

on

OCR news

In this issue:

Learning on the farm
**Implementing the Qualifications
and Credit Framework**
Talking history
Northern Ireland and Wales update



Discovering
the world of
forensics



2010 GCSE changes: latest developments

Welcome

to the September 2009 edition of OCR News. This issue features a range of stories which demonstrate OCR's ongoing commitment to educational and training achievement. These include a review of our Expo events which showcased the changes taking place with the GCSE English, Maths and ICT 2010 specifications, an update of the phased implementation of the Qualifications and Credit Framework, and a look at the world of forensics in the company of two leading forensic practitioners. Updates on initiatives in Wales and Northern Ireland also feature.

Any comments on this edition of OCR News can be sent to editor@ocr.org.uk

Fraser Tennant *Editor*

News in brief



01

01 **Championing World Class Skills**

OCR Chief Executive Greg Watson championed the benefits of skills attainment and its importance to the wider skills agenda at the World Class Skills 2009 Conference and Exhibition in London during July.

Held at the Church House Conference Centre in Westminster, the event brought together a host of organisations involved in the planning and delivery of skills and employment services.

Greg considered the Post 19 landscape and how OCR fits into the wider skills and employment agenda. He asked how the Government could best be involved and made particular reference to how important it is for learners to be equipped with the transferable skills that will allow them to respond to the evolving skills needs of the economy.

Complementing Greg's presentation was a showcase of inspirational work from OCR centres across the UK which gave learners and teachers a unique perspective of how a new era of qualifications is opening doors for young people. Select OCR qualifications, such as OCR Nationals, were brought to life via a range of media including 3D art, film, and E-Portfolio.

01



01 **Get ready for ... Ready Steady Work**

A new offering from OCR's *Ready Steady Work* suite of qualifications – The OCR Certificate in Employability Skills - has been designed to encourage learners to undertake study and learn new skills before they enter or return to the world of employment.

Available at Entry 3, Level 1 and Level 2, this new qualification caters for all age groups and is one of many currently available through Ready Steady Work. It covers job-seeking skills, career development and preparation for employment, with particular emphasis on what skills and attributes an employer will be looking for. Further topics include focusing on financial capability, assessing and improving skills, and preparing for a work placement.

To find out more, go to www.ocr.org.uk/readysteadywork



03

03

03 **Conference to debate the role of the state in assessment**

A gathering of public policy experts, educationalists and assessment specialists will debate the role of the state in assessment systems at the 4th Cambridge Assessment Conference – Issues of control and innovation: the role of the state in assessment systems – on 19 October 2009.

To be held at Robinson College, Cambridge, this conference has extra providence due to the Bill to deliver Ofqual, as new regulator of qualifications, which is currently going through Parliament.

Keynote speakers include Professor Robin Alexander, Fellow of Wolfson College at the University of Cambridge, and Professor Alison Wolf, Sir Roy Griffiths Professor of Public Sector Management, King's College London. Additionally, Professor Mary James, Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge; Isabel Nesbit, Ofqual; Dr John Allan, SQA; and Greg Watson; OCR Chief Executive, will lead a programme of seminars throughout the day.

Senior managers from schools, colleges and universities are set to attend, as well as those working for national and local education bodies, professional organisations, political parties, the media, awarding bodies and employers' organisations.

Further details and a booking form can be accessed at: www.assessnet.org.uk/annualconference/

02

02 **OCR joins BBC and Yale to sponsor Great Debate**

OCR has teamed up with Yale University Press and the BBC History Magazine as sponsors of this year's Historical Association Great Debate Competition.

This is the third such competition and the Historical Association is searching for UK students aged 16 to 19 to take part. Heats will take place across the country this autumn, culminating in a grand final at Clare College, University of Cambridge, in March 2010.

This year's question for debate is: 'Why does your local hero matter?'

The winner of the competition will receive a cash prize and membership of the Historical Association.

Simon Brown, Events Officer for the Historical Association, said: "This is a fantastic opportunity for young people to explore local history and develop their debating skills. Our experience tells us that the Great Debate looks great on a student's CV, especially as many of the heats and the final are taking place in Universities. The Great Debate competition allows us to promote History to students by helping them to recognise the excitement the subject can create and the skills it improves."

Further competition details can be found at: www.history.org.uk

02



Darwin, whose theories generated great debate

Expos highlight 2010 GCSE changes



OCR launched its new 2010 GCSE draft specifications for English Maths and ICT to over 800 teachers at five highly successful Expo events in July.

