

Case Studies

Recognising Non-Formal
Certificated Learning
in the UK and
the Netherlands

Making Learning Visible



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Introduction

The UK European Qualifications Framework (EQF) Work Programme for 2012/2013 included a Project to explore the approaches to recognising non-formal certificated learning in the UK countries and The Netherlands. In addition, the Project identified case studies to demonstrate the approach/es used within each country.

The Project focused on the recognition of non-formal learning where learning/training is delivered, assessed and quality assured. Learners receive some kind of certification outside the formal system as opposed to the recognition of non-formal learning through a recognition of prior learning (RPL)/accreditation of prior learning (APL) procedure.

Based on the European Commission's definitions published in *'Recommendation on the Validation of Non-Formal and Informal Learning'*, 20 December 2012, non-formal learning is broadly defined as:

learning outside the formal school/vocational training/university system, taking place through planned activities (e.g. with goals and timelines) involving some form of learning support, for example:

- programmes to impart work-skills, literacy and other basic skills for early school-leavers
- in-company training
- structured online learning
- courses organised by civil society organisations for their members, their target group or the general public

The qualifications frameworks in the UK differ in nature and scope and the UK countries have different approaches to the recognition of non-formal learning. There is no agreed legal national approach or position to recognising non-formal learning in England and Northern Ireland, but a recognized national approach exists in Wales and Scotland.

A full Project Report will be published by the UK EQF National Co-ordination Points in March 2014. This Conference brochure gives a brief summary of the approaches adopted by the different countries in recognising non-formal certificated learning and presents some case studies to demonstrate the approach/es used within each country.

England/Northern Ireland



Summary of Approaches Used to Recognise Non-Formal Learning in England and Northern Ireland

While there is no agreed legal national approach or position to recognising non formal learning in England and Northern Ireland, there are a number of approaches used, some of which are linked to the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) while others sit outside the Framework.

In England and Northern Ireland three qualifications frameworks are in operation, The Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF), The National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (FHEQ). Since it is the QCF which is referenced to the EQF, approaches to the recognition of non- formal learning were considered in relation to the QCF only. The QCF includes regulated vocational qualifications from awarding organisations that are recognised by the Qualifications Regulators in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. It is a unit based credit framework, comprising eight levels and an Entry Level.

Approaches linked to the Framework include:

Exemption within the QCF

A learner can claim exemption from some of the achievement requirements of a QCF qualification, using evidence of certificated achievements outside the QCF. The requirements and expectations for exemption in the QCF are set out in the Regulatory Arrangements for the Qualifications and Credit Framework (Ofqual/08/3726).

Research has shown that while this facility exists in theory, it is not used in practice as awarding organisations consider it too complex to implement. Hence there are no case studies in relation to this approach.

Recognising employer in-house training within the QCF

Initiatives were launched in England (Employer Recognition Programme - September 2007) and Northern Ireland (The Recognition of Training in Employment Programme - April 2009) to enable employers to have their own internal training accredited or recognised within the QCF.

Approaches which sit outside the Framework include:

Open College Network certification

Open College Networks (OCNs) have existed across England, Wales and Northern Ireland since 1975 to formally recognise the achievements of adult learners and promote and widen access to learning in the UK. The principle motivation driving the early development was the level of provision that was not certificated. Therefore, there was no way of quality assuring that provision or recognising learners' achievements.

Historically, all of this activity has resided outside formal qualification frameworks. However, many OCNs are now recognised awarding organisations within the QCF and operate within the regulated system, working with their centres to deliver both OCN certificated learning programmes or QCF regulated qualifications.

Endorsement of employer training by Recognised Awarding Organisations

Some of the large UK recognised awarding organisations offer the endorsement of bespoke

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training and/or qualifications to companies who do not want to have their in-house training programmes accredited within the QCF. This allows for qualifications to be specifically created and developed to meet the needs of a particular range of learners and stakeholders.

Case Study

Dunbia

Approach linked to the QCF: Recognising employer in-house training within the QCF

Recognising Dunbia's in-house training within the QCF



Background

Dunbia is one of Europe's leading food manufactures supplying quality meat products to local, national and international markets. Dunbia employs over 3600 people across twelve sites in the UK and Ireland; 1200 are employed at the Dungannon sites in County Tyrone, where the company continually strives to improve the skills of its staff. The emphasis on high quality training and development is one of the cornerstones of Dunbia's success.

Rationale/ Challenge

Although Dunbia delivers its own in-house training and is an approved NVQ assessment centre the company used the Department for Employment and Learning's (DEL, NI) Recognition of Employer Training pilot programme as an opportunity to have all aspects of its high quality in-house training accredited nationally on the new Qualifications and Credit Framework.

Dunbia (Dungannon) has an award winning on-site Butchery Academy where employees complete a Proficiency Based Qualification in Food Manufacture – Meat and Poultry Processing. However, the qualification did not match the full range of skills demonstrated by Dunbia's employees – some of which are unique to them. It was in the interests of both employers and employees that these skills were therefore recognised and accredited through a meaningful certificate that is recognised nationally.

The Process

Employers now have an enhanced role in determining and developing QCF qualifications. Where accredited qualifications do not already exist new qualifications can be developed through working in partnership with Sector Skills Councils.

The Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) outlined the QCF process for Dunbia and set up a meeting with Improve (Sector Skills Council for the Food and Drink Manufacturing Industry in the UK). This gave Dunbia the opportunity to describe the skills they needed to have recognized - like the age-old craft of de-boning. They used the National Occupational Standards (NOS) to aid in describing what their employees need to do, to know and to understand in order to carry out particular functions in the workplace.

Dunbia worked closely with Improve to inform the learning outcomes and assessment criteria required for some of the QCF units. Improve subsequently developed these units to meet the needs of Dunbia's employees and these may now also be used to meet the needs of other organizations. These units were put forward for accreditation in new Improve qualifications and they reflect the range of skills which Dunbia articulated. These new qualifications are known as the L2 and L3 Proficiency for Meat and Poultry Industry Skills.

The Future

To meet industry standards a significant majority of the training packages need to be renewed annually so logistically and financially this is the most suitable option. The QCF provides opportunity for Dunbia to broaden each individual's skills base as well as enabling progression. Employees can build up units in addition to the main qualification – this offers

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flexibility and allows them to demonstrate a variety of skills to their employer. As well as working closely with Dunbia (Dungannon), Improve has been consulting with its sister-plants across the UK and Ireland. They are pleased with the developments to date although some work is still ongoing.

Dunbia is the pioneer of the Butchery Academy and is seeking to offer a 'Butchery Academy Graduate Certificate' that can be customised and packaged to best reflect the work activities undertaken by the employees.

Dunbia will continue to use NOS to inform content and further develop company training. It believes that high quality training is essential for skills development and increasing productivity. This is particularly important during a difficult and challenging economic climate.

