



Clear progression

A higher education focus on the IQF

Edition 8 – September 08



Welcome to the eighth edition of Clear progression, the quarterly newsletter for the Integrated Qualifications Framework. Our focus for this issue is on the implications of the IQF for higher education.

In our May newsletter we previewed the five regional conferences on the IQF and higher education. We are now able to report back on what participants told us, and how we propose to respond in developing and trialling a set of draft processes from this autumn.

“ The development of the IQF has reached a key stage. A pilot study will begin in October 2008 as a number of higher education qualifications are submitted for inclusion on the IQF. This study will ensure that the draft processes for including HE qualifications fully support the four draft IQF principles.

The IQF HE processes are being developed using the results from wide consultation with Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) over the past six months. We are very appreciative of the advice offered by HEIs and we are looking forward to continuing to work closely together as the IQF moves towards completion.

Integrated working is key to improving outcomes for children. The development of higher level qualifications for the IQF will help to embed integrated working into the training and development of people working with children and young people.

I am looking forward to working with HEIs in developing the first IQF higher education qualifications over the coming months.”

Frances Evesham, Cross-sector Workforce Reform, CWDC

Consultation with higher education on the IQF

Five consultation events for HEIs were held during March and April 2008 in Exeter, London, Preston, Birmingham and York. The purpose of the consultations was to help identify potential processes for including HE programmes on the IQF. The events were very well attended and generated a great deal of interesting and useful discussion, highlighting the challenges for the IQF in providing a workable framework for HE, as well as suggesting solutions. There was an encouraging level of interest in participating in the development of the IQF.

The delegates at the events were asked to consider potential processes for ensuring HE programmes that could meet the four principles of inclusion for qualifications on the IQF. More details of the four principles can be found at http://www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/assets/0000/0451/Clear_Progression_2008_-_IQF.pdf

Delegates broadly supported the principles and highlighted their expectation that the IQF would support integrated working and workforce mobility. There was also wide agreement that Foundation degrees and new programmes that support integrated services would be particularly suitable

for inclusion. Discussions on potential processes identified the need for an accessible process with clear lead-in times. HEIs also supported closer links with CWN and the desire for an increased flow of information between HE and the IQF was also expressed. The IQF project board are currently finalising arrangements for the draft HE inclusion process, and a fuller summary of the consultations will be published on the IQF website.

The IQF project board

The IQF project board has been tasked with developing the IQF on behalf of the Children's Workforce Network, with the Children's Workforce Development Council co-ordinating the project activities. The IQF project board consists of 11 CWN members, working to improve the transferability and quality of qualifications across England:

- Children's Workforce Development Council
- Creative and Cultural Skills
- General Social Care Council
- General Teaching Council for England
- Life-Long Learning UK
- National College for School Leadership
- Nursing and Midwifery Council
- SkillsActive

- Skills for Health
- Skills for Justice
- Training and Development Agency for Schools

At the IQF HE consultation events, HEIs asked for more information on what the organisations on the project board do, and which areas of the workforce they cover. In response, each partner has provided a brief outline of their role and a website address for further information. Both can be found on the IQF website www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/iqf/project-board

Shared values for integrated working with children and young people

The organisations that regulate two million nurses, school teachers and social workers have joined forces to help promote a shared approach to improving services for children and young people. The General Social Care Council (GSCC), the General Teaching Council for England (GTC), and the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) have drafted a statement of shared values. The goal is to help professionals work together more effectively in the interests of children and young people.

The joint statement was developed in response to discussions with practising nurses, midwives, school teachers and social workers who were keen to work together. They felt that this was most effective when there was a shared understanding of each others' professional values, as well as ways of working.

The GTC, NMC and GSCC want the joint statement to be a practical tool that will help practitioners to build services around the needs of the child or young person. It asks social workers, nurses and teachers to commit themselves to upholding children's rights, to involving families in the decisions that affect them and to learn and make use of each other's areas of expertise.

These values are supported by all CWN members, and are being implemented through their work. For example, the TDA are including them in their Foundation degree framework. They have also been incorporated into the consultation discussions with HEIs, as progress is made



towards agreeing a process for including HE programmes within the IQF.

The values can be viewed at <http://www.nmc-uk.org.uk/aArticle.aspx?ArticleID=2344>

The Common Core in higher education

IQF qualifications will be underpinned by the Common Core of skills and knowledge for the children's workforce – the essential competencies, skills and knowledge identified for the widest possible range of workers in children's services.

CWN members are currently developing a number of ways to support this principle; including making sure the Common Core is embedded in National Occupational Standards, and developing units of qualifications that focus on elements of the Common Core.

As HE qualifications are submitted for inclusion within the IQF over the coming year during the pilot phase, different ways of including the Common Core will be trialled in order to ensure its effective inclusion.

