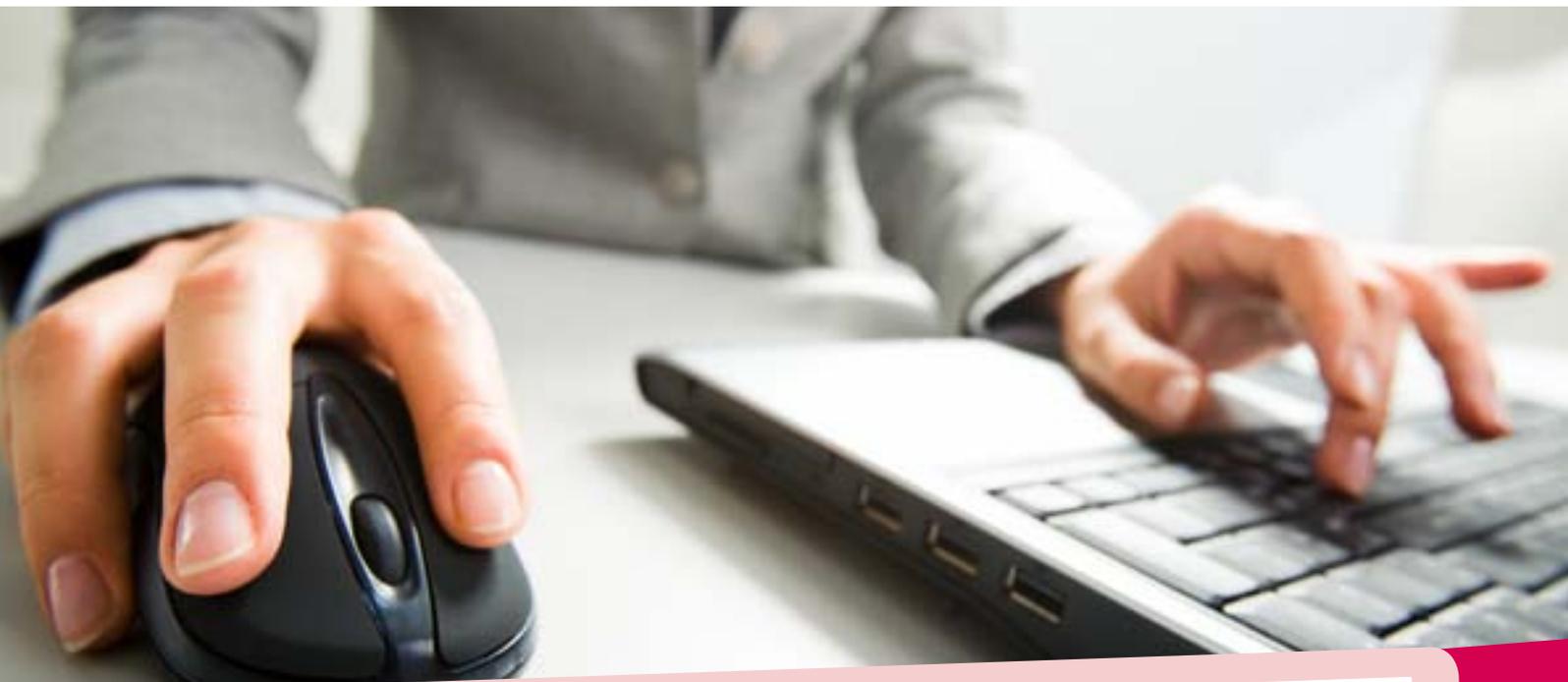
- Apply experience gained to other qualifications.

Case Studies - Exemplar models from the WBL sector

Case Study: Business Administration (North Wales Training)



Tailoring qualifications to meet job role requirements through credit based qualifications



The Curriculum Manager at North Wales Training has been involved with credit since 2002:

- Became a member of the Common Accord Forum.
- Examined credit and the structure of qualifications.
- Reported regularly into the NTfW.
- Became more involved with Awarding Organisations (AO) and participated in the redrafting of ILM qualifications in 2007 (the first AO to change to credit based qualifications).

In order to prepare the organisation for the implementation of credit:

- The Credit Framework was introduced through Sector Team Leaders.
- Time was allocated to examine and discuss how it might be used and its potential impact.
- Team Leaders and Administration staff attended workshops and awareness-raising events.

