



Sector Qualification Strategy

Sector Skills Council/Body Name	ConstructionSkills
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Key

AB	Awarding Body
ACCAC	Qualifications, Curriculum and Assessment Authority for Wales
BACH	British Association of Construction Heads
BEABF	Built Environment Awarding Body Forum
BESA	Built Environment Skills Alliance
CCEA	Council for Curriculum Examinations and Assessment for Northern Ireland
CQFW	Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales
CIC	Construction Industry Council
CITB	Construction Industry Training Board www.citb-constructionskills.co.uk
CITB (NI)	Construction Industry Training Board (Northern Ireland) www.citbni.org.uk
CQS	Construction Qualification Strategy http://constructionskills.net/strategicinitiatives/constructionqualificationstrategy/
CSCS	Construction Skills Certification Scheme www.cscs.uk.com
CSR	Construction Skills Register (Northern Ireland)
DEL	Department for Employment and Learning (DEL NI)
DELLS	Department for Education, Lifelong Learning, and Skills - Wales
DfES	Department for Education and Skills
'Developing' bodies'	Bodies developing units/qualifications such as awarding bodies, manufacturers, professional institutions and universities)
EQF	European Qualifications Framework
EV	External verifier
FE	Further education
FFORWM	Forum for Wales
HE	Higher education

ICT	Information and communications technology
IFCOS	International Forum for Construction Occupational Standards
LSC	Learning and Skills Council
NOS	National Occupational Standards
NVQ	National Vocational Qualification
OSAT	On-Site Assessment and Training www.citb.co.uk/traininglearning/trainingqualifications/onsiteassessmenttraining/
PIs	Professional institutions
QCA	Qualifications and Curriculum Authority
SCQF	Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework
SSA	Sector Skills Agreement
SSC	Sector Skills Council
SfB	Skills for Business network of SSCs
SME	Small and Medium Enterprise
SSDA	Sector Skills Development Agency
SQA	Scottish Qualifications Authority
SQS	Sector Qualification Strategy
S&QSG	Standards and Qualifications Strategic Group
SVQ	Scottish Vocational Qualification
UK	United Kingdom

Introduction to the Construction Qualification Strategy (CQS)

In 2005 the Government gave ConstructionSkills a unique opportunity to shape and modernise future qualifications for the construction industry to ensure that people who achieve them have the full range of skills required by employers. ConstructionSkills are working with the regulatory authorities for England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales to put together a new framework for the future structure of qualifications based on feedback about the current education and qualifications system.

The Construction Qualification Strategy (CQS):

- ensures a well-planned and structured approach for developing fit-for-purpose qualifications and pathways that meet sector and learner needs
- provides a mechanism for implementing and realising the sector's vision, stated in the Sector Skills Agreement (SSA), through the support and engagement of key stakeholder partners
- offers a blueprint and focal point that draws together a coherent set of guidelines, principles, priorities and actions as a basis for future planning and development. The CQS is a 'moving' annex to the SSA
- provides a steer for:
 - bodies developing and awarding qualifications/units
 - the sector home nations' regulatory and funding bodies approving and funding qualifications/units
 - mapping pathways and inter-assessed qualifications.

The CQS aims to:

- identify the sector's key requirements for qualifications, units, pathways, qualification development and other lifelong learning provision
- determine how well existing qualifications, units and other learning provision meets identified sector needs
- identify changes required and produce a development and implementation plan
- develop effective ways of working with the bodies that are developing and awarding qualifications/units, professional qualifying bodies, certification schemes, home nations' regulatory authorities, the Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales (CQFW) and Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF)
- establish a process for 'developing' bodies (such as awarding bodies – ABs, manufacturers, professional institutions – PIs and universities) that are identifying the feasibility, planning, developing, evaluating, reviewing and validating existing and required qualifications/units to meet the sector's needs
- ensure sector qualification proposals are communicated to, and supported by, key stakeholder partners
- suit employers and individuals training and working in all four home nations
- inform home nations' funding plans
- advise training and assessment provision models
- identify mechanisms for establishing mutual recognition of qualifications.

A draft CQS consultation document was prepared with an audit of existing qualifications, strategy recommendations and actions to take the CQS forward. The draft strategy was developed considering a range of government agencies, regulatory authorities, CQFW, SCQF, Skills for Business (SfB) network of Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) and ConstructionSkills source labour market documents. Feedback was obtained in autumn/winter 2005 from twenty five, employer-focused, consultation workshops in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. The draft strategy was also discussed at a range of sector meetings. Employers and training providers responded on the ConstructionSkills website.

From the feedback a high level strategy plan with priorities, success criteria and nineteen revised recommendations/'strands' has been developed and endorsed by the ConstructionSkills' standards and qualifications committees. The strategy has been mapped against the original consultation document and recommendations. The CQS will be a 'moving' annex to the SSA.

Detailed draft action plans for each home country are now being finalised considering the country's requirements and priorities for each strategy strand and an additional strand (strand 20) has been identified. The plans include activities, delivery dates and key dependencies.

For information about how this Construction Qualification Strategy (CQS) is being taken forward and to let ConstructionSkills know your thoughts please go to:

<http://constructionskills.net/strategicinitiatives/constructionqualificationstrategy/>

or email Louisa.West@citb.co.uk

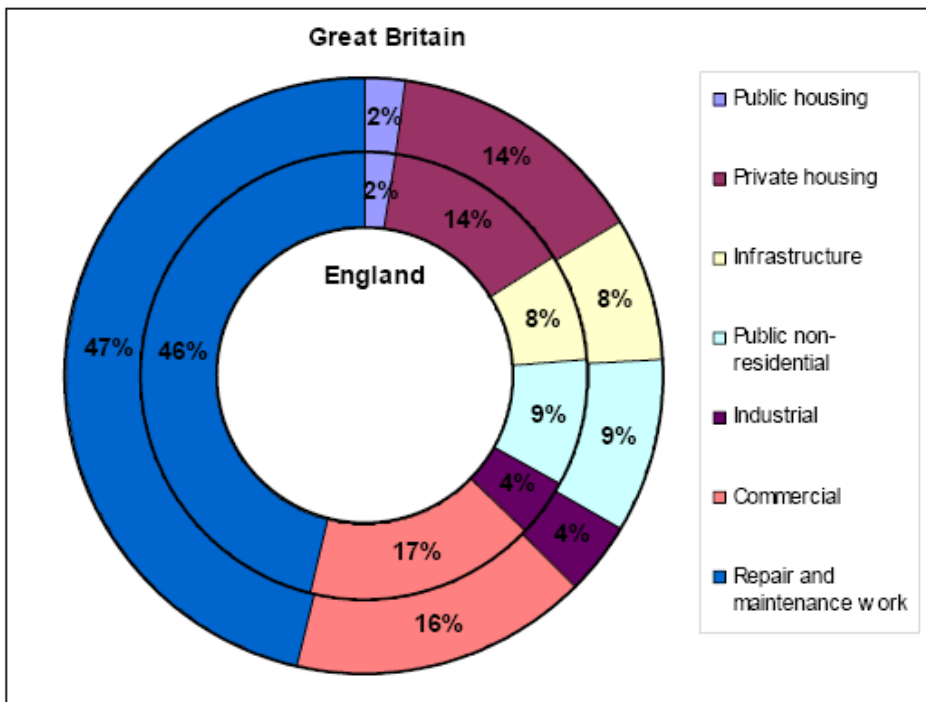
Section 1: Scope of the Sector Qualification Strategy (SQS)

▪ **1.1 The Construction Industry**

For detailed sector knowledge please refer to the main body of the ConstructionSkills Sector Skills Agreement document. The following provides summary information.

ConstructionSkills covers a wide range of sectors in the development and maintenance of the built environment. It represents about 8% of the national economy in terms of GDP (Fig 1).

Fig 1: Construction output by sector in 2000 prices, Great Britain and England: 2003



Source: Department of Trade and Industry

In terms of the construction sector and its constituent and related industries, Table 1 shows that within the principal industries related to construction activity, construction contracting dominates the sector.

Table 1: Composition of the Construction Sector and its Constituent and Related Industries, by Number of Firms, UK: 2003

Sub-sector	ABI Count (% of total firms in sector)
Construction (SIC 45)	69%
Professional services (SIC 74.2)	19%
Manufacture of construction products	7%
Sale of construction products	4%
Mining and quarrying of construction materials	>1%

Source: Annual Business Inquiry, 2003

In the UK as a whole, the sector employs 2.1 million people, has 201,100 enterprises, generates £152bn of turnover (GDP) and over £53bn of value added. Excluding electrical wiring and fitting (SIC 45.31) and plumbing (SIC 45.33) just over 1.8 million people work in the construction contracting sector (SIC 45). A further 225,000 are employed in professional consultancies (SIC 74.2). The industry is the second highest in terms of the proportion of its workforce composed of SMEs and self-employment (80%).

When analysed against other similar labour intensive sectors, the construction industry is the second highest in terms of the proportion of the workforce employed in SMEs (<250 employees) and the sector with the largest share of "one man bands". See Table 2.

The output of the construction industry in the England in terms of market activity doesn't vary greatly from the national picture. **The only variation is that repair and maintenance has 1% less of the total market compared to Great Britain as a whole; the difference being deflected to slightly more activity in the commercial market.**

The construction process is a complex one starting with design and planning through production to ongoing maintenance and refurbishment. Construction work is almost entirely done on a project by project basis, whereby contractors will draw together teams of people who often work for quite a short period of time and then move on to another location or disperse. Much of the work is managed by a main contractor who deals with the client but who subcontracts part of it to smaller firms who specialise in a particular aspect of the process.

