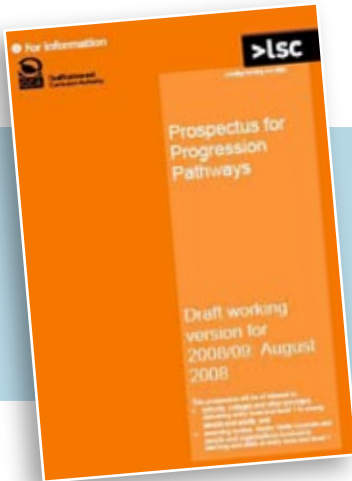


# Foundation Learning Tier (FLT)



**By 2010, all learners working at entry level and level 1 will plan their progression within Foundation Learning Tier pathways. This briefing will help IAG practitioners provide learners with the support they will need.**

## Introduction

When it is implemented nationally, the Foundation Learning Tier (FLT) will lead to greater levels of participation, attainment and progression at Entry and Level 1, improving the life chances of learners aged 14 and over.

The QCA diagram opposite shows how the FLT and progression pathways relate to current reforms. The Government's 14-19 Qualification Strategy identified the Foundation Learning Tier Progression Pathways as one of the four national suites and frameworks. The units and qualifications which make up Progression Pathways will be drawn from the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF). The Progression Pathways will be connected to the three main learning routes (general qualifications, diplomas and apprenticeships). The three other learning routes have been the focus of the most recent CEIAG support programme briefings. A 14-19 choices online practitioners' guide is being launched on [www.cegnet.co.uk](http://www.cegnet.co.uk) in December for further information about all of the reforms shown in the diagram.

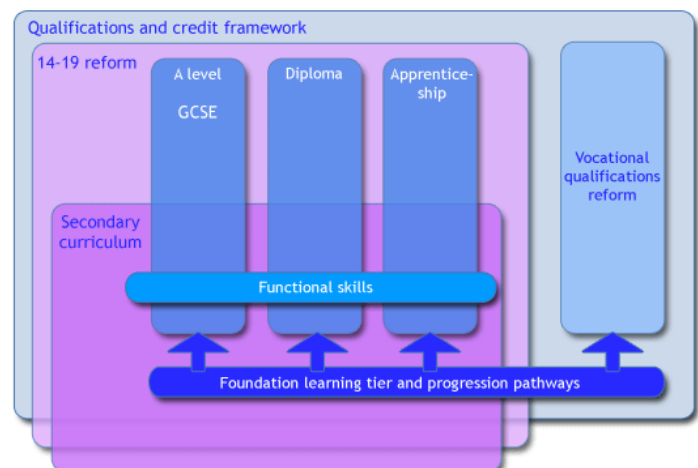


Fig.1 - How the Foundation Learning Tier reforms fit in (QCA, 2008)

## Why has the FLT been developed?

The FLT has been developed to:

- Improve attainment, progression and participation for those learners working at Entry and Level
- Improve progression to Level 2
- Create an underpinning minimum threshold around the depth and breadth of learning

- Offer learners a personalised curriculum within the parameters set by the progression pathways.

‘Wrap-around’ information, advice and guidance (IAG) will be essential to help learners manage their individual progression and achieve the purposes of the FLT reforms.

### What is the FLT?

The FLT is a set of credit based qualifications and units aimed at all learners over the age of 14 working below level 2.

The priority initially is to develop four main progression pathways (or frameworks for learning):

- an Entry Level progression pathway for 14- to 16-year olds onto a Foundation (Level 1) Diploma, GCSEs or other further study
- a Level 2 progression pathway onto a full Level 2 qualification on completing the pathway
- a pre-apprenticeship progression pathway onto skilled employment including apprenticeships
- a progression pathway onto independent living and, where appropriate, employment or supported employment.

During the phased implementation, employer and sector focused progression pathways may be developed.

Each pathway will include:

- subject or vocational knowledge, skills and understanding

- personal and social development learning as both stand-alone qualifications and as units embedded in other qualifications
- functional skills (English, maths and ICT).

The progression pathways will use the flexibilities offered by the new Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) units and qualifications for smaller units of learning and credit accumulation. Providers will be free to choose from a range of units and qualifications to meet the needs of individual learners.

Within the QCF, Entry Level has three sub-levels (See level descriptors in fig. 2). Entry 1 has no lower limit which will allow qualifications at Entry 1 to accredit achievement at pre-Entry level and mean that all learners can gain access to accredited qualifications on the QCF.

Within the Qualifications and Credit Framework, Entry level 1 will recognise achievements previously known as ‘pre-Entry’.  
(See [http://www.qca.org.uk/qca\\_11419.aspx](http://www.qca.org.uk/qca_11419.aspx) for more information).

