

bestpractice

The magazine for professionals in verification and assessment



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Skills for Care

A whole range of new qualifications are being developed by Skills for Care in partnership with awarding organisations. This is an employer and sector led process designed to meet the needs of employers. There will be many different units (or parts of qualifications) that reflect what workers should 'know' and 'do' which make up a number of different qualifications.

What is changing?

The current Health and Social Care (HSC) NVQs level 2 and 3 will be replaced by Health and Social Care (HSC) Diplomas at Level 2 and 3. These will be launched in January 2011.

There will be options to take a generic HSC Diploma or a specialist dementia pathway or learning disability pathway, which will allow learners to tailor their learning to their job role. The current learning disability qualification (LDQ) will not exist on the QCF. The learning disability pathway will provide a new way for learners to gain contextualised knowledge and skills around supporting individuals with learning disabilities.

The current leadership and management in care services (formerly the Registered Managers award) and the Health and Social Care (HSC) NVQ level 4 will become a combined qualification at level 5. The difference in levels reflects differences between the current framework and the QCF. This qualification will also be launched January 2011.

Existing qualifications will be recognised at an equivalent level, so those staff who are qualified will not have to repeat their qualification.

The QCF gives the flexibility to link units studied into relevant qualifications as appropriate, and in some cases will also allow non-accredited prior experience and knowledge to be taken into account. This is formally known as recognition of prior learning (RPL). It is a term used with the QCF to ensure learners do not repeat learning. The RPL system allows certificated and un-certificated learning to be recognised, providing it meets the learning outcomes of the units. Further information should be sought from individual awarding organisations.

Structure of health and social care diplomas at level 2 and 3

Group A – 4 mandatory units across England adults and children, Northern Ireland and Wales and a further 5 mandatory units across England, Northern Ireland and Wales adult social care. The split is as described below.

Personal development Communication

Equality and inclusion Duty of care

Role of health and social care worker Safeguarding of vulnerable adults

Person-centred Support Health and safety

Handling information

Group B - made up of knowledge only units that offer the learner the opportunity to undertake units that form either a generic or specialist learning disabilities or dementia pathway.

For further information visit www.skillsforcare.org.uk

Skills Funding Agency:

Extracts from Guidance Note 5 July 2010 to read the complete document visit www.skillsfundingagency.com.

The document covers:

- Additional funds for Apprenticeships in 2010/11
- Payment and performance management arrangements for colleges and training organisations in 2010/11 (single budget)
- Funding of provision through the single budget
- Quality and intervention
- Audit and financial assurance
- Minimum contract level
- Sub-contracting
- Funding policy clarification: Programme Led Apprenticeship transition

Para 3. The Agency is pleased to announce that it is able to reallocate £54 million of existing funds to support post-19 Apprenticeship delivery. These funds have been released through under spend on Train to Gain delivery in 2009/10 and unallocated Apprenticeship funds in 2010/11. Of the £54m, £9m has been ring-fenced for specific exceptional cases already being considered and includes a small contingency fund. The remaining £45m will be allocated formulaically to all post-19 Apprenticeship providers. Train to Gain only training organisations will not be awarded any of the reallocated funds. The amount each college or training organisation will receive is based on their current share of the allocated 2010/11 post-19 Apprenticeship budget with a weighting increase for Apprenticeship only providers.

Performance

Para 15. For colleges, there will be no performance management or reconciliation of the single budget in-year. It is at the Agency's discretion as to whether any college's allocation/maximum contract value is increased in year. There will be no automatic payment for over-performance and the Agency will not pay for any over-delivery on Train to Gain.

The Agency will expect colleges to provide a Mid-Year Estimate in February 2011, an End Year Estimate in September 2011 and a Final Claim in November 2011. The returns will encompass both Employer Responsive and Adult Learner Responsive delivery. Whilst the Agency will not reconcile funding in line with the Mid-Year Estimate, it will take account of any forecast cash under-delivery in agreeing allocations for 2011/12.

Payments

Para 19. The Skills Funding Agency will continue to pay training organisations based on their actual delivery each month. In period 1 (August 2010) the payment received will relate to the last period of the 2009/10 year. Period 2 will be the payment for activity in period 1.

