

Recognising non-formal certificated learning (NFL) within and outside UK Frameworks

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Introduction

- Project part of EQF work programme for 2012/13
- Explore how the UK countries (plus 2 other European countries) recognise NFL
- Focus on NFL where learning/training is delivered, assessed and quality assured and learners receive certification outside formal system (as opposed to informal learning recognised through RPL)
- Defining formal, non formal and informal learning (Based on EC definitions)
- Policy Background

Methodological Approach

Information collated under four headings to build clear picture as to how non formal learning is recognised within each country:

- The nature and purpose of the NQF
- Does NQF currently include regulated and non regulated provision?
- Is there an agreed national approach or position to recognising NFL? If so what is the approach, how widely is it used and by what type of organisations?
- If there is no national approach how does your country approach the recognition of NFL? How widely is it used and by what types of organisations?

Based on the above information case studies were identified to demonstrate the approach/s used within each country

Methodological Approach

- Second part of project will look at how two other European countries recognise NFL
- Countries selected – Finland and Germany
- Finland – considered to be well advanced in recognising NFL
- Germany - considered to have the same degree of development as the UK in terms of recognising NFL



Qualifications
Frameworks
in the UK

Project Outcomes

Recognising NFL in Eng/NI

- Nature and purpose of framework – since it is the QCF which is referenced to the EQF, approaches to the recognition of NFL considered in relation to QCF
- 9 levels (Entry to level 8). Units and qualifications have a credit value (1 credit represents 10 notional hours of learning) and credit level
- QCF only includes regulated vocational qualifications
- No agreed national approach to recognising NFL
- However there are approaches to recognising NFL - both linked to the framework and those which sit outside the framework

Recognising NFL in Eng/NI

Approaches linked to the framework:

Exemption within the QCF

- The facility for a learner to claim exemption from some of the achievement requirements of a QCF qualification, using evidence of certificated, non-QCF achievement deemed to be of equivalent value
- The requirements and expectations for exemption in the QCF are set out in the *Regulatory arrangements for the Qualifications and Credit Framework*
- The Regulatory arrangements for the QCF set particular requirements of awarding organisations in relation to exemption: ‘The awarding organisation must have in place the necessary systems, procedures and resources to ensure any claims for exemption identified by learners are considered and a record of any valid claims is kept’
- When identifying exemptions AOs must have a process for determining the quality of any units, qualifications or other certificated achievement awarded outside the QCF
- not widely used by AOs – some examples in e-skills and Health and Social Care Qualifications

Recognising NFL in Eng/NI

Approaches linked to the framework:

The achievement of QCF units and qualifications by generating evidence through work based learning

- The validation of work based learning is an approach widely used whereby QCF units and qualifications can be achieved by generating evidence through work based learning
- Occupational qualifications on the QCF are competence-orientated and assessed through evidence of performance. Apprenticeships in England and Northern Ireland are work-based training programmes providing the learner with practical skills through on-the-job training combined with theoretical knowledge through off-the-job learning. The QCF occupational qualifications are a major component of an apprenticeship programme
- Other QCF qualifications such as the BTEC vocational awards may include a work based element

Recognising NFL in Eng/NI

Approaches linked to the framework:

Recognising employer in house training within the QCF

- The validation of employer in-house training was initiated as part of the UK wide Vocational Qualifications (VQ) Reform Programme which seeks to increase the relevance, value and flexibility of VQs through a credit-based unit and qualifications system – the Qualifications and Credit Framework (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
- The aim of the England and Northern Ireland initiatives was to test out different approaches for the accreditation of employers' and providers' training within the national system (QCF)

Recognising NFL in Eng/NI

Approaches which sit outside the framework

Endorsement of employer training by recognised AOs

- Some of the large UK recognised awarding organisations offer the endorsement of bespoke training and/or qualifications to companies
- This allows for qualifications to be specifically created and developed to meet the needs of a particular range of learners and stakeholders. These do not form part of the QCF
- Companies who do not want to have their in-house training programmes accredited within the QCF may choose the endorsement route for the following reasons:
 - Nationally accredited qualifications may not be appropriate for the organisation
 - Independent quality assurance is provided for training programmes
 - Demonstrates the quality of the training programme by conferring Awarding Organisation approval of the aims and content