Held in Newcastle, Coventry, London, Manchester and Bristol, visitors to the Expos were provided with an ideal opportunity to view and ask questions about the new draft specifications and influence the final stages of their development. Subject experts, as well as influential stakeholders and industry speakers, were on hand to demonstrate OCR's level of commitment to the new English, Maths and ICT GCSE qualifications and to give an update on the functional skills elements which are to be embedded in GCSEs.

performance (see page 6 for more information about this service).

Complementing each event were workshops on each of the new draft specifications that provided more in-depth information for teachers. Our publisher partners were also in attendance to discuss proposed materials.

Teachers who may have missed the Expo events but wish to learn more about our new 2010 GCSE specifications can attend one of our **free** half-day *Get Ready* INSET training events taking place across England and Wales from September 2009.

Updates provided by the OCR EXPO team included the news that:

- Functionality is embedded into the revised 2010 GCSE specifications
- The new GCSEs will extensively test functionality so learners will be equipped with the necessary skills to successfully complete the standalone Functional Skills assessment. This means learners will gain another qualification worth half a GCSE (23 points)
- The government is committed to introducing a new measure within the new school report card so achievement of functional skills will have a direct impact on the overall indicators of school performance



Functional skills development update

There are still 12 months to full implementation of functional skills.

This summer, while QCEA consulted widely on the proposed draft regulatory criteria, OCR consulted with a diverse range of centres to help shape the final stages of the development process before the qualifications are introduced in September 2010.

The final criteria are expected to be published by Ofqual in early November. OCR will submit draft qualifications in February 2010.

Centres will be unable to register learners for current Key Skills in Communication, Application of Number and ICT after 31 August 2010. Key Skills tests will be available until 2012.

With our functional skills pilot entering its third and final year, it's the perfect time to join and get ahead in your preparation – even if you currently deliver Key Skills with a different awarding body.

To join our pilot, visit: www.ocr.org.uk/functionalskills

The 2010 GCSE Timeline



Visitors were able to find out more about the toolkit of resources and services that will be available to help them through the changes, ranging from dedicated problem solving resources for maths, to guides to controlled assessment for English and ICT.

They were also able to preview new resources coming on-stream to support the new GCSEs, including Active Results, a free results service designed to help teachers review their learners'

LEARNING ON THE FARM



Developing practical skills for classroom use or on field trips was the mission for teachers of *GCSE Environmental and Land Based Science/Twenty First Century Science* as they put on their wellies at Laverstoke Park farm in Hampshire to share good practice and explore what farm visits have to offer as a learning experience.

Located in Overton, North Hampshire, is Laverstoke Park farm – a 1012 hectare organic and biodynamic farm well known as the 'University of Organics.' The farm boasts a herd of 1600 water buffalo, the largest in the UK, traditional breeds of dairy and beef cattle, rare breeds of sheep and pigs, and poultry.

production, as well as their excellent facilities, is the reason why OCR considers the farm to be an ideal training resource for teachers and Heads of Department currently undertaking *GCSE Environmental and Land Based Science (ELBS)* or *GCSE Twenty First Century Science*.



Examining soil samples

"At Laverstoke we teach the importance of natural farming in today's world", says Clare Scheckter, co-owner of the farm along with husband, Jody. "This is a natural and healthy environment where we use the latest and best research techniques and equipment. We provide an insight into the scientific approach to agriculture, based on organic and biodynamic farming methods. Taking young people out of the classroom and showing them first hand what really happens on a farm, whether in terms of food production, animal welfare, environmental responsibility etc., has a huge impact and really assists in their understanding of key curriculum objectives."

During the summer, OCR, in partnership with Laverstoke, hosted two training days at the farm's new "recycled" education facility (provided by Hampshire County Council). Two large groups of Science teachers got the chance to pull on their wellies and spend a day at the farm learning practical ideas to enhance their lessons and share good practice with colleagues delivering the same qualification. "The idea behind both days was for teachers to discover new ways to liven up their curriculum with the inclusion of more practical activities and the possibility of a fieldtrip for their students. This would better demonstrate the differences between organic and non-organic farming systems" explains OCR's Emma Daniels, who assisted in organising the event.

Laverstoke's commitment to educating the uninitiated in alternative methods of farming



Identifying and categorising animal waste to establish any potential environmental impact



Farm Manager Karl, with a free-range pig



Studying centrifuged milk samples



The farm has three breeds of sheep: Lleysns, Wiltshire, and Hebridiens (pictured)

Activities

Each training day began with a gathering of teachers at the farm's Education Centre where they were met by Emma, OCR trainers Tim Venner and Luke Oxley, and Clare and her team.

