

News Release

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More flexible, more responsive to employers' needs: new health vocational qualifications go live

New vocational qualifications to promote a skilled, flexible and productive health sector workforce go 'live' this month, replacing the existing range of Health and Health & Social Care NVQs.

The new qualifications are designed to be more flexible and responsive to employers' and learners' needs and have been developed by Skills for Health working in partnership with employers and training providers.

Skills for Health Director for Qualifications Strategy, Anne Eaton, said: "Education and training is vital to our sector but it is important that the qualifications offered are flexible and can respond to the fast-changing needs of employers and their staff.

"The introduction of these new vocational qualifications on the Qualifications and Credit Framework will help to ensure that our workforce is competent in the skills they need to do their jobs."

New health and health-related qualifications published to the QCF by Skills for Health include Awards, Certificates and Diplomas at both Level 2 (equivalent to GCSE at grades A-C or BTEC First Certificate) and Level 3 (equivalent to A Level or BTEC National Certificate/Diploma). Subjects range from Health

Informatics to Emergency Care Assistance, Maternity and Paediatric Support and Optical Retail Skills.

The new qualifications are approved by the Qualifications Regulator for use in England, Wales and Northern Ireland and are recognised by regulators and workforce development organisations as the benchmark for the sector.

In Wales the qualifications also sit on the Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales (CQFW). Within Scotland, where the QCF does not apply, qualifications will continue to be regulated by the Scottish Qualifications Authority.

Further information on the qualifications is available from www.skillsforhealth.org.uk/qcf

ENDS

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Notes to editors

1. The Qualifications and Credit Framework is a new way of recognising skills and qualifications, by awarding credit for units (small steps of learning), enabling learners to gain qualifications at their own pace along flexible routes. The framework will:
 - Provide a flexible, modern system for vocational qualifications
 - Give learners the opportunity to transfer credits between qualifications to avoid having to repeat their learning
 - Help employers by describing levels of achievement in terms everyone can understand.

Further detailed information on the QCF is available at www.qcda.gov.uk

2. Health/health and social care qualifications published to the QCF by Skills for Health are as follows:

Level 2

- Award in Health Informatics
- Certificate in Health Informatics
- Certificate in Healthcare Support Services
- Certificate for Working in the Health Sector
- Diploma in Clinical Healthcare Support
- Diploma in Emergency Care Assistance
- Diploma in Health and Social Care (Adults) for England
- Diploma in Health and Social Care (Adults) for Wales and Northern Ireland
- Diploma in Optical Retail Skills
- Certificate in Pharmaceutical Science*
- NVQ Certificate in Pharmacy Service Skills*

Level 3

- Certificate for Working in the Health Sector
- Diploma in Allied Health Profession Support
- Diploma in Blood Donor Support
- Diploma in Clinical Healthcare Support
- Diploma in Dental Nursing (Dec 2010)
- Diploma in Health and Social Care (Adults) for England
- Diploma in Health and Social Care (Adults) for Wales and Northern Ireland
- Diploma in Healthcare Support Services
- Diploma in Maternity and Paediatric Support
- Diploma in Optical Retail Skills
- Diploma in Pathology Support
- Diploma in Perioperative Support
- Diploma in Pharmaceutical Science*
- Diploma in Pharmacy Service Skills*

** New qualifications for Pharmacy Assistants and Technicians are available now in order to meet mandatory registration requirements which come into effect in July 2011.*

3. Skills for Health is the Sector Skills Council for all health sector employers: NHS, independent and third sector. Since 2002 we've been working with employers to get the right people, with the right skills, in the right place at the right time. We are the authoritative voice on skills issues for the health sector and offer proven workforce solutions and tools – with the expertise and experience to use them effectively. To find out more about our unique competence-based approach to workforce transformation and how we can help you drive up productivity and quality visit www.skillsforhealth.org.uk