

A guide to the new flexible way of recognising
and rewarding skills and qualifications



The Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) in Northern Ireland



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November 2010

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Introduction

Over the last 20 years, learners within Health and Social Care and Early Years have worked to the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) resulting in NVQ qualifications. The NQF Framework has been reformed and replaced by the Qualification and Credit Framework (QCF). This change has happened as a result of a government initiative across England, Wales and Northern Ireland.



The Northern Ireland Social Care Council is a partner organisation within Skills for Care and Development. It has been charged with ensuring that the qualifications developed are relevant for Northern Ireland; that the wishes of employers in Health and Social Care and Early Years have been represented and that the resulting qualifications reflect their input and meet their needs. To this end Employers and Employer representatives have commented on the units and qualifications and also have been responsible for writing some of the units relating to Physical Disability and Acquired Brain Injury.

Employers in Northern Ireland said that they wanted qualifications which test competence and which have a robust underpinning knowledge. They recognised the need for some specific, knowledge-based units which enable learners to understand the work – contexts i.e. Learning Disability, Dementia, Sensory Services, Mental Health and Physical Disability. However the message also was that where the knowledge led to carrying out an action or function, i.e. administering medication, that the knowledge and competence should be assessed together so that the gap between acquiring knowledge and applying knowledge was minimal. Also the knowledge base within Early Years qualifications has been strengthened by having a separate knowledge-based unit on child development and by also having units which reflect the Early Years curriculum.

The qualifications which are presented in this booklet hopefully represent the needs of Employers and Learners in Northern Ireland and there will be an opportunity to identify gaps and to add to the qualifications in the future in response to new ways of working, new policy drivers and emerging needs. Consequently there will be review points built into qualifications so that changes can be made where appropriate.

The main qualifications in Northern Ireland are Diploma sized qualifications. However there is an Induction Certificate which reflects the Northern Ireland Social Care Council Induction Standards and this will enable the work which learners do within their first six months of employment to be converted into an accredited qualification. Also a Certificate and Award in Learning Disability has been agreed for Northern Ireland.

The important thing to remember is that smaller bite-sized chunks of learning can be used for continuous professional development. Where there is “in house” training, it is helpful to align this with the appropriate units to give the learner every opportunity to convert “in house” learning into accreditation.

What is the Qualifications and Credit Framework?

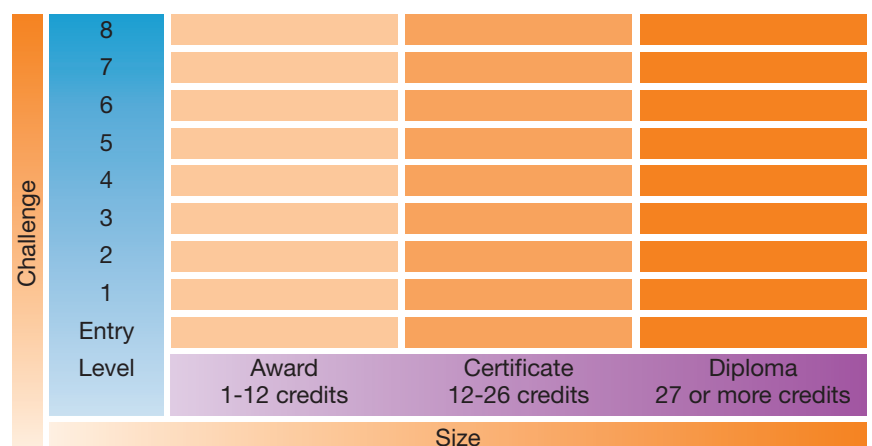
The Qualifications and Credit Framework is a new flexible way of recognising skills and knowledge through qualifications. It aims to simplify how qualifications are achieved through recognising smaller learning achievements. There are three sizes of qualifications in the QCF:

- Awards;
- Certificates; and
- Diplomas.

It does not matter if you are a Level 2 learner or a Level 6 learner, everyone can achieve an Award, Certificate and Diploma qualification. These qualifications titles simply define the size of the qualification. The level of the qualification defines the complexity of the job role. Therefore a Level 2 worker will work under supervision while a Level 5 worker will have responsibility for supervising others and perhaps have other management responsibilities i.e. finance, developing policies and strategies. Yet all can achieve a Diploma size qualification.

