It is the intention of the CQFW is to bring together all forms of recognised learning into a single unifying structure that is applicable to all types and styles of learning and all qualifications.

The Credit Common Accord describes Credit as a “currency” for learning achievement and it is, in itself, “an award made to a learner in recognition of the verified achievement of designated learning outcomes at a specified level” (Credit Common Accord, 2006, Page 11).

One credit is assigned to learning outcomes per 10 hours of learning time at a determined level. The level is an indicator of the demand, complexity, depth of study and the autonomy expected of the learner.

A scale of CQFW education levels has been produced and these are mapped to the European Education Levels within the European Qualifications Framework (EQF).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>HE Doctoral and above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>HE Masters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>HE Honours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>HE Intermediate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>HE Certificate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>NVQ 3; GCE A Levels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>NVQ 2; GCSE A*-C Grades</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>NVQ 1; GCSE D-G Grades</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entry</td>
<td>3 bands of achievement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales was introduced in 2003 as a fully inclusive learning framework. The Levels capture all learning from the very initial stages (Entry) to the most advanced (Level 8). The Fan diagram illustrates the levels and examples of qualifications and learning provision that are included in it.

For further details contact the CQFW Secretariat: Tel: 01443 663 633, Fax: 01443 663 653, E-mail: info@cqfw.net, Visit: www.cqfw.net
Credit can be awarded for vocational learning as long as there is a programme of learning and training, preferably linked to NOS, with carefully constructed objectives (Learning Outcomes), thorough assessment criteria (ways of measuring that learning has been achieved) and that the assessment is undertaken by someone who has been determined to be vocationally competent.

The Credit Common Accord sets out the following benefits of the CQFW:

- assist in removing barriers to progression;
- promote recognition of the skills required to support economic growth in Wales and elsewhere;
- offer parity in the recognition of achievement for learners;
- recognise learning wherever, whenever and however it is achieved;
- accumulate credits towards a qualification or achieved for their own value;
- accumulate credits to meet the specific needs of individuals;
- explain to others the relative value of their award;
- provide an employer with a much clearer picture of what the learner knows and can do; and
- allows for the transfer of a learner’s knowledge and skills between career paths, providers in Wales, the UK and potentially throughout Europe.

Credit is calculated by taking the duration or volume of the learning and then expressing the credit in terms of the level of the learning undertaken. It is useful to think of an example to illustrate this:

A learning activity or training course which is undertaken over a period of 40 hours and is pitched at Level 2 results in 4 Credits at Level 2 which could stand alone as an accredited award, or be used as evidence towards a larger award such as NVQ 2, assuming the learning was based on the National Occupational Standards (NOS) which form part of that NVQ.

It is not essential that all learning recognised through the CQFW is related to NOS or NVQs, however learning related to clinical competence should, wherever possible, be linked in this way so that workers and services are working towards achieving these standards.
Therefore, all learning submitted into the CQFW will be based on a unit of achievement:

The Unit Model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content (Unit format)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Title</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Level</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Credit Value</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Learning Outcomes</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The learner should be able to:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Volume: 1 Credit = 10 hours Learning Time

Credit can only be assigned and awarded by bodies recognised by the CQFW.

The CQFW became operational in 2006 with a number of Awarding Bodies and Higher Education Institutions recognised to operate within the CQFW. There are also plans to test processes for recognising other learning organisations outside these regulatory frameworks. For those Education and Training Providers wishing to deliver credit-rated programmes they need to be accredited with the relevant Recognised Body.

The implications of the way the CQFW is constructed is that experienced and competent staff, may not need to undertake a full learning programme; there may be an assumption that because they have been completing tasks competently for some time, they may be able to move directly to assessment. The assessor may assume learning has taken place if the worker meets the defined assessment criteria.
Using the CQFW in the NHS in Wales

The NHS in Wales is at the forefront of the use of credit to reward learners and to recognise knowledge and skills. NLIAH has a significant number of credit rated Units, in particular for Health Care Support Workers across the Sciences, Allied Health Professions and Nursing. These Units have been quality checked by the NHS Wales Accredited Learning Panel and have been endorsed for use by NHS Wales and they have been supported for inclusion on the CQFW register of Units.

The full list of Units can be found on the NLIAH Portal which can be accessed via the NLIAH website (www.nliah.wales.nhs.uk)

In addition, credits can be used where internal training courses need to be converted into accredited learning to reward the learners who have successfully completed it. There are significant benefits to this type of activity being credit rated and accredited. It enables the learner to receive:

• Formal recognition of skills and knowledge

• Transferability of skills and knowledge around, across and up and down the career frameworks

Credit is also extremely useful for CPD purposes in that it enables the accrual of formal evidence of assessed skills and knowledge and these credits could be used for the Accreditation of Prior Experience and Learning purposes when looking at further awards and qualifications at the same level.

