

Delivering *Skills for Life*

FACT SHEET 10 – ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) for Work

November 2007

The purpose of this fact sheet is to provide the background, context and general characteristics for the new ESOL for Work qualifications, along with a brief summary of the funding.

Readership

1 Regional and local Learning and Skills Councils; colleges and other providers: directors responsible for curriculum development; senior managers and managers responsible for English language qualification provision; teachers and tutors of English language programmes; Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted); colleagues responsible for English language provision.

Structure

2 The fact sheet has two sections. Section one looks at the background and characteristics of the ESOL for Work qualification and the associated funding. Section two presents a set of frequently asked questions with answers.

3 This fact sheet has been prepared by the Employee Development team at the National Office of the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and will be posted on the LSC website (www.lsc.gov.uk). For further clarification providers should, in the first instance, contact their regional or local LSC. Contact information can be found on our website.

Section One: ESOL for Work (EfW): the background, characteristics and funding.

Background

- 1 As part of the Government's review of ESOL provision in 2006, a significant change in the type of learner accessing ESOL provision was identified, showing a far greater take-up from newly arrived migrant workers. However, it was felt that neither ESOL international nor ESOL Skills for Life were fully meeting the needs of this particular learner group. To address this, the Government requested the development of a new suite of English language qualifications.
- 2 The LSC announced the development of these new qualifications in the [*Annual Statement of Priorities: Raising our game 2007/08*](#); *'To extend learner choice and provide suitable qualifications for people studying English language mainly for work, the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) is accrediting a range of new ESOL international qualifications. These will support a shorter, more job-focused, practical approach to English-language skills that is particularly attractive to migrant workers. The new qualifications are expected to be available for August 2007'.*
- 3 Following this statement and in discussion with QCA, awarding bodies, the LSC and the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS), this family of qualifications was retitled 'ESOL for Work'.
- 4 These new qualifications are designed to meet the immediate English language needs of learners who are in employment or who are intending to work in this country, but who do not necessarily intend to become citizens of the UK. Learners will be expected to have some literacy, including the ability to read and write, in their own language(s). The intention of this category of qualifications is to offer opportunities for the rapid acquisition of English for work, through flexible (short course) programmes of delivery that can target the immediate, broad, work-related needs of candidates and employers.
- 5 The qualifications are available to all learner groups, as are the existing Certificates in ESOL Skills for Life. Being part of a specific learner group ie migrant worker, does not dictate which qualification should be taken. Learners should be enrolled on to the most suitable qualification according to their needs and aspirations.
- 6 The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) has worked with 8 awarding bodies to develop and accredit the ESOL for Work qualifications including ongoing consultation with the national interest group the National Association for Teaching English and other Community Languages to Adults (NATECLA). The development also included consultation with the Sector Skills Development Agency (SSDA), some Sector Skills Councils (SSC), TUC and CBI.
- 7 The ESOL for Work qualifications are all Approved qualifications. This means they are accredited by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) for inclusion in the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and approved by the Secretary of State under Section 96 and 97 of the Learning and Skills Act 2000. Once accredited by QCA and approved by the

secretary of state they are sent to the LSC and uploaded on to the Learning Aims Database (LAD). All sixteen qualifications have now been accredited, approved and added to the LSC's Learning Aims Database (LAD).

- 8 There was a formal launch of the qualifications on 16 and 23 October by the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS), alongside the LSC, QCA, TUC, SEDA and NATECLA.

Qualifications characteristics

- 9 Variety has been encouraged in the development of these qualifications and each qualification has a slightly different focus and uses a different assessment methodology; for example, some of the qualifications are more suitable for assessment in the workplace, whereas some are better suited to the classroom. Providers are encouraged to choose the qualification most appropriate for their learners.
- 10 This suite of qualifications are different to any of the previous ESOL qualifications in that they will, to allow a greater focus on the skills needed for employment and employability (particularly those in relatively low-skilled work), have a greater emphasis on reading, speaking & listening rather than writing, although they are 'all mode' qualifications.
- 11 They have the capacity to cover topics such as health and safety, customer care, food hygiene, common work practices, equality and diversity with some sector focused induction into jobs or other job specific elements.
- 12 They relate to the national Skills for Life Standards for Adult Literacy but do not cover the whole breadth and are therefore ineligible for funding as basic skills and do not count towards the 2010 Skills for Life PSA target.
- 13 Initially they are available at Entry Level 3 and Level 1. However, the qualifications allow for learners with spiky profiles by allowing writing skills to be assessed at one level below speaking and listening and reading. For example Entry Level 3 candidates should demonstrate skills levels at Entry Level 3 for speaking and listening and reading but may include Entry Level 2 in writing.
- 14 We expect learners to be able to progress up through these qualifications. It may also be possible for learners to move laterally, to the ESOL Skills for Life qualifications. However, this should be by exception only, where there has been a change in the learner's circumstances necessitating the need to move to a broader qualification. Learners could also complete an ESOL for Work qualification and move on to a SfL ESOL qualification at the next level. For example, a learner completing a Level 1 ESOL for Work qualification may wish to progress to a Level 2, in which case they could enrol on to a SfL ESOL Level 2. However, the decision for learners to be able to make this progression would depend on the needs, circumstances and abilities of the individual candidate and which ESOL for Work qualification they had taken. The provider will need to employ diagnostic assessment to ensure that the progression route is appropriate for them. It is also possible to embed ESOL for Work qualifications into vocational programmes of learning.

