# Qualifications in foreign language competence in the framework of vocational training in the UK

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Deutsch</th>
<th>Español</th>
<th>Français</th>
<th>Italiano</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>B2</strong></td>
<td>Certificate in English – advAantage</td>
<td>Zertifikat Deutsch Plus</td>
<td>Certificat Supérieur de Français</td>
<td>Certificato Superiore d’Italiano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B2 Certificate in English for Business Purposes – advAantage</td>
<td>Zertifikat Deutsch für den Beruf “)”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Certificate in English for Technical Purposes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>B1</strong></td>
<td>Certificate in English</td>
<td>Zertifikat Deutsch “)”</td>
<td>Certificado de Español</td>
<td>Certificat de Français – School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Certificate in English – School</td>
<td>Zertifikat Deutsch für Jugendliche “)”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B1 Certificate in English for Business Purposes – Intermediate</td>
<td>Test Arbeitsplaz Deutsch (A++)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Test Deutsch “)” (A+)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A2</strong></td>
<td>English Benemery Level</td>
<td>Sprachrealsanalyse Deutsch “)” (A++)</td>
<td>Español Nivel elemental</td>
<td>Français Niveau élémentaire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Start Deutsch “)”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Start Deutsch 2 “)”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A1</strong></td>
<td>Start English</td>
<td>Start Deutsch 1 “)”</td>
<td>Start Español</td>
<td>Start Français</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Start Deutsch 1 z “)”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**LIST OF CONTENTS**

I – Introduction
1.1 Definitions 2
1.2 Authorities designated to oversee vocational training 3
1.3 Terminology and acronyms 4
1.4 Bibliography 5

II – Vocational Education and Training in the UK
2.1 Setting standards 6
2.2 Sectors and jobs 6
2.3 NQF and levels 7
2.4 Qualifications and awarding bodies 7
2.5 Delivery 8

III – Vocational Language Qualifications
3.1 The national language standards & vocational qualifications in languages 9
3.2 Free standing qualifications 9
3.3 Programmes including language options bearing credits 10
3.4 Courses/programmes including non-credit bearing language elements 11
3.5 Place of languages in vocational qualifications 11
3.6 Statistical information from CILT 12

III - Conclusion

APPENDICES
A National qualification framework levels descriptors
B National Language Standards – levels and descriptors
I. INTRODUCTION

The British system of vocational education and training is both highly developed and extremely complex. Some parts of it include or can include elements in foreign language competence. There are a number of regulatory authorities, sector skills councils, awarding bodies, occupational and trade organisations involved in funding and inspecting the various public and private providers and which are also responsible for the award of qualifications at national level.

A national qualifications framework covers all accredited qualifications, including vocational qualifications. A large number of employment sectors and an even larger one of specific jobs are concerned. Vocational training may be delivered (and competences assessed and certified) both within teaching and training institutions and at work.

This report deals with the accreditation of skills in modern foreign languages for work in specific sectors and jobs. It only examines non-native languages and will therefore not deal with English, Welsh or Irish, which, although they represent a large part of all foreign/second language qualifications for work in the UK, are deemed for the purpose of this study to be native languages. It will also confine the study to the first three levels of qualifications (below Higher Education).

The key features of the UK systems are:

- An strong involvement of the various sectors of industry in the planning of training
- Qualifications based on occupational standards set by industry and assessing skills as well as knowledge
- Training and education programmes catering for all ages and levels from age 14 to postgraduate studies and work-based learning
- Six levels of qualifications grouped in a national framework

1.1 Definitions

It will be useful to state at the outset that there is not ONE single system of education/qualifications in the UK. We have to differentiate between England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland. This creates a multiplication of the number of organisations, agencies and awarding bodies. Although most of the principles and schemes will in some cases be the same and in others similar, some noticeable differences may also be observed between them. These differences, if significant, will be pointed out in this report, others will not in order to simplify a very complex picture.

All main elements of this report will therefore be based on the system in place in ENGLAND.

