

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 383 922

CE 069 324

TITLE A Framework for Credit. Framework Guidelines 2. Learning Outcomes, Units and Modules.  
 INSTITUTION Further Education Development Agency, London (England).  
 REPORT NO ISBN-1-85338-387-2  
 PUB DATE 95  
 NOTE 24p.; For related documents, see CE 069 322-323.  
 PUB TYPE Viewpoints (Opinion/Position Papers, Essays, etc.) (120) -- Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.  
 DESCRIPTORS Adults; \*Behavioral Objectives; British National Curriculum; Check Lists; \*Credits; Curriculum Development; Delivery Systems; \*Employment Qualifications; Evaluation Criteria; Foreign Countries; Learning Modules; Material Development; Postsecondary Education; \*Student Certification; Student Evaluation; Units of Study; \*Vocational Education  
 IDENTIFIERS \*Great Britain; \*Standardization

ABSTRACT

This document refines and develops a 1992 proposal by Great Britain's Further Education Unit (FEU) that all kinds of student achievement be documented within a common framework involving the following procedures: describing adult learners' achievements in terms of learning outcomes; grouping the learning outcomes into coherent units; defining the level and size of the units according to a common procedure; and agreeing on a credit value for the unit based on learning outcomes, level, and size. The guide is divided into four sections in which the following topics are discussed: (1) the need for a common approach in the use of learning outcomes (definition of and rationale for learning outcomes, problems in communicating and interpreting learning outcomes, FEU's proposal for a common approach, development of a common set of terms); (2) guidance on communicating and interpreting learning outcomes (use of written statements, checklist for writing learning outcomes, learning outcomes and level descriptors, use of exemplar materials, use of networking and professional contacts); (3) developing units (writing units, approving units, using approved units); and (4) learning outcomes, units, and modules (unitization and modularization, units and modules, and modular delivery systems). Appended are an explanation of terms used in specifying learning outcomes and a sample unit.  
 (MN)

\*\*\*\*\*  
 \* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made \*  
 \* from the original document. \*  
 \*\*\*\*\*

ED 383 922

FEDA

A FRAMEWORK FOR CREDIT

# Framework

# Guidelines 2

## Learning outcomes, units and modules

CE 069 324

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
Office of Educational Research and Improvement  
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION  
CENTER (ERIC)

- This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it
- Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

*J. Boone*

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."



**FEDA**  **Further Education  
Development Agency**

**A FRAMEWORK FOR CREDIT**

# **Framework Guidelines 2**

**Learning outcomes, units  
and modules**

On 7 April 1995, the Further Education Development Agency (FEDA) formally superseded the Further Education Unit (FEU) and The Staff College. Between April and August 1995, publications will be produced under joint FEDA/FEU and FEDA/The Staff College banners. From September 1995, FEDA will launch a new publications programme.

Further Education Development Agency  
Citadel Place  
Tinworth Street  
London SE11 5EH

Tel: 0171-962 1280  
Fax: 0171-962 1266

© Further Education Development Agency (FEDA) 1995

ISBN: 1 85338 387 2

Distribution number 097

Printed in Britain by Blackmore Press, Shaftesbury, Dorset

## PREFACE

*A Framework for Credit* refines and develops the proposal first made by FEU in *A Basis for Credit?* (FEU 1992) that all kinds of achievement can be incorporated within a common framework through:

- describing these achievements in terms of learning outcomes;
- grouping these learning outcomes into coherent units;
- defining the level and size of these units according to a common procedure;
- agreeing a credit value for the unit based on learning outcomes, level and size.

*Framework Guidelines 1 and 2* explore the rationale and technical issues underlying the proposal. They also provide advice on how to apply this approach to a range of different applications relevant to further education (FE) colleges and other institutions.

The advice draws upon a variety of current experience and field testing. It is primarily aimed at those undertaking credit-based activities or about to become involved.

The *Guidelines* contain some stand-alone material but most practitioners will find that the publications in the *Framework for Credit* series complement one another and it is useful to use them together.

*A Framework for Credit* provides an overview of the FEU approach and describes a vision for the future. It is aimed at policy makers as well as practitioners.

*Framework Guidelines 1* is aimed at senior institutional managers, curriculum managers and practitioners, and offers advice on levels, credit value and award of credits within the framework proposal. The introduction also provides an overview of the approach used throughout the *Guidelines*.

*Framework Guidelines 2* provides advice on the communication and interpretation of learning outcomes, development of quality assured units, and the relationship between unitisation and modularisation.

*Unitisation, Modularisation and Flexibility* links FEU work on flexible colleges to a credit-based approach to assessment and delivery.