Table 2: Construction Companies by Size of Company, UK: 2003

	All Industries		Agriculture, Hunting & Forestry; Fishing		Construction		Manufacturing		Transport, Storage & Communication	
	F	E	F	E	F	E	F	E	F	E
With no employees†	71.3%	14.6%	69.3%	40.0%	85.5%	39.7%	62.5%	6.2%	82.5%	13.6%
1-4	18.9%	10.3%	25.3%	32.4%	10.1%	12.4%	18.0%	4.7%	10.4%	4.7%
5-9	5.0%	6.6%	3.7%	10.9%	2.3%	7.1%	7.5%	4.5%	3.4%	3.7%
10-19	2.6%	6.8%	1.3%	7.3%	1.2%	7.1%	5.2%	6.2%	1.9%	3.9%
20-49	1.4%	7.8%	0.3%	3.1%	0.6%	8.2%	3.7%	9.9%	1.0%	4.9%
50-99	0.4%	5.2%	0.1%	1.7%	0.1%	4.2%	1.4%	8.7%	0.3%	3.4%
100-199	0.2%	5.2%	0.0%	1.3%	0.1%	4.0%	0.8%	9.6%	0.2%	3.8%
200-249	0.0%	1.6%	0.0%	*	0.0%	0.9%	0.2%	3.4%	0.0%	1.2%
TOTAL SME	99.8%	58.1%	99.9%	96.7%	99.9%	83.6%	99.4%	53.2%	99.8%	39.2%
250-499	0.1%	4.9%	0.0%	*	0.0%	3.3%	0.3%	10.4%	0.1%	4.3%
500 or more	0.1%	36.9%	0.0%	*	0.0%	13.3%	0.3%	36.4%	0.1%	56.5%

Source: Small Business Service Analytical Unit

Notes: F = Proportion of Firms E = Proportion of Workforce

† comprises sole proprietorships and partnerships comprising only the self-employed owner-manager(s), and companies comprising only an employee director.

* denotes that the Labour Force Survey sample size used is too small for a reliable estimate

The level of fragmentation in the construction sector can be seen as both a strength and a weakness: on the positive side, it is likely that it has the flexibility to deal with the highly variable workloads linked to changes in economic cycles; on the negative side the extensive use of subcontracting has brought contractual relationships to the fore and hindered team-working, supply chain integration and strategic management.

Analysis undertaken for DTI demonstrates that the UK construction sector, in productivity terms, is far nearer the performance of the US, France and Germany than other sectors of the UK economy. In labour productivity (LP) the UK is within 15% of the performance of the best (USA) and in total factor productivity (TFP) it is comparable with the USA, France and Germany. Compare this with UK manufacturing which is 29% above the worst and 55% below the best.

However, whilst the industry has shown some improvement in its performance over time, there remains a high degree of pressure to improve – particularly value and predictability.

1.2 Occupations

All the sector's occupations are within the scope of the CQS. These are identified below.

Accessing Operations	Planning Supervision (CDM)
Applied Waterproof Membranes	Plant Maintenance
Built Environment Design	Plastering
Built Environment Development and Control	Post-tensioning
Chimney Engineering	Project Management
Concrete Repairs/Sprayed Concrete	Quantity Surveying Practice
Construction and Civil Engineering	Refractory Operations
Construction Contracting Operations	Removal of Hazardous Waste
Construction Management	Roof Sheeting and Cladding
Construction Plant & Equipment Supv.n & Management	Roof Slating and Tiling
Construction Site Supervision and Management	Sealant Applications
Decorative Finishing and Industrial Painting Occupations	Site Inspection
Demolition	Spatial Data Management
Dewatering	Specialised Plant and Machinery
Directional Drilling	Steelfixing
Drilling and Sawing	Stonemasonry
Energy Efficiency	Structural Repairs
Façade Maintenance	Structural Waterproofing
Fitted Interiors	Sub Structural Repairs
Floorcovering	Surveying, Property and Maintenance
Formworking	Thatching
Hoist Installation	Thermal Insulation
Imprinted Decorative Concrete	Tower Cranes
In situ Flooring	Trackworking
Industrial Door Installation	Transportation
Insulation and Building Treatments	Trowel Occupations
Interior Systems	Tunnelling Operations
Maintenance Operations	Underpinning
Mastic Asphaltting	Wall and Floor Tiling
Passive Fire Protection	Water Jetting
Piling	Woodmachining

Apprenticeships

Construction industry apprenticeships are designed to provide all the necessary skills, knowledge and initial experience required for a wide range of specific occupations. They are aimed at 16-19 year-olds and will in future include those who have already successfully completed a Young Apprenticeship incorporating the GCSE in Construction and the Built Environment. Employers recruit the young people and then work in partnership with colleges and other training providers in delivering the training and assessment required. ConstructionSkills has one of the largest throughputs of Apprenticeship Frameworks across the country issuing in the region of 10,000 completion certificates annually.

At Intermediate level, a high proportion of trainees will enter self-employment on completion of their apprenticeship and will continue without the need for further formal qualifications. A smaller percentage, around 25%, will be encouraged by their employer to progress to an Advanced Apprenticeship or to achieve NVQ Level 3.

Advanced Apprenticeships are also aimed at the 16-19 age group and, on successful completion of their training some will be encouraged by their employer to progress to an HNC, Foundation Degree or NVQ level 4 or into a another Level 3 technical or supervisory function.

The Industry also has a strong tradition of “Indentured Apprenticeships” which is a binding contract between Apprentice and Employer. The contract which exists today is the “Construction Apprenticeship Scheme” and is owned by the industry and administered on behalf of industry by ConstructionSkills which is one of two organisations that are currently still recognised as an Industry Training Board (ITB.) and retain by statute a commitment from industry to raise an annual levy based on payroll. The levy is redistributed to industry through training grants and the largest budget is spent on Apprenticeship training. The sector has in the region of forty five occupational vocational programmes (NVQs) of which twenty two are actively used in Apprenticeship programmes.

1.3 General Scope of the SQS

The CQS context recognises and accommodates the diversity in the industry across all occupational areas, levels and home nations. The strategy draws on examples of good practice and works with differing legislation, frameworks and funding regimes. The strategy relates to the strategies of overlapping built environment sectors.

The CQS will:

- suit the functions and occupations identified in sectors’ occupational and functional maps, including cross-sector job roles and functions (such as personnel management) and inter-sector job roles and functions (such as facilities management)
- consider the requirements of employers and individuals training and working in the four home nations
- not be age-specific
- consider the diverse needs of people entering and already in the sector who require access to learning and qualifications/units
- include vocational education and training qualifications and programmes at all levels provided by schools, further and higher education (FE and HE - including subject benchmarks), professional institutions (PIs - including education frameworks and structured continuing professional development), and private training providers (including employers, manufacturers and training groups) both publicly and privately funded
- help to steer bodies that are developing units/qualifications for the sector
- consider lifelong learning requirements and pathways for all the workforce, including employability, skills for work/life, key/core skills, continuing personal development, upskilling existing workers and opportunities to move across the industry
- identify units/qualifications for trainers, lecturers, assessors and verifiers
- seek to influence entry level and 14–19 year old education (including the school, general and vocational curriculum):
- identifying the skills and competences needed by learners entering the workforce, FE and HE

- agreeing required changes with relevant organisations
- identifying appropriate support for developing stronger vocational 14–19 provision
- consider the need for mutual recognition of United Kingdom (UK) and non-UK qualifications/units, given the worldwide nature of the sector’s work and its migrant workforce.

1.4 Key priorities for the sector

The ConstructionSkills’ SSA identifies the construction industry’s three major skill challenges:

- improving business performance, including supporting lifelong learning to raise the workforce’s skill level
- qualifying the existing workforce, including developing flexible training and qualification structures and assisting the effective integration of migrant workers
- recruiting qualified new entrants, including increasing apprentice completions and degree applications.

The CQS provides a basis for future qualification planning and development to achieve ConstructionSkills’ vision of:

- giving the industry the necessary support to expand and improve businesses
- construction workers having, and being able to prove they have, the skills levels needed to do the job
- recruiting, from the widest pool of talent, half a million quality new entrants with ambition and commitment, by 2010

providing a vocational education and training infrastructure.

1.5 Consideration of each home nation’s government policies

Each of the UK’s countries has its own policies and regulatory frameworks for workforce development, training and education. Strategies also differ between different countries and, to an extent, between English regions. However, the clear common theme is the imperative of improving productivity and competitiveness of Sectors through the development of the workforce.

At the time of writing the UK-wide Leitch Review of Skills has recently been published. It highlights ‘A compelling vision for the UK’, within which a commitment to becoming a world leader in skills by 2020 requires major progress in literacy and numeracy; greater achievement at levels 2 and 3 linked to a substantial increase in the numbers of apprentices; and substantially increased numbers of adults qualifying at Level 4. Leitch highlights the way forward, within which the UK Government and the devolved administrations in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales ‘must now act to decide detailed next steps’. Thus, while the general direction of policy is consistent, Leitch has provided another strong message that there is much more to be done at all levels from policy development, through implementation and to learning delivery.

Different qualification and credit frameworks are operating and being developed in the four nations of the United Kingdom. The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) has twelve levels. It includes community learning and higher education qualifications, alongside work-based, further education and access qualifications. The National Qualification Framework operates in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. The proposed English 'Framework for Achievement' (FfA); the Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales (CQFW) and Northern Ireland frameworks offer entry at nine levels (a basic entry level, then levels 1 to 8).

The CQFW framework includes higher education, which is in separate frameworks in England and Northern Ireland. NVQs/SVQs are currently assigned to the existing five levels in the home nations' frameworks. The respective UK bodies are working together with European partners to ensure general framework principles and links to the European Qualification Framework (EQF), which has eight levels.

ConstructionSkills has questioned why there are different levels and coverage in the respective home nations' frameworks. The construction workforce needs to be mobile and must be able to operate across the UK and internationally using similar areas of skills/knowledge, whatever their original region. The sector is committed to 'Qualifying the Workforce' using CSCS/CSR based on the existing five levels of National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs)/Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQs).

The CQS is intended to be 'framework-neutral'. It proposes one set of general principles relating to all qualifications/units across the four nations. Key sector stakeholders have agreed action plans for each home nation, in line with the CQS general principles and accommodating the home nation's individual frameworks, regulatory requirements and initiatives.

Section 2: Summary of current qualifications and other learning provision

2.1 Purposes, interrelationships and availability of the main qualification types and learning provision

The key purposes of the following main qualification types and learning provision for employers and individuals in the construction sector are:

- entry to the industry including through apprenticeship programmes
- qualifying the construction workforce using standards based qualifications for industry recognition
- training suiting the construction workforce.