Kicking off with a look at composting, the teachers visited the farm's five-acre compost site where all compost and compost teas are produced. Here the group learned that compost tea contains soluble nutrients, enzymes, and hormones and a complex set of organisms which are key to the natural health of the soil, plants and animals.

The group were also given a talk by the farm's lab technicians about the importance of soil and food testing and how using a mass spectrometer is invaluable.

Following this, everyone climbed aboard a tractor/trailer to the cattle area where the main differences between dairy and beef breeds and the characteristics of the Jersey and Angus cattle versus buffalo were explained by Karl, the farm Manager. A wealth of information was provided on genetics and how AI sperm washing is used in sex determination. As a dry run for a potential student exercise, the teachers were asked to observe the calves to try and identify the characteristics that lead them to be selected for breeding.

From here the group travelled to the poultry area for an explanation of the free-range, organic system and the essential function performed by chickens in the natural control of pests. They also looked at the characteristics of the breeds used and types of eggs produced. A study of free-range behaviour was highlighted as a further example of a task that could be carried out by students on a visit. Rounding off the morning's activities was a look at free-range pigs, in addition to the mixed ley pastures. These contained 31 different herbs, clovers and grasses. Comparisons of conventional farming using a very high percentage of rye grass were also demonstrated.

The afternoon saw a number of practical, hands-on activities back at the Education Centre including the examination and sorting of soil, studying centrifuged milk samples and comparing their properties, a popular milk tasting session, and an opportunity to examine and inflate a heart and lung. Links to 'compost cam' and 'veggie cam' at the farm were demonstrated and how they could be used in classroom presentations. Finally, different types of steaks produced by the farm such as buffalo, were sampled and compared to an economy supermarket steak. The jam-packed day ended with a visit to the dairy farm area to observe the milking of the buffalo herd.

Clare: "All these activities were designed to give teachers an insight into the many varied and interesting methods of engaging students within an outdoor environment. Sadly, students have little or no knowledge of farming but when presented with factual information based on real practices, they appear to find it both fascinating and thought-provoking. The teachers were wonderful to work with and it was very rewarding seeing them get so much out of the day's experiences."

Evaluating success

Following the training days, the feedback OCR received from teachers was unanimous in its praise:

Phil de Jonge from Bohunt School, Hampshire, said: "I thought it was a terrific day. I was inspired by the joined-up thinking and smart execution of ideas at the farm. It will certainly inform my teaching of C3 and Applied Science next year. We are looking at a possible visit with some students in the Autumn."

Paul Williams from Frome Community College, Somerset, said: "I thought that the course was excellent. I picked up plenty of ideas to use in the classroom from the leaders

and the materials we were given. It was great to network with other teachers from around the country and find out what they are doing."

"I had a really smashing day, the best course I have ever been on in my 16-year teaching career. I have been telling lots of people about what the place can offer", said Jolanta Brooks from The Abbey School, Kent.

Tom White from Crispin School in Somerset, said: "Many thanks for the OCR INSET day at Laverstoke farm – I found it hugely inspiring."

Simon Jones, KS4 Co-ordinator for Science at Deptford Green School, said: "This was a fantastic opportunity to gain an important insight into how a large-scale organic farm works. It covered a wide range of related science topics from soil chemistry to animal physiology, along with a number of the moral, ethical and social issues involved. I will definitely be bringing our students to the farm!"

Rewarding

Such comments serve to reinforce the OCR view that the knowledge and expertise on offer at Laverstoke Park farm represents a unique outdoor educational opportunity for teachers. Emma Daniels said: "Both of our training days were very successful with the ELBS day being particularly well received. Of the 23 delegates who attended on that day, 22 rated the day as 'excellent' – over 95%. This, combined with their obvious commitment to education and their professionalism, means I have no hesitation in nominating them for an award through the Learning Outside the Classroom initiative."

For more information on the Laverstoke Park farm Education Centre please visit: www.LPEC.co.uk

Online game presents Forensic Science as career option

With a career in Forensic Science fast becoming a viable and attractive option for learners, OCR has produced *Apartment 13* – an online game which gives players the opportunity to sample what it takes to become a forensic scientist.

Produced to promote the range of OCR Nationals in Science qualifications available, *Apartment 13* focuses on the Forensic Science unit in particular and has been designed as a light-hearted look at a serious subject. The game illustrates the skills required to be a forensic scientist, what a day's work may involve, and the career opportunities available.

A cartoon with three distinct parts – *Crime Scene*, *Autopsy* and *Courtroom* – *Apartment 13* provides a murder/mystery scenario in which the player assumes the role of a forensic scientist to analyse evidence, perform an autopsy, and ultimately identify the guilty party from among three key suspects.