The development and refinement of the framework and the advice within these publications is the outcome of the expertise and involvement of a great many individuals and organisations. It represents the outcomes of various FEU development activities, in particular **Credit Framework Technical issues** (RP770), **FEU National Credit Accumulation and Transfer (CAT) Network** (RP739) and developments in the Welsh modularisation and credits initiative.

A number of distinctive contributions need special recognition. From FE institutions: Gwent Tertiary College (Graham Attwell, Catherine Carr), Solihull College (Angela Myers, Lindsey Stewart) and Wirral Metropolitan College (Maureen Hanley, Chris Coleman). From the Wales Modularisation and Credit Unit (Juliet Pierce, Sally Coady). For work on technical issues, Kathryn Ecclestone (University of Sunderland), Dr Andrew Morris (City and Islington College), Professor David Robertson (Liverpool John Moore's University), Dr Richard Winter (Anglia Polytechnic University and, in particular Peter Wilson (Leicestershire Open College Network). In addition, the FEU Credit Framework Team: Jim Bennett, Sally Coady, Liz Lawson, Caroline Mager, Chris Parkin and Tony Tait.

The widespread interest and references to this work such as the recent Joint Statement from all the main providers of post-16 education in this country and from the HEQC CATS Development Project is a tribute to all of those involved (whether mentioned here or not) and points to the need for further development of this work and the applications of credit-based approaches in the future.

**Tony Tait**  
Development Officer,  
Credit Frameworks

# CONTENTS

## 1 THE NEED FOR A COMMON APPROACH IN THE USE OF LEARNING OUTCOMES

What are learning outcomes?

Why use learning outcomes ?

Problems in communicating and interpreting learning outcomes

A solution — FEU's proposal for a common approach

A common set of terms

## 2 GUIDANCE ON COMMUNICATING AND INTERPRETING LEARNING OUTCOMES

The use of written statements :  
unit title, learning outcomes, assessment criteria

A checklist for writing learning outcomes

Learning outcomes and level descriptors

The use of exemplar materials

The use of networking and professional contacts

## 3 DEVELOPING UNITS

Writing the unit

Unit approval

Unit approval — external checking

Uses of approved units

## 4 LEARNING OUTCOMES, UNITS AND MODULES

Unitisation and modularisation

Units and modules

Modular delivery systems

## APPENDICES

1 Explanation of terms used in specifying learning outcomes

2 Example of a unit

# SECTION 1 THE NEED FOR A COMMON APPROACH IN THE USE OF LEARNING OUTCOMES

## What are learning outcomes?

*A Basis for Credit?* (FEU 1992) proposed that learning programmes and qualifications should be based among other things on a clear statement of intended or required 'outcomes'.

The term 'outcome' or 'learning outcome' is used increasingly to describe what it is that a learner, whether student or employee, knows, understands and is able to do after a process of learning. The learning may be the result of a formal process of instruction, training on a job, or through other experiences. Learning outcomes can be both statements of the end-products of learning and the requirements for the award of a qualification.

Many curriculum and qualification developers, as well as training managers, have been defining the intended outcomes of awards for decades using a variety of formats. There is as yet no agreement as to how learning outcomes are best written, although there may be preferred ways depending on purpose.

While 'learning outcome' is now often used as a generic term to encompass a variety of expressions, the term 'learning objective' or simply 'objective' may still be a more comfortable term for many. A whole spectrum of terms now in use seek to define outcomes at different levels of generality or precision.