The main qualification types are:

- basic, key skills and GCSE qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland and core skills, Standard Grade and new Skills for Work qualifications in Scotland, beside other provision to develop individual's employability skills
- National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs)/ Scottish Vocational Qualification (SVQs) attesting competence. The skills and knowledge used by many workers in the sector is covered by a small number of units that may be part of one or a number of NVQ/SVQs (for example people installing fixtures and fittings). Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS www.cscs.uk.com)/ Construction Skills Register (CSR - Northern Ireland) cards are available based on NVQ/SVQ/their units
- vocationally related qualifications helping people develop underpinning occupational knowledge and skills including:

- craft construction awards (England, Wales and Northern Ireland - including those used as technical certificates in apprenticeships) and craft certificates (Scotland)
- National and Higher Nationals (including those used as technical certificates in apprenticeships in England, Wales and Northern Ireland) for technical occupations
- qualifications and training programmes which assist progression from craft to technical, supervision and management
- HE qualifications for technical, supervisory, management and professional services occupations such as foundation degrees (England, Wales and Northern Ireland) and degrees (including masters)
- PIs' qualifications
- qualifications for lecturers, trainers, assessors and verifiers.

Other learning provision includes training group, manufacturers' and continuing professional development programmes which may not currently lead to nationally recognised qualifications. The sector and its clients require manufacturers' training to effectively use new products and methods of construction, for example to maintain existing properties and provide affordable new housing.

The strategy also considers the mutual recognition of qualifications for migrant workers in the global construction sector.

The sector is committed to an ongoing plan for 'incremental' review and development of National Occupational Standards (NOS), particularly in response to evidence from the sector's Qualifying the Workforce initiative. The development and review of NOS and the functional map is overseen by a peer review process by ConstructionSkills' employer led standard and qualification committee arrangements and carried out in line with the 'Quality Criteria for the development and content of NOS'. NOS are available on the SfB NOS Directory website (www.ukstandards.org.uk) and have a variety of uses (Construction Industry Council's 'Standards, Training and Education for Progression – STEP- guidance www.cisc.org.uk).

An audit of the sector's qualifications accredited by Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) and Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) including vocationally related qualifications, Construction Awards, Nationals, Higher Nationals, NVQs/SVQs has been carried out identifying:

- the ABs
- when the qualification was last reviewed
- which national occupational standard (NOS) the qualification is linked to
- which, if any, ConstructionSkills committee validated the qualification as fit-for-purpose
- typical pathways (if known)
- what apprenticeship framework(s) (if any) the qualification is contained in
- whether the NVQ/SVQ is route to a CSCS/CSR card
- whether the qualification is available to pre-16s
- whether the qualification is available to be taught in Welsh or Gaelic.

This audit is attached at Annex 1.

The audit does not currently include:

- qualifications that are still available (such as the craft '2000 series' NVQs, the General National Vocational Qualifications and Advanced Vocational Certificates of Education) but have been replaced by revised or more appropriate qualifications
- HE and PIs' qualifications as data sources are currently fragmented and limited
- manufacturers' programmes. However, ConstructionSkills has information about a range of manufacturers that provide courses leading to a 'certificate of competence' or 'approved installer recognition' (including brick, block, cement, concrete; civil engineering services, façade maintenance, hardware, interiors, glazing, painting and decorating, passive fire protection; plastics, plant and equipment, plumbing, roofing, security systems, timber, wall and floor tiling)
- training group programmes
- qualifications for lecturers, trainers, assessors and verifiers.

ConstructionSkills has for a number of years been trying to obtain the number of people registering and achieving certificates and centres from individual ABs who are not willing to provide this commercial data. They do provide some data to QCA but due to the Data Protection Act this it is not available to the sector. The sector needs this information for national and regional skills forecasts; to monitor and support uptake, completion, funding and provision arrangements and for cradle to grave equal opportunities monitoring by race, gender, age and disability. ConstructionSkills has produced a training audit methodology statement which it has recently submitted to Sector Skills Development Agency (SSDA) highlighting the need for a common approach to undertake audits across sectors. The proposed methodology includes setting up of a data forum to facilitate data sharing by ABs and a pilot study.

ConstructionSkills and the sector is working with a range of ABs and providers:

- to provide on-site assessment and training (OSAT) www.citb.co.uk/traininglearning/trainingqualifications/onsiteassessmenttraining/
- in partnerships to provide integrated on and off-the-job vocational education (including HE), training and assessment linked to apprenticeships, industry certification, professional qualifications and continuing development
- supporting networks such as the Association of Colleges, Association of Northern Ireland Colleges, British Association of Construction Heads' Senate (BACH), Centre for Education in the Built Environment, Centres of Vocational Excellence, Construction Industry Council's Education Forum, Forum for Wales (FFORWM) and foundation degree network.

2.2 Differences in the main types of qualifications across the four UK nations

Industry feedback has said that there should be one qualification structure/framework for all home nations recognised by all authorities. The current main differences are illustrated below:

England, Northern Ireland and Wales	Wales	Scotland
GCSEs		Standard
Specialised Diplomas	Baccalaureate	
A Levels		Higher
Key/functional/employability skills - Skills for Life		Core skills; Skills for Work
Craft construction awards		Craft certificates
'Technical certificates'		
Foundation degrees		

ConstructionSkills is working with the home nations' bodies credit rating and levelling qualifications. ConstructionSkills has concerns that basing credit on the input (notional learning time) does not identify the outcomes and what skills and knowledge a person applying for a job or course already has. The time needed by learners to develop the knowledge and skills for a unit depends on the learner's individual abilities, motivation and if they are new entrants or existing workers. For NVQs/SVQs, time is also needed to experience and develop competence in a range of work-based activities. Credit based on learning times may rate qualifications that require substantial academic study more highly than the wealth of skills and knowledge individuals gain by work-based qualifications. This credit rating will not identify if the person is competent. Employers and providers will still need to look at each individual's qualification and unit certificates to find out what the person actually knows and can do. Providers and candidates will still need to complete accreditation of prior learning/profiling to identify the skills and knowledge candidates already have and the gaps they need to fill. The HE frameworks and European Qualification Framework (EQF) recognise that qualifications should have identifiable learning outcomes for the purposes of transparency, comparability, credit transfer and recognition.

ConstructionSkills and other SSCs have also questioned why there are different levels and coverage in the respective home nations' and European frameworks and are asking for the proposed levels to be reviewed. Home nations' qualification frameworks have added levels around the existing NVQ/SVQ levels 4 and 5 but there are no additional levels around level 3, although a substantial number of the craft, technical and supervisory workforce, career pathways and qualifications are contained in this level. The industry could continue to use qualification titles and guidance which distinguish UK-wide entry routes and pathways by existing NVQ/SVQ levels; industry-recognised qualification titles and pathways; job titles (such as trainee, apprentice, experienced worker or master); groupings (such as craft, technical, managerial); colours of industry certification cards; job functions (such as installation or design) and links to the EQF.

2.3 Analysis of the available information about qualifications and other learning provision

Development and Approval of Qualifications

The audit at Annex 1 confirms that the sector already has a substantial portfolio of standards, qualifications, units and other learning provision. Considerable sector effort has gone into developing, improving and refining these to meet users' needs. Key sector ambassadors have helped to achieve clarity, understanding and commitment to these standards and qualifications.

ConstructionSkills has effective working partnerships, individually and collectively, through the Built Environment Awarding Body Forum (BEABF) with the home nations' regulatory authorities and the ABs identified in the audit. These ABs are aware of the requirements for qualification structures and assessment strategies to be validated by ConstructionSkills' committees. ABs may work with ConstructionSkills' Validation Groups reviewing and developing NVQs/SVQs. ConstructionSkills have some documentation setting out these protocols but these are not readily available to all developing bodies and focus on the peer review validation, rather than the initial feasibility, planning, development/review, consultation and completion stages. The protocols may not be followed if the developing body decides, for commercial reasons, to go directly to the regulatory authorities rather than being subject to validation groups involving peer ABs. ConstructionSkills has been working with the SfB and ABs' representatives to identify and agree best practice for SSCs, developing bodies and regulatory authorities, CQFW, and SCQF working relationships to ensure quality, fit for purpose qualifications, units and other learning provision. Regulatory authorities should advise developing bodies to work to these protocols, including obtaining sector validation. ConstructionSkills is working with QCA and various Awarding Bodies to address these issues through the framework trials and testing programme.

Developing and providing the range of qualifications and units needed by the sector is currently constrained. ConstructionSkills currently develops NOS and NVQs/SVQs, supported by national funding, which are offered by ABs approved by the sector. ABs develop related vocational qualifications such as Construction Awards and National Certificates with no national development funding but use their commercially backed funding. This does not help the sector develop units which could be used with a mix

of NVQs/SVQs/various ABs' related vocational qualification units. ConstructionSkills and ABs can only develop/review qualifications/units to meet industry needs, including small local businesses, if there are sufficient potential candidate numbers to make the development costs feasible and the implementation costs sustainable for national and sector funding bodies and ABs. The market and costs of providing qualifications/units has to be looked at across the range of occupations needed by the sector with both large and small candidate numbers, such as thatching and conservation. Qualifications with limited potential candidates have been rationalised with core and option units providing pathways for a number of occupational areas and candidates. ConstructionSkills has become involved in the framework testing and trialling with QCA with the purpose of exploring solutions to a number of these issues.

Accredited vocationally related qualifications/units that develop people's knowledge and skills (such as a Construction Award or Higher National) have been mapped to individual NVQ/SVQ units. The craft Construction Awards also identify the gaps between the NVQ/SVQ units' knowledge, skills and work-based evidence people need to fill to achieve the NVQ/SVQ. People wanting pathways from other qualifications will not have this information. The sector needs to attract, retain and develop a diverse workforce with a range of existing skills and knowledge. People already working for an employer may have skills and knowledge for which they have no recognised qualification. There is currently no UK, European or international system for mutual recognition of people's existing skills and knowledge, only qualifications. People, including migrant workers and mature entrants, wishing to complete a construction qualification have to complete initial assessment, profiling or accreditation of prior learning to identify their existing skills and knowledge. ConstructionSkills is involved in a number of stakeholder projects looking to address these issues.

Other bodies such as universities, schools, manufacturers, PIs, training groups and employers also wish to develop units/qualifications for specific groups of learners and occupational areas to ensure the training will be eligible for national funding. Manufacturers, for example, are launching new products that need new skill sets and training currently not included in any NVQs/SVQs.