Most of the vocational training programmes are delivered in colleges. These establishments cater for 16-19 yr old students and adult learners. Most of the courses or programmes are at levels 1 to 3 and this sector of education is labelled as Further Education (between Secondary schools/colleges and Higher Education establishments such as universities or Higher Education establishments which mostly deliver programmes at levels 3, 4 and 5).

There are qualifications in most subject areas, including foreign languages for work.
1.2 Authorities designated to oversee vocational training

- The regulatory authority in England is the **Quality and Curriculum Authority (QCA)**, which was set up in 1997 (Section 24 of the Education Act). QCA regulates all external qualifications. It was set up by the government to monitor standards of education and training in England. It is responsible for the framework and accreditation of school, college and work-based qualifications. In this capacity, it monitors the activities of all awarding bodies. The equivalent bodies in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are respectively: SQA (Scottish Qualifications Authority), ACCAC (Qualifications, Curriculum and Assessment Authority for Wales) and CCEA (Northern Ireland Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessments).

- The **Learning and Skills Council** (LSC), formed in 2001, is a non-departmental public body responsible for further education and training for people over the age of 16 in England. It is responsible for planning and funding all vocational education and training in England other than university provision. It is answerable to Parliament and the Secretary of State for Education. Its annual budget in 2006/07 was £10.4 billion. Its remit is to ensure that by 2010, all young people and adults possess knowledge and skills at level 2 and are therefore a competitive workforce. It works with the Employment Service, the Sectors Skills Council, colleges and community groups and any other interested party.

There are specific bodies responsible for the allocation of funds for further education in Scotland (the Scottish Further Education Funding Council) and the Department of Education in Northern Ireland.

- **Lifelong Learning UK** (LLUK) is responsible for work-based learning, amongst other responsibilities. It is a registered charity.

- The **Sector Skills Councils** (SSCs) and the **Sector Skills Development Agency** (SSDA) are independent, UK wide organisations, which enable employers to be involved in the planning and delivery of skills for work. They also include members from trade unions, professional bodies and other stakeholders in their sector. They replaced, in 2002, a multi-layered system of industry led training organisation to form a unified network. One of their main tasks is to define the occupational skills for all key sectors in order to develop national standards. The Agency funds, supports and monitors the SSCs across the country.

- The above organisations work with a number of other partners, establishing connections between training providers, employers, awarding bodies, the government, inspectorates etc. Some of these are listed below:
  - The Association of Learning Providers (ALP)
  - The National Federation for Enterprise Agencies (nfea)
  - The Association of Colleges (AoC)
  - Business Link – providers of practical advice for Business
  - Department for Education and Skills (DfES) – government department
  - Regional development Agencies – in England
  - Learn Direct – network of 2,000 on-line learning centres across the UK
- The Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI)
- OFSTED non-ministerial government department inspecting education and training for ages 16 to 19 in schools and colleges.