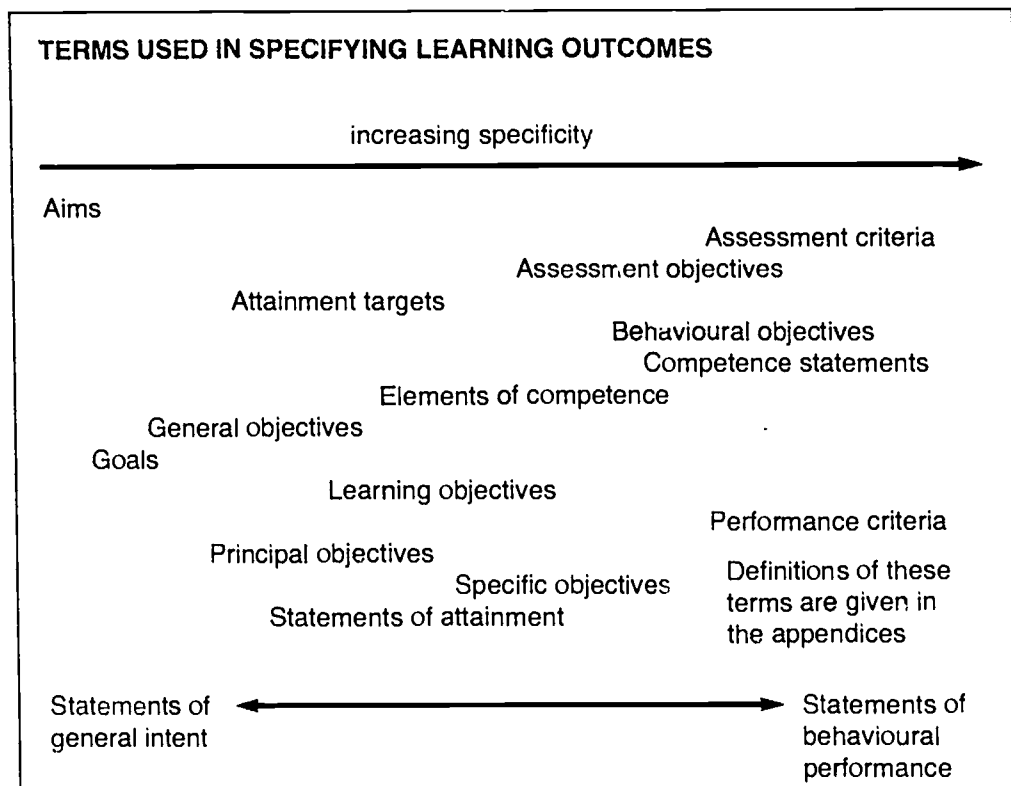


Figure 1



## Why use learning outcomes?

There are many reasons for specifying the outcomes of learning: these are all related to ensuring clear communication between those involved in the education/training process — learners, teachers, employers, qualification and awarding bodies, recruiters (including employers and higher education). A number of trends in recent years have led to their increased use. These include:

- the need to ensure consistency of interpretation in order to underpin reliable national standards;
- the movement towards being more learner-centred and the associated need for transparency and clarity in planning learning;
- increased emphasis on valid and reliable assessment, and therefore clearer identification of the measurable outcomes of learning;
- the need for effective tools for curriculum and staff development;
- increased emphasis on public accountability and the accompanying need to measure achievement reliably.

These trends, coupled with the belief that the measurement of learning might best be achieved through a description of what the students can do, rather than what they have experienced, has led to a growth in the use of learning outcomes to describe achievement within all phases of the education service and in training.

The National Curriculum, GNVQs, NVQs and a growing number of A levels are expressed in the form of learning outcomes. Universities and higher education (HE) institutions increasingly use a learning-outcomes approach in describing degrees and other qualifications. Nonetheless, using learning outcomes has not always proved straightforward.

## Problems in communicating and interpreting learning outcomes

### 1 Clarity

Many learning outcome statements are not written with sufficient clarity to communicate adequately what a learner is expected to achieve.

### 2 No agreed or common language

There is no common approach to writing learning outcomes. A whole range of different terminology is in use (see Figure 1). There is also no agreed way of expressing outcomes even within post-16 education. There is variation within HE too; and between further education (FE) and HE and the National Curriculum.

It is therefore difficult to identify common curriculum areas and areas of overlap and duplication because learning outcomes are expressed differently. This reduces the possibility of rationalising provision and developing opportunities for credit transfer.

### 3 Qualifications with different processes and traditions

There are different traditions with regard to how qualifications are defined. A levels usually have minimal specifications in the form of syllabuses, sometimes expressed as general outcomes, but more often as indicative subject content. Despite their minimal nature, these are interpreted by their users through **exemplars**, in particular the extensive use of text books, past papers, student work and examiners' reports. **Networks** of moderators and examiners organised by the GCE boards support this, as do the various subject organisations.

NVQs are designed principally to be used by employers within their own human resource development policies. They place much more emphasis on written specifications, which are intended to be completely unambiguous, without much use of exemplars or networking. The National Curriculum has highly detailed specifications, with detailed programmes of study and level descriptors to help their interpretation.

Each approach has its limitations :

#### A level

A level has been accused of a lack of transparency, and lack of consistency between subjects and boards. The relative absence of learning outcome statements entails heavy dependence on exemplars and networking and makes the identification of core skills problematic. What learners have achieved at the end may be unclear.

#### NVQs

The NCVQ approach to achieving clarity through highly detailed specifications has led to what has been described as 'a never ending spiral of increasing complexity', which damages the clarity the approach was designed to achieve. See *Assessment Issues and Problems in a Criterion-Based System* (FEU, 1993).