Recognising NFL in Eng/NI

Approaches which sit outside the framework

The Open College Network certification of non formal learning

- OCNs were established to certify learning programmes, based on small steps (units and credits) to meet the needs of the local community
- They work with a range of organisations to deliver a diverse selection of learning programmes based on OCN units of learning (Adult Education Providers, Further Education Colleges, Youth Based Providers, Voluntary & Community Providers, Trade Unions, Small & Medium Enterprises, statutory funded Training Providers, Public Sector Bodies including Prisons)
- Many OCNs have become recognised awarding organisations within the QCF and now operate within the regulated system, working with their centre's to deliver both OCN certificated learning programmes or QCF regulated qualifications
- OCN utilises the same processes for the delivery, assessment and quality assurance for both regulated (QCF qualifications) and non-regulated provision (OCN certificated learning programmes), which sits outside the QCF

Recognising NFL in Wales

- Nature and purpose of framework- CQFW aims to encompass all learning – HE (FHEQ), general and vocational education (NQF and QCF) and Quality Assured lifelong learning (QALL)
- 9 levels (Entry to level 8). Units and qualifications have a credit value (1 credit represents 10 notional hours of learning) and credit level
- Includes regulated and non regulated provision
- The QALL pillar recognises non regulated provision - learning outside HE, general and vocational education and training
- Provision in QALL based on units and credits
- The QALL provides the mechanism to recognise non-formal learning

Recognising NFL in Wales

QALL can include:

- Adult and Community Learning including learning to assist adults to return to learning
- introductory or additional learning undertaken by all types of learners that might help learners to move into QCF units and / or qualifications.
- learning which is additional to QCF units and / or qualifications
- training you might do as part of a job which is not formally recognised currently
- informal learning or training provided in a variety of situations
- informal, specialist, interest or hobby based learning provided by a variety of organisations, such as libraries, museums, unions and voluntary organisations

Main provider of QALL in Wales is Agored Cymru (previously OCN Wales)

Recognising NFL in Wales

QALL Recognition Process:

- Organisations can apply to CQFW to become recognised to assign and/or award credit
- Applications to be a recognised organisation for QALL have come mainly from existing AOS with the principal one being Agored Cymru
- Organisations wishing to have learning recognised are advised to work with a CQFW Recognised Body either directly or via a more experienced learner provider such as a college, a local authority or work-based learning provider
- As QALL units are not part of any regulated qualification there are no rules of combination for using them. Providers can use QALL units as they consider appropriate
- Approved QALL units can only be delivered by a provider that is an approved centre of the recognised body

Recognising non-formal learning in Scotland

- Nature and purpose of Framework – single unified framework including SQA, HE and Scottish Vocational qualifications
- 12 SCQF levels. Units and qualifications have a credit value (1 credit represents 10 notional hours of learning) and credit level
- Includes regulated (qualifications) and non regulated (learning programmes) provision
- Agreed national approach to recognising non formal learning through credit rating process

Recognising non-formal learning in Scotland

Credit Rating Process

- The process for allocating an SCQF level and SCQF credit points to a qualification or programme of learning is called credit rating
- Credit Rating Bodies (CRBs) are responsible for credit rating and placing qualifications and learning programmes onto the SCQF
- All FE Colleges, HE institutions, SQA and a number of approved bodies including the chartered institute of Bankers in Scotland, C & Gs, ILM and the Scottish Police College are CRBs

Recognising non-formal learning in Scotland

- There is a robust QA system for organisations wishing to become CRBs
- Each CRB has rigorous and robust QA systems for credit rating programmes onto the SCQF
- All CRBs are required to comply with the criteria and guidelines set out in the SCQF handbook regardless of what type of qualification or programme they are credit rating
- CRBs credit rate their own learning programmes and some credit rate learning programmes developed by other ‘third party’ organisations
- Much of the non formal learning placed on the framework is from ‘third party’ organisations

Recognising non-formal learning in Scotland

In order to be placed on the framework a qualification or learning programme has to be:

- ✓ outcome based
 - ✓ more than 10 hours (minimum credit of 1)
 - ✓ formally assessed
 - ✓ internally and externally quality assured
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- More than 400 non formal learning programmes credit rated onto SCQF from levels 1-11 ranging from 10 – 1000 learning hours
 - The owners of these programmes include employers, trade associations, trade unions, youth organisations, community organisations and adult education organisations

Recognising non-formal learning in Scotland

Cases Studies:

- CASE STUDY 1: Recognising Microsoft Training Programmes on the SCQF
- CASE STUDY 2: CHILDREN 1ST - Recognising Volunteer Training and Assessment Programme on the SCQF
- CASE STUDY 3: Employer Engagement Project - The Royal Yachting Association Scotland (RYA Scotland)
- CASE STUDY 4: International retailer IKEA supports Borders College and the SCQF