

**For the attention of the
Essential Skills co-ordinator
– centres in **Wales****

January 2013

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Qualifications **Essential Skills Wales**
Essential Skills for Work and Life

Level **all**
Number **3768, 3846**

This news sheet contains the following information:

- Essential Skills for Work and Life now accredited
- Certification codes within 3768
- Wider Key Skills and eligibility for funding – now resolved
- Essential Skills and the wider 'maths and English' picture

This edition of News follows the previous update about Essential Skills for Work and Life issued in **October 2012**.

Essential Skills for Work and Life now accredited

We're delighted to confirm that City & Guilds' new suite of Essential Skills for Work and Life qualifications (3846) has now been accredited by the Welsh Government Regulatory team.

The new qualifications bring together a framework of bite-sized units that can be used to put together a flexible and personalised programme to build learners' confidence and help them address specific skills gaps across communication, application of number and/or ICT. **They are designed to complement, rather than replace, the Essential Skills Wales (ESW) qualifications.**

Unlike ESW, the Essential Skills for Work and Life qualifications are on the Qualifications and Credit Framework, allowing individual units to be recognised as well as providing a choice of qualification sizes (ranging from 6 credits to 37). The units are all aligned to the ESW evidence and knowledge requirements, so can help learners prepare for ESW.

The Essential Skills for Work and Life qualifications are particularly suitable for community, work-based and other types of learning programme where time or other pressures might make it difficult to complete a whole ESW qualification. They can also act as a stepping-stone to ESW – either to help learners progress to the next level or to brush up on particular skills they have not mastered completely in their previous learning.

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NEWS



City & Guilds' suite of Essential Skills for Work and Life qualifications currently includes:

Accreditation number	Qualification title	Min credits	Min credit at/above level	GLH
600/7647/1	Entry Level Award In Essential Skills for Work and Life (Entry 1)	6	6	60
600/7648/3	Entry Level Award in Essential Skills for Work and Life (Entry 2)	6	6	60
600/7649/5	Entry Level Award In Essential Skills for Work and Life (Entry 3)	6	6	60
600/7192/8	Level 1 Award In Essential Skills for Work and Life	6	6	60
600/7185/0	Entry Level Certificate In Essential Skills for Work and Life (Entry 1)	16	16	160
600/7186/2	Entry Level Certificate In Essential Skills for Work and Life (Entry 2)	16	9	160
600/7187/4	Entry Level Certificate In Essential Skills for Work and Life (Entry 3)	16	12	160
600/7193/X	Level 1 Certificate In Essential Skills for Work and Life	16	9	160
600/7191/6	Entry Level Extended Certificate In Essential Skills for Work and Life (Entry 1)	24	24	240
600/7747/5	Entry Level Extended Certificate In Essential Skills for Work and Life (Entry 2)	24	18	240
600/7748/7	Entry Level Extended Certificate In Essential Skills for Work and Life (Entry 3)	24	18	240
600/7188/6	Entry Level Diploma In Essential Skills for Work and Life (Entry 1)	37	37	370
600/7189/8	Entry Level Diploma In Essential Skills for Work and Life (Entry 2)	37	28	370
600/7190/4	Entry Level Diploma In Essential Skills for Work and Life (Entry 3)	37	28	370

All units are portfolio-assessed, and there are no mandatory units. Each qualification can include a mixture of communication, application of number and ICT units – depending on the nature of the programme and learners' particular skills gaps. Within the Award-sized qualifications (6 credits), it is possible to focus on just one subject area; the Certificates, Extended Certificates and Diplomas require units from more than one area.

The qualification webpage will be live later this month. The qualification number to search for is **3846**.

Are these qualifications eligible for funding?

These qualifications are designed primarily for adult learners, especially those in community or work-based settings where a full ESW qualification might not be immediately attainable.

The Welsh Government has confirmed that Essential Skills for Work and Life qualifications will be eligible for public funding for post-16 and adult learners. The qualifications are now listed on the Database of Approved Qualifications in Wales (DAQW).

Approval arrangements

All current City & Guilds Essential Skills Wales (3768) centres will receive **automatic approval** for Essential Skills for Work and Life (3846) once they have been set up on the Walled Garden. We anticipate that this will happen in mid-February, although **in the meantime we are happy for any existing 3768 centres to begin delivering these qualifications, as long as candidates are registered with us once it becomes possible to do so.**

Other centres (not already offering ESW) will need to follow City & Guilds' standard Qualification Approval process if they wish to offer these qualifications. If you currently offer ESW with another awarding organisation, please contact the City & Guilds Wales office (wales@cityandguilds.com) to discuss approval arrangements.

Launch events

We will also be holding a series of launch events for these qualifications – to coincide with a separate series of ESW standardisation events. Dates for both of these will be confirmed later this month.

