

Proposal to integrate qualifications guides with Qualification Information Profiles (QIPs)

The challenge

We publish UCAS UK Qualifications and International Qualifications Guides each year to provide useful information regarding a wide range of qualifications. However, we now face a number of challenges in ensuring the information they contain is accurate and helpful. The Qualifications Information Review (QIR) showed there is a demand for more consistent and factual information about qualifications. This resulted in the creation of Qualification Information Profiles (QIPs). It is not feasible to update and publish both QIPs and guides each year, as we face significant challenges in trying to ensure the information in the guides alone is updated each year.

A new way of integrating all qualification information

In December 2014, we held a workshop with a range of higher education providers (HEPs) to discuss the guides and QIPs, and to explore whether it would be possible to integrate them into a more efficient tool to ensure qualifications information is accessible, helpful and accurate. This workshop helped devise a plan that would integrate the guides with the QIPs, and provide the information in a digital format that is easy to navigate, efficient to update and more accurate.

Proposed plan

Outlined opposite is our proposal to phase the integration of the guides with the QIPs to stagger the work involved. The proposal involves not updating the guides this year – i.e. for the 2016 admissions cycle – so that we can focus on creating new QIPs and start migrating information in the guides to the QIP format. However, existing QIPs will be updated and any changes to key qualifications will be included in these updates.

Proposed integration from guides to QIPs

Start of transition 2015/16

The UK Qualifications and International Qualifications Guides will continue to be available on ucas.com. Work will start to convert the information in these guides to a digital QIP format. The guides will be gradually phased out but will remain available as legacy documents.

Progress transition 2016/17

We will continue to convert the information in the UK Qualifications and International Qualifications Guides to digital qualification profiles using a uniform format.

Conclude transition 2017/18

Qualification information will at this stage be available in a searchable, digital format, making side-by-side comparisons of qualifications easier.

Benefits of moving towards streamlined, digitised information about qualifications

1. The type of information available about qualifications varies – **information in the QIPs guides is more factual and consistently presented. There is also a clear annual process for updates, so the information is more reliable.**

Qualifications currently in the guides will be migrated and verified when transferred into the QIP format. Awarding organisations and / or regulatory bodies will be responsible for providing accurate, up-to-date content. Only regulated qualifications will be included.

An example of a typical Qualification Information Profile (QIP)

This is the current format of our QIP guides available on ucas.com. Future integration of qualification information will follow this standard template.

Field	Field Name	Information
1.	Qualification family	Extended Project Qualification (EPQ)
2.	Country	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> England Wales
3.	Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The qualification helps students develop and demonstrate their project management skills and provides opportunities for extended writing, both of which are highly valued for progression to higher education and employment. Students can tailor their project to fit their individual needs, choices and aspirations. The outcome of the project can be a design, paper or artefact.
4.	Education context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Extended Project is a stand alone qualification to complement their A level studies. Around 30,000 students take an EPQ each year. The EPQ also forms a mandatory part of the Learning and Teaching Strategy for 2008 and 2010. Qualifications which were introduced in 2008 and 2010.
5.	Awarding organisation(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ADA The Assessment & Qualifications Alliance OCR Oxford, Cambridge and RSA Exam Pearson Pearson Education Ltd (formerly Edexcel) VTCT (formerly Vocational Training Char) WJEC Welsh Joint Education Committee CCEA Council for Curriculum, Examinations & Assessment
6.	Code numbers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6009533/9 AQA Level 3 5007406/1 OCR Level 3 5009337/0 Pearson Edexcel 5004161/7 VTCT Level 3 5004182/4 WJEC Level 3
7.	Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The EPQ is a single component linear qualification. Learners undertake their Extended Project in the context of a subject area. The outcome of the project can be a design, performance, or artefact. The Extended Project of Level 3 provides learners with the opportunity to: understand and use research skills have a significant input to the choice and design of an Extended Project develop and engage their own learning and performance as independent learners develop and apply decision-making and, where appropriate, presentational skills where appropriate, develop as confident learners and apply in their studies develop and apply skills creatively demonstrating initiative and use their learning experiences to support their personal aspirational and career development.
8.	Subject area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The subject content of the Extended Project is not prescribed as it focuses on developing skills. Think skills are summarised in the four learning outcomes: Using resources Managing a project Developing and making a project Reviewing the project Examples of acceptable titles for Extended Projects can be found on awarding body websites.
9.	Level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A, B, C, D, E
10.	Grading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Extended Project consists of one component which is internally assessed by the centre and externally moderated. Whether the outcome of the project is a design, performance, report, dissertation or artefact, written work must be of sufficient length to explore the main and subordinate skills of structuring, using an appropriate style and form of writing. A dissertation should be approximately 5,000 words. For other outcomes the written component should be approximately 1,000 to 2,500 words. Learners will be assessed against four objectives:
11.	Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learners will be assessed against four objectives: Learners will be assessed against four objectives:
12.	Contribution of assessment component to overall grade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each assessment objective is internally assessed and contributes to the overall grade.
13.	Best arrangements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As an internally assessed qualification that suits the centre 120 hours (60 credits) Approximately 2000 hours
14.	Qualification size	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As an internally assessed qualification that suits the centre 120 hours (60 credits) Approximately 2000 hours
15.	UCAS size bands	To be provided in 2014.
16.	UCAS grade bands	To be provided in 2014.
17.	UCAS tariff points	To be provided in 2014.
18.	Key issues for UKHE admissions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback from HEIs suggests that the skills that students develop as part of the EPQ are highly valued. Some HEIs signal this by adjusting their standard A level offer for certain courses to include the EPQ. Others use EPQ results in Confirmation and Clearing to distinguish between students who have the same A level results. A number of HEIs encourage applicants to refer to their project in the personal statement and interviews. EPQs are widely valued by HEIs, making points based offers.
19.	Timing of assessments / results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As internally assessed qualifications, students may complete their EPQ throughout the year.
20.	Current or legacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Current First awarded in 2009 Operational end date is not specified
21.	Certification information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awarding organisations issue certificates as per specifications. Links to awarding organization websites and specifications:
22.	Further information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ADA www.ada.org.uk OCR www.ocr.org.uk Pearson www.pearson.com VTCT www.vtct.org.uk WJEC www.wjec.co.uk

2. There is a need for accurate information about as many qualifications as possible – **the updated QIP guides will provide you with extended qualification coverage.**

The streamlined process will focus resources on the production of accurate, up-to-date QIPs for the greatest possible number of qualifications, providing you with more of the information you may need. HEPs will be encouraged each year to tell us if they would like qualifications to have a QIP, in a similar way to how they would request qualifications are added to the new Tariff.

3. **A new category of information will be provided** for programmes currently provided in the guides that are not qualifications. These include extra-curricular awards and programmes that aren't regulated, like the Duke of Edinburgh Award.

4. Information about qualifications is hard to manage and update – **by digitising the qualification information, we will improve efficiency and accuracy.**

It will be easier to update online qualification information, and the single, consistent QIP format will improve your capability to do side-by-side comparison of qualifications. Only 30% of qualification information in the International Qualifications Guide was updated in 2014, despite months of work requesting updates from different organisations. Managing the updates received was still a lengthy and manual process because the information was presented in a typeset published document.

We would be grateful for your feedback on our proposal. We will be discussing the integration of qualifications information at upcoming regional forums and the Annual Admissions Conference. You can email us at qualsinfo@ucas.ac.uk.