

New qualification regulations

Frequently asked questions

January 2017

QCF becomes RQF

(Qualifications and Credit Framework becomes Regulated Qualifications framework)

1. When will QCF qualifications be replaced by RQF qualifications?

All QCF qualifications will be 'turned off' in December 2017.

2. When will RQF qualifications be available?

The first will become available during 2017, but the majority are expected to appear in January 2018.

3. I was going to enrol on a QCF diploma this year, but should I wait until 2018 to take my diploma?

No. For employers and learners, you need to continue using the QCF qualifications as you normally would. Accredited learning providers will continue to offer them whilst the new RQF system is being introduced.

The QCF qualifications are highly respected within the adult social care sector and we expect they will continue to be widely recognised and valued by employers for years to come, as the earlier NVQ qualifications continue to be.

4. If I start a QCF qualification this year will I need to transfer to the RQF if the new qualification is launched before I finish?

No. Most QCF qualifications can be completed within 12 -18 months. However, from the registration of your QCF qualification you will have three years to complete it, should you need that time.

5. Even though I already hold a QCF diploma will I need to update it by taking the new RQF diploma?

No. Your QCF diploma is still valid and you do not need to take a further RQF qualification at the same level or do any kind of 'conversion' course.

6. Can I still register on QCF qualifications after January 2018?

No. All QCF will be withdrawn in December 2017.

7. I won't have finished my QCF qualification by January 2018. Will I have to start from scratch?

No. If you haven't finished your QCF qualification by January 2018, just continue studying. QCF qualifications will continue to be assessed and certificated for a period of time to give people chance to complete them. Speak to your learning provider if you are concerned about this.

8. What will be the new core qualifications?

- Level 2 Diploma in Care (RQF)
- Level 3 Diploma in Adult Care (RQF)
- Level 4 Diploma in Adult Care (RQF)
- Level 5 Diploma in Leadership and Management in Adult Care (RQF)

9. What topics are included in the qualifications?

For an overview of the topics covered in these qualifications see appendix 1. The full specifications for each qualification can [be found here](#).

10. How will these RQF qualifications look different to QCF?

Each awarding organisation will decide how the qualifications look but generally we expect them to be laid out in units as QCF were.

Each core diploma will have a [qualification specification](#). These have been developed by Skills for Care together with sector representatives to outline the mandatory content expected within each core diploma. The specification also proposes some other details such as approximate size of the qualification and quality/variety of optional units.

The things that are likely to be different are the assessment methods and the optional unit choices. Employers and learners need to ask questions about these and any other areas of concern you may have and then choose accordingly.

11. How will I know if the qualification I choose has been developed according to this specification?

Skills for Care will 'approve' all qualifications submitted according to the specifications and they will then show the Skills for Care logo. If a qualification does not show the logo it has not been approved by Skills for Care.

We will be maintaining a list of qualifications that we have confirmed meet these specifications and – as and when these are ready for promotion - will publish this on our website later in 2017.

12. Why should I take a qualification that is approved by Skills for Care?

If qualifications have the Skills for Care logo they will at least meet all the required topic content as stated in the specification for social care qualifications, though this may be phrased in different ways.

13. Have any other specifications been developed by Skills for Care?

Some new RQF qualifications will be available in early 2017 that have been designed to meet a Skills for Care specification:

- [Level 4 Certificate in Principles of Leadership and Management in Adult Care \(RQF\)](#)
- [Level 5 Certificate in Fundamental Knowledge in Commissioning for Wellbeing \(RQF\)](#)

14. Will there be any other new qualifications covering topics and levels not previously available in QCF?

There could be new qualifications according to sector need. Some awarding organisations may develop qualifications according to specific requests where they can see a business case for doing so.

15. I'm looking for a qualification for a specific role within adult social care. Where can I find it?

The core diplomas are designed to apply across all adult care settings and provide the knowledge and skills for all roles within adult care. This supports the portability of such qualifications and provides learners with transferable skills across a range of roles should they choose to transfer to other disciplines.

To support specific roles, or specific disciplines, qualifications can be contextualised through applying the mandatory content appropriately to the job role/service setting and selecting appropriate optional units.