Case Study

Approach which sits outside the Framework:
Open College Network (OCN) Certification
Advice NI Training Programmes which are OCNNI Certificated



Background

Advice NI is a charitable company that supports 69 member organisations within the independent advice sector providing information, advice and advocacy services on a range of issues including benefits, housing, employment and debt. Its training is targeted at those working in the legal advice/advice and guidance sector, offering a range of QCF regulated qualifications and a number of OCNNI certificated learning programmes.

Rationale

Advice NI was seeking to get two of its programmes accredited – Wiseradviser and Advantage. Advice NI is the lead partner for Wiseradviser generalist and skilled level training in Northern Ireland. The training is delivered in partnership with the Money Advice Trust and is part of a UK wide money advice training programme. It is designed for those working with vulnerable clients who are facing financial difficulties. Although Advice NI had been delivering Wiseradviser training for many years, none of its programmes were formally recognised.

Advantage, another of its bespoke programmes, was designed to increase the quality and quantity of advice provided to older people in Northern Ireland. Research was carried out to determine the advice needs of older people and to identify the training needs of advisers.

Research findings highlighted that advisers within the sector wanted to gain formal recognition for all of its learning programmes.

Challenges

The Wiseradviser programme already existed which made the process to certification much easier. All of the units had to meet a set of agreed standards and follow a technical specification established by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA).

The main challenge of the Advantage programme was agreeing the content and determining the key requirements, ensuring that it was fit for purpose and specific to the Northern Ireland context (with potential for UK applicability). The research findings and the expertise of the steering group enabled this process.

The Process

Advice NI in partnership with Age NI and Access to Benefits established a steering group to agree the content of the Advantage programme. OCN certification was the preferred option given that its certificated learning programmes are written in the same format as the QCF units. Each unit is assigned a credit value and a level, making it possible to relate and compare qualifications to those in the QCF regulated system.

A consultant was employed to help develop the units at the appropriate level. Advice NI subsequently worked closely with the OCN Business Development team to tailor the units to meet the specific requirements.

- Advantage programme comprises six units at Level 3 each with a credit value of

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- 3. These can either be taken as stand-alone units or as a cluster of units to meet a specific job role.
- A number of Wiseradviser programmes are also now certificated at Level 2 (with a credit value of 2) and at Level 3 (with a credit value of 3).

Advice NI is an approved assessment centre for a number of awarding organisations (including OCN). Its programmes are mapped to National Occupational Standards (NOS) and all of its non-formal training programmes are certificated through OCN.

Through a process of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) learners can use the evidence from both of the above OCN certificated programmes towards the achievement requirements for some of the learning outcomes in the regulated QCF Framework:

- Level 3 Certificate and Level 4 Diploma in Advice and Guidance
- Level 4 Certificate in Providing Specialist Legal Advice
- Level 4 Diploma in Providing Specialist Legal Advice and Casework

The Advantage programme can be used as RPL towards the Level 5 Award in Providing Legal Advice to Older People.

Advice NI's OCN certificated learning programmes can count towards Continuing Professional Development for legal practitioners.

Benefits

Working with OCN forms a valuable part of Advice NI's professional development training. It allows for the delivery of OCN certificated programmes which are quality assured by a recognised awarding organisation. Although not in the formal qualifications framework these qualifications can be compared to qualifications which are in the regulated system for the purposes of recruitment, selection, learning, development and progression. The majority of the programmes are at Level 3 which is directly equivalent to A Level standard.

OCN certificated learning programmes and QCF regulated qualifications can both serve to up-skill the sector. Non-formal qualifications are valuable to individuals, employers, funders, and the advice sector as a whole. However, sometimes Advice NI needs something which is quite bespoke, more cost effective and not time-bound but which meets the knowledge and skills needs of its organisations or advisers.

OCN certificated programmes are highly valued within the sector and can serve this purpose well. Learning can focus on small chunks of learning that can stand alone or combine to develop specific skills and knowledge in order to meet individual training needs.

Future Plans

Vocational and work related qualifications have changed to become more responsive to the demands of employers and learners. Through its annual Training Needs Analysis, Advice NI will continue to identify gaps in training and ensure that the necessary qualifications are developed to build a trained and competent workforce. Working with OCN allows Advice NI to raise its profile by having all of its learning programmes recognised in a way that best suits the needs of the organisation, its members and the wider advice sector.

Case Study

Approach which sits outside the Framework:
Endorsement of employer training by Recognised
Awarding Organisations

Small Firms Enterprise Development Initiative (SFEDI)
endorsed bespoke business enterprise and business
support qualifications



Introduction

SFEDI Awards was founded in 2007 creating the first dedicated awarding organisation specialising in business enterprise and business support, a standing enjoyed to this day within the UK.

SFEDI qualifications are built on the extensive research that underpins the SFEDI National Occupational Standards and the expertise of the Institute of Enterprise and Entrepreneurs, the UK's only professional institute dedicated to enterprise.

As the only dedicated UK Awarding Organisation, SFEDI Awards designs and develops a range of bespoke business enterprise and business support qualifications that are delivered through members of both the UK based and international centre network.

Within this, the organisation also develops and publishes best practice materials and resources to support the delivery of our qualifications to a high standard to ensure that customers gain all they require when either starting or progressing their enterprise journey.

Background and Rationale

The endorsed programme was created for a specific group of business support professionals who needed to both develop their skills and also prove their competence in providing government funded business support.

The programme of learning and assessment was based on the National Occupational Standards (NOS) for Business Support with the learning being directly related to the knowledge and understanding requirements and the assessment linked directly to the performance criteria within the standards.

It was developed in conjunction with Business Link and the Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) which recognised this as the quality assurance requirement for the delivery of all government funded business support.

The programme was designed to be assessor led rather than learner led with the onus being on the assessor to look for evidence and provide continuous feedback.

This was part of a continuous improvement programme and therefore it was important to include CPD (Continuous Professional Development) in the learning and assessment process.

The Process

Developing the programme involved consulting with Business Link and the RDAs as well as other stakeholders including the development of a strategic partnership with another awarding organisation.

In the early period SFEDI delivered the programme but as it became more and more popular it was necessary to enlist the support of further delivery organisations as a way of ensuring the quality of business support advice. This led to the development of the first SFEDI network of delivery centres, quality assured by SFEDI, comprising business support specialists allocated on a regional basis throughout England.

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Outcomes and Benefits

2649 business support professionals undertook the endorsed programmes including advisers, mentors, enterprise trainers, social enterprise advisers and skills brokers. The impact was seen both in the quality of the business advice being offered and ultimately, the number of businesses receiving high quality advice and support.

It also led to the creation of a national SFEDI online database that can be accessed by businesses in order to assure them that they were receiving business advice from a suitably trained advisor. Advisors who were listed on this directory are required to complete ongoing CPD programmes that are endorsed by SFEDI Awards in order to demonstrate that their knowledge and skills are up to date.

SFEDI Awards continues to develop new products. Due to regulatory requirements and customer demand, they now form a suite of regulated qualifications to further support business support professionals in multiple roles including advisers, mentors and coaches. This includes partnerships with national and multinational organisations and the public sector which wishes to further develop its own staff in order to better support its customers.

