

We are in the midst of a huge change to the vocational standards in use in this country. NVQs are being updated, area by area, and aligned with QCF units, standing for the Qualifications and Credit Framework. Whilst the criteria in some subjects are very similar to the previous qualification, the format in which these units work is very different.

QCF units each have a credit value, with one credit representing 10 notional hours of learning, which is how much time the average learner would take to complete the qualification from scratch. There are three types of qualification: awards (1 to 12 credits), certificates (13 to 36 credits) and diplomas (37 credits or more). Awards range from level 1 to 8, indicating the size of the qualification and not its difficulty.

The title of a qualification therefore shows the size, difficulty, and the general content. As a comparison, GCSEs are level 2, GCE A levels are level 3, and a PhD is level 8. Learners are able to approach qualifications much more flexibly by choosing units appropriate to them and then building up to the full qualification, be it the award, certificate or diploma, providing adequate credits have been achieved and certain rules of combination have been observed.

The current NVQ standards for Learning and Development are being phased out over the next few months. Registration for the A and V awards closes at the end of December and for the L units at the end of March 2011. Learners who have valid registration for these units will have three years from their registration date in which to complete their qualification. All learners registering after these dates will automatically work on the QCF system.

FCT will start running pilot courses against the new standards during December 2010, focusing on the Level 3 award in Assessing Competence in the Work Environment, which covers two units, one covering the practical aspects of assessing and one which is purely knowledge. It is likely that this award will take candidates longer to achieve than the current assessor units of A1 (Assess Candidates Using a Range of Methods) or A2 (Assess Candidates' Performance Through Observation). Likewise the replacement units for V1 (Conduct Internal Quality Assurance of the Assessment Process) prescribe a more comprehensive approach and will take candidates longer to achieve.

If you have any remaining staff who would like to achieve the A or V units beyond the end of this year then you will need to register them with us by Monday 20<sup>th</sup> December 2010, to enable us to process their registrations with City and Guilds. We will invoice you for each registration as these are costs we will incur immediately. This cost will then be deducted from the cost of your course and assessments. Registration is £30 per learner per unit and we will require their full name and date of birth.

If you wish to register candidates in advance for either unit A1, A2 or V1, please contact Monika Brooks at the FCT office with the candidates' full name and date of birth.

Monika can be reached on 020 8840 5132 or via email on [monika.brooks@fct.uk.com](mailto:monika.brooks@fct.uk.com)

If you have any queries about any of this, please contact Lara Newson or Chris Brandreth on the above number, or via email [lara.newson@fct.uk.com](mailto:lara.newson@fct.uk.com) and [chris.brandreth@fct.uk.com](mailto:chris.brandreth@fct.uk.com)