- 15 We expect delivery to be flexible. It is unlikely that they will follow traditional teaching patterns (i.e. 3 hours a week for a year) but be available through a range of approaches, possibly including block or intensive learning, offered in the work place as well as in the classroom.
- 16 Annex A provides a summary of the individual qualifications with further details available on QCA's [National Database of Accredited Qualifications](#)

Funding

- 17 ESOL for Work qualifications are funded at a listed rate, at programme weighing A (1.0). Listed rates can be found in the [Funding Guidance for Further Education 2007/08](#), Annex A, table A2. The qualifications do not attract automatic fee remission.
- 18 Because of their listed rate status, the fee element will be known up front by learners and employers.
- 19 The qualifications are between 100 and 150 guided learning hours (GLH). Currently all 16 qualifications are 150 GLH.
- 20 The listed rate for 150 GLH is £880 for 2007/08. Learners not eligible for automatic fee remission under the normal fee remission categories (as stated in the [Funding Guidance for Further Education 2007/08](#), para 131) will be expected to pay up to 37.5% of their fees. 37.5% translates into £330.
- 21 Further funding information can be found in the LSC's [Funding Guidance for Further Education 2007/08](#).

Section Two: Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Q1. Why have these qualifications been developed?

A: As part of the Government's review of ESOL provision in 2006, a significant change in the type of learner accessing ESOL provision was identified, with a far greater take up from newly arrived migrant workers. However, it was felt that neither ESOL international nor ESOL Skills for Life were fully meeting the needs of this particular learner group. To address this, the Government requested a new suite of English language qualifications.

Q2. How are they funded?

They are funded as a listed qualification at the base rate of 1.0, at £880. The qualifications are not eligible for automatic fee remission, normal fee remission categories apply, and further details can be found in the [Funding Guidance for Further Education 2007/08](#). In 2007/08 the fee element is £330 for which the learner or learner's sponsor (employer) will be responsible. It is expected they will be delivered in around 150 guided learning hours.

Q3. Will there be additional funding available for development costs?

The funding rates set by the LSC already include a contribution to the overheads of the provider including providing information, advice and guidance to learners, initial assessments, and course development. It is the expectation on providers that course development be continual across all qualifications in order to meet the needs of learners. In addition to this, should an employer request specific course development to tailor the course to their specific needs then such additional costs could be met directly from the employer.

Q4. When will the new qualifications be available?

A: Qualifications from 8 awarding bodies at Entry Level 3 and Level 1 have been available since 1 September 2007. Annex 1 lists the qualifications accredited as at 31 August 2007 and awarding body contact details for further information.

Q5. Are other levels being developed?

A: The DIUS and QCA are discussing the possibility of developing other levels of ESOL for Work qualifications with Awarding Bodies. More information will be provided when a decision has been finalised.

Q6. How do the new qualifications differ from the ESOL Skills for Life qualifications?

A: The new ESOL for Work Qualifications are based on the Skills for Life National Standards for Adult Literacy, but do not cover the whole ESOL Core Curriculum. However, the specific difference is the emphasis on English language for the workplace, with qualifications covering a range of work related issues, for example, health and safety, customer care, food hygiene, common work practices, equality and diversity and some sector specific language. The flexibility that has been encouraged in the development of these qualifications means there is variety of choice, and providers are encouraged to review each

qualification against learner and employer needs before deciding on which one to use.

Q7. Do the new qualifications cater for learners with ‘spiky profiles’?

A: The qualifications allow for learners to have writing skills at a level lower than speaking and listening and reading. Some offer flexibility around this by offering the writing assessment at both the same level as the reading and speaking and listening assessments but also at a level lower. Other qualifications only offer writing at a lower level. However, even if they take the writing unit at the level lower they obtain the whole qualification at the level of the reading and speaking and listening units. For example, a learner who achieves their assessments in reading and speaking and listening at Entry Level 3 and writing at Entry Level 2 would be awarded a qualification in ESOL for Work at Entry Level 3.

