

# **Lifelong Learning: Challenges in the Knowledge Based Economies using Credit and Qualification Frameworks for the workforce**

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Lifelong Learning, Learning for Life, Life wide Learning or however described is a key issue of the knowledge age and is a stated priority of the UK and other Countries. This has been driven by the need to create and maintain successful, economies that can create sufficient value in international markets to offer citizens a high level of employment and quality of life in an increasingly competitive world.

The need to maintain a healthy, wealthy economy coupled with the demographic trends will require the need for the working population to be educated, skilled and flexible. Individuals require a good initial education during their period of compulsory education, but will also need to undertake periods of education and training throughout their working life in order to develop skills and knowledge required to meet the challenges of a changing employment market and society.

To facilitate lifelong learning requires the development of qualification frameworks to developing top-up qualifications that build on credit rated learning relevant to both organization and individuals' learning needs. There is now a growing recognition in Europe that qualification frameworks are necessary to facilitate workforce development. In particular the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) is recognized as best practice in Europe and the importance of populating the SCQF Framework with credit rated learning that currently lies outside the mainstream national qualifications is identified

Napier University is recognized as a centre of excellence in this area and has developed a Centre for Credit Rating .Their activities focus on credit rating workplace learning to place it within the SCQF and the credit rating procedures for allocating SCQF credit and level to these courses are described (in-house company training, training from consultants, professional bodies' qualifications etc).

This paper explores the challenges and changes that need to be addressed to ensure that Lifelong Learning is realized by using credit and qualification frameworks to recognize all forms of learning and facilitate the development of Learners. Finally there is a review of the benefits of credit rating for learners, companies, organizations, professional bodies in the context of the modern social economy

Keywords: life-long learning, workforce development, Credit and Qualification Frameworks