



Criteria for Entry Level Qualifications (NQF) in N Ireland

October 2014

The Criteria

Introduction

1. Entry Level qualifications can be developed for accreditation to either the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) or the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF).
2. The following criteria should be used as the basis for the development of all Entry-level qualifications to be offered to learners in N Ireland and accredited to the NQF.

Content

3. Entry-level qualifications must:
 - 3.1 be designed to facilitate learning in practical situations and motivate candidates;
 - 3.2 enable a mixture of levels for units contributing to the overall qualification, where appropriate;
 - 3.3 align the demand of the content to the generic level descriptors set out for Entry 1, Entry 2 and/or Entry 3 within the NQF;
 - 3.4 Ensure the content of the specification is, where appropriate, consistent with the statutory requirements outlined in the NI Curriculum, in particular:
 - 3.4.1 for subjects covering the NI Curriculum Areas of Learning, with the relevant guidance for the subjects;
 - 3.4.2 for the statutory Key Stage 4 subjects of Physical Education and Learning for Life and Work, with the specified minimum content appropriate to the age of the candidates;
 - 3.4.3 for the statutory Key Stage 4 subject of Religious Studies.
 - 3.5 provide a basis for progression, either horizontally or vertically, to other relevant qualifications at Entry Level and beyond:
 - 3.5.1 for literacy, numeracy and information technology, to corresponding skills qualifications, GCSEs and other relevant qualifications; and
 - 3.5.2 for subjects covering the other areas of learning, to corresponding GCSEs and other relevant qualifications.

Assessment

4. Assessment arrangements for Entry-level qualifications must:
 - 4.1 ensure that the range of assessment methods enable learners to demonstrate their achievement;
 - 4.2 ensure that the range of assessment methods do not create an undue assessment burden for learners and assessors;
 - 4.3 involve practical and/or oral, and/or written work (including multiple choice) as appropriate to the area of learning;
 - 4.4 be capable of use in a range of settings;
 - 4.5 enable candidates to generate evidence which will allow for reasonable adjustments as set out in the *General Conditions of Recognition (G6)*;
 - 4.6 include tasks that are externally set, and/or internally set and externally validated;
 - 4.7 include tasks that are externally marked, and/or internally marked and externally moderated.

Reporting of Entry-level qualifications

5. Enable attainment to be reported at unit level or overall qualification level where appropriate.
6. Attainment at overall qualification level or unit level must be reported at one of the sub-levels, Entry 1, Entry 2 or Entry 3, where Entry 3 is the highest outcome.
7. Awarding Organisations must propose a rationale for the level of the overall qualification awarded, where the achievement at individual unit level may be above or below the overall qualification level.
8. Qualifications should be awarded on a pass/fail basis. However, grading may be permitted provided the Awarding Organisation provides a suitable rationale.

Entry level Standard

Entry level qualifications recognise basic knowledge, understanding and skills and the ability to apply learning in everyday situations under direct guidance or supervision. Learning at this level involves building basic knowledge, understanding and skills and is not geared towards specific occupations.

Entry level descriptors

Entry 1

Recognise progress along a continuum that ranges from the most elementary of achievements to beginning to make use of skills, knowledge or understanding that relate to the immediate environment.

Entry 2

Achievement at Entry 2 reflects the ability to make use of skills, knowledge and understanding to carry out simple, familiar tasks and activities with guidance.

Entry 3

Achievement at Entry 3 reflects the ability to make use of skills, knowledge and understanding to carry out structured tasks and activities in familiar contexts, with appropriate guidance where needed.