### 1.3 Terminology and acronyms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABC awards</td>
<td>The Awarding Body Consortium - Awarding body approved by QCA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACCAC</td>
<td>Advisory body to the National Assembly for Wales on all aspects of curriculum, examinations, assessment and vocational qualifications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALI</td>
<td>Adult Learning Inspectorate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BTEC</td>
<td>Vocational qualifications offered by Edexcel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEF</td>
<td>Common European Framework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CILT</td>
<td>National Centre for languages in the UK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City &amp; Guilds</td>
<td>QCA recognised awarding body</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DELLs</td>
<td>Department for Education and Life-long Learning &amp; Skills – Wales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DfES</td>
<td>Department for Education and Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EAL</td>
<td>Awarding body of engineering National and Scottish vocational qualifications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edexcel</td>
<td>QCA recognised awarding body</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELWA</td>
<td>National Council for Education and training in Wales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ETI</td>
<td>Education and training inspectorate (Northern Ireland)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FE</td>
<td>Further Education (post 16 – vocational – usually Colleges)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GCSE</td>
<td>General Certificate of Secondary Education (non-vocational)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GCE</td>
<td>General Certificate of Education (non-vocational) = Advanced levels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GNVQ</td>
<td>General National Vocational Qualification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National, First diplomas</td>
<td>GNVQ qualification levels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HAB</td>
<td>Hospitality Awarding Body (UK)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LCCI</td>
<td>Awarding body run by the London Chamber of Commerce and Industry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learn direct</td>
<td>e-learning across the UK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LLUK</td>
<td>Lifelong Learning UK (registered charity)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSC</td>
<td>Learning &amp; Skills Council (p 2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NARIC</td>
<td>National Agency Recognition Information Centre for the Dfes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCET</td>
<td>National Council for Education and Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCFE</td>
<td>QCA recognised awarding body for vocational qualifications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCVQ</td>
<td>National Council for Vocational Qualifications (merged with SCAA in 1997 to become QCA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOS</td>
<td>National Occupational Standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NQF</td>
<td>National Qualifications Framework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NTOs</td>
<td>National Training Organisations (now part of SSCs – since 2002)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSA</td>
<td>National Skills Academy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NVQ/SVQ</td>
<td>National Vocational Qualifications/Scottish Vocational Qualifications</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
OCR | QCA recognised awarding body
---|---
Ofsted | Schools and colleges inspectorate
QCA | Qualification and Curriculum Authority
SCCA | School Curriculum and Assessment Authority (see NCVQ)
SQA | Scottish Qualifications Agency
SSCs | Sector Skills Councils
SSDA | Sector Skills Development Agency
SVQ | Scottish Vocational Qualifications
VRQ | Vocationally Related Qualification
UKNRP | UK National Reference Point for national Qualifications – central information point – national agency representing the UK in the EU as reference point for vocational qualifications in a member state.
UKRRLP | Register of providers in the UK

1.4 Bibliography and useful links

*Vocational Qualifications in the UK* published by the Department for Education & Skills (2002)

The UK National reference Point for Vocational Qualifications – [www.uknrp.org.uk](http://www.uknrp.org.uk/)
QCA’s database of accredited qualifications – [www.openquals.org.uk](http://www.openquals.org.uk/)
[http://www.britishcouncil.org/usa-education-uk-system-higher-education-about.htm](http://www.britishcouncil.org/usa-education-uk-system-higher-education-about.htm)
Scottish qualifications – [www.sqa.or.uk](http://www.sqa.or.uk)
Information for students – [http://www.ukstudentlife.com](http://www.ukstudentlife.com)
ALI – [www.ali.gov.uk](http://www.ali.gov.uk)
QCA – [www.qca.org.uk](http://www.qca.org.uk)
SSDA – [www.ssda.org.uk](http://www.ssda.org.uk)
Edexcel – [www.edexcel.org.uk](http://www.edexcel.org.uk)
City & Guilds – [www.city-and-guids.co.uk](http://www.city-and-guids.co.uk)
Cambridge Skills and careers award – [www.cie.org.uk](http://www.cie.org.uk)
LCCI – [www.lccieb.org.uk](http://www.lccieb.org.uk)
EAL – [www.eal.org.uk](http://www.eal.org.uk)
Fforwm – [http://www.fforwm.ac.uk](http://www.fforwm.ac.uk)
Learn through Work – [www.learningtroughwork.co.uk](http://www.learningtroughwork.co.uk)
DFES – [www.dfes-uk.co.uk](http://www.dfes-uk.co.uk)
Vocational Training Charitable Trust – [www.atct.org.uk](http://www.atct.org.uk)
Vocational Training Services – [www.vts.ac.uk](http://www.vts.ac.uk)
CILT – [www.cilt.org.uk](http://www.cilt.org.uk)
ALL – Association for Language Learning – [www.all-languages.org.uk](http://www.all-languages.org.uk)
II. VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN ENGLAND

2.1  Setting standards

The SSCs are employers’ organisations and draw on the expertise of all bodies or interested parties in each sector of employment. They aim to improve productivity by improving the skills of the workforce and planning for skills developments that will be necessary in the future. To this effect, they work towards the creation or evolution of apprenticeship schemes and the setting of national occupational standards. In order to set the standards, they have to define the key occupational skills for each sector. These identified skills form the basis of training packages and are used as evaluation criteria for the award of qualifications.

