

NEW QUALIFICATION DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Contents

	Page No
1. Introduction	1
2. Audience	1
3. Scoping process	2
4. Internal approval	4
5. Qualification development	5
6. Qualification steering group	5
7. Involvement of other directorates	6
8. Submission and post approval activity	7
Appendix 1 Scoping process	9
Appendix 2 New Qualification Proposal	12
Appendix 3 Action Plan	22
Appendix 4 Risk Register	24
Appendix 5 Qualification Development Flowchart	26

1 INTRODUCTION:

1.1 The primary purpose of the New Qualification Process (NQP) is to ensure that the organisation is able to develop and gain approval for high quality qualifications that are relevant to the sector and respond to the education agenda in Wales. The process aims to ensure that new qualifications are developed and marketed effectively and efficiently making the best use of resources including staff time and therefore ensuring that the product will provide maximum benefit for learners and centres in Wales.

1.2 There are four stages in the process:

- Scoping proposals for qualification development
- Internal Approval
- Qualification Development
- Submission and post-accreditation activity.

1.3 Within each stage there are a number of key steps which are explained in this document. This document should be read in conjunction with the accompanying flow chart – Appendix 5

1.4 The process aims to ensure that any decisions taken about the development of new qualifications are clear, transparent and based on accurate and reliable market research and business cases including conclusive evidence about the product and the potential market for it. Most new developments will also meet the specific priorities as set out in the Key Priorities Action Plan (KPAP).

1.5 The responsibility for developing the specific qualification submission for regulatory body approval, assessments and support materials, qualification guide, marketing information and any briefings for staff will be allocated as part of the process but ultimately responsibility lies with the Director of Business Development.

2 Audience

2.1 The intended audience for this document is:

- Agored Cymru staff – specifically those likely to act as Lead Officer for the development of a qualification
- key stakeholders like to be involved in qualification development steering groups
- Qualification Regulators.

2.2 The procedure will apply to:

- qualifications developed for approval as part of QCF.

3 Scoping Process (Appendix1)

3.1 Proposals for potential new qualifications will be identified in a variety of ways e.g.:

- market intelligence provided by staff
- sector curriculum development groups eg Fforwm, NTFW, Niace
- regional curriculum fora
- WAG strategic groups
- regional partnership groups
- individual Sector Skills Councils and/or the Sector Skills Alliance
- Agored Cymru Steering Groups.

3.2 The Director responsible for Business Development will consider proposals to ensure that they focus on Agored Cymru key priorities and/or priorities within the Welsh educational agenda. It will be his/her role to decide which of the proposals justify further investigation using the scoping activity and to identify a Lead Officer to undertake the work. Where no subject expertise exists within current staffing a consultant will be appointed to undertake the role of Lead Officer.

3.3 Further scoping activity will be undertaken for selected proposals to :

- ensure that staff time and other resource is not wasted on developments which for any reason cannot become viable products (e.g. do not meet priorities in Wales)
- give an early indication of possible developments so that these can be factored into the strategic planning and implementation process
- alert other directorates to upcoming work and budget implications
- enable more effective and earlier internal communication of future developments.

3.4 The Lead Officer appointed by the Director of Business Development Responsibility will be the responsible for carrying out the scoping process. This process will identify the following information:

- purpose and aim of the qualification
- evidence of support from SSC and other key stakeholders
- evidence of Target market (group) including sectors eg FE and any sub sectors

- evidence of estimate of the market size for the proposed qualification
- evidence of need for qualification in English and/or Welsh
- size and level of the proposed qualification(s)
- evidence for justification of the number of credits
- proposed delivery dates
- evidence to support progression routes into and/or from the proposed development.

3.5 In addition the process will:

- Check there is no duplication with any other existing qualification. If so, these will be used instead and / or re-packaged for to meet the identified need. This will involve interrogation of the QCF unit databank to identify 'shared' units that could be used as part of the potential new qualification. It may be necessary to consult with other Awarding Organisations as part of this process.
- Check whether there are other Awarding Organisation Qualifications similar to the proposed product. If so it is unlikely that the Qualifications Regulators would approve it because of restrictions on the duplication and proliferation of qualifications.
- Confirm that support is available for the product e.g. language centres, from employers / SSCs / industry representatives etc.. This would include considering how the proposal contributes to the Sector Qualification Strategy for vocationally related qualifications.
- Identify how the product meets WAG strategic/policy priorities.
- State how the product could meet development priorities in the strategic plan.