Apprenticeships

Publicly funded apprenticeship frameworks currently require specified, discrete, qualifications. For example, during an advanced craft apprenticeship in England a craft apprentice must complete an advanced Construction Award (the 'technical certificate'); a craft NVQ level 3; key skills level 2 application of number and level 2 communication including an independently assessed end examination; employment responsibilities and rights. Employers and apprentices may have difficulty completing all these qualifications and, therefore, the apprenticeship. Apprentices may have difficulty completing the key skills examination which is set in a general, rather than construction-specific context. Employers and apprentices may not need the breadth of knowledge and skills covered by the advanced Construction Award for the businesses' work activities. Employers may have difficulty providing apprentices the range of activities required by the NVQ. ConstructionSkills has been working with colleges, training providers and employers to ensure the NVQ/SVQ assessment requirements are clearly understood; share best practices for producing work-based portfolios of evidence and improve key skills arrangements. ConstructionSkills is working with QCA and a range of developing bodies to develop and pilot an apprenticeship as a qualification for a number of craft (including specialist) and technical occupations. The qualification will have a mix of underpinning occupational knowledge and skills and competence based units covering activities in which employers can give apprentices sufficient opportunity to become competent embedding employability/key/core skills. The qualification should suit the range of individuals with diverse existing employability skills and the occupation's specific key/core skills requirements, likely pathways, construction work-based learning and assessment contexts the sector needs .

14 to 19

ConstructionSkills is building on partnerships established with schools and local communities, including curriculum centres, to encourage young people from diverse backgrounds to experience, enter, train and qualify through a range of construction craft and technical pathways. In England and Wales a pilot Single and Double Award GCSE in Construction and the Built Environment has been implemented from September 2005. The target market is 14 to 16 year olds, but the qualification is available to people of all ages at levels 1 and 2. Young Apprenticeships were introduced in September 2006 and 14 -16 year olds

will study for a level 2 vocational qualification alongside the school curriculum. The Construction and the Built Environment Specialised Diplomas will be a key mechanism in England to encourage post-16 year olds to participate in education and training and use learning pathways from 2009. A baccalaureate programme is being developed in Wales following Future Skills Wales, the Skills and Employment Action Plan for Wales and 14–19 Learning Pathways recommendations.

Higher Education

ConstructionSkills is working with employers, PIs, HE colleges, universities, home nations' funding and quality assurance agencies, private training and assessment providers to provide a range of higher level part and full-time education, training and assessment programmes including:

- foundation degrees with construction and the built environment subject benchmarks and programmes, with universities, regional colleges and employers working in partnerships
- universities working with employers providing site-related practical experience and assessment centres to NVQ/SVQ assessment
- pathways to technical, supervisory and management functions and jobs and professional membership
- programmes for non-cognate entrants to develop construction-related knowledge and skills
- continuing professional development programmes, including developing management and leadership skills
- promoting the importance of equality of opportunity and the recruitment of a diverse workforce
- routes to PI membership by NVQs/SVQs
- routes to CSCS by NVQs/SVQs or mapping to PI's membership requirements.

ConstructionSkills is involved with Foundation Degree Forward analysing the success of FDs in the construction sector. It is also carrying out an audit of its activities relating to HE. This will assist with populating this strand of the CQS action plans.

International Qualifications

ConstructionSkills has been working with the Home Office, CSCS, sector representatives and other construction and the built environment SSCs (such as SummitSkills) to agree requirements for mutual recognition of qualifications. ConstructionSkills has, with funding from the UK Co-Ordinating Group, undertaken initial benchmarking work with Australia, Belgium, Canada, Estonia, New Zealand and Romania. An International Forum for Construction Occupational Standards (IFCOS) has been established.

Teachers Qualifications

There is a shortage of qualified lecturers, trainers, assessors and verifiers with appropriate occupational and commercial knowledge and experience. These key occupations lack of recognition including by industry certification schemes. ConstructionSkills has worked with Lifelong Learning UK to develop generic standards, related qualifications and career pathways for teaching and training and the Employment National Training Organisation to establish assessor and verifier standards and NVQ/SVQ units. Teachers delivering the proposed specialised diplomas/baccalaureate programmes need industrial knowledge, skills and experience. Lecturers, teachers, trainers, assessors and verifiers must keep up-to-date with construction, business and training best practices and developments. The network for built environment lecturers, teachers, trainers, assessors and verifiers must be maintained, including through the Lifelong Learning Network. This will form a strand of the CQS action plans.

Information and Guidance

ConstructionSkills provides a specialist careers advisory service and website, supported by PIs' and specialist federations' advisors and specialist databases. Employers and individuals may also approach their local business service advisors, schools and colleges for sector-specific information and guidance. Employers, individuals and their advisors need high quality, impartial, jargon-free information and guidance about the range of available sector-validated vocational and work-based pathways, qualifications and units. It is essential that people are referred, throughout their careers, to ConstructionSkills for information and guidance to suit their specific requirements and to help the whole workforce to continue their personal development. Individuals with diverse backgrounds and interests need to be able to find pathways suiting their personal and employment requirements. More academically based learners and their advisors (such as HE colleges / universities admissions tutors) need to find out about work-based training routes including apprenticeships and NVQs/SVQs. based learners and their advisors (such as HE colleges / universities admissions tutors) need to find out about work-based training routes including apprenticeships and NVQs/SVQs. This will form a strand of the CQS action plans.

Progression

Clear pathways need to be identified to suit the diverse development needs of businesses and individuals, and their work and personal circumstances. Continuing personal development and pathways for craft people to progress to technical, supervisory and small business qualifications/units need promoting. A credit system needs to identify people's existing skills and knowledge, rather than the number of learning hours they have completed. People with craft qualifications develop some supervisory knowledge and skills which they should be encouraged to build on if they complete the construction site supervision units that are based on the same NOS. Academic, vocational and professional learning pathways (including continuing personal development) and qualifying systems need integrating. Individuals, for example, may complete a vocationally related qualification, such as a National Certificate or degree. They then have to have their knowledge assessed again for an NVQ/SVQ and yet again for PI membership. These different qualifications need mapping to identify what knowledge and skills has already been assessed and the gaps that need filling. Academic and work-based programmes need to identify and suit individuals with different learning styles. People undertaking a Foundation Degree starting with a craft Construction Award or NVQ/SVQ may need guidance about how to adjust their ways of learning and to apply their existing craft knowledge, skills and experience to other construction and business contexts. This will assist with populating this strand of the CQS action plans.

Funding

Home nations' funding and CITB grant is currently based on whole qualifications rather than specific units. Funding in England, Scotland and Wales is currently focused on level 2 entitlements and specific age groups, rather than qualifications/units where the sector has skills needs. Funding is usually limited to initial qualifications and does not support career development. For example, there is no funding for a craft person who wants to progress to supervisory qualifications/units. Funding for programmes has to cover the costs of delivering a number of individual qualifications/units. For example, there is not sufficient funding for an apprenticeship requiring an underpinning learning course and also a work-based training, experience and assessment NVQ/SVQ programme. There are disparities between school, FE and HE funding. The sector has to approach various European, national and regional funding bodies for limited sources of funding, rather than using one co-ordinated approach. This will assist with populating this strand of the CQS action plans.

2.4 Qualifications and other learning provision currently used, valued and accepted by employers

Feedback from the CQS consultation identified that:

- that employers believe that FE should run training to meet sector demand, not just to fill the college.
- School leavers want to enter construction, but there is a lack of college provision.
- Specialist occupations have particular problems accessing training.
- College lecturers and tutors lack modern site experience.
- Funding is an issue for both resources and teaching.
- Colleges/providers, employers and CITB need better links and communications. An audit control system tracking students' progression and destinations is required.
- Funding should focus on industry skills needs rather than funding regime imperatives.
- Separate funding for training and competence is needed allowing sufficient training time and the employers' preferred delivery model. CITB grant arrangements and Learning and Skills Councils' (LSC) funding which varies between regions and has age restrictions need reviewing.

Employers see N/SVQ assessment as not being fit-for-purpose or cost effective in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. External verification (EV), internal verification (IV) and assessment are inconsistent across the UK. The assessment system needs to be more uniform and comparable whoever assesses or wherever the assessment takes place. Policing is currently inadequate and needs increasing. The development by ConstructionSkills with its own Awarding Body of an experienced worker assessment route is helping to address this issue

ABs assessment strategies need to be flexible to reflect construction in its widest context and be appropriate for all levels. The model and processes need to be rigorous, consistent, fit-for-purpose, responsive, flexible and simpler to meet the industry/occupation needs and preferences at different levels. Quality systems and assessment models need to consider the different needs of qualifications related to learning programmes and those assessing competence.

The provision of ABs' candidate registration and achievement data, which is considered commercially sensitive, must be resolved to help SSCs develop their Sector Qualification Strategies (SQSs).

The EV and AB system in England, Wales and Northern Ireland is adversarial and bureaucratic rather than a capacity and capability building system. EVs are policing without giving any support or guidance. There are insufficient EVs and they are inconsistent across all areas. EVs need to be resourced adequately and better trained.

This will form a strand of the CQS action plans.

Qualifications and other learning provision for pre-entry and entry at all levels

Feedback from the CQS consultation has confirmed:

The industry needs to encourage young people to enter the industry. Employers need to take on young people and avoid people finishing training then having no job.

That young people are not coming to the industry of the right quality and are poorly prepared. Employers believe that Schools, FE and HE are not supplying the industry with people with the basic, expected, skills and that delivery and assessment in general education is putting 'disaffected' young people off. As a result colleges and employers have to fit basic life skills training into an already beleaguered timetable. In England the introduction of Functional Skills into the schools curriculum should help with this.

Industry needs better input and liaison with schools and colleges to influence education. The introduction of Diplomas into the school curriculum offers a model for achieving this.

The image of construction needs lifting. Construction is often seen as a last option and “dumping ground” for underachievers or troublemakers, particularly by teachers and career advisers. This is because schools often lack an understanding of the industry so provide poor quality guidance and seem to want to push young people to college instead. Schools, teachers, careers advisors and parents need a change of perception and attitude towards construction as a legitimate career option providing young people of all abilities a future.

Construction needs promoting as a first choice, professional, career to attract quality people. Better publicity is needed to help people recognise the skills required across the vast range of occupations and the career progression routes that need exploring. Models of best/good practice of industry engagement including promotion and induction programmes, project work using construction skills, taster days, Saturday clubs, Skills for Work courses (currently in Scotland) and pre-apprenticeships should be encouraged and co-ordinated. Employers need to be engaged in these programmes.