#### The National Curriculum

The Dearing review of the National Curriculum (1994) found that it suffered from over-specification. Teachers found the detailed learning outcomes (Statements of Attainment) difficult to interpret, and a 'tick list' approach to assessment emerged which was cumbersome and overloaded. The School Curriculum Assessment Authority (SCAA) has addressed this by slimming down specifications and making more extensive use of broad level descriptors rather than detailed statements of attainment to support teachers' interpretations of standards.

## A solution — FEU's proposal for a common approach

In order to achieve consistency and effective communication of what learners know, understand and can do, FEU believes that some combination of three approaches is needed:

- **written specifications** — of learning outcomes, assessment criteria, and level descriptors;
- **exemplars** — indications of what should be taught and learned: programmes of study, test papers and their analyses, samples of students' work, etc;
- **networking** — of unit writers, teachers, examiners and moderators.

The more widely and effectively exemplars and networking are used, the less specific the learning outcome statements or units need to be.

All ways of communicating learning outcomes use these to different extents and in different combinations.

Work carried out by FEU and others, (note in particular *Assessment Issues in a Criterion-Based System*, FEU 1993), and changes within the National Curriculum indicate that effective communication and interpretation depend on achieving an appropriate balance between these three approaches.

## A common set of terms

For these reasons, FEU has been working both on analysing existing approaches to stating learning outcomes and on developing a common approach with enough flexibility to adapt to the differences between various types of achievement, yet at the same time be applicable to all.

In addition to using this approach to the communication and interpretation of learning outcomes, FEU believes that there could be considerable benefits if there were greater national consistency in the use of terms to describe learning outcomes. Analysis of the terms in current use in FE and HE institutions and in national qualifications suggests that such convergence could be achieved. In order to help users of the framework to specify learning outcomes statements more clearly and consistently FEU suggests the following approach.

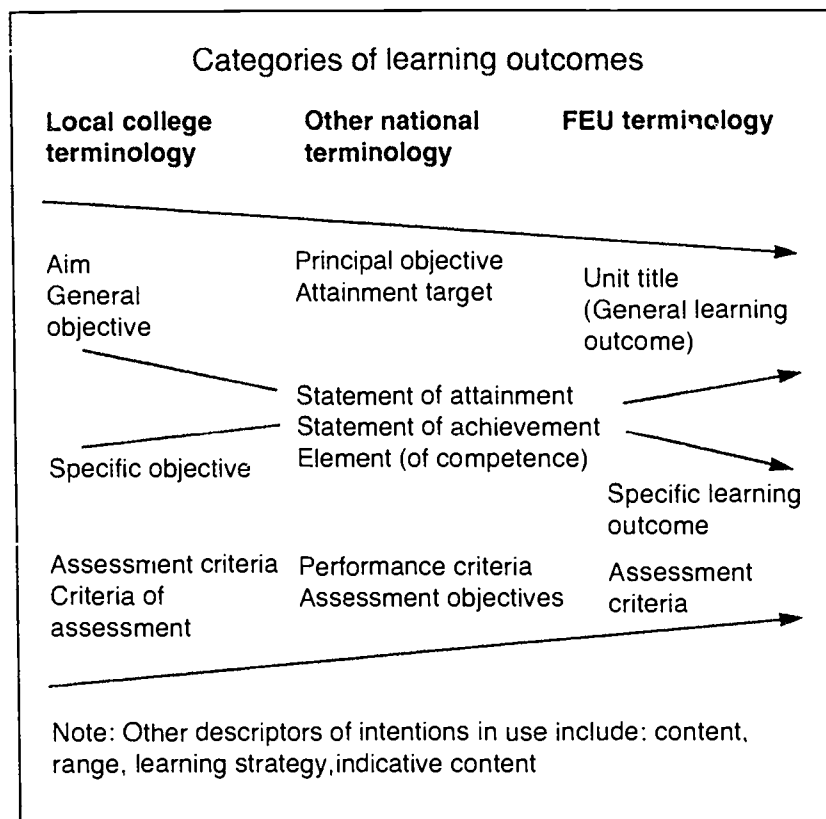


Figure 2

Learning outcomes statements in use are categorised as :

- general learning outcomes
- specific learning outcomes
- assessment criteria, as shown in Figure 3

A more detailed exploration of these recommendations and the underlying rationale is available in an FEU discussion paper *Specifying Learning Outcomes*, written by Christopher Parkin, FEU Officer, Eastern Region, and available from the FEU information centre.

## SECTION 2 COMMUNICATING AND INTERPRETING LEARNING OUTCOMES

**Note:** As indicated in earlier sections, however clearly learning outcomes are expressed, FEU believes that their interpretation for assessment purposes, and in order to ascribe size and level, will usually involve use of exemplar materials and professional contact/networking.