Structure of Qualifications

The diagram below shows the structure of qualifications in terms of size of qualification and the levels of complexity:



The Award size has 12 credits, the Certificate has 13-36 credits and the Diploma is 37+ credits. Credits are measurements of size and they combine to form units. There can be units made up of one credit and the higher the credits, the larger the unit will be. For example the unit “Facilitate person centred assessment, planning implementation and review” is 6 credits in size, while the unit “Principles for implementing duty of care in health, social care or children and young people’s settings” has only 1 credit. It is the number of credits, rather than the number of units which determine the size of a qualification.

How is the QCF different from NVQ?

As has already been established, the QCF allows for different sizes of qualifications and so introduces a level of flexibility into the learning experience. A learner may only require one or two units to perform a function and this can be facilitated through QCF which is different from NVQs.

Learners are able to complete a Diploma size qualification to fulfil their job roles. This is made up of mandatory and optional units and through the QCF they are able to construct a qualification relevant to their work setting by choosing from a large range of units, specific to their workplaces. For example, there are specific units about Learning Disability, Physical Disability, Brain Injury, Mental Health and Dementia, all of which can be chosen in consultation with employers according to what is right for the workplace and service user group. Also, in the optional bank of units there are units more useful to one area of work over another and by carefully choosing the right units employers and learners can make the qualifications much more relevant.

If the learner moves to work with another service user group, having already completed the full Diploma, they will be able to “top up” and gain credit by taking one or two units pertinent to the new service user group. This shows the flexibility of the QCF which facilitates “bite-sized learning”.



Rules of Combination

Combining units to make a qualification

Qualifications are built according to Rules of Combination, so that a qualification is balanced. If a qualification was built from an over-representation of knowledge units, there would be insufficient evidence of competence, so the Rules of Combination determine balance, while still facilitating choice.

The Level 2 Diploma in Health and Social Care, for example, has the following Rules of Combination:

- The learner must have 46 credits in total to gain a full Diploma.
- They must gain 24 credits from the mandatory units.
- They can choose between 2 and 7 credits from the knowledge unit group. Any credits not used from the knowledge bank of units can be added to the optional bank of competence units.
- The qualification is completed by gaining at least 15 credits from the optional bank of competence units plus what is added from the unused knowledge unit group.



Employers should work with learners to help them understand which units are most helpful to the workplace. The aim is that learners not only acquire a QCF Level 2 or 3 qualification, but a QCF Level 2 or 3 qualification with specific relevance to the service user group.

Training Providers need to upskill their training provision in order to offer the specialist learning which learners will now require or provide sector expertise to impart the underpinning knowledge. There is an aim to move away from a “one size fits all” type of training to make training fit the specific needs of the workplace. Pages 11 to 21 demonstrate how qualifications can be tailor-made to the need of the learners and their job roles.



The Qualifications Approved for Health and Social Care and Early Years Care in Northern Ireland

The qualifications which are approved for Northern Ireland will have Wales and Northern Ireland in the title. The structure for the England qualifications are very different, so 'National' organisations which have headquarters in England, should take care that NI employees work to the Northern Ireland qualifications. The qualifications approved for Northern Ireland are as follows:

Health and Social Care

- Certificate in Induction into Health and Social care (Northern Ireland) (Levels 2 and 3).
- Certificate in supporting Individuals with Learning Disabilities (England, Wales and Northern Ireland) (Levels 2 and 3).
- Award in supporting Individuals with Learning Disabilities (England, Wales and Northern Ireland) (Levels 2 and 3).
- Level 2 Diploma in Health and Social Care (Adults) for Wales and Northern Ireland (QCF).
- Level 3 Diploma in Health and Social Care (Adults) for Wales and Northern Ireland (QCF).
- Level 3 Diploma in Health and Social Care (Children and Young People) for Wales and Northern Ireland (QCF).
- Level 5 Diploma in Health and Social Care (Adult's Advanced Practice) Wales and Northern Ireland.
- Level 5 Diploma in Leadership for Health and Social Care (Adult's Residential Management) Wales and Northern Ireland.
- Level 5 Diploma in Leadership for Health and Social Care (Adult's Management) Wales and Northern Ireland.