Many young people want to 'study' construction but a suitable range of qualifications are currently not available to interest good people interested in a range of careers and keep their pathways open. Qualifications need to be seen in the context of progression not just employment. In England, Wales and Northern Ireland the Edexcel BTEC First qualifications are a good model for general education. The new construction and the built environment vocational GCSE appears a good concept but more publicity, appropriate delivery and less academic content may be needed.

In England, key skills should be taught at school in the 14-19 year old preparation programme and used as the entry benchmark to construction. At present key skills seem poorly presented by schools so more college training time has to be spent upgrading key skills, rather than construction skills. This is adding to the cost of training and developing young people. The way key skills are currently delivered demoralise and stops young people achieving apprenticeship frameworks, although the young people meet employer and NVQ requirements. They should be delivered in the occupational context young people can relate to. The generic key skills end exam/test is not occupationally relevant and is proving to be a barrier. This is proven by looking at the evidence available demonstrating barriers to framework achievement

Young people need a more structured and defined learning programme than experienced workers. Young people need time to train, mature and be assessed. Most employers would prefer their trainees completing most of the 'academic' content of the NVQ/SVQ in college by day release. An employer can then confirm the person is competent at a later stage.

There is an urgent need to review the training delivery model in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Employers are unhappy with FE training because it is too quick and narrow due to funding, mapping to a NVQ, key skills, assessment and portfolio building. People may be qualified but do not have the range of knowledge. HE and FE are not supplying candidates with the basic, expected, skills. More time should be spent in FE on a broader training qualification covering all aspects, not just the training linked to a NVQ which is narrow. Newly qualified workers are usually far from competent in most trades until a further two to three years work experience. There are instances of people with NVQ levels 2 or 3, assessed by FE centres, incapable of doing the job. Training content is highly variable between colleges. The content/curriculum of training programmes needs to be more clearly defined. Employers need to help identify the scope of work the training needs to cover. In Scotland the standardisation of training across FE and use of skills tests meets the mark, but CITB funding for day release programmes is needed.

Employers are generally happy with National/Higher National Certificates and degrees, although some considered the National and Higher National Certificate in Construction largely irrelevant, poorly taught, too long and expensive.

The complexity, general confusion and difficulties of achieving a Modern Apprenticeship Framework in England, Wales and Northern Ireland is casting a negative shadow on NVQs. The Apprenticeship frameworks need to be simplified. Their learning programmes need to be 'recognised' as the main core of an apprenticeship. Apprentices cannot currently demonstrate the range of skills employers would expect them to perform unless the employer exposes the apprentice to specific work areas. Colleges can only offer basic, narrow focused, training. Therefore Apprentices need a sufficient period of work experience before their true competence can be assessed and this should be through a skills test. The apprenticeship should last at least three and possibly four years but the LSC funding does not allow this. SSCs should be

allowed more input into determining funding levels.

This will form a strand of the CQS action plans

Qualifications and other learning provision for existing workforce at all levels

Feedback from the CQS consultation has confirmed:

Employers recognise that qualified people perform their job well but, generally speaking, employers will take someone on if they say they can do the job. They will often view having a qualification as being secondary. Therefore the achievement of qualifications and standards needs to be driven by clients. To achieve the objective of a fully qualified workforce issues around the upskilling of the existing workforce must be addressed.

Qualifications in Scotland are meeting most employers' requirements, although construction and civil engineering services are neglected. There are no negative perceptions of SVQs. Employers in England, Wales and Northern Ireland had a good experience of NVQs, site management diplomas and construction management degrees. The Edexcel BTEC First and Industrial Rope Access Trade Association qualifications were also considered good models.

Existing, mature, workers need more accessible on-site training or short specific courses. Many experienced craft people are reluctant to go back to a college, learning, environment. Good craft people are needed who are not necessarily supervisors. Progression is the only way up the pay structure and does not necessarily reflect individuals' skills and capabilities. 'Hence the loss of a good crafts person and gain of a bad manager!'

N/SVQs do not help the industry at the higher levels. It is inappropriate for technical, supervisory and management occupations to demonstrate competence through the current NVQ regime. Graduates who are asked to do an NVQ level 4 feel they are taking a backward step. An evidence diary endorsed by employers should be used to confirm competence. Continuing professional development work should be included in the NVQ programme.

It may not be appropriate to base all qualifications on NOS as this may narrow the range of qualifications. HE/professional qualifications and recognition are not directly compatible and could be designed using other well-established assessment and quality assurance procedures. CSCS at the higher levels should recognise other qualifications, not just NVQ/SVQs, or map to PI's frameworks not the other way round. PIs recognition frameworks should be integrated in the SVQ/NVQ process.

Assessment does not recognise the realities of mature entry well. Site-based work-based recording and accreditation practices are inadequate. Somebody can complete an assessment and pass the marking criteria but not have the complete skills to achieve the industrial standards. Employers' difficulties associated with OSAT and work based recording are impacting negatively on the image of NVQs, although this may be due to the introduction of grandfather rights by CSCS. OSAT is inconsistent and not standard across all areas.

More structured on-site training programmes are needed. Onsite trainers are poor and inadequate. Employers need to be involved in assessment and decide when a person is competent after a time in the workplace. Employer endorsements, which are now used in the craft NVQ assessed route, should be part of the assessment strategy. An evidence diary system endorsed by employers and PIs' recognition processes should be incorporated in assessment for technical, supervision and management occupations. Many people felt that the best method is to test, for example using the assessed route or skills test. Guidelines are however needed as this may only provide a snapshot and not the breadth of evidence. Good competence assessment practice covering diverse approaches needs identifying. Assessment paperwork, material, assessors and verifiers may need some standardising.

The assessment strategy for higher level qualifications is too complex and bureaucratic. Higher level awards need to be used by all ABs in the same way.. More accessible options for assessment need

developing including professional discussions. Employers must have a greater input. Some people wondered if there are enough assessors and verifiers to meet CQS requirements and what strategies were in place to combat this shortage. More and better experienced and qualified assessors with current occupational experience are needed.

Graduate full-term delivery, including one year industry experience, is about right although the course content may need relating to practice. Some major contractors wondered where foundation degrees sit and if they are needed. There is a lack of part-time provision for Master degrees for professionals in specialist areas. Course recruitment and funding is a problem for resource intensive courses.

PIs supported the HE development of common learning outcomes and pathways to professional qualifications, but suggested HE should link rather than be based on NOS/NVQs/SVQs. PIs need to pull together, rather than have different criteria and be brought in with the crafts by producing a family tree.

This will form a strand of the CQS action plans

2.5 Employer evidence for rationalising or developing qualifications or learning provision

The CQS consultation has demonstrated that:

The need for more coherent strategies and better mechanisms to identify what is 'fit for purpose' and that all delivery chain partners should be involved in product development.

Some employers felt that the framework is too complicated and needs rationalising. There may be too many qualifications, possibly driven by the CSCS initiative. Other people suggested there are not too many qualifications because there are many specialisms. Existing qualifications should be enhanced not duplicated. Broader qualifications with core units and more options may give greater flexibility if the pick and mix of units individuals want can then be delivered. Mandatory units could be endorsed by employers who should also check the person has the optional units relevant to the skills the employer needs.

Qualifications recognised as meeting statutory/industry/client body requirements must be recognised by all sectors/industry bodies. The number of ABs offering the same qualification needs reducing. More attention needs to be given to how qualifications are taken to the market. Developing bodies should be prepared to use income from large take-up sector qualifications to support the costs of providing low take-up awards. The framework is not understood by industry or colleges. Employers need a better understanding of the qualifications, routes and procedures. Qualifications need to be more clearly 'branded' and put in families so people can see the whole range and structure of qualifications with clear career progression routes. Better marketing, information and guidance is needed across all routes and levels, with briefings about new routes. Employers and providers are essentially part of the qualification development process and need to own the qualifications.

Employers have asked for stability in the industry qualification system. There have been continuous "incessant" changes since 1993 which has been problematic and should be stopped. People need a period of stability to understand the format and routes. There should be improvements and updating rather than new ideas. The industry had become increasingly frustrated by an initiative overload and programmes not delivering.

There may be too many categories in some plant operation NVQs though the assessed route is helping to overcome this. Some employers felt that current qualifications are targeted at the industry's sub-contract culture and may be becoming too small to meet the needs SMEs who require traditional crafts people multi-skilled with a broad range of competencies. Employers would prefer additional multi-skilling units as bolt-on options to mainstream NVQs.

There are some unused technical qualifications/apprenticeships for technical occupations due to provision, including geographical gaps and lack of employer awareness and engagement.

Some people felt other programmes should have formal recognition as NVQs do not always make people competent. Future frameworks need to recognise wider learning programmes organised by training groups, appreciation courses and company based training, particularly at level 4 and 5, which could be replicated across industry. Manufacturer based training is often ahead of the game and should be recognised. ConstructionSkills is proposing working with manufacturers and specialist federations as part of the second phase of the QCA test and trials to develop manufacturers' training programmes as nationally recognised vocational qualifications.

Some employers said there is a 'bridge' across the divide between craft to supervisory and managerial qualifications. Provision is available accommodating wide basis need. Employers had developed people from craft into technical, supervisory or management roles but they were unsure of the pathway. There would be a bridge if more trainees qualified to level 3 and had full apprenticeship framework completion. The bridge rests with the employer and their knowledge of the progression routes. Progression through supervision/management is more an awareness problem. The transition to first line supervisor is not good or effective, particularly from craft. The progression from craft to technician is perceived not to work following the emergence of NVQs. Professional progression is widely catered for. People however consider there is a lack of logical and clear progression routes which promote the full range of careers. A better, clear, progression pathway is needed, which readily links craft and supervisory qualifications, so the sector has sufficient future managers and supervisors.

The gap between level 2 and level 3 qualifications is too big for some students. Some employers suggested level 3 should be craft, not supervision, based. Advanced skills (for example brickwork) is not 'advanced' only more of the same with some supervision thrown in. Craft level 3 should contain identifiable higher skills and extend and incorporate more detailed work skills. Two to three year work experience should be acquired before progressing to level 3 supervisory qualifications.

NVQ is not always best the route for experienced and good managers. There is no obvious link from craft to supervisory qualifications, like the old City & Guilds system. Craft and higher levels qualifications are different. Standard qualifications are needed so everyone can recognise the qualifications. CIC's NOS/NVQs/SVQs are unwieldy. They should relate to the craft NOS/NVQs/SVQs and be written so they are easy to follow and understand. Craft and technical programmes are not 'joined up'. Achievements in craft programmes need recognising to encourage progression.