The national assessment system is controlled by the QCA, which also monitors the activities of all awarding bodies. Two inspectorates verify that standards in vocational education and training are consistently high. Ali is responsible for all publicly funded learning and training post 19, and work-based training for over 16s. Ofsted is responsible for inspecting schools and college delivering education and training post 16.

The National Occupational Standards state the skills, knowledge and understanding required in order to perform a job. They exist for most occupational areas, including specialist language professions such as translation and interpreting. They form the basis of the National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) and vocationally related Qualifications (VRQs) – SVQs in Scotland. They define what employees must be able to do or must know to carry out the activities required by their jobs; they detail what is expected of people working at different levels within the sector.

2.2  Sectors and jobs

15 main sectors of activities have been identified:
1. Health, public services and care
2. Sciences and mathematics
3. Agriculture, horticulture and animal care
4. Engineering and technologies
5. Construction, planning and the built environment
6. ICT
7. Retail and commerce
8. Leisure, travel and tourism
9. Arts, media and publishing
10. History, philosophy and theology
11. Social sciences
12. Languages, literature and culture
13. Education and training
14. Life and work
15. Business, administration and law

The list of jobs covered is extensive (around 1,000) and goes from abattoir Operative (first on the list) to yoga teacher, youth community officer and zoo keeper (last three) – all letters of the alphabet are covered and all fields of activities from sheriff to EU Official, embalmer and lecturer, even footballer, astronaut, hypnotherapist, water jetter and cake decorator.
2.3 National qualification framework and levels of qualifications

QCA has created a National Qualifications Framework (NQF) for ALL qualifications in England. This provides levels at which qualifications are identified. Since September 2004, there have been 9 levels (from entry level to level 8). National Vocational Qualifications are based on the NOSs and graded on the NQF for accreditation. Each level has descriptors (see appendix A). This report deals only with the first three levels.

The levels are described below:

Level 1: can do a range of routine tasks (semi-skilled occupations)

Level 2: can work on one’s own and take responsibilities and carry out more complicated work procedures (skilled occupations)

Level 3: can carry out complicated tasks, take responsibilities and guide the work of other people (technician/craft/supervisory occupations).

2.4 Qualifications and awarding bodies

2.4.1 Qualifications

At levels entry to level 3, the following qualifications are offered in England, Wales and Northern Ireland:

- BTEC First Diploma (level 2)
- BTEC National certificates/Diplomas (levels 1, 2 & 3)
- City & Guilds Vocational qualifications (entry, levels 1, 2 & 3)
- Foundation degrees (level 3)
- GCEs (vocational - level 3 – have just replaced VCEs or Vocational A levels)
- LCCI Board Vocational qualifications (levels 1, 2 & 3)
- Modern Apprenticeships
- National Vocational qualifications (NVQs)
- OCR vocational qualifications
- Vices (vocational GCSEs)

The majority of these qualifications are awarded through a process of evidence through which the candidates demonstrate their competences for the job against the national criteria. They are assessed under workplace conditions (these may be realistically simulated) by qualified assessors.

Modern apprenticeships are a part of the national work-based scheme and use NVQs. They are offered at two levels: foundation (leading to NVQ/SVQ level 2) and advanced (leading to NVQ/SVQ level 3 and a technical certificate). They include education and training.

Vocational GCEs are now offered in applied subjects: engineering, medias, performing arts, leisure studies, art & design, business, health and social care, applied ICT and travel & tourism.

Many private schools/colleges and Charitable Trusts provide qualifications, which may or may not be recognised by the QCF and by their professional bodies. Reed secretarial College for instance has courses leading to certificates and Diplomas in secretarial studies which are recognised by IQPS (Institute for Professional
Secretaries), Systems and Network Training LTD has courses in hairdressing accredited by the “London Internet Exchange”, Vocational Training Services offers accredited courses in care and childcare, the Vocational Training Charitable Trust also in technology, to quote but a few examples.