The intention is to pursue the possibility of the QCF qualifications being able to attract academic credits for learners who wish to progress to Higher Education.

The Certificate in Induction into Adult Social Care (NI)

Helping a learner towards gaining the Diploma in Health and Social Care

As well as flexibility, one of the key underpinning principles within the QCF must be progression, so each qualification must provide a stepping stone to a larger qualification or a higher level of qualification. An example of providing progression between levels is through a qualification which has a “spiky profile” i.e. the possibility of the Rules of Combination having units at a level above. For example in the Level 2 Early Years qualification, the unit relating to setting up a home-based business is at Level 3, so offering a start of a Level 3 qualification.

The Certificate in Induction is an example of a smaller qualification which can enable the learner to progress to a larger qualification. In essence the Certificate of Induction is constructed of the knowledge base of the units within the mandatory units from the Levels 2 and 3 Diplomas in Health and Social Care. Therefore the knowledge gained during Induction can be assessed and then the learner can easily have their practice assessed once their induction (knowledge-gathering) period is over. That way the induction is stitched into the full Health and Social Care Diplomas.

The Induction Certificate can fulfil several functions:

- Preparing for work within Health and Social care before being employed.
- Learning the underpinning knowledge to do the job once employed.
- The space to learn on the job in a protected timeframe.
- Beginning to understand how to apply knowledge to competence before being assessed.
- Establishing the building blocks for competent practice.
- Providing the underpinning knowledge for the Apprenticeship Framework.



Early Years

There are four qualifications for the Early Years sector spanning Level 2 to Level 5. One of the aims of the draft Early Years strategy is to push up the level of qualifications for the Early Years Sector and the Level 5 Diplomas in Children's Care Learning and Development (CCLD) addresses both Advanced Practice and Management. One of the important enhancements which the QCF has brought to the CCLD has been the inclusion of units based on the Early Years curriculum and a more robust knowledge base. Work is continuing to seek academic credits to facilitate the vocational qualifications providing a progression route to Higher Education. At the publication of this booklet, the UCAS system is being reviewed, but the intention in the long term is to work with Awarding Organisations to ensure that these qualifications also confer academic credits as well as occupational competence. The CCLD qualifications are as follows:

Children's Care, Learning and Development

- Level 2 Diploma in Children's Care Learning and Development for Wales and Northern Ireland (QCF).
- Level 3 Diploma in Children's Care Learning and Development for Wales and Northern Ireland (QCF).
- Level 5 Diploma in Leadership for Children's Care, Learning and Development (Advanced Practice) Wales and Northern Ireland (QCF).
- Level 5 Diploma in Leadership for Children's Care, Learning and Development (Management) Wales and Northern Ireland (QCF).



Next Steps... what the qualifications might look like

The purpose of the rest of this booklet is to help trainers, managers and learners to build the qualification they need from the vast range of units embedded in the Health and Social Care and CCLD Diplomas according to the context of the work and job role of the learner.

The best this booklet can do is to give examples of how a qualification may look for some job roles albeit not a finite range of roles. But it will also give a methodology which will help manager, learners and trainers to design qualifications which will achieve maximum competence in the workplace.



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Building a Qualification

This section illustrates how units can be selected and combined to suit the workers job role and opportunities to develop specific skills and knowledge.

Example 1 (pages 12-15) is an example of building a qualification for a specific workplace and is based on a mental health role from the Voluntary Sector. It will help employers in other service user groups and sectors to visualise a process for shaping units into a qualification which fits the needs of the workplace.

This is an example of a Level 2 Diploma in Health Social Care and there are three components which make up the qualification.

Step 1 – Mandatory Units and Credits

There are 24 mandatory units about which there is no choice. These are prescribed units which must be taken as they are core to all work activities within Health and Social Care.

Step 2 – Knowledge/Context Units and Credits

The knowledge/context units (Group B units) afford some choice where the learner can take a minimum of 2 credits and a maximum of 7 credits. This will not exceed 3 units and will usually accommodate 2 units.

Step 3 – Optional Units and Credits

Any credits not used in Step 2 can be used to add to the optional bank in Group C. Because there is the option to use up to 7 credits in this category, trainers, managers and learners need to decide if they need 7 credits or to have additional credits for the competence-based optional bank.