Any additional specialisms could be sought through further learning. This supports the need for simplification of the qualifications system and not proliferation which leads to complexity.

16. Where can I find the structures for each of the qualifications?

The structures for the QCF diplomas can be found on [this webpage](#) under '**What qualifications are available?**'. Each structure lists the mandatory unit content and all the possible optional units.

Specifications for RQF diplomas can also be found on the [Skills for Care website](#).

17. Will Skills for Care be developing an 'integrated' qualification with Health?

Skills for Care and Skills for Health have [worked in partnership](#) to produce one RQF diploma for all health and adult social care workers at Level 2, so this qualification supports integrated roles. In addition Skills for Care and Skills for Health have agreed a shared 'core' content for RQF diplomas at Level 3, to be available from January 2018.

These align with relevant [Apprenticeship Standards](#).

18. What will happen to the smaller continuing professional development qualifications?

The closure of the QCF system will also result in some of the more specialist Awards and Certificates closing to new learners in December 2017. However, these have proved popular in our sector to help further develop care workers and managers. Therefore, employer demand may lead to similar qualifications being developed under the new RQF system in the future. It is also likely that some of this more specialist content will also form the basis of the optional units within the new RQF diplomas.

Alternatively, it may be that this learning can be provided in the form of non-accredited learning programmes. Skills for Care provides a list of [Endorsed Learning Providers](#) who can help you further.

19. How can I find out which learning providers are offering the new qualifications?

Your current learning provider or awarding organisation should be able to advise you about the current qualifications they offer and their plans about the introduction of the RQF qualification. If you are currently looking for a new learning provider to support you around qualifications, please start by reviewing our [list of Endorsed Learning Providers](#).

In addition [the Skills for Care website](#) will be regularly updated with information on who has

developed the qualifications and how to find a learning provider. The website will also have a list of 'approved' qualifications which will bear the Skills for Care logo.

20. Can I claim Workforce Development Funding for RQF qualifications?

We are currently in discussions with the Department of Health about how the Workforce Development Fund (WDF) is distributed in the future and considering exactly how we will provide funding for RQF qualifications. Meanwhile the advice is as follows:

For QCF units:

- 1 January 2017 – 31 March 2017, continue claiming WDF as normal
- We will provide further information about the WDF from 1 April 2017 when it is available

For RQF qualifications:

- We will provide confirmation of funding processes for these qualifications as soon as it's available, so keep an eye on our [e-news](#)

You can find out more about general changes to qualifications [on our webpage](#) or from this graphic.



Topics included in RQF diploma specifications

Level 2 Diploma in Care (RQF)

DC2A Communication

1. Importance of communication
 - meeting communication and language needs
 - reducing barriers to communication
 - principles and practice of confidentiality

2. Handling information
 - secure handling
 - recording, storing and sharing records

DC2B Person development

1. Own personal development
 - standards, duties and responsibilities
 - personal development plans
 - reflection on own knowledge, skills and understanding

DC2C Values and behaviours

1. Person centred working
 - person centred values and approaches
 - establishing preferences, wishes whilst ensuring choice and control
 - active participation
 - supporting wellbeing

2. Equality and inclusion
 - definitions of diversity, equality, inclusion and discrimination
 - working in an inclusive way
 - accessing support for equality and inclusion practice

DC2D Health and wellbeing

1. Health, safety and wellbeing
 - responsibilities of health and safety
 - introduction to risk assessments
 - reducing spread of infection
 - moving and handling
 - handling hazardous substances
 - fire safety
 - security measures
 - handling stress

DC2E Responsibilities

1. Responsibilities of a care worker
 - working relationships
 - own role
 - how to work in partnership with others
2. Duty of care
 - meaning of duty and care and relationship to duty of candour
 - addressing dilemmas in duty of care
 - responding to complaints

DC2F Safeguarding

1. Safeguarding and protection
 - Recognising signs and symptoms of wide range of abuse
 - Responding to suspected or alleged abuse
 - National and local context including policies and procedures
 - Reducing likelihood of abuse
 - Recognise and reporting unsafe practices
 - Principles for online safety

Additional requirements

The LEVEL 2 DIPLOMA IN CARE must include some additional areas of content that can be taken as optional units. These should be sufficient in range, number, level and content to enable learners to contextualise their learning to meet their own specific development needs. Pre-existing QCF units may be taken as the starting point for content where applicable.

