

# THE RQF AND CPD

The CPD Standards Office is a unique organisation and was founded with the vision of understanding and enabling positive and successful CPD and learning experiences. As a highly specialised expert team, our university led research has equipped us with extensive expertise on all things CPD; including a thorough understanding of delivering professional CPD activities that comply with relevant Government policy legislation.

This factsheet provides an outline of the structure of learning in the UK including the ranking of qualifications and how CPD connects into the education system.

## The RQF and CPD

The RQF stands for the “Regulated Qualification Framework”. It covers all of the main qualifications available in the UK- from basic introductory courses at Further Education Colleges, through school levels, to university degrees and beyond to PhD level.

**The RQF has 8 Levels to which qualifications can be awarded, and is displayed in the diagram to the right:**

The RQF system is based on total qualification time. This includes guided learning, assessment and self-study. The size of the qualification is indicated by total time spend on it by the learner.

Learners can receive three types of qualifications from the RQF:

- \* Awards
- \* Certificates
- \* Diplomas

UNIVERSITY		
Level 8	Doctorate PhD	
Level 7	Masters Degree MA, MSc, Mphil, Meng etc.	
Level 6	University Degree with Honours BA, BSc etc.	
Level 5		Foundation Degree FdA, FdSc
Level 4		HND (Higher National Diploma)  HNC (Higher National Certificate)
Level 3	A Levels, A2, AS	
Level 2	GCSE Grades A*-C Grades 9,8,7,6,5,4	
Level 1	GCSE Grades D-G Grades 3,2,1	
Entry Level	Key Stage 3	
SCHOOL / 6 <sup>th</sup> FORM		
F.E COLLEGE		

The following regulatory bodies oversee the RQF, and have the power to accredit educational courses, that meet all the criteria and quality standards.

The RQF is regulated by Ofqual for England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

In Scotland, the Scottish Credit and Qualification Framework (SCQF) operates differently to the RQF and instead spans 12 levels. See this wiki page:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scottish\\_Credit\\_and\\_Qualifications\\_Framework](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scottish_Credit_and_Qualifications_Framework)

## How does CPD link to the RQF?

As CPD is essentially a process for keeping qualifications up to date, it does not sit at any particular level on the RQF. Instead CPD can occur at any level of the RQF, (although it mainly occurs from Level 6 onwards).

Some providers of education choose to develop an award, certificate or diploma that will be formally accredited by the RQF, whereas others are simply looking to accredit a course for CPD purposes.

In this respect, CPD accreditation and RQF recognition sit alongside each other, and providers tend to opt for one or the other.

Technically a RQF award can be recognised for CPD purposes, however individuals will primarily undertake a RQF award for the qualification itself e.g. to achieve a GCSE or university degree.

*For more information about the RQF see the website:*

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National\\_qualifications\\_frameworks\\_in\\_the\\_United\\_Kingdom](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_qualifications_frameworks_in_the_United_Kingdom)

## QCF - The Qualification and Credit Framework

Sometimes there is confusion between the RQF and the QCF. However, the QCF is simply a previous name and structure. The RQF replaced the OCF in 2015 as a title. This framework has the same number of educational levels covering all levels of learning in secondary education, further education, vocational education and higher education.

For more information about the RQF see this website:

<https://ofqual.blog.gov.uk/2015/10/01/explaining-the-rqf/>

We hope you have found this factsheet helpful.