Some companies provide a training package and career ladder so people can progress through levels 3, 4 and 5. Many employers said however that there are no suitable products available for training supervisors. A broad modular supervision/management training programme would be welcomed with a pick and mix basket of recognised level 3 and 4 units/modules related to, but broader than, the higher level NVQs. Various companies are developing their own technical, supervisory and management programmes which could, if appropriate, be promoted and used by other companies. The programme should meet business needs. Individuals and organisations should be able to 'dip in', on a "just in time" basis, over a longish timeframe, when they encounter new aspects of their role and take on wider responsibilities. The training element needs to be separate from the assessment/NVQ/SVQ so people can develop their people's supervisory and management skills before being signed off by their employer as competent.

Bolt on courses for higher awards, such as National/Higher National Certificates, must be recognised. Funding has prohibited the training. Courses, such as the Site Management Safety Training Scheme, need recognising and integrating as part of higher qualifications. Continuing professional development undertaken by professional service occupations needs recognising and bringing into NVQs. The links between learning and NVQs at the higher levels is poor. Other HE qualifications are seen as better value than NVQs.

This will form a strand of the CQS action plans

Section 3: Other Uses of Qualifications

3.1 Use of qualifications for regulation of practice

At present the government is committed to driving the cowboys out of the construction industry and raising standards of work and health and safety. Many influential bodies are working towards a policy of a fully qualified workforce by 2010 when it will be compulsory to prove workers' skills and qualifications before they can work on site. Many contractors are already asking for all workers on their site to hold a CSCS card to prove their competence in their stated occupation. Some clients are also specifying that contracts will only be awarded to contractors and sub-contractors with carded workforces. CSCS/ CSR use NVQs/SVQs as the recognised level of competence.

3.2 Use of qualifications to promote customer confidence and protect consumers / the public

Clients are increasingly being encouraged to look for CSCS/CSR/ NVQs/SVQs as quality standards for construction work and NOS as a common currency.

3.3 Uses of qualifications in Scotland, Northern Ireland, Wales and England

CSCS in England, Wales and Scotland and CSR in Northern Ireland use NVQs/SVQs as the recognised level of competence.

Section 4: Sector Working Environment

4.1 Features and characteristics of the working environment informing qualifications

The construction process is a complex one starting with design and planning through production to ongoing maintenance and refurbishment. Construction work is almost entirely done on a project by project basis, whereby contractors will draw together teams of people who often work for quite a short period of time and then move on to another location or disperse. Much of the work is managed by a main contractor who deals with the clients but who subcontracts part of it to smaller firms who specialise in a particular aspect of the process. This presents great difficulties with training and qualification achievement and forms a main reason as to why the CITB exists with its statutory levy.

Although skills gaps are not perceived as a problem in the existing trades workforce, they do cause difficulties among new starters, professionals and managers. A detailed assessment of management skills in the contracting industry showed gaps in those skills required for the future: proactive business development, design management, technical and practical skills, option and risk appraisal, and business development. In the trades, latent (hidden) skills gaps are preventing the industry from addressing productivity and performance problems. At least 250,000 people in the ConstructionSkills' footprint still need to improve their skills to meet NVQ/SVQ level 2 requirements.

The initial supply side challenge is to provide employers with a reliable flow of suitably trained new entrants and to ensure that employers are maintaining and improving the skills of their workforce in line with market forces. The evidence presented suggests that the UK is failing on the first part of this challenge and will continue to do so if growth continues.

Current UK training and education provision does not provide enough qualified routes of entry into the industry. Whilst FE provision for the main trades appears to be almost sufficient, little more than half of those people who start training become qualified. There is scarce FE provision for specialist or civil engineering occupations, including plant. Professional and technical provision is also very patchy, with particular problems in disciplines such as building services engineering. Electrical provision appears satisfactory but plumbing completions are well below the level required.

Following several years of decline HE establishments are now seeing increasing numbers of starters. HE attracted 10,800 starters in 2003/4, which is an 11% increase on the previous year. Inspections of universities suggest most display good practice. The accreditation of courses by PIs confirms this. Employers are similarly supportive, although a recent CIC survey of 927 firms found one third of respondents felt that the quality of recruits had fallen.

The combined findings from the CIC surveys of construction professional services companies give cause for concern that investment in training, by small and medium-sized enterprises in particular, is low. Also, although employer-led training is held to be essential, the actual amount carried out as part of a well-structured programme is less than adequate. Related activities, such as continuing professional development, feature only as a low company priority.

There is insufficient data on which to draw reliable conclusions about the quantity and nature of construction employer training for the overall sector. However, the introduction of standards through CSCS/CSR and the provision of OSAT are widely accepted by larger employers as a positive move and are proving an effective way of qualifying the workforce.

80% of professional services employers experience problems in their existing workforce and the data suggests that a minority of firms experience severe problems in this respect. However, construction employers repeatedly report in surveys that their own workforce is suitably qualified and that the problem is entirely to do with the inflow of people. This suggests that the skills gaps in the existing workforce are either not apparent to employers or that employers are in denial.

The sector needs a mobile, skilled and qualified workforce, with learning matched across nations. Currently, qualification titles and the five NVQ/SVQ levels are recognised across the UK, including by the industry's certification schemes.

To meet the demands of the industry and its clients the workforce must undertake lifelong learning. Employers and learners (including mature and migrant workers) may only want to complete one or two units to fill gaps, or update or certify specific areas of their knowledge and skills. Designers, for example, may wish to prove to their clients and PIs that they are competent in current construction safety design by completing nationally recognised, auditable units as continuing personal/professional development.

The sector employs and needs to attract people from diverse backgrounds with varied employability skills. Employers and individuals need these underpinning essential skills in order to develop the key/core and occupational knowledge and skills needed for employment and career development.

The industry requires and provides opportunities and pathways for people to develop by:

- specialising in one occupational area and undertaking increasingly complex work, for example developing from level 2 to level 3 plastering
- broadening their range of skills and knowledge, for example by following a construction operations concreting pathway, then extending it to formworking and steelworking
- moving to another occupational area, for example from bricklaying to supervision or from town planning to transport planning
- ongoing continuing development, updating and extending skills and knowledge, for example by moving from town planning into specialist conservation areas of work or for craft people to develop the skills needed to run a business.

The sector and its clients need people with a wide range of skills to complete construction projects and run its businesses, including administrators, building services engineers, cleaners, landscape gardeners and construction people with customer service, sales and business support skills. Other sectors also employ people with construction skills, for example on film sets. Other sectors may tailor some of the construction standards to suit their specific sector needs. ABs have to provide qualifications/units that meet a range of sectors' requirements, assessment and qualification strategies. ConstructionSkills is working with other sectors on specific developments and through the Built Environment Skills Alliance (BESA), BEABF and the SfB network of SSCs to ensure:

- construction and cross-sector qualifications/units meet the UK construction skills requirements
- commonality where appropriate between sectors' assessment and qualification strategies.

The sector employs and needs to attract people from diverse backgrounds with varied employability skills. Employers and individuals need these underpinning essential skills in order to develop the key/core and occupational knowledge and skills needed for employment and career development.

4.2 Workforce trends and forecasts

The construction industry is a large employer that is currently hindered both by skills shortages in the trades and skills gaps in its managers and professionals. It represents about 8% of the national economy in terms of GDP.

The construction industry is, and has been over the last ten years, a significant employer of labour (2.1 million people and 210,100 enterprises). Since 1996 the employment trend has been positive with a growth of 14%. The majority of employees work for mid-sized (11–250 employees) companies, yet most companies are small (90% have less than 10 employees). In terms of occupational structure, manual workers dominate and they are likely to earn more than manual workers in other sectors – a condition that has applied since 1995 and could indicate that skills shortages are leading to wage inflation.

When analysed against other similar labour intensive sectors, the construction industry is the second highest in terms of the proportion of the workforce employed in small and medium enterprises (those with less than 250 employees) and the sector with the largest share of 'one man bands'.

Overall the incidence of self-employment in the construction sector has increased more quickly than that of direct employment. For example, between 2000 and 2004 self-employment in the UK construction industry increased by 28% whereas direct employment only increased by 1%. The contracting part of the construction industry relies heavily on a large number of sub-contractors, over a third of who are self-employed. The Labour Force Survey 2004 indicates that, of the 2,166,800 people working in the industry, 804,770 are self-employed. At 37% this figure represents a drop from 40% in 1997, but is still one of the highest in Europe. The flexibility of such a large pool of self-employed labour and the avoidance of employers' National Insurance contributions are significant financial advantages to prime contractors. The disadvantage is the lack of investment in skills and qualifications by those who are self-employed and migrate from job to job with little security of income and few of the advantages of direct employment.

In addition to highlighting the contribution that the UK construction industry as a whole makes to the UK self-employment population, analysis by occupation also attributes 'trades consistent with construction (for example, carpenters and joiners)' as having a large part to play. Self-employment in the four main craft trades (wood trades, bricklaying, plastering and painting & decorating) accounts for 60% of their total employment across the UK. Clearly this strong tendency for career pathways to aim towards self-employment, particularly in the main trades where the financial rewards are perceived as greater, has implications on the future training of individuals moving to self-employment and on how industry can provide sufficient opportunities for new entrants.

The construction workforce is more biased towards lower level qualifications than the overall UK workforce. Apprenticeships are common and in some regions of the United Kingdom almost half the workforce will be trained in this way.

Women account for approximately 10% of the industry's total employment, but only 1% of manual and 30% of non-manual employment. The manual portion of the sector is the most gender imbalanced in the UK. The proportion of ethnic minorities nearly doubled from 1.5% in 1994 to 2.8% in spring 2004 but this is still significantly lower than the 6.9% present in the total working population. For both these groups, the representation for professional services is higher than for manual occupations, but is still an under-representation compared with the whole workforce.

The construction industry will, over the next 20 years, lose around 30% of its workforce through retirement. Its age profile is significantly biased towards the 30–44 age bracket compared with the UK working population as a whole.