2.4.2 Awarding bodies

150 awarding bodies are listed by Uknrp. These include organisations specialising in examinations and accreditation. The most important ones are Edexcel, OCR, LCCI, Cambridge International examinations, City and Guilds, etc (plus SQA and the Welsh Joint Education Committee).

- Edexcel operate in 105 countries and offer BTEC qualifications and vocational GCEs.
- City & Guilds offer work-related qualifications in many areas of industry and commerce. These include NVQs and examination based (Pitman) qualifications in office administration and accountancy.
- OCR offers NVQs and vocational GCSEs.
- The LCCI has 8,000 centres in 86 countries and deals mainly with business and commercial qualifications.

Some awarding bodies are responsible for qualifications in a specific sector. The main ones are:

- The Hospitality Awarding Body (HAB)
- The Association of Accounting Technicians (AAT)
- The Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA°)

There are many others and they are extremely diverse (from the Bakery Training Council to the British Horse Society, the British Institute of Inn-keeping, the Corrugated Packaging Association, the Ministry of Defence, Cultural Heritage, the Guild of Cleaners and Launderers, the Institute of Management, the Photo Imaging NTO etc).

These awarding bodies cater for the whole range of work activities appearing on the list.

2.5 Delivery of education and training

Vocational education and training starts in vocational schools at age 14. The most common courses lead to examination-based qualifications (BTEC first or National diplomas).

The Further Education sector is the largest providers of vocational education and training in the UK. In England, two third of all 16-19 yr old attend Colleges of FE rather than school (700,000), the figure in Wales is 80%. There are over 296 colleges of FE in the UK. They offer full-time, part-time, evening, work-based and e-learning courses or programmes of courses to about 4 million students in England alone (school-leavers and adults). Colleges deliver about 6 million qualifications each year and 17,000 different qualifications. Up to level 3, only about half the awards – approximately 55% - fall under the National Qualifications Framework (this includes GCSEs and GCEs, most of which are general rather then vocational). Colleges work with employers to provide Modern apprenticeships.

There are also a vast number of private providers. Many of those offer courses leading to NVQs or VRQs. They include private schools and colleges (notably in specific fields such as secretarial colleges or health care professions), employers or
professional associations running their own training schemes or offer work-based qualifications.

III. VOCATIONAL LANGUAGE QUALIFICATIONS

3.1 National Language Standards and Vocational Qualifications in Languages

The National Language Standards were first published in 1993. The latest version dates from 2005. They were devised in collaboration with Sector Skills Councils, employers and professional bodies. They set the UK occupational standards for languages in the workplace. They apply to all languages and all sectors. They cover four linguistic skills at the lower levels (listening, speaking, reading and writing), plus translating at levels 4 and above. Each skill is assessed separately. They are recognised by FE, HE and employers and are conform to the National Framework. They can be customised to each job where needed.

The national standards are used by awarding bodies when developing language units, language NVQs or VRQs for specific sectors or jobs. There are five levels.