3.6 The information provided in the scoping process will be considered by the Director responsible for Business Development who will take a decision on whether or not to proceed. The decision will be based on whether the proposal:

- meets priorities identified in the strategic plan or is a clear new opportunity
- will meet a clear national market
- has or would have SSC / SSB or employer support if appropriate
- clearly meets a need in Wales
- has or would have WAG support if appropriate.

3.7 Regular reports will be presented to the Senior Management Team meetings and the Board providing an update on the progress and approval of scoping activities.

4 Internal Approval (Appendix 2)

4.1 The purpose of this stage in the process is to ensure that any decisions about new developments are based on appropriate evidence including a cost benefit analysis.

4.2 Once approval for further investigation is approved the Lead Officer will complete the New Qualification Proposal (Appendix 2).

4.3 In addition to information gathered as part of the scoping exercise the following information will be required as part of the internal approval process:

- identification of appropriate specialist knowledge within the organisation (this could be based on the appointment of an appropriate consultant(s) and within centres and/or key stakeholders)
- identification of appropriate current National Occupational Standards (for vocationally related qualification proposals)
- identification of the possible structure of the proposed qualification(s)
- estimation of costs for staff and consultancy (this should include travel and accommodation where necessary)
- estimation of costs for facilitating steering group events
- projected registrations for at least 3 years – including any registrations that already exist in this sector or for this type of development
- projected charges for the qualification
- total projected income for 3 years
- proposals for any additional materials that could be developed to support the qualification. This should include a justification for the need for additional materials and any costs of production
- An action plan (Appendix 3) including realistic timeframes should be completed for the proposal. The action plan should be completed in consultation with key staff from other areas e.g. quality, finance, marketing, IT etc.
- A risk register (Appendix 4) should be completed for the proposals identifying all risks identified in relation to the qualification development. This should include the risk of **NOT** proceeding with the development.

4.4 The information provided in the New Qualification Proposal will then be submitted to the Board for formal approval (though responsibility may be devolved to the Senior Management team in order to avoid unnecessary delays). If the proposal is approved the Senior Management team will agree the action plan for implementation of the proposal and identify members of other directorates who will be involved in the development process. The development will then be included in the strategic priorities and progress reported to the Board on a regular basis.

5 Qualification development

5.1 Lead Officer for the qualification development

5.1.1 Responsibility for leading the Qualification development will be allocated as part of the SMT approval process. The Lead Officer for the qualification development will

- identify, convene and support the Qualification Steering Group
- liaise with relevant bodies such as SSCs, WAG etc. providing regular updates on the development and deadlines
- in conjunction with the Steering Group develop the qualification including the completion of the qualification proposal for Qualification Regulators; identify appropriate 'shared' units on QCF; map to NOS/Key skills/Welsh Bacc/learning core as appropriate
- ensure that design specifications as set out in section 1 of the regulatory arrangements for QCF are met
- ensure that all relevant Agored Cymru policies and procedures are applied to the development of the qualification including the Fair Assessment Policy and the Equality and Diversity Policy
- provide information for the Web Based Accreditation template and liaise with the Qualifications Officer in the submission of the qualification

6 Qualification Steering Group

6.1 It is vital that any new qualification development includes subject specialist expertise and guidance. A 'Qualification Steering Group' of approximately 6 – 8 members should be convened to provide the appropriate level of expertise and knowledge. The group should include representatives of key stakeholders, sector specialists and a senior member of the Quality Standards and Regulation Directorate. Depending on the nature of the qualification it may be necessary to stipulate that members of the group has Welsh language skills. The sector specialists should include the potential lead External Verifier for the qualification where possible.

6.2 The role of the Steering Group will include:

- the identification and/or development and approval of any units to be included in the qualification
- ensuring there are no unnecessary barriers to entry to units and qualifications. Where barriers do exist they must be stated and the

inclusion of the requirements that create the barriers are justified in terms of the integrity of the unit or qualification.

- ensuring units meet QCF requirements
- the development of a rationale for rules of combination and/or credit exemptions for the qualification that clearly specify the combination of units that need to be achieved for award of the qualification.
- the identification of appropriate assessment strategies for the qualifications that require the production of sufficient evidence to enable reliable and consistent judgements to be made about achievement
- confirmation that relevant policies and procedures have been applied to development of any assessments for the qualification e.g. Access to Fair Assessment Policy and Equality and Diversity Policy
- confirmation of the aims and objectives
- the approval of any set assessment tasks for the qualification
- cost effectiveness of any set assessment task
- confirmation of appropriate mapping requirements
- identification of appropriate progression opportunities for learners
- agreement on the type of quality assurance to be applied to the qualification.