For Adult Care: Optional units are likely to be drawn from the following areas:

Specialisms e.g. Acquired brain injury

- autism
- dementia
- diabetes
- end of life care
- learning disability
- mental health
- multiple conditions and/or disabilities
- Parkinson's
- sensory loss
- stroke care

Clinical skills e.g.

- medication administration
- pressure area care
- test specimens

Aspects of support e.g.

- assistive technology
- foot care
- managing incontinence
- managing pain and discomfort
- nutrition
- personalisation
- positive behaviour support
- supporting families and carers
- therapy

This is not an exhaustive list and intends only to provide suggestions. Awarding organisations are encouraged to develop innovative optional units to meet the needs of their learners and people receiving care and support.

Level 3 Diploma in Adult Care (RQF)

DC3A Communication

1. Promote communication
 - meeting communication and language needs, wishes and preferences using range of methods
 - communication from different perspectives
 - overcoming barriers to communication
 - advocacy
 - principles and practices of confidentiality
2. Promoting effective handling
 - legislation, policies and codes of practice relating to handling information
 - implementing good practice including security and storage
 - maintaining good records
 - supporting audit processes
 - supporting others to handle information

DC3B Person development

1. Promote personal development
 - duties, responsibilities and expectations of own role
 - reflection on practice including own values and belief systems
 - evaluating own performance and agreeing personal development plan
 - using continuing professional development opportunities for own development

DC3C Values and behaviours

1. Promote person centred approaches
 - care plans in applying person centred values and assessing feedback from delivery of care plans
 - apply person centred values and adapt approaches in response to individual
 - establish consent of individuals and understand process if this is difficult
 - promote active participation
 - promote choice and control to support wellbeing
 - understand risk assessment in relation to person centred support
2. Promote equality and inclusion
 - definitions of diversity, equality, inclusion and discrimination
 - effects of discrimination and how inclusive practice supports diversity
 - working in an inclusive way
 - promoting diversity, equality and inclusion

DC3D Health and wellbeing

1. Promote health, safety and wellbeing
 - own and others responsibilities relating to health and safety
 - legislation, policies and procedures supporting others to follow safe practices
 - assessing and managing risks in relation to health and safety
 - infection prevention and control
 - moving and handling
 - handling hazardous substances
 - fire safety
 - security measures
 - managing stress

DC3E Responsibilities

1. Own responsibilities
 - working relationships
 - quality assurance processes
 - working in partnership with others
 - resolving conflicts
2. Duty of care
 - how duty of care contributes to safe practices
 - addressing conflicts or dilemmas arising from individual rights and duty of care
 - responding to complaints

DC3F Safeguarding

1. Promote safeguarding and protection
 - recognition of signs and symptoms of categories of abuse
 - factors that may make individuals more vulnerable to abuse
 - responding to suspected or alleged abuse
 - local and national legislation, policies and procedures
 - sources of information and advice to support self and others including whistleblowing
 - ways to reduce likelihood of abuse
 - recognising unsafe practices
 - principles for online safety

Additional requirements

The [LEVEL 3 DIPLOMA IN ADULT CARE](#) must include some additional areas of content that can be taken as optional units. These should be sufficient in range, number, content and level to enable learners to contextualise their learning to meet their own specific development needs. Pre-existing QCF units may be taken as the starting point for content where applicable.

Leadership qualities

It is not only managers in adult social care that demonstrate leadership skills, but the whole workforce. The consultation on the Diploma Specifications revealed a need for leadership units to be included within the Level 3 Diploma in Adult Care. In order to gain Skills for Care approval, qualifications must provide learners with the opportunity to choose optional units to develop and implement their leadership abilities. We suggest using the Leadership Qualities Framework to support optional unit develop in this area.

E.g.