To play *Apartment 13*, and join the game's 2.5 million players to date, go to: www.ocrnationals.com/sciencegame



Customised exams in minutes

examQuest

ExamQuest is a learning resource which offers teachers access to a database of past OCR examination questions and supporting materials, including hundreds of past questions, mark schemes and examiner comments to help create assessment materials across years 10 to 13.

ExamQuest saves teachers hours of time in compiling personalised assessment materials by giving them access to relevant exam questions to create homework, classroom resources, mock exams and mark schemes. It also allows corresponding examiners' comments to be viewed so that common errors by learners can be recognised.

Subjects available on ExamQuest include GCSE and AS/A Level for Mathematics, Science, Physical Education, ICT, and Religious Studies. Along with the new 2010 GCSE specifications, available from February 2010 will be updated Maths & ICT products.

For the full list of subjects available on ExamQuest and to play a subject demo, please visit: www.examquest.co.uk.

Active Results now available for June 2009 GCSE Science, Maths and ICT

Active Results, the free results analysis service which reviews the performance of individual learners or whole schools, is now available for our GCSE Maths, ICT and 21st Century and Gateway Science suites.

Taking value-added progress measures into account, Active Results gives a more detailed measure of learners' achievements by including information on their background and prior achievements.



For more information and to find out how you can access it, please go to: www.ocr.org.uk/interchange/active_results.html, contact our Customer Contact Centre on 01223 553998, or email: activeresults@ocr.org.uk

OCR: leading the way with technology

New online claims process replaces paper-based original

September 2009 saw the launch of the new online claims system for OCR Nationals qualifications. This new system replaces the old paper-based process of Confirmation and Moderation Sample Lists and Certification Record Forms which placed a heavy paper burden on Assessors. This new process means:

- There'll be a lot less paperwork
- It reduces the chance of error
- It speeds up the issuing of certificates

With the old paper-based system now obsolete, all certification claims for OCR Nationals qualifications must be made online via Interchange at: <https://interchange.ocr.org.uk>.

A guide on how to make a certification claim using the new process is available to download from: www.ocrnationals.com.



OCR films open a door into history



An Elizabethan Lady, an SS Major, a Master Gunner, a Nazi Nurse or a Medieval Surgeon – imagine being able to share the thoughts, feelings and reactions of such characters and learn about some of the most famous (or infamous) periods in history.

To make this possible, OCR has teamed up with the live interpretation company, The History Squad, to produce a series of films for students which are part of a comprehensive collection of free support materials for OCR's new 2009 GCSE *History A – Schools History Project* and *B – Modern World History* specifications.

The films, collectively known as *Talk History*, number five in total and each brings alive a character from history to give students a unique insight into their lives. Written and produced by The History Squad's Kevin Hicks, who has over 15 years' experience of bringing history to life in schools, the content of the films draws on contemporary accounts. Each film is of 10–15 minutes duration and shows the characters describing their everyday life and how it affects them.

The films are accompanied by teacher guidance notes, which are available to download from the OCR website. Advanced Skills Teacher Ellen Carrington produced the notes and is well placed to comment on the variety of ways in which they can be used in the classroom and why they are such a valuable resource.

Ellen says: "These films are ideal either as an advanced organiser, to show students prior to them studying a new topic, or as a summary/revision aid at the end of the topic to help students to see the 'bigger picture.' They can be used as an aid to help students summarise – a vital skill for them to master prior to revision. Whilst watching the films, students can list the historical events that are mentioned and following the viewing, could create a mind map summarising the information. Alternatively, they could be provided with a list of events and then be asked to summarise what the character says and feels. The films are also useful tools to encourage students to develop empathetic understanding. After viewing the films students could be asked to create their own monologue, similar to the film, but looking at the events and issues through the eyes of a different member of society. For example, if they have watched the rich, Elizabethan lady, they could write a monologue for a poor member of society.

"Alternatively they could brainstorm questions they would like to ask the character in the film, before a member of the group takes on that role in a hot-seating activity and attempts to answer other students' questions."

As to their usefulness as a teaching resource, Ellen is resolute: "The films are an invaluable resource for allowing students to see how the key questions from the specification are inter-connected. GCSE students often find it relatively easy to understand a single event or development, but sometimes struggle to put these in context. Dealing with complex and abstract concepts or trends rather than dates and events is another skill that some students find difficult to master. By focusing on a fictional character, such as the ones in these films, students are provided with

a 'hook' on which to hang their ideas. Students often find that being able to associate events and ideas with a visual prompt helps them to understand and remember the information that they need in their assessments. This can be especially beneficial to visual and audio learners."