3.2 Free-standing qualifications

Several awarding bodies offer NVQs or VRQs in various languages at levels 1 to 4:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Awarding Body</th>
<th>Qualification</th>
<th>Language(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABC</td>
<td>VRQ - entry + levels 1 &amp; 2</td>
<td>French, German, Italian, Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City &amp; Guilds</td>
<td>NVQ - levels 1 &amp; 2</td>
<td>Chinese, Italian, Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edexcel</td>
<td>NVQ - entry + levels 1 to 3</td>
<td>French, German, Arabic, Chinese, Italian, Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICAAEP</td>
<td>NVQ - level 1</td>
<td>Chinese for business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LCCI</td>
<td>FLAW - levels 1 to 3</td>
<td>various languages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCFE</td>
<td>VRQ - levels 1 &amp; 2</td>
<td>Certificate in Foreign Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOCN</td>
<td>NVQ - levels 1 &amp; 2</td>
<td>Certificate in language skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OCR</td>
<td>NVQ - levels 1 to 4</td>
<td>French, German, Italian, and Spanish in work contexts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>VRQ - entry + levels 1 to 4</td>
<td>Certificate in business Language competence in French, German, Italian &amp; Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>VRQ - entry as above</td>
<td>Japanese and Russian</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ABC will accept any language, provided that the centre can prove that they have adequate provision to teach that language. The LLCI FLAW scheme (Foreign Languages at Work) can be offered as free standing or be attached to another FE or HE qualification. Languages offered are usually French, German, Italian, Japanese and Spanish. The NCFE Certificate in Foreign Language has been designed for the Business and Leisure sectors. It includes 4 compulsory fields of study: Introducing oneself, carry out financial transactions, travel, make arrangements by telephone. There are 4
extra optional elements: eating out, finding a venue, organising accommodation and planning for free time. Progression allows to progress from level 1 to level 2 or to level 2 NVQ language units or to GCSE in languages.

Altogether, between all the examination boards, at entry level, there are 5 qualifications possible in the following languages: Arabic, Chinese, Czech, Danish, Dutch, French, German, Greek, Gujarati, Hindi, Italian, Japanese, Punjabi, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Somali, Spanish, Swedish, Tamil and Turkish.

At level 1, 7 qualifications are offered in the languages listed above.

At level 2, there are 5 qualifications.

At level 3, there are 4 qualifications.

The Institute of Linguists offers a certificate in Bilingual skills, which, although not described as vocational is mainly aimed at people using languages in their work/professional lives. They also cover other languages than those listed above: Albanian, Amharic, Bulgarian, Cantonese, Croatian, Dari, Estonian, Hungarian, Kiswahili, Kurdish, Latvian, Lithuanian, Romanian, Serbian, Slovak, Slovene, Somali, Thai, Vietnamese (some with regional variations as required).

3.3 Credit-bearing language options on programmes or courses

A number of programmes include one or several languages on their curriculum. This may be compulsory but more generally is offered as option or additional unit. This is notably the case on BTEC programmes. In those cases, the language module is credited at the right level (1,2 or 3) like all other components of the programme. Each institution makes the choice of language(s) and level(s) when designing its programme. When language modules are part of the programme, they will appear on the qualification profile of the student.

Language modules on BTEC programmes are common in some subjects, such as Business, Tourism and Customer care. They occur occasionally on other programmes such as Hospitality and Catering, Sports & Leisure. Very rarely, one comes across their existence on Hairdressing or Construction National Diplomas. In the vast majority of other cases, they are never offered, although some 16 to 19 yr old students may be able to study a language in parallel to their vocational programme (GCSE usually). Specific vocational qualifications can include a larger or smaller foreign language element. This applies particularly to Business, Office Management or Administration programmes and especially if offered as “international” or “bilingual” programmes. Students taking Vocational GSCEs or vocational GCEs in schools or colleges may of course study languages as well.

Looking specifically at language provision for front-line staff in customer care, it was found that the provision is patchy. Qualifications for such jobs are at levels 2 (mostly) or 3. There is a choice of NVQs and BTEC qualifications. A survey of some colleges offering NVQs (West Thames, Gateshead, the COOP, Rochdale Metropolitan, Institute of Customers Services, SCARF, Westnotts etc) showed that no language module was advertised in the programme literature or syllabuses. However, there is a unit entitled “Welcoming International Visitors” on the BTEC certificate/diploma in customer care at level 2/3 and the four colleges offering this programme in Kent did include the language element in their programme. Language courses are also offered
at many other colleges (Nottingham College, the College of the Arts were consulted as sample).

3.4 Courses/programmes including non-credit bearing language components

Programmes like Learn Direct or Adult Education Centre offer vocational language modules at levels 1 to 3, but these are mostly non-credit-bearing. There is evidence of quite a large take-up from adult-learners but no exact figure could be obtained.