Are there plans for any further levels?

The Essential Skills for Work and Life suite so far only covers only Entry 1-3 and Level 1, although work has recently begun on a further set of units and qualifications at levels 2 and 3. As with the existing units, these are being developed collaboratively with input from a number of awarding organisations.

Certification codes within 3768

We have recently had to introduce a series of certification modules for each of the Essential Skills Wales and wider Key Skills qualifications within 3768. These module codes (eg 3768-901, 3768-902) must now be entered **as well as** the relevant unit/assessment code before a certificate will generate.

Why have these modules been introduced?

Certification modules are widely used in many City & Guilds qualifications (eg in the Employability and Personal Development qualifications – 7546), especially where the same unit/assessment code can be counted towards more than one qualification or is used within more than one registration route. They are used to prevent multiple certificates being generated automatically.

Although ESW has no overlapping units (each qualification has consists of a single unit), there are two alternative charging routes ('pay upfront' using 3768-01, or 'pay-as-you-go' using 3768-02, -03 and -04). We had assumed when ESW was initially set up that candidates would only be registered for one *or* other of these routes, although our Operational teams have noticed a growing pattern of candidates (inadvertently, we suspect) with registrations for both 3768-01 and one or more of the pay-as-you-go routes. We've also noticed that any candidates with previous wider Key Skills achievements under 3638 are sometimes reissued with these qualifications each time they are registered for any of the 3768 product codes.

Won't this create extra work?

Only insofar as it means there are now two codes to enter for each candidate instead of one. It might mean results take longer to enter if this is done directly onto the Walled Garden via a Form S, although the impact can be lessened if results are submitted via an Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) file upload.

However, introducing a 'cash in' mechanism has the advantage of preventing unwanted certificates as each one needs to be requested positively. Each qualification has a unique certification module – eg Level 1 ESW Communication has the code 3768-904 when completed under a 3768-01 registration, and 3768-934 when completed under 3768-02.

Why was there no advance warning of this change?

There should have been, and we can only apologise for this.

The full extent of the problem of duplicate ESW and wider Key Skills certificates being generated automatically came to light quite suddenly, as a result our operational teams considered it necessary to act quickly. A change of this kind would normally have a lead-in or grace period, and we're sorry that this did not happen in this case.

We're also sorry about the initial problem with the set-up of these modules that prevented results from being entered onto the Walled Garden in the first few days (again, a consequence of needing to act quickly!), although we are pleased to confirm that this has now been rectified.

Wider Key Skills and eligibility for funding – now resolved

We are also aware that there have recently been problems with funding eligibility for our wider Key Skills qualifications, although we are pleased to confirm that **this has been rectified and the qualifications are now displayed correctly on DAQW.**

The problem stemmed from a system glitch within the IT system that underpins the Register of Regulated Qualifications (RRQ), causing it to imply that these qualifications to imply that they were only available in England. Since this error was not a consequence of any action on our part, it was not immediately apparent to us, and only came to light when we noticed that the qualifications had disappeared from DAQW. The RRQ listings were corrected shortly before Christmas, and the qualifications have now reappeared on DAQW with the correct operational end-date (31 August 2014).

We're grateful to colleagues at Ofqual (who manage the RRQ) and the Welsh Government Regulatory team for acting quickly to resolve the problem once it was pointed out to them, although we are sorry for any inconvenience this has caused in the meantime. We do not anticipate any further difficulties with funding claims now that the DAQW listing has been corrected, although we are happy to approach the Welsh Government's funding team on your behalf if it is necessary to do so.

Essential Skills and the wider 'maths and English' picture? You will probably be aware that the Welsh Government's recent review of 14-19 qualifications proposes changes to the assessment model for Essential Skills Wales. We are working closely with the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) to understand the

detail of these changes more fully and likely timescales. We will keep you posted about this, although we do not anticipate any changes being introduced until at least 2014.

You may also have seen City & Guilds has also just launched a new suite of Framework qualifications in England called Mathematics Skills and English Skills. There are a number of similarities between these qualifications and Essential Skills for Work and Life, although also some key differences since they reflect the skills policy agenda in England and are designed to align with Functional Skills rather than ESW. The Welsh Government has confirmed that Mathematics Skills and English Skills will **not** be approved for use or funded in Wales.

Not just new qualifications – a whole new support offer...

As well as introducing new qualifications, we are also developing a range of new teaching and learning materials to support numeracy and literacy (or maths and English) tutors and learners. Unlike previous materials we have developed for SmartScreen and other platforms, these materials will not be designed or branded to support *only* one particular qualification, learning provider or country. Instead, they will be suitable for use with any 'maths and English' qualifications or programmes of learning.

These materials will be introduced later in the spring, and will include a mixture of free resources (available to all City & Guilds centres) and subscription-based content.