Kevin Hicks added: "These films will give you a piece of history. Many of the people who've actually seen it have said: 'That's incredible. That's really opened my eyes.' That's what I would say. If you want a taste of real history, then have a look."

Three of the five *Talk History* films and the teacher guidance notes can be downloaded from the OCR website at www.ocr.org.uk. A free DVD with all five films and accompanying interviews can also be requested via the website.

"Students can see how they can do difficult problems, it's a real confidence boost for them."

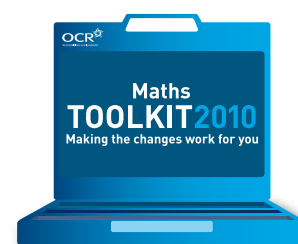
Wendy Merrett, Head of Maths, Expo July 2009

We want to help you breathe life back into Maths for everyone. We've been running pilot Maths GCSEs since 2006, and our experience is helping us to develop dedicated problem solving resources for the new 2010 Maths GCSEs.

Missed our Expos? For an overview of our draft specifications, book on to one of over 50 free half-day Get Ready INSET training sessions.

Book your free place today at www.ocr.org.uk/eventbooker using course ref OMAH.

OCR
RECOGNISING ACHIEVEMENT



Discovering the World of Forensics

Watch any of the current crop of TV 'forensics' shows such as *CSI* and *Waking the Dead* and you would be forgiven for thinking that the solving of crime is just a matter of making startling conclusions based on convenient scraps of evidence and interviews with made-to-order suspects.

However, the real-life world of forensics is a great deal more complex than its sexy TV counterparts would have us believe. It is a world which calls upon the expertise of a myriad of disciplines – psychology, pathology, serology, psychiatry, toxicology and ballistics – and one in which interest is growing rapidly within the educational world.

Delving into this world, an appearance at the 2009 Association for Teachers of Psychology (ATP) Annual Conference at Exeter University saw OCR working with two leading forensic practitioners – Brian Hook and Clive Donner – as they launched their new GCSE *Psychology* specification.

Considered to be the highlight of the conference, Brian and Clive's Psychology-based workshops provided a fascinating insight into the techniques employed in forensic investigation – what constitutes a crime scene, how a crime scene is examined, how prints are identified and preserved, the interpretation of witness statements and the importance of fibre comparison.

Although forensic science is a versatile and powerful tool in the investigation of a crime, science alone is not enough. To be successful, forensic techniques must be utilised along with the knowledge and experience of detectives, uniformed police, and civilian experts. Following the event, OCR News met with Brian and Clive – known professionally as CSI4U and regular consultants to the emergency response agencies in Europe and many other parts of the world – to discuss the world of forensics.

CSI on TV – help or hindrance

So working with a name such as CSI4U, do Brian and Clive consider the existence of TV shows such as *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation* and the like to be a help or hindrance as they strive to introduce forensics to a new audience? Brian told us: "We often ask our fellow professionals and the teachers and students that we train if they watch *CSI* and the answer is that almost everyone does. People have always been intrigued by crime solving fiction, their detection, criminals and their motives. *CSI*-type programmes have gone to a higher level; it's not a 'who dunnit' but a 'how we can prove they dunnit.' The vast majority of people realise



Brian Hook (left) and Clive Donner



it's an entertainment show; it's the subject matter that is fascinating and enigmatic. The show makes people think. It's raised the profile of Crime Scene Examination and Management greatly and for that we are grateful."

Background and experience

Whilst pondering the future of forensics, Brian turns back the clock to the years of learning his trade. "I was a police officer in the Metropolitan Police for 30 years", says Brian as he references an impressive CV. "Over half of that I spent on specialist units: homicide teams, murder as it was called in the old days; the Racial and Violent Crime Taskforce and the Anti-Terrorist Branch. In all those specialist roles I was involved in forensic examination of crime scenes, forensic management of crime scenes, lecturing and training to other agencies outside the police service and also within the police services, nationally and abroad. Most uniform officers have a multitude of jobs to do. It's about knowledge, it's about training and so early on I embarked, on behalf of senior officers, to spread the message."

Consultancy to education

So having established an impressive track record with the Metropolitan Police and as a forensics consultant, how did the move into the educational world come about? Brian answered: "I was approached by Thames Valley University to look at their Forensic Degree course, and at this time, Clive and I were also involved in training other agencies around the world.

It was pointed out to us that what we were doing training-wise would actually be a very good platform for team-building and so we took part in an open day and as a result we got a phone call from a high school in Sussex asking us to go along and speak to them. It kind of ballooned from there really."

