



Credit transfer and progression from the QCF to Higher Education

- WYLLN 3rd Annual and Progression Conference
- Leeds April 23rd 2010
- Peter Wilson
peterwilson49@btinternet.com



Implementing the QCF

- 5 years of consultation, tests, trials and development 2003-08
- 18 months of implementation (Nov. 08)
- Over 3000 qualifications
- Over 16,000 units
- All vocational qualifications moved from the NQF to the QCF by March 2011



QCF and 'non-QCF' qualifications

- All qualifications are part of the new 'regulatory framework' from April 2010
- Some regulated qualifications continue to fall outside the scope of the QCF:
 - A Levels
 - GCSEs
 - 14-19 Diplomas (in part)
- A decision on moving these qualifications into the QCF after the election



Credit transfer and progression

- ‘Progression’ remains a concept based primarily on qualifications and on moving from one level to another
- ‘Credit transfer’ is a new concept, based on the ability to move achievements between qualifications at the same level
- There are very few examples of credit transfer currently operating in the QCF
- Even fewer between the QCF and HE



Credit transfer in the QCF

- All awarding organisations (AOs) must accept credits for transfer from any other QCF awarding organisation..
- ..based on the rules of combination for the 'receiving' qualification
- So 'credit transfer' is an explicit entitlement for a learner..
- ..based on rules set by AOs and subject to regulation by Ofqual



Credit transfer in HE

- Based on institutional policies, not on any nationally enforceable requirement
- Subject to conditions set by faculties, departments or courses over time
- Based on decisions made by individuals about individuals
- A barter economy, rather than a currency
- An underdeveloped feature of HE (?)



Credit transfer between the QCF and HEIs

- Linking together a regulated framework with one based on institutional autonomy
- Credits are not actually ‘transferred’ in a physical sense..
- ..but some HEIs (or faculties or courses) are prepared to ‘recognise’ QCF credits
- The way in which QCF credits are ‘recognised’ varies across different HEIs



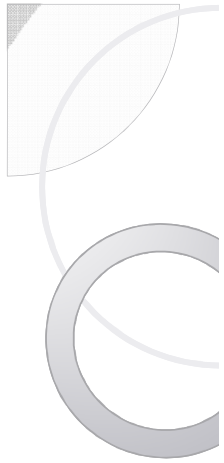
Making credit transfer work between the QCF and HE

- Some HEIs are prepared to commit to an institutional recognition of QCF credits for 'general credit' (eg the OU)
- Some HEIs 'recognise' QCF credits through an APL process (eg Plymouth)
- Some HEIs grant 'exemption' for QCF credits (eg Wolverhampton)
- Some HEIs 're-award' their own credits based on QCF credits (eg xxxxxx)



Actions by QCF AOs to support credit transfer

- Mutual development of units between QCF AOs and HEIs (eg LLUK)
- Explicit 'curriculum matching' in qualification design (eg ILM)
- Consultation with groups of HEIs in designing QCF qualifications (eg IAM)
- Designing higher level units to 'match' HEI credit values (eg CCN, ICM)



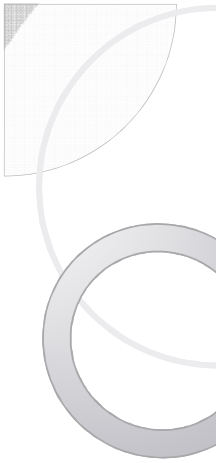
The barriers to credit transfer between the QCF and HE

- The flexibility of qualifications in the QCF is still underdeveloped
- Some QCF AOs are actually competing with HEIs for learners
- The current climate of increasing competition for HE places reduces incentives to accept credit transfer
- HEFCE funding rules militate against an 'open' policy of credit transfer



What next?

- More work with QCF AOs to make higher level qualifications more flexible
- More work with funding organisations to remove barriers to credit transfer
- More progression agreements based on credits rather than qualifications
- Spread models of HEI good practice
- Work with Ofqual to improve HEI's confidence in the currency of QCF credit



For more information

- For more information about the QCF:
 - www.qcda.gov.uk/qcf
- For more information about regulation:
 - www.ofqual.gov.uk/qcf
- For a copy of *Big Idea, Small Steps*:
 - www.niace.org.uk/publications