The competence optional bank must have at least 15 credits. To help with decision making a process has been identified to help work through the options. Example 1 demonstrates the use of the process to develop a qualification specific to the role of Housing Support Worker in Mental Health.

Building a Qualification – Example 1

Health & Social Care Level 2 Diploma

Housing Support Worker in Mental Health

Total Credits for a Level 2 Diploma is 46 credits

Mandatory Units

24 credits to be achieved all, of which are prescribed.

Group B Units – Knowledge/Context Units – 2-7 credits

Potential units which are helpful for the job role:

- CMH 301 Understand Mental well-being and mental health promotion – 3 credits.
- CMH 302 Understand mental health problems – 3 credits.
- SSOP 201 Introductory awareness of models of disability – 2 credits.

The credits identified in these potential knowledge/context units total 8 credits which is one credit too many so a choice must be made regarding either losing a mental health unit or the Models of Disability unit. It would be advisable to closely compare the two mental health specific units to see if they are too similar and thus facilitate choosing the most effective unit for the job role.



Group C Units – Optional Units

Start by identifying the units which suit the role. This will mean that you will identify more units that you are able to use. In this exercise with the Voluntary Sector organisation Mindwise, the following units were identified as potentially suitable for the Level 2 Housing Support Worker's job role:

Reference	Unit Title	Credit Value
ASM 34	Administer medication to individuals and monitor the effects	5
HSC 2004	Contribute to monitoring the health of individuals affected by health conditions	2
HSC 2006	Support participation in learning and development activities	3
HSC 2007	Support independence in tasks of daily living	5
HSC 2008	Provide support for journeys	2
HSC 2010	Provide support for leisure activities	3
HSC 2011	Support individuals to access and use information about services and facilities	3
HSC 2012	Support individuals who are distressed	3
HSC 2013	Support care plan activities	2
HSC 2023	Contribute to supporting group care activities	3
HSC 3031	Contribute to support of positive risk taking for individuals	3
HSC 3019	Support individuals in their relationships	4
HSC 3022	Support individuals to live at home	4
HSC 3038	Work in partnership with families to support individuals	4
HSC 3045	Promote positive behaviour	6
L2EFAW	Emergency first aid skills	1
LD202	Support person centred thinking and planning	5

The highlighted units are those chosen to complete the Level 2 diploma for this particular role, but as can be seen from the above list, others would also have been fit for use in the role. It is important to read the units and test their suitability for the role.

Also when choosing Level 3 units in a Level 2 qualification, ensure that the role can facilitate achievement of the unit so as not to frustrate the learner or endanger the individual service user.

Qualification Profile

Health & Social Care Level 2 Diploma

Housing Support Worker in Mental Health

Once this exercise has been undertaken, the Qualification Profile for a Level 2 Housing Support Worker in Mental Health will be thus:

Mandatory Units – 24 credits in value

Reference	Unit Title	Credit Value
SHC 21	Introduction to communication in health, social care or children's and young peoples settings	3
SHC 22	Introduction to personal development in health, social care or children's and young people's settings	3
SHC 23	Introduction to equality and inclusion in health and social care or children's and young people's setting	2
SHC 24	Introduction to duty of care in health, social care or children's and young people's settings	1
HSC 024	Principles of safeguarding and protection in health and social care	3
HSC 025	The role of the health and social care worker	2
HSC 026	Implement person centered approaches in health and social care	5
HSC 027	Contribute to health and safety in health and social care	4
HSC 028	Handle information in health and social care settings	1
	Total Mandatory Credits	24



Group B Units – Context/Specific Units from which 2-7 credits can be taken

Reference	Unit Title	Credit Value
CMH 301	Understand mental well-being and mental health promotion	3
CMH 302	Understand mental health problems	3
	Total Context/Specific Credits	6

Optional Bank C – 15 credits + 1

Reference	Unit Title	Credit Value
ASM 34	Administer medication to individuals and monitor the effects	5
HSC 2013	Support care plan activities	2
HSC 2031	Contribute to the support of positive risk taking for individuals	3
HSC 2007	Support independence in tasks of daily living	5
L2EFAW	Emergency first aid skills	1
	Total Optional Credits	16
	Total Value of Qualification Matched to Job Role	46

Please note that the units highlighted in red are Level 3 units in a Level 2 qualification and this will assist the learner to begin to embark on a Level 3 qualification with 3 units in the bank already to the value of 11 credits. However in choosing Level 3 units, please exercise care that the learner is not being disadvantaged and that the content of the Level 3 units chosen are achievable within the role.

