

# Chief Verifier Report

**QCF Level 3 Award in Employment Related Services**  
**QCF Level 3 Certificate in Employment Related Services**  
**QCF Level 3 Diploma in Employment Related Services**

**2011/2012**

**England and Wales**

**September 2012**

## **REPORT FOR PUBLICATION**

### **1 The qualifications and standards**

These qualifications were launched by OCR in May 2012.

All the qualifications follow the standard verified model, ie candidates have to provide a portfolio of evidence that meets the qualification standards. The evidence is assessed in the centre by occupationally competent and qualified centre staff, internally quality assured by occupationally knowledgeable and qualified centre staff and then externally quality assured by OCR external verifiers.

There are two specialist units within the suite - Understanding the Employment Related Services Sector and Sustaining an Employment Outcome, both at Level 3. The other units are from a range of existing qualifications, including Advice and Guidance, Customer Service, Sales, Contact Centre Operations, Learning and Development, Management and Business Administration.

The Employment Related Services sector includes organisations and individuals whose aim is to support the long-term unemployed into sustainable employment. It is supported by the current Government's Work Programme agenda, often referred to as "Welfare to Work". The qualifications are aimed specifically at those individuals (Personal Advisors, Job Coaches and Employment Trainers) working within the sector who support clients in gaining sustainable employment. Current provision in the form of NVQs in Information, Advice and Guidance and Career Guidance (amongst others) is not considered appropriate for PAs in the ERS sector.

The Level 3 Diploma has been included within the Advanced Level Apprenticeship in Employment Related Services.

Candidates have the opportunity to progress within the suite of qualifications. For example, a candidate achieving the Level 3 Award, may wish to progress horizontally onto the Level 3 Certificate or Diploma, or vertically onto a Level 4 qualification. Alternatively, candidates may wish to progress onto other OCR qualifications in areas such as generic Advice and Guidance, Career Information, Advice Guidance and Development, Learning and Development or Management.

## 2 Sector Developments

In July 2012 the Institute of Employability Professionals (IEP) was launched together with its website <http://www.iemployability.org/> and the registration of their first members.

People have already registered for the qualifications with EDI and have achieved Certificates and Diplomas. During the year the IEP began work on the Higher Apprenticeship (Level 4).

This shows that there is obvious interest in the sector for the qualifications and OCR should see this as an opportunity to market the qualifications with its centres which are already offering the qualifications in Advice and Guidance and Career Information, Advice, Guidance and Development.

The IEP is designed as an individual membership body with entry at various levels to suit levels of experience and qualification, affiliate, associate, members and fellow. Members may come from any sector where their role involves working with unemployed people and their communities.

The IEP has been highly supported by sector employers. Some of these have elected to become Founder Patrons to demonstrate their on-going commitment to professional standards for their staff and are actively working with IEP to bring their staff teams into membership. IEP has also worked closely with the Careers Professional Alliance to ensure that IEP standards and theirs are closely aligned and create transferable ladders of career progression.

In an article in FE News June 2012 *Janette Faherty OBE* who is chair of the Institute of Employability Professionals said, *What has been interesting is the enthusiasm from front line staff, those working with customers in this hostile economic situation and following upheaval in contracts and jobs. As we talk directly to them they see the Institute as raising perception of the important work they do, instilling pride and improving performance. They are keen to offer mentoring to new recruits and are seeking mentoring opportunities through the Institute to develop their career.*

The Register for Career Development Professionals was launched by the Careers Profession Alliance (CPA) on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2012. The CPA has had conversations with personnel from IEP and although they are separate organisations it is hoped that any staff working in Employment Related Services will see that as well as progressing in their own sector their qualifications could be used to transfer to the career development sector and to then take appropriate qualifications to achieve the Level 6 qualification requirement for entry to the Register of Career Development Professionals.

Case Studies on the CPA site <https://www.cparegister.org/> show how people can progress from one level of the Career Information, Advice, Guidance and Development qualifications to another and also from other qualifications such as the new ones in Employment Related Services. Over time, this may lead to more take up of both the ERS qualifications and the CIAGD ones.

The definition of the career development sector is now much broader than in the past. The *Blueprint for Register of Career Development Professionals and Career Progression Framework* published in April 2012 provides the following definition,

*Career development professionals provide activities and services which assist individuals or organisations seeking support to affect a wide range of career transitions. These may be associated with life and career stages, including the development of the career ideas of young people. Contexts include educational choices, work experience and internships, labour market entry, skills and vocational training, job search, sector/management level change, promotion or transfer, redundancy, entrepreneurial business development, working identity change, disability and stress related career development issues, adjustments to life-work balance, returners to the labour market, portfolio working and pre-retirement choices.*

*Such activities and services may be delivered in schools, universities, colleges, training organisations, **public employment services**, the workplace, community or voluntary sector and the private sector. They may be provided on an individual or group basis and may be face-to-face or at a distance (including help-lines and web-based services). They include the provision of information, ideas, tools and resources (verbal, printed, web-based or other forms), administration of assessment and self-assessment tools, career guidance interviews, career education programmes, career coaching, taster programmes, work search programmes, outplacement, redundancy and transition services, retention and talent management reviews, career progression or promotion, training, or other forms of career development-related consultancy, research and professional development.*

From this definition it can be seen that there is scope for those working in Employment Related Services to be included within the definition of the Career Development sector.

The Work Programme is a major new payment-for-results welfare-to-work programme that launched throughout Great Britain in June 2011. Along with the Universal Credit benefit reforms, it is central to the Coalition Government's ambitious programme of welfare reform. The Work Programme is being delivered by a range of private, public and voluntary sector organisations which are supporting people who are at risk of becoming long-term unemployed to find work. It replaces previous programmes such as the New Deals, Employment Zones and Flexible New Deal and represents a long-term investment by government and its partners in seeking to help more people into lasting work. The programme design combines strong long-term incentives with freedom for service providers to innovate. It is at the leading edge of wider government commissioning of payment-for-results public services.

In conclusion, the above changes and developments in both the Employment Related Services sector and the Career Development sector can be seen as an opportunity for further demand for both sets of qualifications. OCR, via its links with the Institute of Career Guidance/Careers Profession Alliance is well positioned to keep abreast of these developments and to plan its marketing strategy and further supporting product development accordingly.