Wales



Summary of Approach Used to Recognise Non-Formal Learning in Wales

The Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales (CQFW) embraces all types of learning within a common recognition framework. It currently includes regulated and non-regulated provision. Learning programmes fall into one of three pillars: higher education (the FHEQ); general and vocational education (the NQF and QCF respectively); and quality assured lifelong learning (QALL).

Wales has an agreed national approach to recognising non-formal learning within the CQFW through the Quality Assured Lifelong Learning pillar (QALL) which recognises learning that is outside Higher Education and General and Vocational Education and Training. It reflects an understanding that all learning wherever and whenever it takes place should be valued and recognized. The development of QALL provides a mechanism to recognise (certificate) the knowledge or skills gained through wider learning. It should be noted that units in QALL cannot be units from any regulated qualification such as the QCF. Providers can select and use QALL units as appropriate.

One of the main providers of QALL in Wales is Agored Cymru, the Welsh awarding organisation specialising in meeting the needs of all learners in Wales. It developed from the Open College Networks in Wales. OCN Wales was established in October 2004 with the merger of the three former OCNs in Wales. In August 2009 OCN Wales became an Awarding Organisation in the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) and changed its name to Agored Cymru.

The Quality Assured Lifelong Learning (QALL) mechanism allows bespoke in-house company training, adult and community learning, continuing professional development, and other learning to be recognised and awarded credit.

Units can be designed and submitted to QALL through a recognised body if there is not already an existing similar unit within regulated qualifications or the QALL pillar. There is a clear process for developing and drafting units.

The following three case studies demonstrate how Non-formal Learning can be recognised within the CQFW.

Case Study

Recognition of Youth Work Training within the CQFW



Background

The 2 year project, financed by the Welsh Government, explores how work undertaken and experience gained by staff, volunteers and young people, within the voluntary youth work sector, is or can be, recognised within the Credit and Qualification Framework for Wales (CQFW).

CWVYS, (Council in Wales for Voluntary Youth Services) in developing this programme, recognised that although organisations in the voluntary youth sector have years of experience of developing high quality and relevant activities for young people and developing training opportunities for young people and the adult workforce, the majority of the volunteer training is from organisational bespoke training and is non-accredited. While efforts have been made to link some of the existing training to recognised awards, external recognition for the content, methodology, quality assurance and learning outcomes of practice that already existed needed to be developed.

Rationale

Research into the needs of the sector found:

- quality of training was variable
- organisations needed support in managing and accessing appropriate training that develops cohesive progression
- a lack of funding to aid organisations in overcoming resource constraints that prohibit training needs
- no mechanism for formally accrediting adult volunteers
- no Quality Youth Work Induction training that is compatible with the National Standards for the Youth Service in Wales
- a lack of understanding of the methods available to accredit or reward valuable soft outcomes and skills acquired in informal or non-formal learning that could be used across the voluntary youth sector

This project assists voluntary youth work organisations to build their capacity to formally recognise the first steps of youth work training and encourage progression to more formal youth work qualifications by:

- developing an induction programme of 9 units and workbooks in Welsh and English
- employing a Training & Development Officer to support organisations
- forming an official Volunteers Pilot Trainers Team
- delivering 'Training the Trainer' sessions for the Volunteers Trainers Team
- delivery 'A Stepping Stone to Youth Work' units
- developing and piloting the CWVYS Quality Mark award, which recognises workforce development and youth work policy and practice.

Challenges

Challenges faced during the first year included:

- developing the capacity and confidence of organisations and individuals to deliver 'A Stepping Stone to Youth Work' units. The project arranged, tutor drop in days,

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team tutoring, formal unit assessor training, Train the Trainer Training and on call 1:1 support.

- time and scheduling of delivery – voluntary youth organisations have certain periods of the year for developing volunteers which do not always coincide with reporting and delivery schedules
- Dropbox was utilised as a mechanism to ensure ease of access for the tutors to the correct and latest versions of the unit workbooks
- changes in key personnel impacted on the delivery schedule. However this was seen as an asset, with new personnel appreciating the products of the Project for use within their new role.

The Process

The 9 Units for 'A Stepping Stone to Youth Work' have been accredited by Agored Cymru. To lessen the burden on the accreditation process, CWVYS (as the umbrella body for the sector), and YMCA Community College Wales have a formal agreement to process the award of credits. This allows voluntary youth organisations to concentrate on the delivery of the units within their organisations. The CWVYS training and development officer acts as the Internal Verifier and the YMCA Community College Wales is responsible for the standardisation and the administration of the programme.

Results/Benefits

Performance of the Project as at September 2013:

- 94 participating students on target to complete 300+ accredited units
- 71 students have registered for 195 units
- 17 participating organisations

Key findings in the midterm Impact Evaluation Report detailed benefits to:

- personal and professional development
- up skilling and progression to further youth work qualifications
- better trained volunteers/workers and improved team working
- improved professionalism
- increased partnership working

Participating organisations have also noted the following benefits:

- An active forum for collaboration between local, regional and national organisations
- Greater emphasis on having bespoke induction training package on the shelf for new volunteers and frequently changing training personnel
- Ability to brand locally, enhancing the brand of the organisation
- Removing the fear some people have of accreditation, engaging people for the first time in youth work training and encouraging and motivating them to do more

"We have one or two staff who were confident in their own roles but didn't involve themselves directly with young people. The training has helped them be more grounded and work better face to face with young people."

"It's specific to the voluntary youth sector and most importantly it ensures that young people will get a high standard from the people working with them."

"86% of learners planned to progress to further qualifications"

Future Developments

- to support larger National Voluntary Youth Organisations to adopt the units. Some have indicated making 'A Stepping Stone to Youth Work' mandatory within the provision throughout the country
- to better articulate for learners the progression options for learners to more formal youth work qualifications
- to look at the recognition of non-formal learning for management training for volunteers, trustees and staff
- to assist the sector in its understanding of how skills (including soft skills) can be recognised through non-formal and informal learning

Case Study

Recognition of Welsh Local Government in-house
training programmes within the CQFW



Background

Local government employs around 157,000 people in Wales (ONS Quarterly Public Sector Employees Survey, Quarter 2 2012) and is made up of 22 local authorities, each of which is a large independent autonomous organisation and an employer in their own right. Local authorities actively support the development of their employees through a range of workforce development interventions.

In-house learning is a key component within the workforce development portfolio and programmes are often developed and delivered internally to meet local needs. The result is that whilst local authorities have active regional networks and often share learning opportunities or work together to access external programmes, the development of in-house learning has traditionally been managed locally and independently of one another. Learning is often tailor-made to meet organisational needs within each authority and whilst some authorities are active in seeking accreditation in one form or another, there are still many learning programmes that are not accredited or recognised externally.

