

Credit for Young People – a new qualification

The National Open College Network is pleased to announce the formal approval of a new suite of qualifications aimed at young people. The NOCN Skills Towards Enabling Progression (Step-Up) qualifications provide units which can be used flexibly to create programmes of learning. The Step Up qualifications are an innovative range of credit based pathways designed to accredit a wide range of activities engaged in by learners aged 14 plus. These activities can be carried out in a range of settings, both formal and informal.

Step Up qualifications are part of the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF). They encompass the principles of the Foundation Learning Tier (FLT) providing clearly identified pathways from Entry 3 and Level One. The flexibility of the pathways allow for the design of a personalised curriculum to meet the needs of a diverse range of target groups and of providers.

There are three sizes of Step Up qualifications, Award, Certificate and Diploma. Subject to rules of combination, they form nationally recognised qualifications. The differing sizes of qualifications on offer mean that the curriculum can be customised to meet both personal and vocational needs.

The nesting of units within the three progression qualifications: Award, Certificate and Diploma, allows for different sizes/length of programmes as well as flexible delivery over different time periods according to the needs of learner and provider. The qualifications also allow for a 'spiky profile' so learners can achieve units at different levels.

A key advantage for providers in the school sector is that these qualifications contribute to performance tables, if the core units are used according to the rules of combination. The tests and trials have showed their usefulness in addressing the needs of learners with disabilities, of disaffected young people who are or are in danger of becoming NEET, as well as for the alternative curriculum in schools. They can also be used by partnerships to address 14-19 strategies in a locality.

To explore how the Step Up qualifications might serve your needs as a provider, please contact your local Open College Network who will be pleased to support staff in curriculum planning. This will demonstrate some of the possible ways to use the units from the qualifications and the full qualifications.

Please visit the new NOCN website to find out more information about NOCN qualifications and use the new unit bank to search for units for your learners.

www.nocn.org.uk/learning-providers