The current forecast is that the industry needs to recruit and train 88,000 entrants per annum for the next five years, with 25,000 in the four main trades (bricklaying, carpentry and joinery, painting & decorating, plastering); 20,000 specialists and civil engineering occupations; 17,000 in management and clerical roles; 7,000 in professional and technical roles; 5,000 in plant and logistics; and 14,000 in electrical, plumbing and related trades.

Demographic pressure and the increased popularity of HE will reduce the pool of labour available to the sector, forcing it to look to non-traditional pools which will in turn help to address the gender imbalance.

Whilst there is much anecdotal evidence of the increased use of migrant workers, there is a general lack of data. The CITB-ConstructionSkills study 'Employer Attitudes and Motivations to Learning and Training' indicated that currently only 4% of employers (excluding the self-employed) had employed any non-UK citizen in the last 12 months. Predictably, larger firms are more likely to have recruited migrant workers, but more surprisingly professional service firms were more likely than construction firms to employ migrant workers. Overall, non-UK citizens account for 2% of the total current workforce (6% among the largest firms employing 250 or more across the UK). At least some of these staff spoke English as a second language. 36% of companies employing non-UK citizens expected the proportion of non-UK citizens to grow.

In the last year nine surveys of skills shortages, skills shortage vacancies and skills gaps have been carried out across the sector. Each has confirmed that skills shortages affect a wide number of companies and skills gaps affect relatively few companies. It is most difficult to recruit workers for the wood trades, bricklayers, plasterers, and general operatives/labourers. The picture varies by region (East is best, North West is worst) but is relatively consistent across different sizes of businesses and different subsectors.

If the current capacity for training does not sustain the industry's projected growth then employers may resolve the deficit in trained people by:

- hiring untrained people and so further reducing the competence of the workforce, which will then affect quality, productivity and performance
- 'poaching' trained staff from other firms thus increasing wage inflation
- improving the productivity of the existing workforce
- a combination of these actions.

Skills shortages (the inability to recruit people with appropriate skills) have a significant impact on the sector, particularly amongst trades and manual labour. Overall this will reduce the ability of firms to win work, lowering the capacity of the industry as a whole and reducing the speed with which the government can create the infrastructure (schools, hospitals and housing) to the level of quality required to improve public services across the country. The industry's investment in management and leadership development needs to focus on preparing for the future rather than just getting better at what the industry does now. The sector must focus on providing the skills to deliver the reform agenda being set by industry 'think tanks'

such as the Strategic Forum for Construction and Constructing Excellence. The industry must be made aware of, and act upon, the skills gaps in the existing workforce. A better trained and qualified workforce would improve the quality, performance and productivity of most companies in the sector.

4.3 Features of the working environment for Scotland, Northern Ireland, Wales and England

Construction employment in the regions varies between 58,000 and 306,000. As a proportion of all regional employment across Great Britain, not including Northern Ireland, it is in the fairly narrow range of 5.8%–8.5%.

The special features of the working environment for Scotland, Northern Ireland and England are clearly described within the ConstructionSkills Sector Skills Agreement.

ConstructionSkills is developing CQS action plans for each of the four home nations that will address their respective qualification and training frameworks.

The construction workforce needs to be mobile and must be able to operate across the UK and internationally using similar areas of skills/knowledge, whatever their original region. The sector is committed to 'Qualifying the Workforce' using CSCS/CSR based on the existing five levels of National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs)/Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQs). ConstructionSkills has questioned why there are different levels and coverage in the respective home nations' frameworks

Section 5: How ConstructionSkills Will Help Realise the Future

5.1 ConstructionSkills' view of qualifications and other learning provision in the future

In February 2005, ConstructionSkills and QCA agreed to develop a CQS as a basis for future qualification planning and development to meet the construction industry's three major skill challenges identified in the ConstructionSkills' Sector Skills Agreement (SSA):

- **improving business performance**, including supporting lifelong learning to raise the workforce's skill level
- **qualifying the existing workforce**, including developing flexible training and qualification structures and assisting the effective integration of migrant workers
- **recruiting qualified new entrants**, including increasing apprentice completions and degree applications
-

The CQS will help to achieve ConstructionSkills' vision of:

- giving the industry the necessary support to expand and improve businesses
- construction workers having, and being able to prove they have, the skills levels needed to do the job
- recruiting, from the widest pool of talent, half a million quality new entrants with ambition and commitment, by 2010
- providing a vocational education and training infrastructure.

Collaborative solutions are being proposed to enable the industry to have the qualifications and pathways it needs. These include:

- an ongoing incremental review of National Occupational Standards (NOS) and qualifications, particularly responding to evidence from the sector's Qualifying the Workforce initiative
- developing more coherent, but flexible, qualifications and units for specialist occupations
- mapping manufacturers' training against vocational qualifications and developing short courses recognised for government funding. The sector and its clients require manufacturers' training to effectively use new products and methods of construction, for example to maintain existing properties and provide affordable new housing
- developing innovative pathways to qualifications that enhance traditional apprenticeship arrangements and meet the needs of the industry's sectors, widening on-site practice opportunities and increasing completions
- improving understanding of construction career opportunities
- providing lifelong pathways for ongoing development, including opportunities to move across the industry
- a unitised framework supporting incremental lifelong learning
- providing a credible and rigorous assessment strategy that responds to the challenges of the large numbers of experienced workers on the On-Site Assessment and Training (OSAT) programme
- integrating academic, vocational and professional qualifications, and continuing professional development across the built environment, building pathways based on NOS
- identifying mechanisms to establish mutual recognition of non-United Kingdom (UK) qualifications to help to integrate migrant workers into the workforce.

The CQS will:

- ensure a well-planned and structured approach for developing fit-for-purpose qualifications and pathways that meet sector and learner needs
- provide a mechanism for implementing and realising the sector's vision, stated in the SSA, through the support and engagement of key stakeholder partners
- offer a blueprint and focal point that draws together a coherent set of guidelines, principles, priorities and actions as a basis for future planning and development. The CQS will be a 'moving' annex to the SSA
- provide a steer for:
 - bodies developing and awarding qualifications/units
 - the sector home nations' regulatory and funding bodies approving and funding qualifications/units
 - mapping pathways and inter-assessed qualifications.

Aims of the strategy

The CQS aims to:

- identify the sector's key requirements for qualifications, units, pathways, qualification development and other lifelong learning provision

- determine how well existing qualifications, units and other learning provision meets identified sector needs
- identify changes required and produce a development and implementation plan
- develop effective ways of working with the bodies that are developing and awarding qualifications/units, professional qualifying bodies, certification schemes, home nations' regulatory authorities, the Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales (CQFW) and Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF)
- establish a process for 'developing' bodies (such as awarding bodies – ABs, manufacturers, professional institutions and universities) that are identifying the feasibility, planning, developing, evaluating, reviewing and validating existing and required qualifications/units to meet the sector's needs
- ensure sector qualification proposals are communicated to, and supported by, key stakeholder partners
- suit employers and individuals training and working in all four home nations
- inform home nations' funding plans
- advise training and assessment provision models
- identify mechanisms for establishing mutual recognition of qualifications.

Scope of the strategy

The CQS will:

- suit the functions and occupations identified in sectors' occupational and functional maps, including cross-sector job roles and functions (such as personnel management) and inter-sector job roles and functions (such as facilities management)
- consider the requirements of employers and individuals who are training and working in all four home nations
- not be age-specific
- consider the diverse needs of people entering and already in the sector who require access to learning and qualifications/units
- include vocational education and training qualifications at all levels provided by schools, further and higher education (including subject benchmarks), professional institutions (including education frameworks and structured continuing professional development), and private training providers (including employers, manufacturers and training groups)
- help to steer bodies that are developing units/qualifications for the sector
- consider lifelong learning requirements and pathways for all the workforce, including employability, skills for work, key/core skills, continuing personal development and upskilling existing workers
- identify units/qualifications for trainers, lecturers, assessors and verifiers
- seek to influence entry level and 14–19 year old education (including the school, general and vocational curriculum):
 - identifying the skills and competences needed by learners entering the workforce, further and higher education
 - agreeing required changes with relevant organisations
 - identifying appropriate support for developing stronger vocational 14–19 provision

consider the need for mutual recognition of UK and non-UK qualifications/units, given the worldwide nature of the sector's work and its migrant workforce

The sector's workforce requirements will be considered as a whole by ConstructionSkills standards, qualifications and lifelong learning committee arrangements (annex 2). ConstructionSkills will continue to encourage the industry to support and sustain an integrated functional map and suite of fit-for-purpose NOS, qualifications and units by incremental review and development. Collaborative solutions will be used to enable the industry to have the qualifications, units and pathways it needs.

ConstructionSkills will maintain an audit of existing qualifications relevant to the construction workforce evaluating the number of centres and candidates registering and achieving certificates. The information required by learners, employers and providers will be made available on a web-based database or directory. Qualifications and units identified in the audit will be reviewed and maintained incrementally where there is clear sector support and feedback including evidence from the sector's Qualifying the Workforce initiative. New qualifications, pathways and units will be developed where there is clear sector support and feedback considering ConstructionSkills and other relevant SSCs' labour market information. All vocationally related construction and the built environment units/qualifications including HE should be linked to NOS and common learning outcomes that provide career pathways. More coherent, but flexible, qualifications and units will be developed for specialist occupations including obtaining recognition and funding for manufacturers' training. Academic, vocational and professional pathways (including continuing personal development) and qualifying systems across the built environment will be integrated based on NOS with a structured unit outcome-based approach supporting lifelong learning. Qualifications should be developed using a mix of developing bodies' units. Construction qualifications/units will be titled so they can be recognised across the UK. A credit system identifying people's knowledge and skills should be developed and used. The home nations' proposed framework levels should be reviewed.

ConstructionSkills will continue to work with other SSCs, SSSA and home nations' government departments/agencies to promote certification / accreditation schemes based on NOS/NVQs/SVQs. Innovative pathways to qualifications will be developed to enhance apprenticeship arrangements and meet the needs of the industry's sectors, widening on-site practice opportunities and increasing completions. Mutual international recognition for construction standards, qualifications, units and IFCOS will be expanded including mechanisms to help people identify and fill gaps in knowledge and skills.