The CQFW project provided an opportunity to use the accreditation of quality assured learning to both recognise this in-house learning provision through an established Welsh Government framework and support increased collaboration between local authorities, utilising the CQFW as a universal platform by which learning programmes can be shared between authorities in the regions, across local government and maybe the wider public sector.

Methodology

The key challenges and issues facing authorities that drive development interventions are often shared. The CQFW project was seen as an opportunity for local authorities to share common solutions, avoiding duplication of effort, offering transferability, recognising investment in learning, providing evidence of collaboration, supporting achievement, improving performance and where possible reducing costs.

The project was initiated between colleagues in Welsh Government and the Welsh Local Government Authority (WLGA), working with local authorities. The project was managed through distinct national and regional work programmes, each of which was led by either the WLGA or a lead authority from within local authority training and development networks.

Anticipated Benefits

The key benefits anticipated by the different work programmes were to:

- embed the learning and reward participation, to recognise the investment in learning and provide an incentive for employees to participate.
- develop capability to improve practice and performance.
- offer transferable skills that lead to a more flexible workforce.
- provide consistency in terms of content, delivery and assessment to improve standards.
- recognise the educational value of tailored in-house training provision via a recognised framework that gives credibility to the programmes and attracts a wider audience.

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- support progression, using development opportunities to identify talent and promote progression routes.
- deliver sustainable outcomes, sharing across local authorities to cut design and development costs and to increase the delivery capacity and capability in the region.
- increase the number and range of opportunities within a recognised framework.
- support employment and increase engagement.

Outputs

Outputs		
National equalities programme led by WLGA	Equalities member development	Accredited by Agored
	Equalities senior leadership/management team development	
	Equalities staff development	
South East Wales regional programme led by Cardiff Council	An induction to local government	Accredited by ILM
	New manager programme	
	Handling difficult conversations	
South West Wales regional programme led by Neath Port Talbot Council	Connect to Care - Working in the Care sector - Sensory Loss - Preparing a Healthy Meal - Dementia Support	Accredited by Agored
National work programme led by Cardiff Council	Piloting a process for ILM accreditation	Process piloted successfully but not published by ILM
	Mapping exercise	Summary report prepared for partners

Key Findings and Lessons Learned

Working collaboratively across local authorities

1. The project has highlighted that developing and accrediting learning programmes in order to satisfy a broader range of partners and different organisational priorities is harder and more time consuming to achieve. The complexities of co-designing and developing programmes for use across multiple local authorities requires longer lead in times, to enable successful collaborative development to take place and for outputs to be achieved.
2. The CQFW provides an effective platform by which accredited in-house learning can be shared and participation expanded, enabling established programmes to be utilised by other local authorities. For example, the CQFW project will enable the already successful Connect to Care programme to be shared and then delivered by other local authorities who have shown an interest in the programme.

3. Without exception all of those involved in delivering the project have developed a greater understanding of the CQFW, the differences between awarding organisations and the accreditation of learning within the QALL pillar.

It has increased the knowledge, expertise and therefore the capacity within local government to take forward future activity in this area. Expertise can be shared more widely, with lead authorities involved in the CQFW project able to transfer their knowledge and expertise within the regional networks of which they are a part.

4. Working together has created greater awareness of the range of learning available across local authorities, both regionally and nationally. This greater awareness and the wider availability of recognised in-house learning via the CQFW can support sharing and avoid duplication

The CQFW and working with Awarding Organisations

1. The project highlighted a need for better information for employers, to support them in the process of gaining accreditation via the CQFW and understanding of the CQFW in terms of the regulated and QALL pillars.

It is suggested that there is a need for an intermediary or support structure for employers and should be made an explicit requirement for those who are authorised to work with the QALL pillar of the CQFW.

Employers would benefit from a clear process that is user friendly, considers their needs and guides them through the process. If possible there should be a common approach to the CQFW QALL accreditation process by all awarding organisations involved that is user friendly, considers employer needs and guides employers through the process.

2. More diversity is needed in the range of awarding organisations actively supporting accreditation through the CQFW QALL pillar. It would be useful to have a published list of awarding organisations that actively offer accreditation via the CQFW QALL pillar.

Not all of the awarding organisations authorised to accredit learning via the CQFW fully understand the QALL pillar or have a process for accrediting learning via this mechanism.

3. The process of accreditation has usefully raised awareness of some of the programmes already available on the CQFW, both in terms of regulated qualifications and the QALL pillar. Local authorities undertook a more rigorous assessment of their original ideas to ensure their suitability for accreditation through the project. Throughout the process they established that there are some existing accredited programmes that would meet the needs originally identified.

It would be useful for employers to be able to readily access a list of accredited learning available via the CQFW, in terms of both regulated and quality assured lifelong learning. Greater awareness of the options available might avoid unnecessary duplication when developing in-house programmes. It might also better engage employers in the publicly funding learning infrastructure on which they sometimes rely, strengthening relationships with Sector Skills Councils, Standard Setting Bodies, awarding organisations and others.

Case Study

Developing an NHS Accredited Pathway within the CQFW



Background

The 2 year project was funded by the Welsh Government and specifically the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) and was designed to develop appropriate education and training to meet current and future challenges in the NHS in Wales. Development of the workforce is a key driver for the NHS to adapt to the changing quality and safety agenda. This pilot study was designed to develop an accredited pathway that links key clinical areas where skills can be developed, through accredited training units, and translated into workforce and clinical delivery. The pilot study was designed to develop a range of projects that allowed all staff within the Clinical Programme Group (CPG) of Mental Health and Learning Disabilities within the Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) to access further education and training.

To develop this pathway, a number of training units were selected, based on current clinical need and were followed through the process from identification of clinical need to development, delivery and evaluation of these training units. A total of 9 units were identified reflecting clinical priorities where there was a perceived need to develop skills and translate them into the workforce and clinical delivery. It presented a more quality assured approach to in-service training and staff development, where the organisation uses the concepts of teaching and expertise to up skill the workforce without necessarily attending university for formal qualifications.

Rationale

The Clinical Programme Group of Mental Health and Learning Disabilities has a patient population with very specific and complex clinical needs that need to be cared for by professionals who require specialist and continuing education and training programmes. Traditional educational programmes, written and delivered by staff from Further and Higher Education were seen within the CPG as being too generic and not meeting specific clinical needs. In addition, a number of further issues made this project even more timely. These included:

- Current in-service training was sporadic and variable in quality
- The Health Board did not have the required expertise to develop training in an educationally coherent and progressive way
- More recently, the Welsh government's Mental Health Measure for Wales (2010) placed new clinical responsibilities on Health Boards in Wales. This called for a new and faster approach to the development of the workforce than had traditionally been the case.
- Difficulties in recruiting specialist medical staff in North Wales continued to be a major problem.
- Statutory legislation as well as the limits placed on Junior Doctors' hours (EU Working Time Directive) meant that specialist nurses needed to be re-deployed into areas such as managing and delivering an out of hours service in North Wales.
- The CPG was trying to develop a 'Recovery' ethos which was aimed at developing the skills of service users and carers so that they could achieve a level of independence and free up some of the workforce for other responsibilities.