For people wanting to use their credits for NVQ purposes, the current rules state that the evidence used to pass the unit (portfolios, assignments, reflective logs, witness testimonies etc) can be assessed as evidence towards the underpinning knowledge requirements of an NVQ, providing the unit has been mapped to the appropriate NOS and it is pitched at the same level. This means that relatively inexperienced staff and those who are not able to access NVQs straight away can begin the process of accumulating evidence which will give them both supplementary credit and which will be useful for their NVQ portfolios.

It also provides

• Motivation for staff to develop more

• Reduction in the need for duplication of education and training

• The ability for the worker to use credit accumulation which can enable people to learn in small accredited chunks and which can contribute to larger awards
In addition, while it is not necessary to have qualifications to demonstrate achievement of NHS Knowledge and Skills Framework requirements within a worker’s Personal Development Plan, credit provides solid evidence of achievement and this is supported by the fact that credit rated units used in the NHS in Wales must be mapped to KSF Dimensions and Levels as well as to National Occupational Standards.

To build credit rated units and to enable workers to earn credits for their achievement, a number of rules and standards must be met.

Learning design; the curriculum and structure of the learning, must conform to national accreditation standards which have been set out by the Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales.

The learning must have:

- **Learning Outcomes** – Statements of what a learner can be expected to know, understand and/or do as a result of a learning experience

- **Assessment Criteria** – Descriptions of what a learner is expected to achieve in order to demonstrate that a learning outcome has been met

- **Level** – An indicator of the relative demand, complexity, depth of learning and of learner autonomy derived from generic level descriptors (The programme must be mapped to an education level set by the CQFW and which is consistent with level descriptors shared across the UK credit frameworks)

- **Learning Time** – A measure of the learning substance of a unit or whole qualification. It is related to the amount of time a typical learner might be expected to take to complete all of the learning relevant to the achievement of the learning outcomes.

- **The value of a unit**, based on the learning time attached to the learning outcomes and level. One credit is assigned to learning outcomes for 10 hours of learning time.

Programmes cannot be accepted on to the CQFW register of accredited learning unless it complies with these quality principles.
All health related units, modules, awards and qualifications developed with use of the following design principles:

- Recognition and reward of all learning developed in response to robust intelligence on requirement or rationale

- Flexible and constantly developing units/modules of learning which both stand alone and enable defined packages of learning which are underpinned and mapped by the use of National Workforce Competences.

- A structure that ensures alignments with UK and European educational level descriptors (see appendix 1), Career Frameworks, The NHS Knowledge and Skills Framework (KSF) and country specific level and credit frameworks.

- Packages or units of learning which meet the needs of the employer, learner, education or training provider, professional bodies and regulators from use of ‘rules of combination’ in construction of awards and qualifications.

- A structure that facilitates and promotes the principles of skills escalation by the provision of horizontal and vertical progression routes which also provide the opportunity to study a breadth and/or depth of knowledge and skill as required.

- The reward and recognition of different types of learning (formal, work based, experiential, informal and theoretical)

- Reliable and valid quality assured assessment of learning and flexible continued learning development.

All accredited learning which is used in the NHS in Wales must conform to these principles and standards and consistency with these criteria is checked by the NHS Wales Accredited Learning Panel before being endorsed for use in the NHS in Wales.

Source: Skills for Health
www.skillsforhealth.org.uk

In addition all learning should conform to one or more of the Sector Skills Council Learning Design Principles. The Sector Skills Council for Health is Skills for Health (SfH) (www.skillsforhealth.org.uk). The learning design principles set out by SfH are as follows:

**Recognition and Reward of Learning Framework – design principles**

- A structure that facilitates and promotes the principles of skills escalation by the provision of horizontal and vertical progression routes which also provide the opportunity to study a breadth and/or depth of knowledge and skill as required.

- The reward and recognition of different types of learning (formal, work based, experiential, informal and theoretical)

- Reliable and valid quality assured assessment of learning and flexible continued learning development.

All accredited learning which is used in the NHS in Wales must conform to these principles and standards and consistency with these criteria is checked by the NHS Wales Accredited Learning Panel before being endorsed for use in the NHS in Wales.

Source: Skills for Health
www.skillsforhealth.org.uk
If you require an up-to-date list of Recognised Bodies operating in the CQFW, or a copy of a CQFW Handbook please contact the

CQFW Secretariat
CQFW
Tŷ’r Afon
Bedwas Road
Caerphilly
CF83 8WT

or e-mail info@cqfw.net or visit www.cqfw.net

For any further information on the use of credit in the NHS in Wales please contact the Workforce Development Unit at NLIAH where an advisory service exists to support the development of new units and awards.

For a copy of the Credit Common Accord please visit the workforce Development Unit website for a download www.nliah.wales.nhs.uk