It can be useful to specify learning outcomes and develop units for various purposes such as curriculum mapping, unitisation, internal resourcing and guidance. FEU emphasises, however, that institutions should not usually develop units and offer accreditation in curriculum areas where national qualifications and unit accreditation are available.

However clearly learning outcomes are expressed, FEU believes that their interpretation for assessment purposes and in order to ascribe size and level, will usually involve use of exemplar materials and professional contact/networking.

### The use of written statements

Learning outcomes can be defined as that which the learner must know, understand and be able to do in order to achieve an award. As the learning outcomes are the things which are assessed, they are usually accompanied by associated assessment criteria.

Learning outcomes may be written with varying degrees of specificity. All learning outcomes statements have a verb and content statement.

<b>Verb</b>	<b>Content</b>
Translate	sales literature
Check	calculations

More specific learning outcome statements may include conditions of performance.

<b>Verb</b>	<b>Content</b>	<b>Condition of performance</b>
Translate	sales literature	with the aid of a dictionary
Check	calculations	correct to three significant figures with a calculator

However it is useful to include such conditions within assessment criteria rather than the learning outcomes themselves.

It is also helpful to summarise a set of learning outcomes with an overall general learning outcome, which may form a title for the unit.

Thus a unit will consist of a unit title (including a general learning outcome), learning outcomes and assessment criteria using the following approach.

### **Unit title (general learning outcome)**

The usual function of general learning outcomes is to specify clearly the overall purpose of the unit being described. This is useful not only to give direction to the learning but also in unit marketing and curriculum planning. With such an end in mind, it seems appropriate to restrict the number of such learning outcomes statements to one per unit, serving the purpose of an extended unit title or summary of the learning outcomes. NVQ and GNVQ unit titles offer examples of this.

### **Learning outcomes**

It is not possible to prescribe precisely how specific learning outcome statements should be. There is a balance to be struck between the degree of specificity in a learning outcomes statement and that provided by the assessment criteria. The greater the specificity, and, in particular, the greater the use of indicators of performance, the more the learning outcomes become de facto assessment criteria.

### **Assessment criteria**

Assessment criteria define achievement more specifically, and enable judgements to be made as to whether or not the learning outcomes have been achieved. Not only are they a guide to those assessing the achievement, but within the framework, together with learning outcomes and level descriptors, they enable a judgement to be made about the level and the volume of achievement being described.

### **Checklist for writing learning outcomes**

The process of specifying learning outcomes requires the proposed learning outcome statements to be checked carefully against widely applicable criteria. The following list is concerned with the over-arching requirement that for the statements to be intelligible and useful to **all** users. Assessment criteria will normally meet these requirements as well.

1. All learning outcome statements, individually and collectively, should use language as clearly and unambiguously as possible and:
  - be as simple as possible;
  - eliminate unnecessary words;
  - avoid vague verbs with differing meanings.
2. All learning outcome statements should be coherent:
  - balanced with respect to required knowledge and skills;
  - logical in sequence;
  - avoiding duplications;
  - avoiding inconsistencies.
3. All learning outcome statements should :
  - be of maximum relevance and utility;
  - relate to previous 'level' of learning outcome statements;
  - be applicable to new (unforeseen) situations;
  - be motivational, rewarding and enriching to the learner.
4. In defining learning outcomes it is essential to test out proposed units with colleagues and users. This involves:
  - talking to colleagues, explaining to others and getting their feedback;
  - checking out users' interpretations;
  - asking questions, making judgements.
5. During development, the intended learning outcome statements should be refined when feedback from implementation and the nature of learner achievement have been evaluated.

**TITLE****Carburettor Maintenance** — carry out general maintenance of the most common carburettor types.

The learner should be able to:

**Learning Outcome**  
Service a carburettor**Assessment Criteria**  
Remove the carburettor without assistance  
Clean and check every jet and passage for extensive wear  
Replace and readjust accurately, and check using an exhaust gas analyser.*Figure 3***TITLE****Application of Market Theory** — understand application of market theory to a range of frequently encountered resource problems.

The learner should be able to:

**Learning Outcomes**  
Apply market theory**Assessment Criteria**  
Express a real resource problem in terms of relative supply and demand  
Allocate possible solutions to the supply and the demand side  
Suggest credible ways of implementing solutions, covering most major possibilities  
Evaluate possible solutions in terms of their impact on the problem and on producers and consumers.*Figure 4*

They should not only contain information about the standards of performance required, but also refer to the progressive strands within the level descriptors, i.e. the level of learner autonomy and the complexity and range of the learning outcomes. (For details of level descriptors see *Framework Guidelines 1* Section 2.)