Catching the Ripper

Given the forensic science techniques available today, would such expertise have caught the perpetrator of the most famous of unsolved crimes – those of the Whitechapel Murderer himself, Jack the Ripper?

"Most likely" is Brian's answer. "If the current methods and procedures had been in place we would like to think that those responsible would have been caught and convicted. The application of the disciplines of crime scene preservation and control and the continuity and integrity of the recovered forensic evidence would mean the evidence would provide much more information and intelligence about the suspect[s]."

Although five murders are generally attributed to 'Jack', there were a total of 11 murders investigated between 1888 and

1891. "I know that the witness statements are no longer in existence but the coroner's inquest was widely reported and a lot of the testimony was reported verbatim so partial records do exist."



"It would have been interesting to not only look at them forensically, but to also apply the current psychological profiling methods to the scenes, witnesses and potential suspects to enhance and focus the investigation."

Working with OCR

The ATP Conference saw Brian and Clive's first association with OCR as they helped launch its new GCSE Psychology specification using a series of practical and theoretical activities entitled *The Wonder of Forensic Psychology*.

"We were tasked with bringing out the psychological profiling and the psychological aspects of forensics so the first thing we did was to look at the definition of psychology," remembers Clive. "We quickly realised that whilst they might have a good broad knowledge of psychology, other than CSI on TV, they didn't know a lot about forensics. So, the first thing we did was to raise their level of forensics knowledge; what is it, how is it done, why is it done, what are our capabilities and also what are our limitations."

After establishing a theoretical base, practical activities for delegates included the chance to make a photo-fit using actual Police software and the opportunity to guess 'Who Dunnit' following a robbery. Explains Brian: "We created a crime scene scenario – the theft of a valuable cup from Walkham Hall country house – which was broken down into different disciplines – physical exhibits, witness statements, E-fits and finger-print evidence. We injected clues so delegates would have to work out the significance to certain things. The answers were there for the teachers and students but the whole purpose was for them to look at all the different aspects and to use their critical thinking to solve the crime." Adds Clive: "I think the crucial thing is that we recognise that all this has to be a positive experience. It's no good it being otherwise. We want these activities to be informative and fun."

With the Forensic Psychology element being universally hailed as the highlight of the show, how would Brian and Clive characterise their relationship with OCR? "OCR was magnificent" says Brian firmly. "We were given a specific brief with firm aims and objectives to work to and that makes the task relatively easy to accomplish."

Moving forward

Flushed with their success at the ATP Conference, Brian and Clive are in no doubt as to the wisdom of teaching forensics and the benefits it brings to students and teachers as well as themselves. "To be a successful forensic psychologist you must have a firm understanding and knowledge of what drives an investigation and how the examination of a crime scene is done. Passing on the knowledge, experience and comprehension of scene examination and management of scene examination and management forensics still excites us, affirms Brian. Equally enthused, Clive says: "To be able to pass that on to others with the same passion or to see that passion being woken is a magnificent feeling. I always had a thirst for knowledge and the one thing about what we do is you never stop learning."

As to the way ahead, the course appears clear. "Clive and I have become more and more involved in the educational world and it's obvious there is a need for our skills, knowledge and ability. We can impact on a variety of subjects where forensic knowledge is required either directly or because it forms a part of a broader knowledge base. I think that we and OCR complement each other and I believe that working together in the future would be mutually beneficial."

READ ABOUT OCR'S ONLINE FORENSIC GAME - PAGE 6.



Implementing the Qualifications and Credit Framework

Paul Steer, OCR Stakeholder Relations Director, outlines the approach taken so far.



With the introduction of the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) leading to a complex and evolving landscape for those involved in its delivery, OCR is carefully managing a process of controlled implementation.

Paul Steer explains: "The phased implementation of the QCF has been taking place since January 2008 with full implementation due to be completed by September 2010. Over the next year, this reform of vocational

education will have a major impact upon both the qualifications and the funding regime that your centre will have to manage to deliver high quality services to learners.

"We have been actively involved throughout the phased implementation of this reform programme and we have a growing range of provision already accredited within the QCF. OCR is currently working alongside Ofqual, the Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency and all sector bodies to revise our existing qualifications offer in line with the implementation timeline.

"Underpinning our approach is a drive to ensure that our qualifications will meet the needs of your centre in the way our existing provision does. In doing this, we will manage the changes required in a way that is effective and efficient and reduces any possible risks to you and your learners.

"Throughout the coming year OCR will provide a *QCF Spotlight* publication to keep you informed of the developments across the whole reform programme. This publication will tell you how we will be managing the move of our existing qualifications within the National Qualification Framework (NQF) to the QCF and provide updates on key issues as they emerge."