By 2009 the staff possessed a high level of knowledge and understanding of credit – but little experience of application. A questionnaire about provider readiness (issued by the NTfW) was completed by individual teams and by the organisation as a whole. This provided mixed results, even though all staff had received the same training and attended awareness-raising events. Some AOs were more proactive than others – those staff involved with the more proactive AOs appeared to have a greater understanding of credit. It was therefore decided to conduct a whole organisation audit to examine real work on the ground. This was utilised as a benchmark and provided the organisation with a base on which to build and progress.

Although funding difficulties presented some challenges to the provider during the early stages of credit implementation, great strides have been made. They acknowledge that it is still in its infancy and that more development work and time are now required for embedding in order to reap the full benefits of credit based delivery.

Key benefits:

Within the Business Administration route, the implementation of credit provides:

- A greater range of units available.
- Greater flexibility in delivery.
- The opportunity to tailor qualifications to meet job role requirements.
- Recognition of wider skills.
- An opportunity to come up with a wider range of ideas for using credit.
- Potential alternative methods of matching activities and learning to credit qualifications.



Example 1: Learners following Business Administration qualifications could not previously gain accreditation for other aspects of their job role eg front of house activities. With the implementation of credit, the learner can now choose from a wide range of units eg retail, customer service, ICT. This not only widens the scope for each individual learner, but also enables the provider to meet learner and employer needs in accrediting tailor made qualifications reflecting the diversity of people’s roles, widening scope, meeting job requirements and ensuring a multi-skilled workforce.

Example 2: The provider has worked with the Local Authority to tailor-make qualifications for refuse collectors by offering team leading and management units – this would not have been possible prior to the implementation of credit.

Key contact: Allison Jones, Curriculum Manager, North Wales Training

Case Study: Hairdressing (ISA Training)

Embracing the Learner Records Service (LRS)



At ISA Training, in order to prepare the organisation for the implementation of credit, a nominated member of staff:

- Was allocated overall responsibility as lead.
- Attended a wide range of awareness-raising updates, seminars and events.
- Disseminated information to all staff, eg through regular standardisation meetings, to ensure all staff were kept up to date.

Hairdressing was one of the first set of qualifications to move to credit based qualifications. Whilst there was not a huge amount of change to the content of Hairdressing qualifications, the preparation and experience gained in this area helped to ensure that the organisation was well-prepared for implementation of credit in other areas as they switched to credit based qualifications.

The provider has taken steps to raise awareness of credit with both its learners and employers with whom it works. An exciting and innovative current development is the design of a new accredited programme within the Hairdressing sector aimed at learners completing Apprenticeships. Working closely with the NTfW and Awarding Organisations, arrangements are at the developmental stage at present.

Key benefits:

Unit accreditation has always been offered by the provider. However, the introduction of credit-based qualifications has prompted the provider to devise learner knowledge books for each individual unit eg Health & Safety, Consultation. The workbooks provide all the knowledge and preparation required for assessment and at the same time provide clear explanations about units and credit. The result has been increased awareness and understanding of credit (learners and employers) and a much clearer picture of “where they are going”. Learners are able to see the units building up and motivation has increased.

A company decision was taken during the very early stages of credit implementation to make use of LRS and ULNs mandatory. It is considered that when learners can view their Personal Learning Record (PLR) with the Training Consultant, the RPL identification process will be speeded up and improved. One of the key benefits of using ULNs/LRS has been to raise awareness with stakeholders of its functionality in preparation for its introduction across the WBL sector from August 2011.



Example: The provider has fully embraced the LRS and put in place procedures to identify ULNs and to ensure the smooth-running of the system. Application forms have been amended to include identification of existing ULNs and a recording form has been created which goes out with all starter packs. Learners are requested to insert their ULN onto the application form (if they have one). The Training Consultant identifies at Initial Assessment period whether the learner has a ULN. If so, the ULN is verified by the Training Consultant; otherwise learners are assigned one by the administrators.

Key contact: Sarah Heenan, Learning Support Manager, ISA Training.

Case Study: Health and Social Care (Educ8)



Taking a holistic approach to the implementation of credit based qualifications



Educ8 has taken a holistic approach to the implementation of credit, ensuring:

- A consistent and coherent approach across the organisation.
- Well-informed staff.
- Flexible and responsive provision.
- Increased opportunities and benefits.