Assessment criteria should be more specific than the learning outcomes to which they relate, using: a **specific action verb**, **content**, and **'qualifiers'**.

The qualifiers to be used should make reference to one or more of the following:

- complexity;
- level of learner autonomy;
- range.

Figures 4 and 5 on the previous page are examples which have been created for illustrative purposes only to show the level of clarity and specificity which can be achieved with such an approach. A more detailed example of this approach appears in the Appendices.

Assessment criteria should be used to help make an overall judgement about whether the learning outcomes of a unit have been achieved and should not be used over mechanistically. The next phase of work in this area will involve further work on the specification of learning outcomes and the relationship between learning outcomes and assessment criteria.

### **Learning outcomes and level descriptors**

Level descriptors accompany the learning outcomes and assessment criteria, informing their writers of the appropriate language, helping users interpret them and ascribe the appropriate level.

The FEU framework level descriptors (see Framework Guidelines 1) synthesise the practices and traditions of A level, GNVQ, NVQ and OCN. The strands of progression within them are learner autonomy, complexity and range. Assessment criteria qualifiers should contain reference to one or more of these, in addition to performance standards.

The greater the clarity of the level descriptors, the easier it will be both to write clear learning outcomes and to interpret them. For this reason, FEU is continuing to test and enhance existing descriptors.

### **The use of exemplar materials**

Exemplars are needed in order to develop a consistent view of achievement at various levels for curriculum and qualifications designers, writers of units, teachers, moderators and assessors. They may also be used as an indicator of possible programme content. Exemplars may take the form of:

- programmes of study;
- student work;
- tests and examinations;
- examiners' and moderators' reports;
- textbooks and study guides.

The absence of such a body of documented experience is a serious problem for new qualifications and for specifying achievement for minority needs. Developing, disseminating and using such exemplars should form an important part of the implementation strategy of any body involved in the development of qualifications or credit systems.



**In the absence of any significant body of exemplars, greater emphasis will have to be placed on networking practitioners in order to develop a common understanding through sharing their own interpretations.**

### **The use of networking and professional contacts**

Both exemplars and networking are necessary for writing, interpreting and using learning outcomes at all levels and also for ascribing level, size and credit value to units.

**Networking and professional contact include activities such as :**

- practitioner panels
- examiners meetings
- OCN or consortia meetings
- other forms of contact and communication

## SECTION 3 DEVELOPING UNITS

Using the approach outlined in earlier sections, institutions may identify and develop appropriate units and move towards unitisation of their entire curriculum offer. The increasing range of unitised qualifications, in particular GNVQs, NVQs and modular A levels, means that much of the curriculum offer is already in a unitised form. In addition, the development of the Welsh Unit database and unitisation activities in a number of colleges within the FEU CAT network provide good opportunities for sharing units rather than development of new ones.

Nevertheless, local circumstances, responsiveness to customer demand and technological innovation will often impel colleges to develop original units.

The development of such units includes a number of stages which need to be underpinned by quality assurance processes with both internal and external dimensions. The general rule is that in developing units, institutions should ensure there is quality assurance both:

- external to the writers of the unit but internal to the organisation
- external to the organisation.

### **Stage one: Writing the unit — usually internal**

In writing a unit an approach similar to the one outlined in this publication should be followed, in particular using the unit specification, guidance on communicating learning outcomes and the checklist for writing learning outcomes.

At this formative stage writers should check that the unit :

- does not duplicate ones already available nationally or locally;
- is coherent;
- is expressed clearly and consistently.

### **Stage two: Unit approval — internal and external dimensions**

Institutions need to establish systems for approval of units to check that the first stage conforms to agreed practices within the institution or wider consortia. It is necessary to agree and approve :

- the ascribed level and size;
- the credit value;
- the contexts and purposes of the credit value.

It is also necessary to ensure that there are feedback loops to unit writers, and that writers and other users keep the units under review. Units approved should have a fixed shelf life.

Approval panels whether within a single institution or in consortia arrangements should consist of members representing different subject areas/ vocational areas as well as that of the unit writers.

This stage may overlap with stage three, and in the case of consortia arrangements, will be built into the process.

### **Stage three: Unit approval — external checking**

Mechanisms to ensure wider consistency, external scrutiny and use of the expertise available in other institutions need to be developed. OCN panels have often been used, particularly in Wales. Other kinds of panel arrangement may be developed in order to satisfy the external dimension. Recommended key features are that :

- unit writers are present;
- less than half the members should be from the same institutions;
- representation is from more than one sector.

