

## Consultation Summary Paper

# Ofqual consultation on Withdrawing the Regulatory arrangements for the Qualifications and Credit Framework

16 October 2014

*Opened 24/07/2014, closed 16/10/2014, Pearson lead/s: Karen Hughes and Siân Owen*

### A brief introduction to Pearson

Pearson is the world's leading learning company. Our education business combines 150 years of experience in publishing with the latest learning technology and online support. We are also part of the wider Pearson family which includes Penguin, Dorling Kindersley and the Financial Times. We provide education and assessment services in more than 70 countries. Our qualifications, courses and resources are available in print, online and through multi-lingual packages, helping people learn whatever, wherever and however they choose.

### A summary of the consultation

The QCF was launched in 2008 as a reforming framework for adult vocational qualifications. To make it possible, a detailed set of rules was required. The Regulatory arrangements for the QCF were developed. For some time Ofqual has been concerned that the Regulatory arrangements have not delivered their intended outcomes and that they sometimes stand in the way of the development of consistently good, valid and reliable qualifications. This consultation proposes to remove the QCF regulatory arrangements and instead regulate all qualifications just through the Ofqual General Conditions of Recognition. Later in the autumn Ofqual plans to make proposals that all qualifications are underpinned by a validity strategy and when they set out these proposals they will seek further views on the practical aspects and timeframe.

### A summary of the Pearson response

Pearson supports the long-term vision expressed in this consultation. The proposals allow for increased innovation in the design and development of qualifications, and for awarding organisations to take full responsibility for the quality of qualification content. However, in the short term, the dismantling of the QCF needs to be carefully planned to avoid the risks of both causing unnecessary confusion and having a negative impact on learners. Our response to this consultation is written with both these long- and short-terms views in mind.

- We agree the arrangements for the QCF should be withdrawn but the dismantling needs to be carefully planned. We recommend Ofqual plan for a transition period of 5 years.
- We are happy with the principle that QCF-recognised awarding organisations shouldn't have to re apply for recognition, however, applying recognition at level and sector based only on existing provision could create some strange anomalies. The process of recognition will need to be robust whilst also being proportionate with the level of risk associated with the particular sector and the size of the request.
- We don't anticipate issues with the proposed closure of the unit bank, but where a unit is shared, an awarding organisation should only be allowed to withdraw its permission for other awarding organisations to own a copy in exceptional circumstances.
- We agree that it should be possible to continue to assign credit to qualifications where this would be of benefit to the learner and/or other end users of the qualification.
- The removal of the link between size and title of a qualification will improve the clarity of titling for end users. However, given the familiarity with the concept of Award, Certificate and Diploma representing increasing sizes it may be worth keeping this relationship or giving careful consideration of how Ofqual might offer guidance on sizes.
- Existing qualifications should still refer to the QCF. To change the titles of existing qualifications will confuse providers and learners.
- Greater clarification/guidance is needed re the requirement 'to assign a level that most closely matches the achievement associated with the qualification'.
- We would welcome clarity about the future of unit funding in the light of the withdrawal.