In preparation for implementation of credit, the provider felt that a key part of the development was to ensure that all staff were supported through the challenging move from NVQ and were kept informed about developments. This approach included:

- Giving responsibility to two assessors for researching credit, implementing new procedures and projects and acting as ambassadors within the organisation. Their knowledge is pooled and they provide advice and support to other staff. They feel proud of what they have done.
- Increasing the frequency of team meetings from monthly to weekly, with time allocated to pool knowledge.
- Allocating members of each team to attend training and information events; any information collected was shared with all staff during team meetings and paperwork stored in a central credit file which all could access, ensuring all staff had the same information.
- Inviting specialists in to talk about how credit works, eg Jeff Protheroe (NTfW) and Jan Morgan (City & Guilds).
- Examining existing practises in order to identify whether they met credit requirements and mapping standards across to new qualifications. This resulted in the provider being able to take a more holistic approach.

- Setting up regular meetings with other providers, enabling them to take a united approach to credit implementation. Working as a group, rather than individually, eliminated duplication of work and ensured a common accord.
- Liaising and exchanging ideas with all External Verifiers.

The provider felt that with so much potential variety, it was important to provide learners with a choice of units which reflected their current job role rather than “pigeon-holing” them, thereby tailoring each qualification to individual employment requirements. They developed a “skills scan” which enabled the provider to:

- Highlight the differences between the levels of qualifications.
- Identify any areas where they needed to up-skill their own staff.
- Provide training and time to bring their staff “up to speed”.
- Identify the most appropriate level and units for each individual learner through completion of the skills scan during induction.

From a commercial point of view, the organisation has worked with:

- The Council and local colleges to provide flexibility in delivery including internet-based and taught lessons.
- New organisations to map and deliver mandatory training in order to minimise repetition of learning and speed up the process of qualification completion.

Key benefits:

Motivation for lower level learners:

- Previously, learners often became intimidated at the magnitude of the qualification. Now, with smaller units, learners feel more confident, they can see the end of each unit and are more focussed and driven to complete. Delivery and completion of units have become shorter and sharper, resulting in learners seeing end results quicker.

Example: A learner who has completed a level 2 qualification was eager to progress to a level 3 qualification. Her current job role does not provide the opportunity to work at level 3. However, because the qualifications are unit based, she has been able to commence the level 3 knowledge-based units and when she progresses to a level 3 position she will be able to develop her competence-based units enabling her to up-skill and complete the level 3 qualification.





Commercial advantages:

- Identifying and mapping commercial courses/employer mandatory training across to credit based qualifications has resulted in increased commercial opportunities by offering the incentive for learners to achieve formal recognition of units and the opportunity to progress to full qualifications.
- By Diploma candidates completing these units, they will not only develop their underpinning knowledge, but will also potentially have the theory which can be applied to practice through their assessment by their work based assessor.
- Cross referencing these courses to the credit framework not only gives commercial courses added credibility, but it also ensures that training is facilitated and applied to practice through the use of varied teaching methodology such as simulation and the use of scenarios.
- These courses can also be utilised for candidates who want to complete a credit based qualification in the future, thus reducing the length of their apprenticeship.
- The provider is currently developing RPL further to take into account employer mandatory training already completed.

Provider benefits:

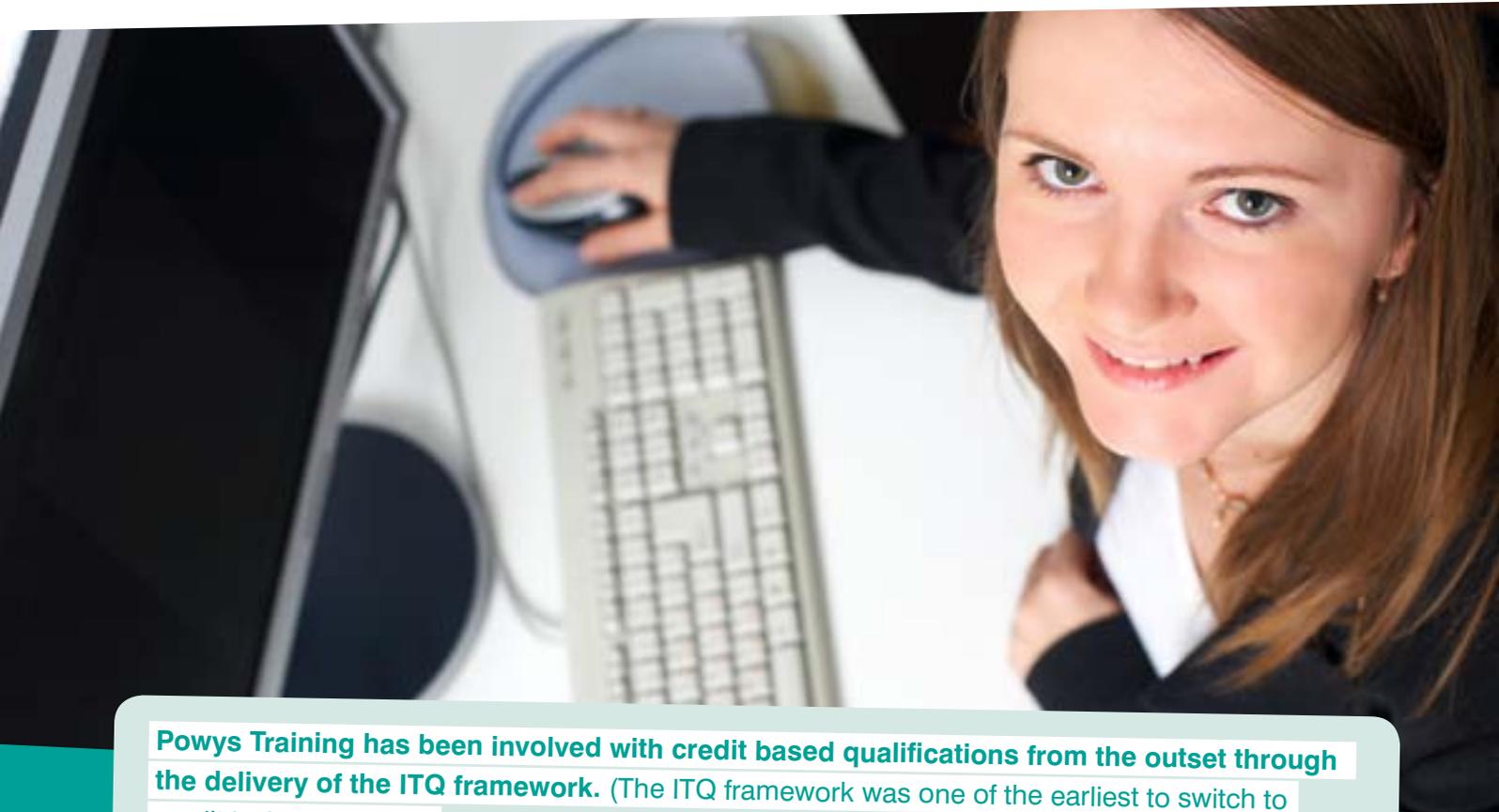
- Both the staff and the organisation feel empowered by credit. They believe that this has improved flexibility in their approach, provision and delivery, enabling them to better meet the needs of learners and employers.
- In-depth preparations (as outlined above) for implementation have helped the provider significantly. They believe that they have made good progress to date and fully intend to undertake further developments in order to reap the full benefits of credit for all stakeholders.

Key contact: Lisa Goslin, Quality Improvement Officer, Educ8.

Case Study: IT (Powys Training)



Providing flexibility and avoiding duplication of learning through credit based qualifications



Powys Training has been involved with credit based qualifications from the outset through the delivery of the ITQ framework. (The ITQ framework was one of the earliest to switch to credit in August 2009.)

In preparation for the implementation of credit, a key member of staff:

- Was identified and given responsibility to ensure that all staff were kept fully informed about changes.
- Had also been working with ITQ as an Internal Verifier.
- Was responsible for attending meetings and awareness-raising events.
- Cascaded information to all staff (managers, IVs, assessors).

Good preparation by the provider ensured:

- Well-informed staff across the organisation with very good understanding of credit.
- The organisation was well-equipped for implementation of credit based qualifications.

This has enabled the organisation to:

- Maximise opportunities to develop a more flexible and responsive provision with greater flexibility, choice and progression for learners.
- Apply the experience gained with ITQ to other qualifications as they switched to credit based qualifications.

The provider now sees it working to full advantage and firmly believes that once it is in place, it reaps benefits for everyone (learner, provider and employer).

With the introduction of the credit framework, it is much easier to identify:

- What learners have already achieved.
- How that learning can be put towards credit based units and qualifications.
- Any gaps in skills, knowledge or understanding in relation to qualifications.
- The necessary individual support which may be required for further development, progression and/or improvement.

Key benefits:

The introduction of credit has facilitated the recognition of prior learning (RPL) process and provided clear advantages in respect of the promotion of credit accumulation and transfer (CAT).