In Wales a cross-phase and business dimension has been recommended. Feedback loops to institutions and relevant national awarding bodies should also be built into the process.

### **Stage four: Uses of approved units**

Units developed and approved through this process may be used for various purposes — curriculum mapping, guidance, reporting results, internal resourcing, as a basis for modularisation and so on.

However they cannot be used for the award of credits to learners without the involvement of a credit awarding body such as an OCN or HE institution because these processes do not involve quality assurance through institutional recognition, programme design, assessment verification and moderation. (See also *Framework Guidelines 1: Section 5 Awarding Credit.*)

## SECTION 4 LEARNING OUTCOMES, UNITS AND MODULES

### Unitisation and modularisation — the general approach

The analysis of intended achievement into coherent groups of learning outcomes or 'units' makes modular delivery easier to implement. However it does not in any way impose modular delivery where this is not appropriate to the subject, to the learners or to institutional structures. In fact unitisation frees colleges from the single, rigid approach to delivery which has often proved a weakness in schemes, including modular ones.

**The value of unitisation is that it enables providers and learners to make rational choices about, when, and when not, to use modular delivery arrangements.**

Units are defined as coherent and explicit sets of learning outcomes. The unit specification lies at the centre of the framework and consists of the following:

The unit specification prescribes only that information which a unit must contain in order to make necessary judgements about its level and size. Therefore details of such things as methods of delivery, assessment methods, recommended unit combinations and grading criteria are not part of the specification. However they may be supplemented in the construction of modules of delivery, progression agreements, qualifications and so on.

- title
- learning outcomes statements
- assessment criteria
- level
- size
- credit value (based on other features)

The unit specification is minimal so that it can be applied across the range of achievements and qualifications that the framework needs to encompass. More detailed specification would lead to fewer uses and users. For example, if grading criteria were a requirement of the unit specification, NVQs would be precluded. If recommendations about the combination of units were a requirement, development of new curricula and qualifications would be constrained.

The **weakness** of the unit specification in terms of specificity is its **strength** in terms of openness and potential universality.

### Units and modules

Fundamental to the framework is the conceptual separation of **delivery** from **assessment**. The framework sets out a specification for units of assessment and is not prescriptive about how those units are achieved by learners or how institutions deliver them. This maximises the opportunities for both institutions and learners to decide on the most appropriate way to achieve the learning outcomes of a unit. While they are conceptually separate, it is recognised that in practice delivery and assessment are often related.

FEU has promoted the terms :

- **units** of assessment
- **modules** of delivery

Thus the learning outcomes of a unit can be achieved via one or more of the following: college-based programmes, work-based learning, accreditation of prior experience and learning, distance learning, other routes

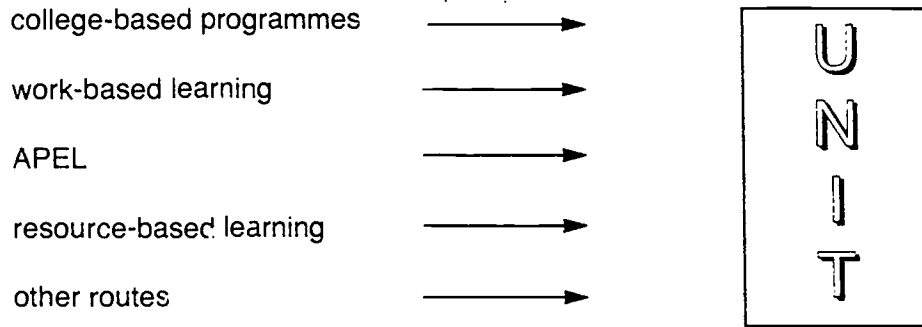
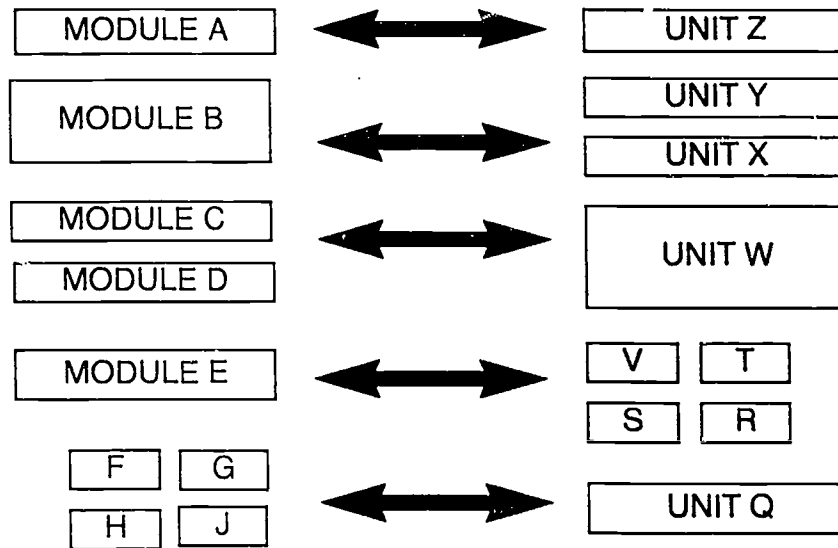