In consultation with Employer organisations, the following pages contain other job roles profiled as qualifications. These are only examples and are there to help visualise what a qualification may look like. They are by no means prescriptive and it is important for employers, learners and trainers to work through the initial exercise to identify the most suitable range of units from which to construct the qualification.

The following organisations have worked through the initial exercise to identify appropriate units for various roles and the examples offered in the next pages are the work of:

- ARC
- Mindwise
- Belfast Health and Social Care Trust
- Northern Ireland Childminding Association



Qualification Profile

Health & Social Care Level 2 Diploma

Domiciliary Support Worker – Learning Disabilities

Mandatory Units – 24 credits in value

Reference	Unit Title	Credit Value
SHC 21	Introduction to communication in health, social care or children's and young people's settings	3
SHC 22	Introduction to personal development in health, social care or children's and young people's settings	3
SHC 23	Introduction to equality and inclusion in health and social care or children's and young people's setting	2
SHC 24	Introduction to duty of care in health, social care or children's and young people's settings	1
HSC 024	Principles of safeguarding and protection in health and social care	3
HSC 025	The role of the health and social care worker	2
HSC 026	Implement person centered approaches in health and social care	5
HSC 027	Contribute to health and safety in health and social care	4
HSC 028	Handle information in health and social care settings	1
	Total Mandatory Credits	24

Group B Units – Context/Specific Units from which 2-7 credits can be taken

Reference	Unit Title	Credit Value
LD 201	Understand the context of supporting individuals with learning disabilities	4
	Total Context/Specific Credits	4

Optional Bank C – 15 credits + 3

Reference	Unit Title	Credit Value
HSC 2031	Contribute to the support of positive risk-taking for individuals	3
HSC 3020	Facilitate person centered assessment, planning, implementation and review	6
HSC 3045	Promote positive behavior	6
LD 203	Provide active support	3
	Total Optional Credits	18
	Total Value of Qualification Matched to Job Role	46

Qualification Profile

Health & Social Care Level 2 Diploma

Day Care Worker – Adult Physical Disability

Mandatory Units – 24 credits in value

Reference	Unit Title	Credit Value
SHC 21	Introduction to communication in health, social care or children's and young people's settings	3
SHC 22	Introduction to personal development in health, social care or children's and young people's settings	3
SHC 23	Introduction to equality and inclusion in health and social care or children's and young people's setting	2
SHC 24	Introduction to duty of care in health, social care or children's and young people's settings	1
HSC 024	Principles of safeguarding and protection in health and social care	3
HSC 025	The role of the health and social care worker	2
HSC 026	Implement person centered approaches in health and social care	5
HSC 027	Contribute to health and safety in health and social care	4
HSC 028	Handle information in health and social care settings	1
	Total Mandatory Credits	24

Group B units – Context/Specific Units from which 2-7 credits can be taken

Reference	Unit Title	Credit Value
PD OP 2.1	Understand physical disability	2
PD OP 2.3	Understand the impact of acquired brain injury on individuals	3
SSOP 2.1	Introductory awareness of models of disability	2
	Total Context/Specific Credits	7

Optional Bank C – 15 credits

Reference	Unit Title	Credit Value
HSC 2010	Support care plan activities	2
HSC 2015	Support individuals to meet personal care needs	2
HSC 3029	Support individuals with specific communication needs	5
HSC 2014	Support individuals to eat and drink	2
SS OP 2.5	Support individuals to negotiate environments	4
	Total Optional Credits	15
	Total Value of Qualification Matched to Job Role	46

Qualification Profile

Health & Social Care Level 3 Diploma

Community Mental Health Worker – Day Care

Total Credits for the Level 3 Diploma – 58

Mandatory Units – 28 credits in value

Reference	Unit Title	Credit Value
SHC 31	Promote communication in health, social care or children's and young people's settings	3
SHC 32	Engage in personal development in health, social care or children's and young people's settings	3
SHC 33	Promote equality and inclusion in health and social care or children's and young people's setting	2
SHC 34	Principles for implementing duty of care in health, social care or children's and young people's settings	1
HSC 024	Principles of safeguarding and protection in health and social care	3
HSC 025	The role of the health and social care worker	2
HSC 036	Promote person centered approaches in health and social care	6
HSC 037	Promote and implement health and safety in health and social care	6
HSC 038	Promote good practice in handling information in health and social care settings	2
Total Mandatory Credits		28