This required very specific education and training in a timely manner. All these issues provided a rationale and context for the piloting of a new way to meet these needs. The range

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of projects included specific packages relating to Agenda for Change to broad applicability training that crossed clinical areas and bands of clinical staff. This mix of projects aimed to add scope and potential for the organisation to test its approach in developing and implementing accredited in-house training.

Challenges

Challenges faced during the project included:

- developing the capacity and confidence of staff and the organisation in developing and delivering the training units. They were supported by a project director and manager
- difficulties in ensuring staff were able to attend at appropriate time
- financial difficulties within NHS Wales and the Health Board meant that some units had to be delivered more than once due to travel ban
- difficulty in back filling for staff attending units
- large geographical area to be covered by one Health Board provided difficulties in travel and supporting staff attending the units
- there were initial communication difficulties with Agored Cymru but these were eventually resolved
- low number of students completing assessed work on the units

The Process

All 9 Units for the project have been accredited by Agored Cymru. In developing the workforce, the pilot sought to develop a pathway that would allow a very specific workforce need to be translated quickly into a quality assured education or training package. As well as providing for an immediate need, it was important that each training package could be situated within a lifelong learning context. To do this, it was necessary, as a minimum, to make sure that all training packages were quality assured through an established and nationally recognised educational format. The Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales (CQFW) provides this common language, which allowed all training packages to be accredited. The project was set up specifically to work with Agored Cymru as the main awarding organisation.

The intention was to develop a quality process where evaluation occurred regularly and lessons learned were applied to the next iteration of the process. It was originally hoped that each training package would be developed and delivered twice so that evaluation would be more complete and the process well embedded. Due to problems with accreditation, financial constraints and workforce pressures, there was some slippage in the timeline, so it was not possible to do this. Nevertheless, some units have been delivered twice. It is also important to note that all courses differ in length, academic level and number of credits awarded as well as being targeted at both the regulated and unregulated workforce. This provided the project with a good representative sample.

In developing a series of training units within the CQFW, the pilot was designed to practically identify problems, attempt to solve them and end with a pathway that was validated as a potentially new quality assured approach to workforce development in the NHS. To achieve this, evaluation needed to be practical and ongoing. As well as this, it was also important to hear directly from participants about their experiences. Lifelong learning and continuing

professional development depend on the availability of education and training opportunities as well as the motivation and experiences of staff involved.

Results/Benefits

“...the principles of creating a set of standards for staff to adhere to, indicates that all staff need to work to this level; to have that decided and defined by clinicians who work in this field is very beneficial and a really good principle. I don’t think we do it often enough. This defines very clearly what we expect people to do.” (Unit Leader)

The quote above illustrates a key feature of this innovative project. It encapsulates and brings the concept of lifelong learning to life. The project itself was designed to empower clinicians working in the Health Sector in North Wales to identify and develop accredited training packages or units. This pilot provides good evidence to the Welsh Government and NHS Wales that this process can be used to develop a high quality NHS work force that can enhance clinical standards and potentially the quality of patient care and outcomes. It also demonstrates that the CQFW has the potential to provide a seamless workforce development model for all staff within the NHS. Used as an education and training framework it has the potential to quality assure all staff development (CPD) for both the regulated and unregulated staff.

The findings that emerged from this project outline the process of piloting the development of a pathway that links service and clinical need to the development and delivery of bespoke quality assured in-service training units. This has been defined as the generation of **‘translational education’**. Translational education is education that meets an identified clinical need, is largely developed and delivered by clinicians and is quality assured and benchmarked against established standards. This project breaks new ground in piloting and establishing a quality assured process that, if developed further, links NHS workforce development more clearly to lifelong learning. It has the potential to up skill the workforce in a more strategic way, improve the quality of care given to patients in the health system and improve patient outcomes.

Results included:

- The project has established an innovative method for developing bespoke education and training. Practitioners, not academics, were empowered to develop and deliver accredited in-service training that met a current clinical need. This was education developed ‘from the coalface’. This method of ‘translational education’ has succeeded in developing a number of key training units for the regulated and unregulated workforce as well as service users and carers. Out of 9 units identified at the start of the project, 7 have been delivered at least once with a number having been delivered twice. Units varied from level 2 to level 6 and from 6 credits to 20.
- The project has shown that units that were developed and delivered to meet a clearly defined clinical role or need were more successful than units that were aimed at a more generic up skilling of staff.
- There were issues due to the specialist nature of some units, in getting appropriate assessors to evaluate proposed units.
- Another issue was the lack of a structured assessment process that met the needs of the learners including a need for more learner support. Further work needs to be done in developing more creative approaches to assessment.

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- There has been an increased level of enthusiasm among staff who have developed and delivered the units. The staff who have delivered the units at least twice made adjustments after the first delivery, demonstrating a learning experience. Evaluation of the second delivery was more positive. There are a number of new units which will be added to the portfolio.
- The work of the project has been strongly supported and facilitated by the Senior Management Team (SMT). They have supported practitioners who have developed and delivered the training units as well as supporting staff in attendance. The success of the CQFW project has allowed them to think more strategically and the SMT has extended the work of the CQFW to include other education and training. There is evidence of cultural change among staff and senior management who now readily ask for 'CQFW' training.
- The project has begun to break down barriers between 'education' and 'service'. A steering group of clinicians and academics have developed a number of modules at level 7 in psychological therapies and Primary Mental Health Nursing. The group, supported by the Director of the CQFW project, are developing a multi-professional postgraduate level framework which is developed from the ground up. Accreditation of these modules is being explored with a local university but it is envisaged that all FE/HEIs in North Wales will become involved.

Future Developments

This small scale pilot project has demonstrated a more innovative way of developing the workforce and meeting immediate clinical needs. The development of 'translational education' puts clinical practitioners at the centre of all education and training in the NHS in Wales. As a result of this project, a number of key developments have begun including:

- The wider dissemination of this work, including NHS Wales, the Welsh Government, Department of Education and Skills (CQFW) and BCUHB.
- New units are being developed and accredited by a local university in North Wales
- An Education and Workforce Development Group has been set up within the CPG to co-ordinate all training and education. This Group consists of key staff from the CPG, BCUHB, higher and further education institutions as well as staff from Workforce Modernisation (formerly NLIAH) and DfES.
- This Group will adopt the CQFW as the framework for all in-service training and education to provide a model of seamless educational progression from level 1-8.
- Work has begun in linking these and new units to the development of competencies and work profiles for an identified sample of posts within the Health Board including psychological therapists, primary mental health workers, health care support workers in mental health and learning disabilities.
- Funding is being sought to continue the Project. The Project should be extended and jointly funded for a further two years to facilitate long term cultural change where CPD is seen as something that benefits both individual staff and the organisation.
- Funding should include the appointment of a full time education and IT manager appointed to work more closely with practitioners in developing units. The IT manager would begin to develop the BCUHB staff website and begin to put these units online for use throughout Wales.