Language studies on Tourism or Business courses are often delivered as optional extras and do not bring separate accreditation, although they may be included in the overall assessment for the course of study.

3.5 Place of language on vocational training programmes

Until recently, schools and colleges offered GNVQs to 16-19yr old students. These included language components if required. They have been phased out and will finish in 2008, presumably to be replaced by Vocational GCSEs and GCEs. Students will be able to take general GCSEs and GCEs or presumably vocational GCSEs and GCEs alongside other subjects.

The list of awarding bodies and qualifications offered above is quite limited and revealing of the limited interest and take up for languages across the country, where 80% of all school attendants have stopped studying any foreign language by age 16.

A more specific study of some of the awarding bodies gave some results which confirm the above.

City & Guilds are the largest providers of vocational qualifications, covering 27 sectors and sub-sectors from advice & counselling to travel & tourism. We were unable to find any qualification offered by that awarding body including a foreign language component. For instance Travel & Tourism offered at levels 1 to 4, with a choice at level 3 of 37 possible units, each leading to a certificate has not a single language unit. However HAB, which is linked to C&G does offer VRQs on short courses in languages and there are free-standing language NVQs.

LCCIB claim that they offer French, German, and Spanish for Business in line with both CEF and British National Standards for Languages, but no qualifications are described and an investigation into the examinations in Business Administration presented no module in any foreign language. However, it is possible to enter for their FLAW diplomas separately. The same can said of NCFE.

CAL in Scotland has no languages on the list of topics in Business or Administration for instance.

The research undertaken has proved that it is very difficult to find any offer of language courses from the published material on vocational courses from individual establishments. There is no doubt that many offer languages but there are certainly very few who actively publicise the fact!

There is also some difficulty in finding accurate and up-to-date information. For instance, it is somewhat puzzling that NVQs in languages do not figure on the current list of NVQ accreditations published by Edexcel, whilst they are listed by CILT.
3.6 Language Trends 2006 – CILT Survey

In 2006, CILT conducted a survey of the language provision on Vocational courses in FE Colleges in the UK. The survey covered all 296 colleges and included all parts of the UK. The full report can be found on the CILT Website (http://www.cilt.org.uk) and are particularly relevant to this report.

Only 44% of colleges replied to the survey. This does not mean that others don’t offer languages but is an indicator. The main findings from those who completed the questionnaire are as follows:

- Out of 139 colleges, 60 offer vocational language courses. 50 used to but no longer do so. Those courses are on BTEC first and national diplomas (73%), on NVQ programmes (18%) or on higher national diplomas/certificates (25%).
- Most of them are in Spanish (92%) and French (45%). A few colleges offer Italian and German, no other language is represented.
- Virtually all the courses are on Travel & Tourism programmes, with only 22% of business courses offering this option, 10% of hospitality and catering, 7% of fashion programmes and virtually no other area of study.
- Half the qualifications are NVQs language units, but 20% offer OCN, 13% ABC and 10% OCR – CBLC. Only 2 courses were not accredited, although 13% stated “other” non-disclosed accreditations.
- The vast majority of qualifications are at level 1 (76%), but 43% are at entry level and 38% at level 2. Level 3 represents only 9%.
- It is also interesting to note that 32% of respondents expected an increase of take-up in 2006/07, whilst 42% anticipated a decrease. The main reasons cited for the decrease were funding, low level of interest from students and staffing difficulties. Increases would be due to new programmes being offered or increase in uptake from students.
- Those colleges which had interrupted their provision altogether gave the following reasons: low interest from students (33%), lack of support for languages in the establishment (26%), reduction in hours allocated on vocational programmes (26%), funding (25%), poor results (11%) and staff restructuring (8%).

IV. CONCLUSION

Vocational education and training in Britain are both well-established and undergoing many changes.

On the one hand, the national framework for qualifications has standardised most qualifications on offer, including qualifications in languages for vocational purposes. All languages and sectors are potentially covered and units can be stand alone or attached to specific vocational qualifications for a sector or a job. Qualifications are available from the various awarding bodies at all levels to level 3.

