

Top Tips for the QCF

Writing assessment criteria

Assessment criteria say how the learning outcomes will be achieved and reflect the level of difficulty in achieving them. There are nine levels and these are summarised in the QCF Level Descriptors (see the Ofqual website below).

Each assessment criterion should:

- relate to the learning outcome in language that is consistent with it
- be measurable or observable
- be succinct enough to avoid an undue assessment burden
- be sufficiently detailed to enable the assessment judgement to be made
- be capable of assessment through different methods, in a variety of settings
- be written in the third person
- not specify assessment methods or instruments of assessment (e.g. *'Write a report on government policy for'* includes a specific assessment method, whereas *'Explain government policy for'* does not)

Can the same assessment criteria be used at different levels?

- No. The language used in the assessment criteria should be appropriate to the level assigned to the unit and will vary at each level
- The language used must be suitable to the QCF level descriptors for the given level

What number of assessment criteria should be used?

- At least one assessment criterion is needed for each learning outcome, but usually you will need more so there is enough information for the assessor to make a judgement.
- If there is only one criterion, it may be possible to incorporate it into another learning outcome in the unit
- There is no regulatory limit on the number of assessment criteria. Too many it could mean an undue burden on the assessor and candidate. So aim for the minimum that will allow an assessor to judge whether a learning outcome has been achieved

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Tips on sentence construction when writing assessment criteria

Try to avoid

- multiple clauses as they can be confusing or create ambiguity
- verbs that are difficult to observe or measure (such as understand, know, demonstrate, recognise or perform)
- using qualifiers such as accurately or effectively as they are subjective and not easily measured
- use of abbreviations or acronyms, without explanation

and

- Check that each statement is explicit, unambiguous and capable of assessment (for example, consider how the following statement might be interpreted “Perform how to communicate effectively”

What are the potential pitfalls to look out for?

An assessment criterion

- includes content that does not relate to the learning outcome
- repeats the learning outcome using the same or very similar language
- A criterion is so detailed that it ‘gives away’ or implies the answer for the learner
- is very detailed and/or complex resulting in an undue burden of assessment for both learner and assessor
- is so vague and ambiguous that the learner could perform badly and still achieve the learning outcome
- consists of information which has been cut and pasted from another source, such as a previous qualification, National Occupational Standard or training manual, and often does not meet QCF regulatory requirements
- refers to specific legislation, policies or procedures - if they were to be updated, renamed or withdrawn, the unit would become out of date

Getting help

Visit the QCDA website to access

- Guidance materials <http://www.qcda.gov.uk/24.aspx>
- An interactive guide <http://www.qcda.gov.uk/qualifications/qcf/4799.aspx>
- The Ofqual website <http://www.ofqual.gov.uk/> will give you the latest on the regulatory arrangements for units and qualifications within the QCF
- The Federation of Awarding Bodies (<http://www.awarding.org.uk/public/qcf-capacity-building>) also provides information and contact details of people who can help.



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Contact us at, 0845 226 1712, info@stratagia.co.uk to discuss how we can help you.