Level	Summary
<b>Entry 1</b>	Entry 1 recognises progress along a continuum that ranges from the most elementary of achievements to beginning to make use of skills, knowledge or understanding that relate to the immediate environment.
<b>Entry 2</b>	Achievement at Entry 2 reflects the ability to make use of skills, knowledge and understanding to carry out simple, familiar tasks and activities with guidance.

Level	Summary
<b>Entry 3</b>	Achievement at Entry 3 reflects the ability to make use of skills, knowledge and understanding to carry out structured tasks and activities in familiar contexts, with appropriate guidance where needed.
<b>Level 1</b>	Achievement at level 1 reflects the ability to use relevant knowledge, skills and procedures to complete routine tasks. It includes responsibility for completing tasks and procedures subject to direction or guidance.

Fig. 2: QCF Level descriptors (from [http://www.qca.org.uk/libraryAssets/media/QCF\\_level\\_descriptors.pdf](http://www.qca.org.uk/libraryAssets/media/QCF_level_descriptors.pdf))

The 'At-a-Glance' Guide to progression pathways can be downloaded from: [http://flt.excellence.qia.org.uk/display\\_pagedoc.asp?id=272](http://flt.excellence.qia.org.uk/display_pagedoc.asp?id=272)

### How is the FLT being implemented?

Phased implementation began in September 2007 with first teaching on a small scale and developmental basis from September 2008. During 2009-10, progression pathways will be further populated with provision from Entry Level and Level 1 of the Qualifications and Credit Framework. QCA is working in partnership with awarding organisations, providers, sectors and the Learning and Skills Council to ensure that all stakeholders are well informed of qualification development needs for learners and to ensure that a sufficient, relevant and appropriate range of sizes and levels of credit-based qualifications will support learners to improve their work and life chances.

### A key role for IAG

The Post-16 Provider Development Framework (<http://flt.excellence.qia.org.uk/document.asp?id=340&pageno>) identifies a number of 'readiness indicators' relevant to the role of IAG in ensuring the success of FLT especially:

- **Initial assessment and ongoing review (RI-5)**
- **Recognition of achievement and progression (RI-3)**
- **Reaching priority learners and motivating them to succeed (RI-6)**
- **Developing partnership arrangements (RI-7)** to provide opportunities for learners to access support outside that which a learning provider could be reasonably expected to provide
- **Support for learners (RI-8)** to cover retention, progression and referral issues. It also covers the provision of a range of methods to support learners including pastoral support and IAG on a wide range of issues, e.g. the learner journey, finance. Providers will be expected to have achieved or be working towards IAG accreditation.

To facilitate these processes, providers must establish systematic approaches to tracking learner achievement and progress during and following a learning programme. IAG practitioners will need to become familiar with the range of records created by the learning provider for use by learners, e.g. learning and workplace logs, skills profile (part of initial assessment) and the personalised learning and support plan. It is important that practitioners help learners to 'own' their plans and

involve them in identifying and agreeing realistic and challenging overall learning goals.

Regular ongoing reviews of learner progress will be a critical part of the process to encourage learners to reflect on their learning, self-assess their progress and seek guidance and advice, for example, on the need to repeat learning or to take units at the next level. Although all units and qualifications will be credit-based to enable learners to make progress without needing to repeat learning unnecessarily, learning and IAG providers will need to help some learners with learning difficulties or disabilities decide whether to repeat learning to maintain skills or repeat them within new contexts to allow progression. Similarly, learning and IAG providers will need to help learners decide whether to take units above the level of the overall qualification, e.g. allowing stepping stones from Entry and Level 1 to Level 2. This is a proven strategy for helping learners move onto the next level of learning and should be encouraged wherever possible.

## Find out more

The *Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS) FLT website* is the gateway to many useful resources; and you are welcome to join the 'Progression pathways and FLT' online community:

<http://flt.excellence.qia.org.uk/>

<http://excellence.qia.org.uk/community.aspx?community=70>

The *support and resources section of the LSC FLT website* has much useful information:

<http://qfr.lsc.gov.uk/flt>

QCA's '*What is FLT?*' ([http://www.qca.org.uk/qca\\_8153.aspx](http://www.qca.org.uk/qca_8153.aspx)) page provides access to other useful FLT pages, e.g.:

- the guidance on the writing of units of credit
  - information about testing and trialling arrangements
  - national and practitioner conferences
- Presentations from the recent FLT National Conference are now available on the QCA website: [http://www.qca.org.uk/qca\\_20359.aspx](http://www.qca.org.uk/qca_20359.aspx)
- planning for diversity and inclusion

The *Prospectus for Progression Pathways* - working version for 2008/09: July 2008 is available at:

[http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/National/LSC-P-NAT-080131\\_ProspectusProgressionPathways.pdf](http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/National/LSC-P-NAT-080131_ProspectusProgressionPathways.pdf)

(The next revision is planned for Spring 2009)