On the other hand, the provision of vocational training is becoming more diverse and it is more or less impossible to have a complete picture. The government has set a target to increase the number of adults skilled at level 2 (GCSE or equivalent) by 20% by 2020. In a speech made on 30th March 2007, the Prime Minister talked about “the need to personalise the provision and funding of vocational qualifications”. In the same speech, he indicated that in-house training schemes would be given the green light to companies such as Tesco, British Airways or others to run and accredit their own training. According to the LSC, “more than 4 million people of working age
in England still have no qualifications and lack basic skills. We want to change this and have promised everyone free learning to achieve their first level 2 qualification, with support focused on vocational skills”. It is however doubtful if foreign language skills will be considered to be essential skills.

Vocational language qualifications are currently widely available if not plentiful but their take-up in 2006 was limited to 1,860 learners in FE colleges for the whole of the UK. This represents about 1% of students enrolled on vocational programmes in those colleges. Moreover, these qualifications have traditionally been offered as an optional extra. In the current financial climate, this makes them even more vulnerable as there is evidence of long-term decline over the past 15 years. There is therefore a risk that awarding bodies start reviewing the viability of the qualifications they offer in languages.

Meanwhile, many adults are regularly frustrated when they need language skills for work and have great difficulty in finding a suitable provider and/or getting recognition/accreditation for their study and it is hard at the moment to foresee dramatic changes in the situation or much encouragement for language study at the highest level. The Welsh Education Authority has recently decided to make the study of one foreign language compulsory for the Welsh baccalaureate but vocational language courses/qualifications will probably remain optional in virtually all cases.
Appendices

http://www.cilt.org.uk/standards/languages.htm
The structure of the NQF

NQF levels

Each accredited qualification has an NQF level. If qualifications share the same level this means that they are broadly similar in terms of the demand they place on the learner. However, qualifications at the same level can still be very different in terms of content and duration.

The following table shows a selection of individual qualifications and how they appear in the current NQF. It also highlights how these more precise levels broadly compare to the Framework for Higher Education Qualification (FHEQ) levels.

We have selected examples of qualifications that were previously at levels 4 to 5 but now have more precise levels. For a full list of all accredited qualifications in the NQF please visit NDAQ, QCA's freely searchable website.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National Qualifications Framework (NQF)</th>
<th>Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Previous levels (Examples)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Current levels (Examples)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 5 NVQ in Construction</td>
<td>Level 8 Specialist awards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 5 Diploma in Translation</td>
<td>Level 7 Diploma in Translation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 4 National Diploma in Professional Production Skills</td>
<td>Level 6 National Diploma in Professional Production Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 4 BTEC Higher National Diploma in 3D Design</td>
<td>Level 5 BTEC Higher National Diploma in 3D Design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 4 Certificate in Early Years Practice</td>
<td>Level 4 Certificate in Early Years Practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 3 NVQ in Aeronautical Engineering A levels</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 3 Certificate in Small Animal Care</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Level 2 | Level 2 Diploma for Beauty Specialists  
|        | Level 2 NVQ in Agricultural Crop Production  
|        | GCSEs Grades A*-C  
| Level 1 | Level 1 Certificate in Motor Vehicle Studies  
|        | Level 1 NVQ in Bakery  
|        | GCSEs Grades D-G  
| Entry level | Entry Level Certificate in Adult Literacy |

*Revised levels are not currently being implemented for NVQs and a small number of related qualifications. For current information please refer to NDAQ.

**Framework for Higher Education Qualifications**


This framework applies to degrees, diplomas, certificates and other academic awards (other than honorary degrees and higher doctorates) granted by a university or higher education institute.

Broad comparisons with NQF levels can be seen in the table above. For further details, visit the QAA website. A link to this website is available from this page.

**Framework for Achievement**

The changes to the NQF support the Framework for Achievement (FfA), the new and forward-looking framework that will encompass a much wider range of achievements. For more information, visit the FfA page on the QCA website, which can be accessed from this page.