- Learning and development for self and/or others
- Personal and professional behaviour
- Resource management
- Service development
- Team leadership
- Quality assurance

Other optional areas are likely to be drawn from the following:

Specialism e.g.

- Acquired brain injury
- Autism
- Dementia
- Diabetes
- End of life care
- Learning disability
- Mental health
- Multiple conditions/disabilities
- Parkinson's disease
- Sensory loss
- Stroke care
- Substance misuse

Clinical skills e.g.

- Obtaining blood samples
- Physiological measurements
- Medication administration

Aspects of support e.g.

- Activities
- Advocacy
- Assistive technology
- Co-production
- Education, training and employment access
- Foot care
- Learning and development
- Managing incontinence
- Managing pain and discomfort
- Nutrition
- Personalisation
- Positive behaviour support
- Risk assessment
- Supporting families and carers
- Skills for everyday life
- Therapy

Level 4 Diploma in Adult Care (RQF)

DAC4A Communication

1. Lead communication
 - models of communication including transactional analysis and Lasswell's model
 - barriers and consequences of ineffective communication
 - independent advocacy
 - use of assistive technology
 - interaction with individuals including giving information
 - legal and ethical tensions between maintaining confidentiality and sharing information

2. Records and reports
 - legal requirements for safety and security of information recorded
 - preparing reports accurately and according to legal and organisational requirements
 - using information communication technology systems for collection and storage within and across disciplines
 - using and evaluating records to inform judgements and decisions

DAC4B Person development

1. Own development
 - codes of practice and standards of care role
 - using reflective practice to improve own practice and service delivery
 - agree personal development plan
 - use and evaluate evidence based practice

DAC4C Values and behaviours

1. Lead inclusive practice
 - current legislation, codes of practice, policies and procedures
 - barriers and attitudes leading to discriminatory behaviour
 - inclusive practice that supports equality and diversity
 - promoting equality, diversity and inclusion including challenging discrimination
 - support and lead others to work in ways that promote equality and diversity

DAC4D Health and wellbeing

1. Lead health and safety
 - legislation, policies and procedures
 - responsibilities of self and others in relation to wide range of health and safety
 - working safely applying legislation and complying with guidelines and procedures
 - assess and manage risks
 - support others to work safely
2. Person centred assessment
 - theories, principles and tools of assessment
 - working in partnership with individual and others in assessment
 - carry out person centred assessments that promote wellbeing
3. Support planning
 - theories and principles
 - effects of legislation including impact of mental capacity act on support planning
 - developing and recording support plans in partnership with individual and others
 - values of assistive technology in support planning process
 - implementing, evaluating and reviewing support plans

DAC4E Responsibilities

1. Professional practice
 - theories, values, principles and statutory frameworks for practice
 - duty of care
 - addressing conflicts or dilemmas between individual rights and duty of care
 - contribution to quality assurance processes
2. Working in partnership
 - features of partnership working leading to better outcomes
 - overcoming barriers
 - developing, agreeing, evaluating working relationships with colleagues
 - developing, agreeing, evaluating working relationships with other professionals
3. Personalisation in care and support
 - models of service provisions
 - legislative and policy drivers for personalised care
 - commissioning personalises services and the role of direct payments
 - self-directed support
 - promoting personalisation
 - developing systems and structures for personalisation

DAC4F Safeguarding

1. Safeguarding and protection in adult settings
 - legislation, guidelines, policy and practice for safeguarding
 - own responsibilities in relation to safeguarding
 - recognising and responding to suspected or alleged abuse
 - participation in inter-agency, joint or integrated working to protect individuals
 - supporting others in safeguarding
2. Safeguarding children and young people
 - Own responsibility in safeguarding children and young people present in adult settings
 - Supporting others to understand their own responsibilities
 - Addressing conflicts and dilemmas associated with safeguarding

Additional requirements

The LEVEL 4 DIPLOMA IN ADULT CARE must include some additional areas of content that can be taken as optional units. These should be sufficient in range, number, content and level to enable learners to contextualise their learning to meet their own specific development needs. Pre-existing QCF units may be taken as the starting point for content where applicable.

