

United Kingdom Credit Forum

MAKING SENSE OF CREDIT AND QUALIFICATION FRAMEWORKS IN THE UK

SCQF		FHEQ-EWNI & CQFW		QCF/NQF		FQ-EHEA		EQF	
12		8	8	8		Three		8	
11		7	7	7		Two		7	
10		6	6	6		One		6	
9									
8		5	5	5					5
7		4	4	4					
6			3	3			4		
5			2	2			3		
4			1	1			2		
3			E3	E3			1		
2			E2	E2					
1			E1	E1					

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Making Sense of Credit and Qualification Frameworks in the United Kingdom

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Preface

Learning credit is awarded to learners in recognition of their learning achievements. The purpose of credit is to reflect the amount of learning and the intellectual demands of the learning in a quantified form so that there is a means of comparing the equivalence of learning. Credit originated in the United States around 1900 but it was not introduced in the United Kingdom until 1968 when the Open University launched its degree programmes. Over the intervening years the award of credit has been progressively adopted in further and higher education and in many institutions it is a normal unremarkable part of academic life. Awarding credit has become the most common way of recognising learning in an academic and professional context.

Since 1968, there has been a protracted period of development as the FE and HE sectors have sought to develop and agree common approaches to credit. Credit now widely plays a part in formally recognising learning, but for a number of reasons explored in this book, there has been a proliferation of systems and frameworks. Various bodies, ranging from individual institutions to associations of nation states, have sought to develop their own distinctive frameworks. The result is a series of partially overlapping credit systems and credit and qualification frameworks which is potentially confusing for politicians, funders, providers and learners.

So the purpose of this book is to make sense of the frameworks: to clarify, elucidate and explain. It also suggests how we might begin to reduce some of the current complexity. The book comprises four parts. Part A introduces credit, explains the relationship between credit and learning and gives a historical account of the growth of credit practice and qualification frameworks in the United Kingdom. Part B charts the pan-European developments specifically the growth of European Higher Education Area and the supporting European Credit Accumulation and Transfer System (ECTS); and the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning (EQF) and the supporting European Credit system for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET). Part C considers various aspects of credit practice and the way in which credit plays a part in planning and recording the student journey. Finally, in Part D we offer a concluding critical overview.

We have assumed no previous background in credit on the part of the reader but we hope that those who are familiar with credit and with qualification frameworks will find the book useful. There is a quick introduction to credit in the UK over the page and a fuller introduction in Chapter 1. We aim to strengthen knowledge and understanding of credit which may then benefit future decisions. The book has been written by the present and past members of the UK Credit Forum together with several invited authors. The contents have been designed to unfold a logical and coherent introduction to the subject but readers will find that they can dip into individual self-contained chapters. We cite our sources of information in the text of each chapter and list all references at the end of the book. We have also compiled a full explanatory glossary of nomenclature and bodies associated with credit practice and qualification frameworks. Finally, we hope that the book vindicates its title and assists those involved in the planning of future developments in the UK and perhaps elsewhere in the world.

Acknowledgements

This book has greatly benefited from the assistance of many specialists in the field of credit, qualifications and learning development. We wish to thank Emeritus Professor Beverly Sand who provided valuable comments on Chapters 1, 2, 4 and 12; Tony Tait suggested useful improvements to Chapter 2; Dr Sonia Reynolds kindly commented on Chapter 5; Aileen Ponton, Rory McIntyre, John Hart and Dr David Bottomley gave helpful comments on the development of the Scottish Credit and Qualifications framework in Chapter 6; Dr Caroline Egerton, Frank Lyons and Anita Walsh advised on levels in Chapter 10; Rob Ward kindly commented on recording achievement in Chapter 14; and Mark Atlay gave valuable advice regarding the diagrams in Chapter 15. The authors are extremely grateful to all the past and present members of the UK Credit Forum for their constant support and good advice. We thank Helen Lingwood for her considerable help and Debbie Martin for excellent design work. Finally Paul Bridges is deeply indebted to Roger Waterhouse who first introduced him to credit and student-centred learning in 1990.

Paul Bridges and Mark Flinn
Editors
4th November 2010

ABOUT THIS BOOK

This book provides an introduction to credit and its role in the support of learning in post-school training and education. It traces the historical development of credit and FHE qualification frameworks in the United Kingdom over the past 40 years. Although the book focuses on the UK, it includes accounts of pan-European systems and frameworks and discusses the relationships between the UK and European frameworks. The book comprises 16 chapters which have been designed to give, collectively, a broad coverage of the subject culminating in a critical overview. The book includes colour charts which show the articulation between the UK national frameworks and the pan-European qualification frameworks. It also includes an extensive explanatory glossary of nomenclature and organisations.

153 pages, A4 format, Soft. bound.

WHO IS THE BOOK WRITTEN FOR?

This book is written primarily for the UK professional involved in the design, development, delivery and regulation of programmes in vocational and academic education at all levels. The book aims to help the reader gain a better understanding of the credit principles and the design of qualification frameworks. The book assumes no prior background knowledge of credit. The book may also be of interest to professionals working outside the UK in mainland Europe and in other parts of the world.

WHO ARE THE AUTHORS?

The 14 authors are current and past members of the UK Credit Forum together with a number of invited specialist authors. Each author has considerable experience of the field covered by their chapter.

HOW CAN I OBTAIN A COPY OF THE BOOK?

Copies of the book can be purchased from the University of Derby Online Store <https://unishop.derby.ac.uk> Price £25. Postage and packing within the UK is £4.00. Enquiries: please contact Paul Bridges at the University of Derby P.h.bridges@derby.ac.uk.

(HNC); Certificate of Higher 4 Qualifications Fra Graduate Diploma

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Front cover: The articulation between the UK and pan-European frameworks. See the full chart in Table 16.3.

Back cover: a montage of qualification frameworks

Level 11
Level 8
Level 7
Level 6
Level 5
Level 4
Level 3
Level 2
Level 1

Education
(levels 4-8)
Work for
Level 8
Level 7
Level 6
Level 5
Level 4
Level 3
Level 2
Level 1

Level 6	Higher, SVQ 3	Level 11	Masters, SVQ5	Level 6	
Level 5	Intermediate 2, Credit Standard Grade, SVQ	Level 10	Honours Degree, Graduate		National Certificate Certificate of Higher