Again, providers should ensure they chose the qualifications that best suit the needs of their learners.

Q8. Are these qualifications unitised?

A: No, they are not QCF unitised qualifications. Awarding bodies do not offer separate certification for each unit therefore the qualification cannot be funded as separate units. As such partial achievement funding cannot be claimed for partial success of the qualification. The whole qualification should be delivered. Information around partial achievement can be found in paragraph 141 of the LSC’s [Funding Guidance for Further Education 2007/08](#).

Q9. If learners fail a mode assessment eg reading, can they take it again?

A: Yes. Learners who fail can re-take another assessment for that mode on another occasion when they have made more progress, but they cannot be assessed on the identical tasks twice over.

Q10. What about learners who only want to do the speaking and listening mode? Can they enroll on to an ESOL for Work qualification?

A: No, as the ESOL for Work qualification is not unitised, therefore assessment and funding do not support achievement of stand alone units of qualifications.

Q11. Will the new qualifications count towards the national target?

A: These qualifications are not part of the Skills for Life family of qualifications and do not currently count towards the 2010 Skills for Life PSA target, however, the possibility of their contributing towards a target in the future is being examined.

Q12. If a learner is employed should the employer pay the learner’s fee element?

If the learner is employed either the employer or the learner will be expected to pay the fee contribution, unless the learner is eligible for fee remission under normal LSC fee remission categories, but there is currently no enforcement to insist an employer pays. However, if the provision is brokered through the Train

to Gain service we expect employers to pay the fee element. It is not yet available through discreet Train to Gain funding but can be accessed through main stream FE funding.

Q13. What about other English language courses, for example international ESOL qualifications? Will these new qualifications replace them?

A: No, the ESOL for Work qualifications will not replace them. International ESOL qualifications are specifically targeted at candidates who are intending to study English either before coming to the UK to work or to study, or who wish to study English in this country, and who do not intend to become citizens of the UK, or to settle in the UK. However, these foreign candidates may wish to be certificated with a nationally accredited qualification from this country, because of the reputation, quality and international recognition of these qualifications. These qualifications have not been eligible for public funding in England through the LSC since August 2007. The only exception to this is IELTS, which will remain eligible for funding in 2007/08.

Q14. Can the ESOL for Work qualification be offered through OLASS to offenders in custody?

A: Yes, ESOL for Work can be offered to offenders in custody. The type of English language course offered to a learner ie, ESOL Skills for Life or ESOL for Work, will be dependant on their level of need and aspirations.

Q15. How can I find out more about the new ESOL for Work qualifications?

A: For further information please contact the relevant awarding body - details can be found at Annex A.

Annex A - ESOL for Work qualifications

All the currently submitted qualifications listed below have been accredited and are available for teaching.

Awarding body	Qualifications	Website
City & Guilds	Entry Level Certificate in ESOL for Work (Entry 3)	www.city-and-guilds.co.uk
	Level 1 Certificate in ESOL for Work	
Edexcel Ltd	Entry Level Certificate in ESOL for Work (Entry 3)	www.edexcel.org.uk
	Level 1 Certificate in ESOL for Work	
English Speaking Board (International) Ltd	Entry Level Certificate in ESOL for Work (Entry 3)	www.esbuk.org
	Level 1 Certificate in ESOL for Work	
National Open College Network	Entry Level Certificate in ESOL for Work (Entry 3)	www.nocn.org.uk
	Level 1 Certificate in ESOL for Work	
Open College North West	Entry Level Certificate in ESOL for Work (Entry 3)	www.ocnw.com
	Level 1 Certificate in ESOL for Work	
Scottish Qualifications Authority	Entry Level Certificate in ESOL for work (Entry 3)	www.sqa.org.uk
	Level 1 Certificate in ESOL for work	
Trinity College London	Entry Level Certificate in ESOL for Work (Entry 3)	www.trinitycollege.co.uk
	Level 1 Certificate in ESOL for Work	
University of Cambridge ESOL Examinations	ESOL Entry Level Certificate in ESOL for Work (Entry 3)	www.ucles.org.uk
	ESOL Level 1 Certificate in ESOL for Work	

There is considerable variety in the structure of assessment and the design of assessment tasks. Providers are strongly advised to research what best suits the needs of their learners. It should not be assumed that an awarding body's ESOL for Work qualifications will necessarily follow a similar pattern to their other ESOL qualifications.

To find out more about any of the ESOL for Work qualifications, please contact the individual Awarding Body.

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