

Q Africa 2007

National and Sectoral Qualification Frameworks in the UK

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UK Context: Devolving & Evolving

- From 1999 the 'post devolutionary' era
- DAs: Scottish Government, Welsh Assembly Government & Northern Ireland Assembly
- Scotland: Education System historically distinctive development, Employment is not devolved
- Wales Education devolved, Employment is not 'quangos' brought into WAG, 2006
- Northern Ireland – Education & Employment devolved; strong cultural dimension to education system, influence of European & US models

Events May - November 2007

- people of Scotland elected a Nationalist Government – SNP minority administration
- people of Wales removed the overall mandate of the Labour Assembly - Coalition between Labour & Plaid Cymru
- Northern Ireland Assembly restored. Power Sharing agreed between the DUP & Sinn Fein
- UK: new PM's "Machinery of Government" changes – DSCF, DIUS, DWP, DBERR
- Election deferred to 2009 -18 month policy cycle

UK Policy & Strategy Context

- Skills Strategy, 14-19 Strategy, Leitch Review & Implementation Plan
- Scottish Lifelong Learning Strategy, Determined to Succeed, Skills Strategy
- Wales: Learning Country, Skills and Employment Action Plan
- Northern Ireland: Skills Strategy, FE Means Business

UK Qualifications System

- 2 National Frameworks – SCQF, CQFW incorporating VET & HE
- 1 Trans-national NQF for England, Wales & Northern Ireland for VET
- 1 HE Framework for England: FHEQ
- Credit Systems operate/in implementation across NQFs & at local & institutional level
- **Articulation** key to “UK wide” recognition & EQF referencing

European Dimension

- European Commission: strategy & subsidiarity
- Mechanisms: ECTS, ECVET, EHEA, Europass, Professional Qualifications & **EQF**
- European Parliament Recommendation - member states to 'reference' national frameworks to EQF by 2010
- Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland; strong involvement in Lifelong Learning Developments
- UK referencing to EQF by 3 routes: Scotland, Wales & England/Northern Ireland

Systemic Issues & Challenges

- Styles of Intervention 'Reformist' & 'Incremental Development'
- Demographics: 70+% of the 2020 workforce is already in the labour market
- Skills Levels (proxied by Qualifications) falling in OECD Tables
- Leitch Report: Calls for **Simplification** to enable understanding and generate demand and investment

A Complex System?

- Regulation: 5 Authorities, SQA & QAA roles
- HE: Autonomous Institutions
- FE/VET: Colleges, Training Providers (workbased), Community & Voluntary Sector
- Qualification & Curriculum: HEIs (140), Commercial Awarding Bodies (117), Sector-Strategic & Standard Setting Bodies (25 & 23), Professional Bodies (???)
- England: IVET/General Ed, VET, HE separated
- Regional & Sub-Regional structures

The Long Tale: the UK VET system

- Craft Era: Guilds & Trade Apprenticeships
- Industrial Age: Philanthropy, Voluntarism & development of Institutions
- Beginnings of a VET & Quals system: CGLI
- Municipal era: A national system administered locally, growth of FE (& HE)
- Post War: Social Partners, Industry Bodies
- Information Age: Sector-Strategic Bodies

The Long Tale: Persistent Themes

- Different systems rooted in different histories
- Role & Style of Government, Intermediary & Representative Bodies
- Many actors in provision and qualifications
- Social Cohesion & Lifelong Learning
- VET/FE: Employment and/or Employability?
- HE & World Market, Research Agenda
- Learning & achievements outside the system
- Demand, Funding & Investment

'Employer Led' Approaches

- Craft Era: Training & Development, Working Conditions
- Industrial Era: Institutions, Courses, Exams
- Information Age: Generating Revenue (Levy), Designing Occupational Standards, NVQ System
- 21stC – Articulating Demand, Brokering Agreements, Sectoral Strategies

Sector Skills Council Role

- Research & Articulate Demand through Sector Skills Agreements
- Articulate Occupational Competence through Standards & Profiles
- Key Role in New Delivery Structures: National Skills Academies
- Develop Strategies for Qualifying the Sector Workforce: SQS
- Approve Vocational Qualifications in QCF

Qualification Framework Developments

- NQF (EWNI) becomes QCF, unit based underpinned by Credit System, 8+1 Levels
- CQFW integrates QCF into broad framework, integrations HE and Non-formal learning
- SCQF, unitised, non regulatory, Credit Based, integrates HE & Non formal 12 levels
- FHEQ – encouraging full adoption of CAT

Issues arising in Framework Development

- Different Technical Specs & Levelling
- Standards of Competence/Learning Outcomes, Unit based structures
- Credit: Timespan/Outcome (Workbased)
- Sector located/Cross Sectoral
- Quality Assurance/Quality Improvement
- Qualification Classification & Purpose
- Use of Qualifications: Proxies & Targets

Extending the Networked Approach

- SSCs are working together: Alliance(s)
- SSCs are working with Awarding Bodies
- SSCs working with VET Providers on direct Demand and Supply Relationship
- SSCs, HEIs & Professional Bodies working on the Higher Level Skills Agenda
- SSC & Lifelong Learning Network interaction at Regional Level

Where to Next?

- Encourage a shift from communities of interest & territory
- A strong role for Communities of Practice across the system
 - Strengthen articulation and progression
 - Help movement from accumulation to transfer
 - To develop new models & solutions
 - To generate demand and investment