Any training organisation or employer that is in receipt of both Adult Learner Responsive and Employer Responsive funds will continue to receive separate payments for these funding streams. These organisations only receive a single post-19 Employer Responsive budget.

Quality and Intervention

The coalition Government is committed to 'setting free' colleges from state control, whilst ensuring that only high quality colleges and training organisations receive public funding to deliver high-quality provision. This section of the Guidance Note clarifies how the Skills Funding Agency will implement these principles. In doing so, it restates the operational arrangements for the assessment of quality and intervention should standards be breached.

Eligibility for public funding – Approved College and Training Organisation Register (ACTOR)

Para 34. All colleges, training organisations and employers will need to be on the Skills Funding Agency's Approved College and Training Organisation Register (ACTOR) in order to be considered for funding from the Agency.

Case conferences

Para 42. The triggers for underperformance are still being modelled, but are likely to include existing measures such as Ofsted outcomes (in particular grades for leadership and management and overall effectiveness), Framework for Excellence data, Notices To Improve, and/or where there is information about a provider entering into a re-organisation or merger phase.

What constitutes an Apprenticeship?

Before considering a pre-Apprenticeship programme it is necessary to fully understand those elements that are, and must be, retained within any full Apprenticeship programme. Only then will it be possible to describe a valuable progression route which is properly positioned and can accurately be entitled 'pre-Apprenticeship'.

An Apprenticeship at whatever level (2, 3 or higher) has to be **employed**, ie the Apprentice works for an employer and is in receipt of a wage. Furthermore, the Apprenticeship should follow a fully approved, employer designed '**framework**'.

What then is a pre-Apprenticeship?

All Apprenticeship frameworks comprise a variety of 'elements' separated into three main categories. These are:

- Competence based elements normally assessed at the workplace.
- Accredited knowledge based elements often referred to as technical certificates.
- Basic skills/functional skills (often embedded elsewhere).

If we position Apprenticeships as the core element of all (Government funded) skills training, then Government should only fund those elements that are found within full Apprenticeship frameworks.

I therefore **propose that a Government funded pre-Apprenticeship should (only) be those parts of any employer designed approved Apprenticeship framework that can be started before the learner is employed and only then able to complete the full Apprenticeship**, ie any elements of a framework that are not dependent on the learner being in employment, eg knowledge based units, functional skills/key skills, employability rights and responsibilities, the personal learning and thinking skills, etc, etc.

Under this definition, any framework element that is undertaken before employment status is gained would be classified as 'pre-Apprenticeship training'. This would include:

- Activities currently covered by 'young Apprenticeships' (age 14-16).
- Appropriate elements of diplomas (age 14+).
- Off the job vocational courses provided by colleges and other training organisations (all age).
- Elements of e2e (16-18) and Foundation Learning (all age).
- Programme led Apprenticeships, undertaken with employers prior to ultimate employment (all age).
- Basic, employability and skills training under DWP's Work Programme (currently 18+).

Under this proposal, from the age of 14 upwards everyone entitled to Government funding to engage on a pre-Apprenticeship programme as outlined above should not only have the opportunity to start building up the various elements/units that comprise a full Apprenticeship framework, but also have their achievements properly accredited, **prior to** completing a full Apprenticeship with an employer. In simple terms, the elements funded under such a pre-Apprenticeship would not need to be repeated **nor funded again** when a full employed Apprenticeship is secured.

Conclusion

Pre-Apprenticeship should not be a closely defined programme, but rather a flexible approach that enables all learners (not just young people) to develop those elements of a full Apprenticeship programme that do not need to be undertaken **in or at work**. Attainment of elements in this way would maximise their opportunity to progress into a full employed Apprenticeship at the appropriate level, taking fully into consideration all learning already undertaken. This would leave the Apprenticeship brand free to reflect the fact that Apprenticeships are real jobs with real employers. Much current duplication of Government funding would be removed, with all vocational training being focused onto the development of Apprenticeships. Pre-Apprenticeship activity would be appropriate to individuals operating from pre-level 2, right through to levels 4/5, with progress onto, and completion of, a full Apprenticeship **only** when employment has been confirmed.

Extracts from
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For further information go to www.learningproviders.org.uk