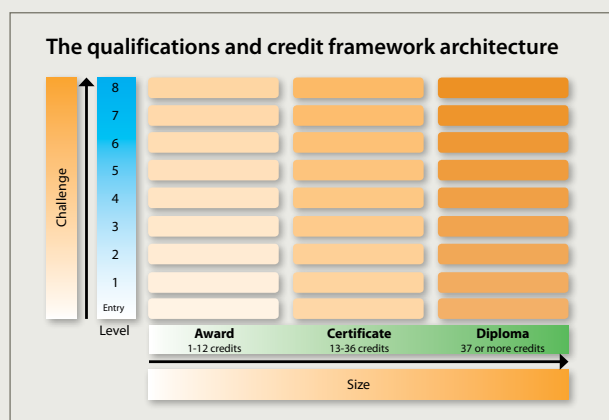
OCR qualifications – migrated and migrating



Over the next 12 months, our remaining qualifications will be revised with a view to launching them in September 2010.

Understanding the QCF

QCF Structure



Each qualification is assigned a title which will indicate:

1) The level of the qualification (the complexity and depth of learning)
Entry level in the QCF is comprised of 3 levels to facilitate upwards progression. There are then 8 levels in the framework, with level 8 equivalent to postgraduate level learning. Depending on the rules of combination (how units are combined together) QCF qualifications can contain units from different levels. The level of the qualification can either be drawn from the levels of the majority of the units or the levels of the mandatory unit(s).

2) The size of the qualification (the volume of learning)

- Award (1 to 12 credits)
- Certificate (13 to 36 credits)
- Diploma (37 credits or more).

3) The content of the qualification

- Awarding organisations will work closely with Sector Skills Councils/Bodies to determine the content of the qualifications
- The core content of a qualification can be common across awarding organisations by the use of "shared" units. These are units on the QCF that can be assessed by any awarding organisation.

How it works in practice

Units and credit values

Each unit will have a credit value, which represents how long the learning element of that unit will take to complete. One credit represents 10 notional hours of learning.

Qualifications will be made up of a combination of mandatory and optional units. The credit and units required to complete a qualification are identified using the rules of combination.

Transfer of credit

Where rules of combination allow, learners will be able to build credit and transfer that credit between awarding organisations so that a bite size approach to learning can be supported.

Shared units can be directly transferred between Awarding Organisations. This will allow learners to proceed without having to repeat any previously achieved units.

Learner records

Learners will be given access to an online Learner Record using their ULN (unique learner number) that will log all unit and qualification achievements. This same system will also allow awarding organisations to review a learner's previous achievements and record their new achievements in a central repository.

Factsheets provide career guidance for Northern Ireland learners

"Possessing up-to-date information on skills and qualifications is of vital importance to young people and adults in Northern Ireland when it comes to making decisions on their future career", says Employment and Learning Minister, Sir Reg Empey.

Sir Reg, speaking at the launch of a series of Industry Factsheets, which have been designed to improve access to careers information for young people, adults and careers practitioners in Northern Ireland, continued: "The importance of easily accessible and up-to-date labour market information is recognised in 'Success through Skills', the Department's Skills Strategy and also in 'Preparing for Success', the Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance Strategy for Northern Ireland. In the current economic downturn, it has never been more important for young people and adults to make informed and appropriate career decisions. These Factsheets will be a welcome resource in helping to make those decisions."

The Factsheets, produced by the Department for Employment and Learning's (DEL) Careers Service, in conjunction with the Alliance of Sector Skills Councils, provide a wealth of facts and figures about jobs and industries, job proposals, relevant skills and entry requirements, as well as highlighting opportunities available.

Further support for the Factsheets has been provided by Paul McGlade, OCR's National Manager for Northern Ireland, who earlier this year, gave a presentation to Careers Advisors in Belfast to update them on the availability of the OCR qualifications relevant to the entry requirements for many of the occupations listed in the Factsheets. Paul has since been advised by the Careers Advisors that they now feel 'better informed', not only about OCR's range of qualifications, but with the OCR Nationals Career Path Finder which is considered to be a very useful resource for relating appropriate qualifications to a chosen occupational area.

The Factsheets are available to download from the Careers Service website at: www.careersserviceeni.com



Additional plans to help apprentices in Northern Ireland:

The Department for Employment and Learning in Northern Ireland has announced radical plans to help more of the country's young people to become apprentices. Sir Reg Empey has said that new Programme-Led Apprenticeships would set 'would-be apprentices' on the path to career success. Due to get underway in September 2009, the new Programme-Led Apprenticeships will give 16 and 17 year old school leavers the opportunity to gain a full apprenticeship qualification in their chosen area. The apprentices can achieve this through a combination of simulated learning and time spent with an employer on a one-day-a-week work placement.