Group B units – Context/Specific Units from which 2-7 credits can be taken

Reference	Unit Title	Credit Value
CMH 301	Understand mental well-being and mental health promotion	3
CMH 302	Understand mental health problems	3
Total Optional Credits		6

Optional Bank C – 23 credits plus 1 credit not used from Group B = 24 credits

Reference	Unit Title	Credit Value
ASM 24	Develop and sustain effective working relationships with staff in other agencies	4
HSC 3004	Facilitate and support learning and development activities to meet individual needs and preference	5
HSC 3020	Person centered assessment, planning, implementation and review	6
HSC 3045	Promote positive behavior	6
HSC 3066	Support positive risk taking for individuals	4
Total Optional Credits		25
Total Value of Qualification matched to job role		59

Qualification Profile

Health & Social Care Level 3 Diploma

Senior Care Worker – Residential Services for People with Dementia

Total Credits for the Level 3 Diploma – 58

Mandatory Units – 28 credits in value

Reference	Unit Title	Credit Value
SHC 31	Promote communication in health, social care or children's and young people's settings	3
SHC 32	Engage in personal development in health, social care or children's and young people's settings	3
SHC 33	Promote equality and inclusion in health and social care or children's and young people's setting	2
SHC 34	Principles for implementing duty of care in health, social care or children's and young people's settings	1
HSC 024	Principles of safeguarding and protection in health and social care	3
HSC 025	The role of the health and social care worker	2
HSC 036	Promote person centered approaches in health and social care	6
HSC 037	Promote and implement health and safety in health and social care	6
HSC 038	Promote good practice in handling information in health and social care settings	2
	Total Mandatory Credits	28

Group B Units – Context/Specific Units from which 2-7 credits can be taken

Reference	Unit Title	Credit Value
DEM 301	Understand the process and experience of dementia	3
SSOP 3.1	Understand models of disability	3
	Total Context/Specific Credits	6

Optional Bank C – 23 credits plus 1 credit not used from Group B = 24 credits

Reference	Unit Title	Credit Value
DEM 304	Enable rights and choices of individuals with dementia whilst minimizing risks	4
DEM 312	Understand and enable interaction and communication with individuals who have dementia	4
DEM 313	Equality, diversity and inclusion in dementia care practice	4
HSC 3020	Facilitate person centered assessment, planning, implementation and review	6
HSC 3047	Support use of medication in social care settings	5
L2EFAW	Emergency first aid skills	1
	Total Optional Credits	24
	Total Value of Qualification Matched to Job Role	58

Qualification Profile

Children's Care, Learning & Development Level 2 Qualification

Childminder

Total Credits for the Level 2 qualification – 39

Mandatory Units

Reference	Unit Title	Credit Value
CCLD MU 2.2	Contribute to the support of child and young person development	3
CCLD MU 2.3	Understand how to safeguard the Welfare of children and young people	3
CCLD MU 2.4	Contribute to the support of children and young people's health and safety	3
CCLD MU 2.8	Contribute to the support of positive environments for children and young people	3
CCLD MU 2.9	Understand partnership working in services for children and young people	2
CCLD MU 2.10	Contribute to the support of children and young people's development through play	3
SCH 21	Introduction to communication in health, social care or children's and young people's settings	3
SCH 22	Introduction to equality and inclusion in health, social care or children's and young people's settings	2
SCH 23	Introduction to personal development in health, social care or children's and young people's setting	3
TDA 2.1	Children and young person development – knowledge unit	2
	Total Mandatory Units	27

Optional Units Group B - for working with babies

Reference	Unit Title	Credit Value
CYPOP 5	Understand how to set up a home-based childcare service	4
CCLD OP 2.4	Contribute to the physical care of babies and young children	3
CCLD OP 2.15	Contribute to the support of children's communication, language and literacy	2
TDA 2.14	Support children and young people at meal and snack times	3