6.3 All members of the Steering Group will be provided with training by Agored Cymru using the QCF guidance on unit writing and developing rules of combination.

7 Involvement of other directorates

7.1 Liaison with the other directorates will be essential to ensure that appropriate deadlines are set to meet the action plan agreed by SMT. If there is any slippage in the deadline dates the Director responsible for Business Development will be informed and amendments agreed with proposals for new deadlines agreed.

7.2 When the development is complete and confirmed by the Steering Group and SSC/other key stakeholders the whole submission folder should be checked and **approved** by the Director responsible for Business Development.

7.3 The Qualifications Officer will then submit the qualification to the Regulators using the Web Based Accreditation process.

8 Submission and Post approval activity

8.1 During the Web Based Accreditation process there may also be issues identified which were not obvious beforehand. Therefore, there may be a number of issues raised by the Qualifications Officer which will need answering and / or resolving.

8.2 Agored Cymru is committed to providing support and guidance to centres and learners using qualifications. The following materials will be the minimum provided to support the introduction of a new qualification. These documents will be drafted at the same time as the submission but made available to centres on receipt of approval for the qualification from the Qualification Regulators.

- **A Qualification Guide**, available in Welsh and/or English which includes:
 - introduction to the qualification;
 - benefits for Centres and learners;
 - target group;
 - structure and content of the qualification;
 - general information on using the qualification;
 - information regarding appropriate assessment;
 - quality assurance processes for the qualification;
 - qualification charges;
 - progression opportunities
- **Sample assessment materials** available in Welsh and/or English and published to the website.
- **Publicity and promotional materials** written in a house style and produced by the marketing team – available in Welsh and/or English.

8.3 Internal briefings will be held to disseminate information to all staff about the requirements of the qualification. This will ensure that accurate and consistent advice and guidance is available to centres wishing to use the qualifications.

8.4 Following qualification approval the Lead Officer will:

- monitor the usage of the qualification in conjunction with the Quality Assurance team and review the continued need for each of the units within the qualification

- respond to any issues raised by SSCs etc centres or learners. If these are quality issues e.g. issues relating to assessment activity, then this will be the responsibility of the Quality Directorate
- monitor and review the continued evidence of use and need for the rules of combination and ensure the continued compliance of the rules of combination with QCF design features, comparing them against the rationale for the qualification
- monitor the relevance of the units against the NOS / other mapping and ensure that these are kept up to date
- compare the units with other units in the databank to ensure consistency in level and credit value
- apply for the extension of the qualification if appropriate.

8.5 Once the qualification has received approval the administrative team will:

- build the qualification on the MIS system i.e. group units and input rules of combination
- finalise and translate the qualification guide
- translate assessment and promotional materials
- upload materials to the website
- circulate internal briefing documents
- publish marketing materials.

Appendix 1

Qualification Development Scoping process

Please complete all sections below before submission

1. Qualification details

1.1 Qualification Title(s)						
1.2 QCA Sector/Sub-Sector level(s)						
1.3 Level(s)	Pre Entry	☐	Entry One	☐	Entry Two	☐
	Entry Three	☐	Entry	☐	One	☐
	Two	☐	Three	☐	Four	☐
1.4 Size	Award	☐	Certificate	☐	Diploma	☐
1.5 Type	☐ VRQ – Vocationally related qualifications ☐ OG – Other General Qualifications ☐ BS – Basic Skills ☐ Other (please specify below)					
1.6 Target Group	Pre 16	☐	16 – 18	☐	18+	☐
	19+	☐				
1.7 Estimated Number of credits			1.8 Estimated date for delivery			

2. Product Development Rationale

2.1	Is this development consistent with the KPAP priorities?	(select)
<i>If Yes please indicate the relevant priorities</i>		
2.2	Does this duplicate existing provision within the NQF or QCF?	(select)

2.3	What is the estimated market for this qualification?
2.4	Does this proposal have SSC support and/or approval? (select)
<i>If Yes, which SSC?</i>	
2.5	Does this proposal have Employer support? (select)
<i>If Yes, which Employer?</i>	
2.6	Does this proposal have the WAG/DCELLS support? (select)
<i>If Yes, which sector?</i>	
2.7	Does this proposal map to key WAG policies or strategies? (select)
<i>If Yes which policies/strategies?</i>	
2.8 Purpose and aim of qualification (maximum 200 words)	