Scotland



Summary of Approach Used to Recognise Non-Formal Learning in Scotland

The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) differs from the other UK Frameworks in that it is a lifelong learning Framework that includes an increasing range of general, vocational and academic qualifications and learning programmes. It also includes regulated and non-regulated provision and includes all HE qualifications. It was created by bringing together the majority of Scotland's mainstream qualifications into a single unified Framework.

Scotland has an agreed national approach to recognising non-formal Learning within the SCQF through their credit rating process. The SCQF allocates levels and credit points to qualifications and learning programmes making them easier for learners, employers and the general public to understand. The process for allocating an SCQF Level and SCQF Credit Points to a programme of learning or qualification is called credit rating. Credit Rating Bodies (CRBs) are the organisations responsible for credit rating and placing qualifications and learning programmes onto the SCQF. All Further Education (FE) colleges in Scotland are CRBs, as are all Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), the Scottish Qualifications Authority and a number of approved bodies including The Chartered Institute of Bankers in Scotland, City & Guilds, the Institute of Leadership and Management and the Scottish Police College. This process involves ensuring the quality and integrity of the learning programmes.

SCQF Partnership (SCQFP) actively promotes the value of credit rating to non-formal learning and work with a range of organisations to explore options for learning to be credit rated into the Framework.

At the moment there are more than 400 examples of non-formal learning programmes that have been credit rated onto the SCQF. Non-formal learning programmes have been placed on the Framework from levels 2 to 11 and range in size from 10 learning hours to over 1000 learning hours. The owners of these programmes include individual employers, trade associations, trade unions, youth organisations, community organisations and adult education organisations.

The following four case studies demonstrate the recognition of non-formal learning within the SCQF.

Case Study

Microsoft Programmes recognised within the SCQF



Background

Microsoft is known across the globe as a household name in IT and nearly all of us will have had some experience of their products or services, even if we are not aware of it. It is a technology leader that creates innovative software to help individuals and organisations realise their full potential. The company has spent many years in Scotland working closely with the education sector to make Microsoft certification and training affordable and adaptable to delivery within standard qualifications such as degrees and Higher Nationals.

Rationale

Microsoft has had a long term interest in how it could best help Scotland's economy and the skills of its people. It was among the first companies to become interested in the SCQF to further the skills work it has been doing in Scotland during the last ten years. A recent survey amongst colleges highlighted the need to move forward and to obtain credit rating so that Microsoft certifications could be used as credit towards SQA qualifications and other purposes.

The Process

The SCQF Partnership advised Microsoft as to where the Framework could be most effective to their business and the routes to having their programmes recognised on the SCQF. The programmes which have been credit rated to date cover a range of skills – providing for the needs of those who look after desktops in a variety of sizes of organisations and the backroom technicians who look after the server.

Benefits

The SCQF was developed to help both employers and employees understand and compare the range of qualifications available in Scotland. Mainstream qualifications, such as those offered in schools, are included in the Framework and Microsoft is one of the private sector companies that has stepped up to the mark to place its industry-standard certifications on the SCQF.

Specialists recognise the value of the Microsoft programmes. Having them on the SCQF means they can be used within college programmes ensuring that graduates can develop the latest skills and gain credit for what they achieve. The collaborative work between the public and the private sectors enables young people to have the right skills at the right time while driving Scotland's economy forward. The credit rated programmes range from SCQF Level 7 to SCQF Level 9 with a value of 9 to 40 SCQF Credit Points. They were credit rated by the University of the West of Scotland.

SCQF Database entries

Microsoft IT Professional: Windows Server 2008: Enterprise Administrator	Microsoft 9
Microsoft IT Professional: Windows Server 2008: Server Administrator	Microsoft 9
Microsoft Technical Specialist: Configuring Microsoft Windows Vista Client	Microsoft 7

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Microsoft Technical Specialist: Deploying and Maintaining Windows Vista Client and Microsoft 2007 Office Desktops	Microsoft 7
Microsoft Technology Specialist: Windows Server 2008: Applications Infrastructure, Configuring	Microsoft 7
Microsoft Technology Specialist: Windows Server 2008: Network Infrastructure, Configuring	Microsoft 7
Technical Specialist: Accessing Data with Microsoft .NET Framework 4	Microsoft 8
Technical Specialist: Microsoft SharePoint 2010 Application Development	Microsoft 9
Technical Specialist: Web Applications Development with Microsoft .NET Framework 4	Microsoft 8
Technical Specialist: Windows 7 Configuring	Microsoft 8
Technical Specialist: Windows Application Development with Microsoft .NET Framework 4	Microsoft 9
Technical Specialist: Windows Communication Foundation Development with Microsoft .NET Framework 4	Microsoft 9
Technical Specialist: Windows Server 2008: Active Directory, Configuring	Microsoft 8

Industry-specific qualifications ensure that employers have a team with the right skills through relevant IT certifications with objective validation. Having these certifications credit rated means that their level can be easily compared to the level of other mainstream qualifications, including SVQs, HNC/Ds and degrees.

The SCQF also helps employees to navigate the maze of IT courses offered by industry as well as universities and colleges. Learners may also find that they are able to transfer credit gained through smaller, relevant chunks of learning, such as Microsoft's wide range of certifications, towards larger learning programmes such as a degree in Computing and IT. Industry qualifications can also help job seekers stand out in today's highly competitive job market.

Derrick McCourt, Director of Microsoft Scotland, comments, *"Working with the SCQF has enabled Microsoft to bring a formal recognition of its own certification system in terms of credit and level. This is valuable in that it brings together qualifications from the worlds of industry and academia, thus establishing a mutual parity to support the Scottish Government's skills strategy. In practical terms, those responsible for hiring IT professionals for industry vacancies now have, for the first time, a method of comparing different qualifications on applicants' CVs. This will bring benefit to Microsoft, its tens of thousands of solution partners and hundreds of thousands of customers."*

Case Study

CHILDREN 1ST Volunteer Programmes recognised
within the SCQF



Background

The vision of CHILDREN 1ST is for a happy, healthy, safe and secure childhood for every child and young person in Scotland. For over 125 years, CHILDREN 1ST has been working to build a brighter future for Scotland's vulnerable children and families. We listen, we support and we take action by delivering services in homes and communities across Scotland. We work to safeguard children and young people, to support them within their families and to help them recover from abuse, neglect and violence. We speak out for children's rights and campaign to change attitudes.

CHILDREN 1ST has a long tradition of involving volunteers and highly value the unique contribution that volunteers make to the charity. The energy, enthusiasm, skills and experience which volunteers bring, enrich the work of paid staff and help them to provide high quality services for vulnerable children, young people and their families. The organisation has around 270 staff and 900 volunteers in 27 locations across Scotland.

Rationale

With funding available by the Scottish Government, the SCQF Partnership established a project to support learning programmes using a community learning and development approach, by having them credit rated on to the SCQF. 2012-13 was the first of a three-year project aimed at supporting the credit rating of up to 30 programmes.