For more information on the Common Core please see: <http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/deliveringservices/commoncore/>

“ This is an exciting time for the IQF and Higher Education. The Gateways project has identified the real potential of Fds for the IQF and the sector - giving recognition to and transferability of higher education level knowledge and skills, that enables staff progression right across the children’s workforce. Foundation degree forward (fdf) fully supports this work and is setting up projects with CWDC, the TDA and SkillsActive to make Foundation degrees even more accessible.”

Dr Sue Tatum, Director for Employer Partnerships (Public Sector) fdf

Foundation degrees

During the series of regional consultations with HEIs this summer, Foundation degrees were identified as a good starting point for higher education engagement with the IQF project. In line with the IQF principles, HEIs felt that the structure of Foundation degrees has the scope to reflect the Common Core of skills and knowledge for the children’s workforce, and the potential to allow transition and flexible qualification routes for learners. The final consultation report will be used to inform the approach to IQF higher education integration.

In addition, the IQF oversaw the Foundation degree Gateway Project (FdGP). The FdGP was commissioned by CWN to look at how Foundation degrees are meeting the needs of the IQF for the children’s workforce.

The project was supported by the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS) Gateways to the Professions Development Fund and overseen by a steering group including member organisations of the Children’s Workforce Network (CWN).

The project was carried out on behalf of CWN by Simon Wilson and Mary Barber from Wilson Sherriff.

The key questions considered by the research are as follows:

- The extent to which employers’ needs are currently being met through Foundation degrees.
- The extent to which current Foundation degrees support transition between different children’s sectors and different levels of qualification.
- The potential of Foundation degrees as a key feature of the IQF, providing a bridge between vocational and higher education qualifications.

Based on the research findings, five recommendations were made to reinforce and clarify the future role of Foundation degrees in the context of the IQF.





An action plan, based on the recommendations has been submitted to the IQF project board to take forward the recommendations made in the report.

To view the full recommendations and report please go to: <http://www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/iqf/iqf-project-activity/foundation-degree-gateway-project>

Preparing tomorrow's professionals

Children, young people and families should be supported to contribute to learning, teaching, assessment and evaluation in higher education for children's services professionals, according to a report from the Integrated Children's Services in Higher Education project, funded by the Higher Education Academy. The report also calls for universities to break down their own internal departmental or faculty barriers and strengthen links with sector skills bodies and employers so that they can work together to prepare tomorrow's children's services professionals for integrated working. A need for collaboration between regulatory bodies on requirements across professions is identified to enable better

integration, whilst Sector Skills Councils, Government departments and research funders are urged to recognise and support the HE role in changing practitioner roles and the culture of practice for integrated children's services.

The project focused on education for integrated children's services to meet the Every Child Matters (ECM) agenda. Key disciplines and professions involved include: teaching, early years, carers, nursing, midwifery, medicine, psychology, social work and youth and community work.

The project aimed to bring together relevant subject disciplines and sector bodies to:

- Provide an evidence-based approach to identify effective ways of developing inter-professional curricula and pedagogy for professional practice in children's services.
- Scope existing initiatives and support the development of informed educational policy and practice for professionals who will be working in reconfigured children's services.

- Provide a more coherent response to the Integrated Qualifications Framework (IQF) for the children's workforce across higher education.

The full project report, including a knowledge review and a report on the national conference (with detailed case studies), can be found at <http://icshe.escalate.ac.uk>

Next steps for the IQF and HE

The priority for the IQF and HE project over the next year is to pilot the process of including HE programmes within the IQF. This will begin in October 2008, once the draft processes for inclusion have been finalised. A small number of programmes – reflecting the diversity of the types, levels and subjects of HE programmes available

within the children's workforce sector – will be taken through the inclusion process. An evaluation will be conducted in order to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the processes with the results leading to any required revisions. This pilot is similar to the current pilot project with nationally accredited vocational qualifications that are being submitted to the IQF through the approval mechanisms of the Sector Skills Councils and the Qualification and Curriculum Authority's framework, the QCF.

It is expected that, from October 2009, the revised processes will enable the IQF to be a live framework, beginning to be populated with all levels of qualification using an effective and sustainable mechanism that ensures the integrity and the added value of the IQF are maintained.

Want to find out more?

For more details on the IQF visit CWDC at www.cwdcouncil.org.uk, CWN at www.childrensworkforce.org.uk or email IQF@cwdcouncil.org.uk

For further information on CWN's work or to subscribe to the CWN e-bulletin, please contact Frances Evesham, Cross-sector Workforce Reform, CWDC at frances.evesham@cwdcouncil.org.uk

The IQF is being developed by the members of the Children's Workforce Network (CWN). The IQF Project Board has representation from all CWN members. The Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC) is project-managing the development of the IQF on behalf of CWN.