Optional Units Group B – for working with toddlers and pre-school children

Reference	Unit Title	Credit Value
CYP OP 5	Understand how to set up a home based childcare service	4
CCLD OP 2.18	Contribute to the support of children's outdoor play	2
CCLD OP 2.15	Contribute to the support of children's communication, language and literacy	2
CCLD OP 2.11	Contribute to the support of children's positive behavior in early years settings	3
PEFA P 001	Paediatric emergency first aid	1
	Total Credits for Both Roles	39

Qualification Profile

Children's Care, Learning & Development Level 3 Qualification

Play Group Leader

Total Credits for the Level 3 qualification – 65

Mandatory Units

Reference	Unit Title	Credit Value
CYP Core 3.1	Understand child and young person development	4
CYP Core 3.2	Promote child and young person development	3
CYP Core 3.3	Understand how to safeguard the well-being of children and young people	3
CYP Core 3.4	Support children and young people's health and safety	2
CYP Core 3.5	Develop positive relationships with children, young people and others involved in their care	1
CYP Core 3.6	Working together for the benefit of children and young people	2
CYP Core 3.7	Understand how to support positive outcomes for children and young people	3
EYMP Unit 1	Context and principles for early years provision	4
EYMP Unit 2	Promote learning and development in early years	5
EYMP Unit 3	Promote children's welfare and well being in early years settings	6
EYMP Unit 4	Professional practice in early years settings	3
EYMP Unit 5	Support children's speech, language and communication	4
SCH 31	Promote communication in health, social care or children and young people's settings	3
SCH 32	Engage in personal development in health social care or children and young people's settings	3
SCH 33	Promote equality, diversity and inclusion in health, social care or children and young people's settings	2
SCH 34	Principles for implementing duty of care in health, social care or children's and young people's settings	1
	Total Mandatory Units	49

Optional Units Group B

Reference	Unit Title	Credit Value
CYPOP 3	Lead and manage a community based early years setting	6
CCLD FP OP 3.1	Promote children's experiential learning	6
CYPOP 17	Understand the needs of children who are vulnerable and experiencing poverty and disadvantage	5
	Total for Optional Units	17
	Total for Qualification	66



Frequently Asked Questions

What is the QCF?

The QCF is the new regulated framework for creating and accrediting qualifications in Northern Ireland, England and Wales. It will be introduced in Northern Ireland in January 2011. It allows learners to build up credits that recognise and reward skills and knowledge that can lead to qualifications. The QCF will, for the first time, introduce a standard currency for learner achievement across the qualifications system through the award of credit.

How will the QCF work?

The diagram on page 4 of this booklet illustrates the structure of qualifications on the QCF. Units and qualifications can be distinguished by complexity and size. Every unit and qualification on the framework will have both a credit value and a level. One credit represents 10 hours of learning, so the credit value shows how much time an average unit takes to complete. Levels can vary from Entry Level through to Level 8 depending on the depth and complexity of the unit. There are three sizes of qualifications:

- Awards (1-12 credits);
- Certificates (13-36 credits); and
- Diplomas (37 credits or more).

Will the new qualifications prepare workers as effectively as the old ones?

The Northern Ireland Social Care Council, in partnership with sector experts has built upon the strengths of previous qualifications to ensure we provide a modern, skilled workforce for Northern Ireland. As the workforce regulator the NISCC is committed to ensuring people who use social care services are kept safe by workers who are knowledgeable, skilled and competent. This is not demonstrated in just defining set hours of learning, but in the assessment of the outcomes of that learning and this is built into the new qualifications.



Are there similarities between the new QCF qualifications and existing ones?

There will be many similarities between the new qualifications and the existing ones. For example, there will still be assessment of knowledge, skills and competence predominantly in the workplace and the qualifications will still be underpinned by National Occupational Standards (NOS). QCF Diplomas will be of a similar size to National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) and will be available at a range of levels.

What about learners who are already undertaking existing qualifications such as NVQs?

After December 2010 there will be a period of transition. The new QCF qualifications for NI will be launched over the next 18 months. Learners undertaking qualifications prior to the launch of appropriate QCF qualifications will be encouraged to complete their qualification. Their qualifications will continue to be valid and will be recognised as predecessor qualifications.





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November 2010