Challenge

Volunteers come to CHILDREN 1ST with a wide range of skills, abilities and motivations. Some of their motivations are simply to "help a child", while others are looking to develop skills for personal development or professional reasons.

CHILDREN 1ST believed that SCQF credit rating would be attractive to volunteers who have few or no qualifications in this field and that they could be used for progression in their personal or professional life. CHILDREN 1ST also believed that it was important to inform and its service users (children, young people and their families) and partner agencies that the Volunteer Training and Assessment Programme (VTAP) has been recognised as an SCQF credit rated programme.

The Process

CHILDREN 1ST originally got involved in the credit rating process through its involvement in the Community Learning and Development (CLD) Council for Scotland's CLD approval process. The CLD approval panel recommended that CHILDREN 1ST would apply for the Scottish Government and SCQF project in order to have the programme credit rated. Following an initial information workshop, the first step was to complete a work plan of tasks.

CHILDREN 1ST had an existing volunteer training programme which was amended and adapted to the needs of the credit rating process. Many of the learning outcomes were amended through the process. A consultant who was working with SCQF supported the organisation. The consultant liaised with CHILDREN 1ST and the credit rating body – Edinburgh's Napier University. CHILDREN 1ST was successful in the credit rating process

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and now has an SCQF 5 credit rated programme for our volunteers titled, “Supporting Children Young People and Families: Volunteer Training and Assessment Programme”. The Programme consists of four modules and was allocated 6 credit points. The organisation is currently rolling out this Programme across its services in Scotland. Napier University will be quality assuring the Programme going forward. On completion of the Programme they are offered ongoing development training relevant to their work role.

To date twenty staff members have completed a 3-day course enabling them to become Key-Trainers for the Programme. The first Volunteer Training and Assessment Programme began in March 2013. By the end of September 2013, four Programmes (40 volunteers) had been completed with three more scheduled to commence soon. As part of the Programme development we ran a pilot programme, Training for Co-Trainers for nine volunteers in September who were keen to develop their training skills and to help the organisation meet the demand. This was a shortened version of the 3-day Key-Trainers course to accommodate volunteer availability.

Benefits

Having its programmes credit rated and assigned a level is extremely important for the organisation as it provides the opportunity for its volunteers to get recognition for their learning in the workplace. It also helps their understanding of courses and programmes that lead to qualifications.

Initial feedback from volunteers has been very positive:

“It was a great programme, I didn’t realise it had a formal qualification – I was surprised and pleased to hear this.”

“The trainers created a relaxed and interactive learning environment. Good information supplied with a mixture of dialogue and enjoyment.”

CHILDREN 1ST now advertises Volunteer Training and Assessment Programmes (VTAP) in its volunteer recruitment leaflets and advertisements in an effort to attract more people to become volunteers. The credit rating has benefited CHILDREN 1ST as it has provided the organisation with an opportunity to update and formalise the assessment process for volunteers.

The Future

CHILDREN 1ST plans to run VTAP programmes across a range of services within the organisation and to invite current active volunteers to become co-trainers for the Programme. Another development is to look at the possibility of adapting the Programme materials to create a self-study programme (a mixture of self-study, online forums and tutorials). This will enable CHILDREN 1ST to provide accessible training to volunteers located in rural areas in the north and west of Scotland.

Case Study

Recognising the Royal Yachting Association Scotland
(RYA Scotland) awards within the SCQF



Background

The Royal Yachting Association Scotland (RYA Scotland) has two distinct roles. Firstly, it is a membership organisation charged with looking after the interests of individuals, clubs, training centres and affiliates of the RYA in Scotland. Secondly it is a recognised governing body for sailing in all of its forms in Scotland.

The first of these roles is directly supported by the membership of the RYA and the second is supported by Sport Scotland, the national agency for sport.

RYA Scotland has five full-time employees, 5 part-time employees and it is also currently working with an Intern position. In addition it has ten people who deliver activity on a contractual basis.

Rationale

With funding made available by the Scottish Funding Council, the SCQF Partnership established a programme of work to initiate and support a range of employer engagement projects. 2012-13 was the second of this three-year project aimed at raising levels of awareness of the SCQF and helping to bring together employers, colleges and universities to utilise the SCQF. This projects highlights how the SCQF can be used to develop progression routes, improve skills utilisation and recognise learner achievement through partnerships between employers, sectors and educational institutions.

The Process

The Development Manager of RYA Scotland was approached by SkillsActive Scotland offering an opportunity to get some of the RYA awards credit rated on to the SCQF. It was a great opportunity to work with educational establishments with a view to improving the quality of training.

Benefits

The Dinghy Instructor Award has been credit rated at SCQF level 8 with 7 credit points and the Powerboat Instructor Award at SCQF Level 8 with 5 credit points. These courses take place throughout Scotland and are available to those aged 16 and over.

This process has introduced a number of new areas of working that requires RYA Scotland to deliver workforce training and development and fundamentally change the approach to delivering instructor training. This will improve the quality of the proficiency training delivered in Scotland. The process was comprehensive, useful and much easier than expected. RYA Scotland was provided with great support from the outset.

Learning Programme

The Powerboat Instructor course takes 3 days. However, pre-course work is required and the candidates have to have achieved a high level of powerboating prior to signing up for the course. This is verified by a pre-entry assessment, alongside a check of First Aid certificates and personal membership of the RYA. The course itself examines the delivery of training

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in the handling of powerboats and associated activities. The course is moderated on the final day, by an external moderator who verifies the ability of the candidates, as well as the performance of the trainer leading the course.

The Dinghy Instructor course takes 5 days. The candidates go through a similar process prior to application. A pre-entry assessment is carried out and candidates should hold a valid First Aid certificate and a Level 2 powerboat certificate, as well as personal membership of the RYA. This programme covers boat handling skills, teaching methods, planning for activity, working with the range of boats used in dinghy training and powerboat handling, as well as shore-based type activities. The programme is moderated by an external moderator who informs RYA Scotland about the quality of the course and candidate performance. This helps to monitor the training programmes and the standards of delivery.

Future Plans

RYA Scotland will certainly credit rate more of its training programmes as funding becomes available. The experience to date with SCQF has been very, very positive.

Case Study

Borders College work with IKEA to credit rate the Ready
for Retail Programme



Background

Borders College operates from six sites within the Scottish Borders and Edinburgh and is the sole Further Education college and major provider of training in the Scottish Borders region. Each year it enrolls around 3000 students for a wide range of training programmes.

Since the 1990s Borders College has worked with organisations that support people with disabilities by developing courses for their service users within the Borders and Edinburgh areas. Using the SVQ as a model of delivery, Borders College developed units at basic levels that could be delivered in non-college environments, for example, in supported workplaces, training establishments and other community-based settings. The units were written by Borders College staff with input from staff from partner organisations and this subsequently became known as the 'Skills Accreditation Programme'.