Optional areas are likely to be drawn from the following:

Specialisms – support needs e.g.

- Acquired brain injury
- Autism
- Dementia
- Diabetes
- End of life care
- Learning disability
- Mental health
- Multiple conditions/disabilities
- Parkinson's disease
- Sensory loss
- Stroke care
- Substance misuse

Specialisms – aspects of support e.g.

- Assistive technology
- Behaviour support
- Community partnerships
- Direct payment management
- Education, training and employment access
- Housing and accommodation
- Information, advice and guidance
- Mental Capacity
- Re-ablement
- Safeguarding
- Support for carers and families

Leadership e.g.

- Culture setting and promotion
- Leading change and innovation
- Learning and development for self and/or others
- Personal and professional behaviour
- Mentoring and/or supervision skills
- Partnership working
- Quality assurance
- Resource management
- Service development
- Setting standards
- Team leadership

Level 5 Diploma in Leadership and Management in Adult Care (RQF)

1. Leadership and management

- theoretical perspective
- national policy drivers
- leadership and management styles
- developing a culture of learning and leading the vision
- team leadership

2. Governance and regulatory processes

- legislation and statutory requirements
- internal governance arrangements
- regulatory processes, including CQC

3. Communication

- theoretical models of communication
- communication systems
- information management

4. Relationships and partnership working

- context of relationships and partnership working
- systems leadership
- establishing and overcoming barriers to partnership working
- leading relationships with individuals, carers and families
- coproduction
- working relationships with colleagues and professionals in other agencies

5. Person centred practice for positive outcomes

- features of outcomes based and person centred practice relating to wellbeing
- active participation and leading good practice in choice and control
- developing a culture which leads and supports others in person centred practice
- leading practice to achieve healthcare outcomes
- equality, diversity and inclusion
- leading continuous improvement in practice

6. Professional development, supervision and performance management

- principles of professional development
- importance of literacy, numeracy and digital skills
- principles and practice in supervision
- performance management

7. Resources

- principles of resource management including physical resources, financial Resources and human resources
- forecasting
- use of technology
- recruitment and retention

8. Safeguarding, protection and risk

- legislative framework, national and local policy and guidelines including whistleblowing
- procedures and good practice including continuous review of policy and procedures
- lead good practice and support team members in safeguarding
- safeguarding of children
- restrictive practices
- health and safety requirements and practice
- risk taking and risk management
- mental capacity and consent
- managing concerns and complaints

9. Manage self

- self-awareness, values and belief systems
- manage own behaviour
- manage own workload
- own professional development

10. Decision-making

- formal and informal processes
- using data, information and intelligence
- engaging others in decision making
- collecting and using evidence

11. Entrepreneurial skills and innovation

- identifying need for growth and development
- developing entrepreneurial culture
- market provision of adult care including current drivers and funding mechanisms
- leading innovation and change management processes
- vision creation and implementation

Additional requirements

All qualifications for the LEVEL 5 DIPLOMA IN LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT FOR ADULT CARE must include some additional areas of content that can be taken as optional units. These should be sufficient in range, number, level and content to enable learners to contextualise their learning to meet their own specific development needs.

Optional areas are likely to be drawn from the following:

I Management of specific modes for service delivery eg

- domiciliary services
- residential services
- supported accommodation/extra care services
- telecare/remote services
- community services

II Specialisms eg

- dementia
- physical disability
- sensory loss
- acquired brain injury
- learning disability
- autistic spectrum needs
- mental health needs
- substance misuse
- profound and complex needs
- multiple conditions

III Aspects of support eg

- integration and integrated services
- care planning and assessment
- assistive technology and digital skills
- positive behavioural support
- group living
- end of life care
- advocacy
- mental capacity
- support for sexuality and sexual health
- support for families
- support for transitions
- infection prevention and control
- spiritual wellbeing
- clinical skills

IV Aspects of management eg

- business development
- recruitment and selection
- induction
- quality assurance
- concerns and complaints
- resources
- research
- change management
- coaching and mentoring
- disciplinary systems
- inter-professional teams
- operational plans
- records and reports
- study skills