Figure 5

### Modular delivery systems

Units of assessment are defined independently of the modules or other mechanisms for their delivery. It is possible therefore for a module and a unit to be identical in terms of what is delivered and assessed. However a single module could deliver outcomes contributing to a number of different units of assessment. A number of modules could contribute to a single unit of assessment. Many permutations are possible.



*The relationship between units and modules is flexible. The outcomes of a unit may be reached through a single module. Alternatively, they can be reached through two or more modules or one module can contribute to achievement of a number of units. For example, a work experience module could contribute to a vocational unit, and to units in Communications and Maths. Many permutations become possible.*

Figure 6

Further discussion and guidance on a credit-based approach to unitisation and modularity is to be found in the forthcoming document *Unitisation, Modularisation and Flexibility*.

## APPENDIX 1: TERMS USED IN SPECIFYING LEARNING OUTCOMES

<b>Aim:</b>	a general statement of broad intent (with very little precision) non-behavioural usually achievable through a wide range of alternative study
<b>General aims:</b>	it is often useful to distinguish between general aims — usually achievable through study of a wide range of alternatives, e.g. through any GNVQ programme, and
<b>Specific aims:</b>	only achievable through a specific discipline or vocational area, e.g. science, business
<b>Goal:</b>	similar to an aim, concerned with the general end to be achieved
<b>General objective:</b>	a general statement of intent, more precise than an aim, more abstract than a specific or behavioural objective
<b>Attainment target:</b> (National Curriculum)	a general statement of knowledge, understanding or skill which a learner (pupil) should develop
<b>Statement of attainment:</b> (National Curriculum)	a more specific statement of what a learner (pupil) should be able to do (but not necessarily expressed in behavioural or competence terms)
<b>Learning objective:</b>	a statement of intent describing what the student will be able to do, in use as a term similar to but less precise than a behavioural objective
<b>Principal objective:</b>	similar to a general objective and used by BTEC from the 1980s
<b>Specific objective:</b>	one of a number of more precise objectives representing the type of behaviour which will denote achievement of the general objective
<b>Assessment objective:</b>	<i>'describe the intellectual and practical skills which candidates would be able to demonstrate'</i> an example of a definition from a Midland Examining Group GCSE Examination syllabus

**Behavioural objective:** a statement of intent describing a proposed behavioural change in the learner - a statement of what the learner can demonstrate - a planned and observable outcome of learning

**Element of competence:** *'describes what can be done; an action, behaviour or outcome which a person should be able to demonstrate. Or an element of competence may describe such things as the knowledge of understanding which is essential if performance is to be sustained or extended to new situations, within the occupation'* (Guidance Notes 3 Training Agency, ED, 1988)

**Assessment criteria:** statements which enable judgements to be made whether a learning outcome has been achieved (i.e. the quality of the learner's achievement)

**Performance criteria** statements which provide evidence that the learning outcome has been achieved (i.e. the learner is either competent or not competent):

— describe activities and evidence which must be assessed and achieved

— enable judgements to be made whether outcomes have been achieved

— descriptions of what competent performance looks like.

**Competence statement:** a statement clear, active and relevant to a defined occupational competence.

## APPENDIX 2

**UNIT TITLE:** Art & Design — Communicate and investigate through drawing

**Credit value:** 1

**Level:** 3

### LEARNING OUTCOMES

Learners should be able to:

- 1 use visual language to communicate information and ideas to others
- 2 use drawing as an investigative tool
- 3 investigate and record observations
- 4 use formal art and design elements expressively and creatively

### ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

- 1.i use and select a range of media in the drawing process
- 1.ii demonstrate a consistent and competent approach to visual communication
- 2 demonstrate investigative thinking
- 3 use investigative observations to record a personal response
- 4 demonstrate the use of formal art and design element — line, tone, texture, form and shape, in an imaginative and experimental way

*Based on a Llandrillo College Unit approved by a Welsh North Wales Access and Credit Consortium*