Rationale

In 2012-13, with funding available from the Scottish Funding Council, the SCQFP established a project to support colleges that wanted to credit rate their non-recognised qualifications and put them onto the Framework.

This project aimed to achieve three outcomes in its role of supporting Credit Rating Bodies:

- To help overcome any perceived barriers to credit rating within colleges
- To increase in a coherent way the amount of currently non-recognised qualifications on the Framework
- The building of sustainability in credit rating within regional structures in Scotland

Borders College chose to credit rate the Ready for Retail programme in order to enhance its value, to improve learners' employability and to enable employers to measure the programme against other nationally recognised awards.

The Process

Borders College developed the programme with assistance from staff working in the Edinburgh branch of IKEA. They set about developing units that would fit around the work tasks that were being carried out, providing structure to the learning that was taking place. IKEA staff members and some from the partner organisations were trained to help with the delivery and assessment of the Award.

The units for the Ready for Retail Award were validated through Borders College's internal approval system. The application included general information about the award and structure, justification for developing new provision, delivery methods, entry requirements, access routes and progression routes.

Borders College, as an approved Credit Rating Body, has rigorous and robust quality assurance systems for levelling and credit rating learning programmes onto the SCQF. The SCQF level descriptors are used to indicate the level of difficulty of the qualification at a given level on the Framework, and the SCQF credit points show how much time it takes, on average, to complete the qualification.

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Outcomes & Benefits

Ready for Retail is now available at two levels depending on the level of support received by the candidate - SCQF level 1 or SCQF level 2 with 35 SCQF credit points awarded to those who complete the full award.

Jenny Grant one of the first people to take part in the Ready for Retail programme and now fully employed by IKEA stated *“Working on the shop floor and doing the Ready for Retail course has helped me with my confidence and being able to interact with other people. I really enjoyed working on my portfolio. It is the first time I have got a recognised award and it made me feel awesome.”*

Liz Stanton who co-ordinates the programme for IKEA commented *“The Ready for Retail course gives specialist support to people with disabilities, stopping them from feeling trapped into welfare dependency. We deliver the course in a real life retail environment and our store offers a wide range of areas to work in; restaurant, office, shop floor, communication/display and warehouse. We’d absolutely encourage other employers to adopt a similar approach, so people with disabilities can play a full role in society.”*

David Killeen, Vice Principal (Quality and Innovation), at Borders College says *“We believe that there is currently a very limited range of vocational qualifications at these levels which does add to the barriers for someone with a disability trying to gain employment.”*

Susan Govan, the Programme Manager at Borders College welcomed the opportunity to credit rate the award, stating, *“It’s a programme which has worked, not only for IKEA, but also for small galleries and charity shops, improving the lives of people who are often disadvantaged in the workplace. The SCQF credit rating of the programme adds value and will help improve the employment prospects of these candidates.”*

Future Developments

Following the success of the Ready for Retail Award, Borders College is now levelling and credit rating another programme entitled the ‘Tenancy Award’ which will help people who are being supported in a tenancy for the first time to understand their rights, responsibilities and other aspects of living in rented accommodation.

The Netherlands



Summary of Approaches Used to Recognise Non-Formal Learning in The Netherlands

The Dutch Qualifications Framework (NLQF) is a new way of describing Dutch qualifications levels. It is a systematic arrangement of all existing qualifications in The Netherlands comprising two pillars. The first pillar consists of qualifications regulated by the public sector (the Ministries of Education, Culture and Science and the Ministry of Economic Affairs). The second pillar caters for 'other qualifications' or non-formal qualifications, notably those awarded by the private sector outside the formal system and related to the labour market. The inclusion and classification of these latter qualifications is generally at the request of the providers.

The NLQF incorporates higher education qualifications within the Framework. The Framework consists of an Entry Level followed by 8 levels with Level 1 the least complex and Level 8 the most complex.

The National Coordination Point for NLQF developed procedures for including non-formal qualifications into the NLQF. Having qualifications included in and levelled to the Framework enables a much easier comparison with other qualifications at national and European level.

The Netherlands has two ways of recognising non-formal learning. The first is through The Netherlands Qualifications Framework (NLQF) and the second is through the Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL). Both methods are ways of validating non-formal learning; the NLQF on the level of the qualification and APL on the competence of the individual. However, since the focus of this project is not on the recognition of non-formal learning through recognition of prior learning (RPL)/accreditation of prior learning (APL) procedures, the following case study demonstrates how non-formal certificated learning is recognised within the NLQF.

Case Study

Recognising the ABN/AMRO Qualification
'Relationship Manager for Companies' in the NLQF



Background

The ABN/AMRO is one of the largest banks in The Netherlands. The bank employs about 110,000 staff worldwide, 20,000 of whom are in The Netherlands. NIBE/SVV (private supplier of education) developed a qualification for ABN/AMRO, “Relationship Manager for Companies”.

Rationale

With funding available from the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, procedures have been developed and committees set up to make it possible for inclusion of non-formal qualifications within the NLQF. ABN/AMRO is the owner of the qualification, “Relationship Manager for Companies”. NIBE/SVV and Gooi Consult are the organisations responsible for the delivery and examination of the education programme. NIBE/SVV is the organisation which went through the procedure of validation. The ABN/AMRO Bank together with NIBE/SVV were both interested in getting the qualification included in the NLQF.

In January 2013 NIBE/SVV, together with ABN/AMRO, submitted its request for validation of the organisation. One of key points in the assessment by the “Quality Committee” (the committee that assesses the requests for validation) is **to establish** who is the owner of the qualification. While the bank (ABN/AMRO) is responsible for the content and any changes to the qualification, NIBE/SVV is responsible for **the process of education (delivery and assessment)**. It was agreed by all parties that since NIBE/SVV is the owner of the qualification it is appropriate **that it would** undertake the process of validation. As a result of the issue around ownership the procedure took more than three months. NIBE/SVV was validated in June 2013.

After the validation of the organisation, NIBE/SVV submitted its request for inclusion of the ABN/AMRO qualification, “Relationship Manager for Companies” into the NLQF. NIBE/SVV suggested level 6 NLQF as the most appropriate level on the basis of their self-evaluation. The self evaluation was sent to three external experts who assessed it. The external experts’ report was sent to the “Classification Committee” of the NCP which reviewed it. On the basis of this report the Committee advises the NCP Board on granting the requested level in the NLQF. In September 2013 the ABN/AMRO qualification, ‘Relationship Manager for Companies’ was granted the NLQF level 6, and included in the NLQF for the period of 5 years.

Benefits

The organisations involved are convinced that inclusion of the qualification in the NLQF which indicates the NLQF level and therefore the EQF level, supports the mobility of the bank’s employees. This is important as the world of banking is international with a lot of mobility. The first graduates of this NLQF qualification will have both an NLQF and EQF level on their diploma.

Future Developments

NIBE/SVV intends to submit more qualifications to NCP NLQF for inclusion in the NLQF. This extends to a wide range of qualifications in the financial world where there is an increasing demand for quality and level.