Powys Training has always used accreditation of prior learning (APL) with NVQs. However, in the past it has sometimes proved difficult to match prior learning to new qualifications and in many cases the assessor would have little alternative but to start from scratch. This resulted in more work for the assessor and was unfair on the learner, who would have to repeat aspects of learning.

There is now far greater flexibility and variety. The ITQ offers over 80 subject options across 3 levels. Learners may choose units from the ITQ framework and/or incorporate selected units/credits from other sectors. This provides flexibility of choice, enabling learners to select a range of units from across the levels, building personalised qualifications which meet their needs and which are appropriate to their job role. The assessor works closely with each individual learner to select appropriate units and qualifications and an informed learning programme is drawn up which assists individual progression aims.

The introduction of credit has enabled the organisation to provide more flexible delivery of qualifications, with multiple entry points and bite-sized training. The ITQ framework enables learners to put units achieved at lower levels towards qualifications at higher levels. It is now much easier for the assessor to recognise prior learning by examining individual qualifications and mapping across. If the previous qualification is a credit based qualification, then the “*Rules of Combination*” indicate clearly to the assessor which units/qualifications can be used, together with the associated credit values.

This enables learners to fast-track or to take their learning further (eg to another alternative unit, to a full qualification or to study at a higher level). The transfer of credit between qualifications enables certification for those who move from one level to another eliminating repetition of learning and duplication of training. It is much fairer on the learner and has resulted in improving the learner experience and motivating learners to progress to further learning.

Example 1: A recent example is a learner who achieved the IT User level 2 Certificate. The learner had excelled in certain software and was therefore able to achieve the IT User level 3 Award (which would not have been possible in the past). This resulted in the learner obtaining a qualification to recognise his true abilities without having to repeat learning.

Example 2: A learner, who wanted to sign up onto the Foundation Apprenticeship programme. She had already completed an ECDL qualification, which is a credit based qualification. She was able to use the credits from her previous qualification which had been achieved with one Awarding Body and by adding a mandatory unit and a couple of optional units she was able to achieve the Diploma for IT User level 2 with a different Awarding Body, in a very straight forward process.

Key contact: Sue Hulse, Qualifications and Curriculum Manager, Powys Training.

Case Study: Management (Acorn Learning Solutions)

Helping employers and learners to benefit from credit based qualifications



Acorn Learning Solutions is proactive in helping employers and learners to benefit from credit, having been involved with re-writing NOS (National Occupational Standards) and working with units since they came out as credit based qualifications.

The provider has maximised opportunities to respond to employer needs by putting employers in the “driving seat”. It is an excellent example of how an employer has influenced the content of training programmes, enabling the provision, through credit, of appropriate and relevant training for employees tailored to meet company needs guided by an experienced provider.

Acorn worked closely with a Call Centre employer who had a particular need that did not fit into an apprenticeship framework, ie the accreditation of sales units. The provider identified employer needs:

- Through discussion.
- By examining in-house training.
- By identifying in-house training aims and objectives.

From the information gathered, Acorn then examined NOS and the units register to identify suitable units that matched requirements:

- Relevant units were identified.
- Following discussions with Awarding Organisations, programmes were customised to match company requirements.
- The result has been the creation of a bespoke Apprenticeship for the employer by adding single units of credit into a framework.

Working closely with employers Acorn was able to:

- Design, recognise and accredit in-house training and development that met specific business needs.
- Provide opportunities for accreditation of national qualifications and nationally recognised certification.

Key benefits:

Tailored provision:

- Appropriate and relevant training for employees, tailored to meet company needs.

Recognition of in-house staff training:

- Opportunities have been provided for the employer to have their high quality in-house staff training nationally recognised. Acorn train the employer to deliver and assess employees/trainees, with Acorn providing administrative support; this ensures that delivery and training meets the employer's assessment needs and standards.



Using credit, Acorn has been able to develop other areas of its delivery:

Example 1: RPL has been built into Acorn's initial assessment procedures to identify training that a learner has previously received in order to eliminate duplication, accredit prior training and identify any gaps – training/assessment of the gaps then takes place. This provides opportunities for accreditation through RPL of whole frameworks and in some instances learners can be registered and certificated on the same day.

Example 2: Acorn is developing its learner induction programme to include accreditation of units of credits from a sustainability award. The evidence is gathered during the mandatory induction process to becoming an apprentice and will provide added value and outcomes to learners without additional training. Learners will be given the option to continue to complete the full sustainability qualification.

Key contact: Emma Choat, Head of Programme Development, Acorn Learning Solutions.