For Office Use Only

APPROVED

This Initial Proposal has been approved as being consistent with the KPAP and/or has demonstrated market potential

Signed

Date

NOT APPROVED

This Initial Proposal has not received approval for the following reason(s) stated

Comments:

Signed

Date

Appendix 2

New Qualification Proposal	
Name of Qualification (s)	
Name of Product	
Criteria	
1. Strategic priorities	
Please provide information in your application which addresses the following points:	
1a. Describe how the proposed qualification meets the markets / sectors / priorities contained within the KPAP	

1b. If the proposed qualification does not meet the above, describe why it should be regarded as an exception
1c. Is the proposal for a sector that Agored Cymru already has QCA approval to submit qualifications in?

2. Sector Skills Councils / Bodies / Lead Bodies / DCELLS

Approval / endorsement by a sector lead body is essential for any vocationally related qualification proposal to be approved. Non-vocational qualifications may also require endorsement by external bodies. If the proposed qualification does not require sector or other approval please indicate why:

Otherwise, please provide information in your application which addresses the following points:

2a. Describe how the proposed qualification meets the requirements of the appropriate SSC Sector Qualification Strategy - outline the SSC endorsement timescale / requirements. If endorsement has been secured provide evidence. If not, detail how / by who an approach will be made.

2b. State which relevant NOS the units will be designed to meet

2c. Describe (and provide reference) to other relevant national strategies the qualification would seek to address.
2d. State what level of support you have from the relevant Sector Skills Council / Body or DCELLS

3. Business Case

Please provide information in your application which addresses ALL the following points:

3a. Describe how the proposed qualification or suite of qualifications will be structured:

- * What is the proposed size of the qualification(s) – number of units / credits / levels
- * What is the proposed range of the qualification(s) – Award, Certificate, Diploma

3b. Describe the expected level of work that will be undertaken to develop this qualification

- * How many units already exist and are matched to NOS?
- * How many new units will need to be created?
- * What level of expert knowledge exists within the OCN to develop the new units?

3c. Provide an estimate of the cost (including people hours) which might be incurred in developing the proposed qualification (with details of the nature of the resource required). Who will undertake the work? What is their expertise?

3d. Describe the market the proposed qualification will be designed to meet, e.g. niche, regional, national / type of learner or centre. Where possible identify / indicate the size of the market. Identify the target learner group eg 14-19, ACL, work based

3e. Describe how the proposed qualification will address a gap in the market (what are other qualifications in the market which might compete with the proposed qualification)

3f. Evidence of the volume of the potential or current take up by centres of the proposed qualification in terms of learner registrations(per annum or as a one off). Evidence of demand / the basis for your reasoning should be provided.

3g. Provide evidence of the income which might be generated by the proposed qualification over 3 years based on the proposed charges for the qualification(s)

3h. Summarise the timeframe for development and state when the qualification should be available for use

4. Additional Material

4a. Will the proposed qualification require additional supporting materials to be developed, e.g. learning materials; assessment materials? If so describe why, and of what type.

4b. If yes to the above, outline how these materials will be / could be developed, and include in the action plan.

5. Action Plan

Please include an action plan with specific deadlines for all stages of the qualification development

APPROVED

This New Product Proposal has been approved :

Signed
on behalf of the SMT

Date

NOT APPROVED

This New Product Proposal has not received approval:

Signed
on behalf of the SMT

Date

Appendix 3

Action Plan Format

The Action Plan should be in a spreadsheet with a similar format to this:

Product Development Action Plan					
START DATE:					
Task	Responsibility	By 03/06/08	10/06/08	17/06/08	24/06/08
Develop new units	AB				
New units approved internally	CD				
Units submitted to Sector lead OCN for quality check	EF				
Units submitted to SSC for approval	GH				
Units returned	IJ				

The proposed start date of the development should be entered. Each step of the development should be noted as a task. Each task must have a named person as responsible for completion and the expected completion date. The dates should be in chronological order across the page and be highlighted in the date cell against the task as in the example above.

Appendix 4 Qualification development - Risk register

Qualification Title:

Lead Officer:

The tables below identifies and quantifies the main areas of risk identified in the development of each qualification.

Area of Risk Likelihood scored from 1 (low) to 5 (high) multiplied by Impact = Risk.	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Key on scale of 1-20 : 17-20 very high, 14-16 high, 10-13 medium, 10 low.	Control to mitigate risk	Action by who/when

New Qualification Development Process

