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Update

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Welcome to the April 2008 Update

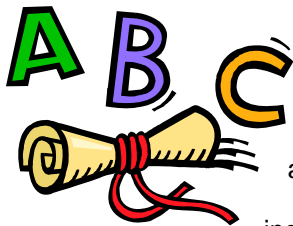
VISIT www.epicltd.com – EPIC LAUNCHES NEW WEBSITE

We are pleased to announce that the EPIC website has been revamped and we hope provides members with a more user-friendly interface with EPIC. Please contact Trish Jagger on 01522 751065 if you have any comments on or queries about the website.

CONFUSED ABOUT ALL THE CHANGES TO EDUCATION, TRAINING AND FUNDING? THEN READ ON....

As part of our regular update, EPIC will help to clear some of the 'fog' surrounding the machinations of this seemingly very complex world of training and funding. In the following updates we will be covering topics such as Skills Pledge; Train to Gain; National Skills Academies; New Training & Qualification Standard; Diplomas; Apprenticeships; Skills Accounts; Accreditation of in-company training; changes within the Local Skills Councils and Qualifications & Curriculum Authority; and much more.

This month's hot topic is the **Qualification & Credit Framework [QCF]** – yet another **new acronym!** So here is a very simple initial outline of what is to come because how, what and where we train and achieve is changing fast.



A new framework for qualifications is going to be introduced. Why is this different from what we have now? By now most of us are familiar with National Vocational Qualifications [NVQs] which range from Level 1 (least difficult) rising to Level 5 (most difficult) and NVQs sit in the National Qualifications Framework [NQF]. The NQF is based on **whole** qualifications. But often individuals do not need or want to pay for whole NVQs especially when what is required is not relevant to their job role. However recent surveys have confirmed that individuals do want recognition for their achievement and understand the concept of credit.

Therefore, the new framework will be based on **units**. Individuals will be able to gain **credit** for each unit achieved building up to a whole qualification if they so wish. The unit-based framework will allow far greater flexibility in the design of qualifications ensuring that these fit better with the needs of individuals and employers; indeed the QCF even provides for in-house employer/provider training to be recognised within the national system. But for the individual is it about being able to take much smaller steps in gaining recognition for **competent performance**. The new system will also provide for **credit accumulation** (banking credits) and **transfer of credits** between qualifications and awarding organisations; thereby, avoiding individuals necessarily restarting from the beginning if they change job roles or commence on new learning programmes.

All units in the QCF will be given a **Credit** value. One Credit equals 10 hours of learning time i.e. average time expected to complete.

QCF Levels approximately correspond to NQF levels as:

QCF Level*	NQF Level*
8	5
7	
6	
5	
4	4
3	
2	3
1	2
Entry 3	Entry
Entry 2	
Entry 1	

The level and size of a qualification will be easily understood by everyone as the system will use the following standard terms of: 'award'; 'certificate'; 'diploma' which is based on credit values.

TITLE	AWARD	CERTIFICATE	DIPLOMA
Credit Value	1-12	13-36	37 and above

So in the new framework you can have an award at Level 1 or an award to Level 8. This is because the qualification type 'award, certificate, diploma' represents the size of the qualification, not how difficult it is. This is determined by the Level

Qualifications are based on units in the QCF using **rules of combination** which determine the credits to be achieved via mandatory, optional or equivalent units, exemptions and any time limits on credit accumulation.

The QCF will also track all learners' achievement through the use of a **Unique Learner Number (ULN)** and an individual's electronic **Learner Achievement Record (LAR)** detailing information on past achievements. The LAR is linked to the National Database of Accredited Qualifications enabling individuals using a personal identification number (PIN) to check with own progress towards a qualification; or view what other qualifications the units contribute to; or even to show the record of achievement to their current or potential employer.

The QCF will enable:

Employers to:

- easily determine the achievements of employees
- ensure training and qualifications are based on current employment training and skills needs
- have a common understanding of levels of attainment
- improve retention and progression rates by recognising smaller steps of achievement more frequently
- have their in-house training recognised within a national framework
- track continued professional development

Individuals to:

- see from the title of a qualification how difficult it is, how long it will take on average to complete and its general content;
- have greater freedom to choose to complete units or whole qualifications
- build up credits at their own pace
- bank credits and use at a later date
- transfer credits between qualifications avoiding repetitive learning
- use as part of their continued personal and professional development

For more information on the Qualification & Credit Framework contact the EPIC office or visit: http://www.qca.org.uk/qca_8150.aspx

* Degree of difficulty – Entry 1 rising to Level 8

SHOTFIRER & EXPLOSIVE SUPERVISOR PUBLIC EXAM

The next Shotfirer or Explosive Supervisor Exam is scheduled for **28 May 2008**, to be held at the Novotel Hotel, Nottingham/Derby at Long Eaton. For further information or to book a place please contact Kerrie on 01727 869008 or email kerrie@epicltd.co.uk

ARE YOU CHECKING THE VALIDITY OF CONTRACTOR SAFETY PASSPORTS?

In order to help you reduce accidents on your site and assist you with the management of contractors, it is important to ensure that your contractors have a valid contractor safety passport. The two day course and the one day refresher course have been designed to raise levels of health and safety and general environmental awareness of contractors. It is therefore important that you and your site managers are requesting to see the cards of contractors and checking that they are valid.

To show that you support the scheme a free downloadable poster is available from the EPIC website or click on the link to the [EPIC CSPS Poster](#)



If you need to check whether a contractor has a Contractor Safety Passport, please call Zoe at EPIC on 01727 869008 or for details of course providers and course dates please visit the EPIC website www.epicltd.com.

EPIC SITE SAFETY AWARENESS AND SAFE BEHAVIOUR FOR ROAD HAULIERS PUBLIC COURSES

If you are interested in accessing public courses for road hauliers please email your requirements to Lynda McKill indicating the number of people you wish to attend the course, your preferred location for delivery and also preferred day of the week for delivery. We are currently logging all your requirements so that courses can be scheduled around your needs.

Please see below dates for current public courses – places are still available!

PUBLIC COURSES

25 April	Loughborough
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For further information or to email your requirements please email Lynda Mckill: Lynda@epicltd.co.uk or call on 01727 869008.

EPIC PUBLIC COURSES 2008 PROGRAMME

29 th April	EPIC Understanding the Quarries Regulations (Basic)	Wakefield
8 th -9 th May	EPIC Understanding the Quarries Regulations (Advanced)	Scotland
20 th -21 st May	EPIC Supervising Safety in Quarries	Yorkshire
30 th May	EPIC Risk Assessment in Quarries	Midlands
11 th -12 th June	EPIC Effective Safety Committees	Loughborough
16 th -17 th June	EPIC Understanding the Quarries Regulations (Advanced)	Derbyshire
26 th June	EPIC Quarry Safety Inspections	Yorkshire
3 rd July	EPIC Understanding the Quarries Regulations (Basic)	Newmarket
8 th July	EPIC Safe Working and Inspection of Excavations, Trenches and Stockpiles for Quarry Supervisors	Bristol

Places are available on the above courses – Book in advance to guarantee your place!

For further information or to reserve a place on any of the above courses please contact Kerrie on 01727 869008.

For further information on how EPIC could help you, please call now on 01727 869008 or visit www.epicltd.com