The announcement follows the publication of the Employment and Learning Committee's report – *The Way Forward for Apprenticeships* – which stated that the present economic situation has made it increasingly difficult for those who are currently apprentices to find paid employment while completing their training.

More support means more choice for learners in Wales

Schools, colleges and training providers have been tasked with delivering more choice for 14-19 year old learners by the Welsh Assembly Government. The Learning and Skills Measure that requires each local authority to provide 30 options at Key Stage 4, and a requirement that every local authority submits plans on how post-16 learning providers might work more collaboratively, are two important ways in which this broader provision is being encouraged.

During a plenary session at the Assembly, the Deputy Minister for Skills, John Griffiths, said that these proposals would mean that 60% of providers would be implementing the changes by September 2010, and the remaining 40% by September 2011.

"This means a lot of change for schools, colleges and training providers", says Robin Hughes, National Manager for OCR Cymru.

"And this is happening at a time when many qualifications are changing too. It will be a challenge for us all to deliver the benefit of wider choice for learners in the midst of such change. So to help, we now have more support events happening in Wales than ever before. And we have recruited a new member of staff to the team in Wales – Robert Mills. Robert has experience of being responsible for widening provision at college faculty and at school departmental levels. He'll be meeting those people who need the support most - teachers, trainers and lecturers - and also meeting those who need to know about the changes affecting qualifications, like local authority subject advisors."



New OCR Cymru 2009/10 events calendar now online



OCR Cymru is pleased to announce that its new calendar of events for 2009/10 is now available online. Year after year, OCR has increased the provision of support for its centres in Wales, and the new academic year will see more events than ever before as the team in Wales responds to the needs of teachers, lecturers, and trainers.

John Adamson, Customer Support Services Co-ordinator, said: "We hope that this calendar will prove useful over the coming year and that centres will be able to join us at one of our many free *INSET* events for GCSE English, Maths, and ICT. But if you cannot attend an event or require something that is not included in our calendar then in-house training is an option we can discuss with you."

The OCR Cymru events calendar is updated regularly and can be accessed by logging onto www.ocr.org.uk/cymru then *Events*. Additionally, John Adamson can be contacted on 02920 537810 for more information on this or the in-house training option.

Forthcoming events

OCR has a packed events schedule over the coming months. Why not come and visit us?

8 9

OCTOBER OCTOBER

SSAT Languages Conference

The Belfry, Birmingham

OCR will present the latest updates to our languages portfolio, including Asset Languages, at this key conference. College leaders and language teachers will share ideas and explore effective leadership and classroom practice with some of the most influential figures in language education.

28

OCTOBER

Employment and Skills Summit

Central Hall, Westminster

This major conference brings together all those involved in the effective delivery of public policy and services in the welfare to work, skills and benefits sector. Greg Watson, Chief Executive of OCR, will join the panel: Integrating and Strengthening Employment and Skills Strategies in the Face of Recession.

15

OCTOBER

14 – 19 Provision: Mapping the New Reality

The Commonwealth Club, Westminster

The impact of ongoing 14-19 reform, including the Apprenticeships Skills, Children and Learning Bill, as well as changes to strategic planning of 16-19 provision, is the focus of this Westminster briefing. OCR's Stakeholder Relations Director, Paul Steer, will join a panel to discuss Delivering a Quality Curriculum.

19 20 21

NOVEMBER NOVEMBER NOVEMBER

D&T with ICT Education Show

Hall 10, NEC Birmingham

OCR will have a stand (B24) at this, the major D&T event of the year. In addition to our subject specialists offering advice on our extensive D&T portfolio, OCR's Chief Examiner for Product Design, Austin Strickland, will present a seminar – Creative Student Activity and Innovation in Assessment – covering the new Innovator Suite.

21 22

OCTOBER OCTOBER

CompTIA UK Annual Members Event

Ascot Racecourse, Berkshire

OCR is the sponsor of this event which brings together more than 200 industry leaders who will discuss new ways to grow business, hear about the latest IT business trends, and form new partnerships. The programme opens with a keynote address from entrepreneur and TV Dragon James Caan.

27

NOVEMBER

CfA – Council for Administration's Conference 2009

NSL Learning and Conference Centre, Nottingham

This OCR sponsored conference will focus on the importance of Business & Administration skills within the changing landscape of UK education and training. OCR qualifications specialists will be available to discuss our IT and Business Administration portfolios.

www.ocr.org.uk

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