ConstructionSkills will continue to provide information and guidance about the range of construction career opportunities, pathways, qualifications and units. Guidance will be available to help employers, potential students, their advisors and admissions tutors recognise and participate in CSCS/CSR, NVQs/SVQs, related vocational qualification and apprenticeship programmes. Information and guidance about HE programmes and pathways will be available alongside other construction qualifications. Appropriate employability skill qualifications and delivery methods will be identified and used in schools, colleges and the workplace. The existing SkillMatch web-based system may be used to profile existing workers occupational skills to identify their employability skills. Construction and key/core skill qualifications, including gaps and methods of filling these, will be identified. Coherent, diploma / apprenticeship / baccalaureate programmes will be finalised, used and evaluated. Employers and ConstructionSkills will be involved in reviewing, approving and supporting HE courses and PIs' frameworks.

An infrastructure of vocational education, training and assessment provision will be supported to deliver the range of construction and the built environment qualifications, units and pathways to enable individuals and businesses to develop. Suitable standards, qualifications, career pathways and industry certification scheme recognition will be established for lecturers, trainers, assessors and verifiers. The BEABF and Skills Academy in England should help identify, develop and share best practices and encourage employer engagement. The new NVQ/SVQ assessment strategy will be implemented and monitored. Creative and innovative solutions, including e-assessment and paperless portfolios, will be further developed, evaluated and implemented more widely to support mobile individuals' lifelong learning. Tools to support the lifelong learning profiling / planning / tracking / recording / assessment / review cycle will be further developed, evaluated and used. Funding should be available based on targets and national and regional skills priorities for sector validated qualifications and units. Learners should be able to complete and obtain funding for a selection of units awarded by various developing bodies.

5.2 How ConstructionSkills will work with partners to realise its view of the future and action plans

ConstructionSkills will continue to work across all four home nations through collaborative partnerships to realise its view of the future and action plans through dialogue with:

- employers and practitioners. ConstructionSkills will continually reinforce communication of the strategy to provide a greater understanding of qualifications. ConstructionSkills welcomes employers who are interested in developing qualifications/units. Development work needs to involve a group of employers so the qualifications/units suit the range of employers (including SMEs) and are recognised by the sector and its clients to allow transferability and mobility. Employers are encouraged to provide support in the workplace for training and assessment and value individuals' and their businesses' achievements. Employers should work with providers and individuals planning, recording, profiling, auditing, updating and certifying people's skills and knowledge using the range of available qualifications and units
- federations
- trade unions
- PIs
- individual ABs and the BEABF. ConstructionSkills will continue to work with developing bodies including ABs, universities, manufacturers, PIs, training groups, groups of employers and regulatory bodies to provide the range of qualifications/units needed by the sector. ConstructionSkills and SfB have identified protocols for working with developing bodies and regulatory authorities which are now being reviewed
- schools and local partnerships, such as curriculum centres
- FE colleges including the Association of Colleges, Association of Northern Ireland Colleges, BACH Senate and FFORWM
- training and assessment providers including employers, manufacturers, training groups and National Training Federation Wales
- HE including the Accelerating Change in Built Environment Education initiative, home nations funding councils, Quality Assurance Agency, Universities UK, Higher Education Academy – Centre for Education in the Built Environment, and Construction Industry Council's Education Forum
- CSCS Board and CSR. ConstructionSkills supports industry certification schemes, federations, unions and PIs lending validity, value and recognition. Clients are advised to ask for and check qualifications during selection processes
- ConstructionSkills' Strategic Partnership Panel; Standards and Qualifications Strategy Committee (SQSC) and Validation Group (see below)
- CITB's Training Committee
- CIC's Lifelong Learning Committee
- BESA
- other SSCs and standards setting bodies developing and using cross-sector NOS/qualifications/units
- Connexions/Careers Scotland/Careers Wales/Job Centre (Northern Ireland)
- funding bodies including HE councils, Department for Employment and Learning (DEL NI), Learning and Skills Council, Scottish Executive, Scottish Funding Council for Further and Higher Education; Wales Assembly Government (Department for Education, Lifelong Learning, and Skills - DELLS)
- the UK home nations' regulatory authorities, CQFW and SCQF
- inspectorate/quality assurance bodies e.g. the Adult Learning Inspectorate and Estyn.

Annex 2 shows the new ConstructionSkills committee structure which will establish, evaluate, maintain and implement a coherent, sustainable, construction qualification strategy meeting the whole workforce requirements:

- the Standards and Qualifications Strategic Group (S&QSG) is being established between the partner organisations in ConstructionSkills and will be responsible to the ConstructionSkills Strategic Partnership Panel. The S&QSC will provide advice and guidance and lobby as appropriate, to direct the CQS and action plans on the development and maintenance of a coherent and comprehensive framework of standards/benchmarks and qualifications to support the industry's targets for a fully qualified workforce throughout the UK. Members will include federation, PI, AB, HE, FE, school and union representatives. Representatives from the regulatory bodies, SSSA, LSC and Scottish Enterprise will be invited as observers
- the ConstructionSkills Standards and Qualifications Validation Group. Members will include employer, PI, HE, FE and union representatives. Representatives from the regulatory bodies, SSSA and BEABF. Employers and practitioners currently involved in the occupational area in the four home nations, their regions and varied sizes/types of businesses need to realistically advise ConstructionSkills, ABs and providers about their requirements and suggest improvements to existing NOS/qualifications/units including the content, assessment and delivery methods (such as work-based assignments, e-learning or part-time courses)
- the Built Environment Skills Alliance (BESA) which includes representatives from Asset Skills, ConstructionSkills, Energy & Utility Skills, Engineering Construction Industry Training Board, Lantra, Pro Skills and SummitSkills. Other relevant standards setting bodies with an interest in the built environment (including for example SEMTA, Cogent and the rail sector), regulators, ABs, providers and others, including CSCS representatives, may attend by invitation. BESA is predominantly an advisory and liaison group with a focus on development issues. The strength of the group comes from sharing a common interest and maintaining a focus on common issues across the Built Environment. It will aim to work through its members and promote and encourage joint working where this is appropriate and likely to add value
- the BEABF includes ABs and home nations' regulatory authorities supported by the above built environment SSCs/standards setting bodies' standards and qualifications staff. The BEABF oversees the assessment strategies
- CITB-ConstructionSkills Training Committee focuses on operative and craft training, with some interests in technical, supervisory and management occupations employed by companies in-scope to CITB-ConstructionSkills
- CIC Lifelong Learning Committee with its Education and Training and Continuing Professional Development Panels focuses on HE and technical, managerial and professional occupations in professional services employers.

5.3 How ConstructionSkills will prepare information and materials, including action plans

From feedback about the original CQS original consultation document and recommendations a high level strategy plan with priorities, success criteria and following nineteen revised recommendations/'strands' has been developed and endorsed by the ConstructionSkills' standards and qualifications committees inclusive of all home nations. The strands have been mapped against the original consultation recommendations.

Detailed draft action plans for each home country are being finalised considering the country's specific requirements and priorities including an additional strand 20. The plans include activities, delivery dates and key dependencies. The home nations' have identified that some activities, such as NOS related work, will be undertaken UK wide with respective home nation's advice and support. The plans are being made available on <http://constructionskills.net/strategicinitiatives/constructionqualificationstrategy/> Any requirements for regional action plans have yet to be established by the respective home nations.

Strategy Strands and Coverage

Qualification Strategy Delivery

1. Establish and maintain one ConstructionSkills' Strategic Standards and Qualifications Group.

Both UK wide inclusive of all home nations and home nation specific groups.

2. Develop a UK-wide qualification strategy and home nations' action plans.

UK wide strategy inclusive of all home nations and home nation specific action plans including appropriate UK wide actions.

3. Inform emerging Government policy by construction sector needs.

Informing both UK wide and home nation specific Government policies.

Industry Recognition

4. Establish and implement a standards and qualifications communications and marketing strategy.

UK wide inclusive of all home nations and home nation specific communications and marketing strategies.

5. Establish certification /accreditation schemes and qualification/ programme framework support.

UK wide inclusive of all home nations with home nation specific as appropriate (for example CSCS in England, Scotland and Wales; CSR in Northern Ireland).

Strategy Strands and Coverage

Framework of Standards, Qualifications and Units

6. Develop occupational standards and common learning outcomes.

UK wide inclusive of all home nations with home nation specific as appropriate.

7. Establish principles for developing bodies, regulatory authorities and SSCs working together.

UK wide inclusive of all home nations with home nation specific as appropriate (for example with home nations' HE funding bodies).

8. Develop assessment strategy and methods.

UK wide inclusive strategy of all home nations with home nation specific assessment methods as appropriate (for example skills testing in level 3 SVQs).

9. Develop qualifications, units, PIs' frameworks and pathways (non-higher and higher education).

UK wide inclusive of all home nations with home nation specific as appropriate (for example NVQs/SVQs; foundation degrees in England).

10. Develop cross-sector qualifications / units to meet sector skills requirements.

UK wide inclusive of all home nations.

11. Develop and maintain a qualifications database and audit.

UK wide inclusive of all home nations' audit.

Entry to the Industry

12. Develop and use appropriate employability skill qualifications, including in the 11-19 skills framework.

UK wide inclusive of all home nations with home nation specific as appropriate (for example Skills for Work in Scotland).

13. Develop fit for purpose frameworks and pathways

UK wide inclusive of all home nations with home nation specific as appropriate (for example with

13. Develop fit for purpose frameworks and pathways

UK wide inclusive of all home nations with home nation specific as appropriate (for example with Specialised Diploma in England; Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification.).

Migrant Workers

14. Establish mutual international recognition.

UK wide inclusive of all home nations.

Strategy Strands and Coverage

Delivery Infrastructure

15. Support the provider infrastructure.

Home nation specific with UK wide support as appropriate (for example Skills Academy in England).

16. Identify standards, qualifications and career pathways for lecturers, trainers, assessors and verifiers.

Home nation specific infrastructure with UK wide support as appropriate (for example strand already embedded in Scottish infrastructure).

17. Provide a Lifelong Learning Network.

Home nation specific infrastructure with UK wide support as appropriate (for example strand already embedded in Scottish infrastructure).

18. Identify standards, qualifications and career pathways for lecturers, trainers, assessors and verifiers.

Home nation specific infrastructure with UK wide support as appropriate (for example strand already embedded in Scottish infrastructure).

Vocational Education Funding

19. Obtain funding for completing qualifications and units.

Specific with home nations' funding councils.

Supporting a Sustainable Inclusive Construction Industry

20. Identify and implement strategies to support cross cutting themes important to the development of a sustainable, inclusive, construction industry.