



The Comprehensive IT Solution for Awarding Organisations

The Quartz information system has been developed by Portico Consulting to support the entire lifecycle of learning and qualification development and management.

Quartz supports all aspects of operations for programmes of vocational learning, QCF and other qualifications – including programme and qualification development, learner registration, achievement tracking, internal and external verification, and certification. Business management is supported through integrated CRM and business intelligence tools. Quartz provides substantial efficiency benefits, improvements in customer service, and compliance with regulatory requirements. It is scalable and affordable for large and small organisations.

Factsheet - Summary of Quartz Functionality

Recording and tracking of achievement

- User interface optimised for fast and easy entry of achievement, together with extensive data quality validation.
- Units can be awarded either fully, or at an achievement level expressed as a percentage.
- Providers/centres have Portal access to real-time on-line record of achievement.

Units

- Units of accredited (and non-accredited) learning are the building blocks of programmes and qualifications.
- Flexible coding of units against national and local coding schemes, and automated coding against sectors.
- Full unit content recording including learning outcomes and assessment criteria.

Qualifications

- Highly flexible model for the definition and recording of 'rules-of-combination' which automatically handles even the most complex definitions.
- Fully automated identification of achievement of qualifications – including any combinations of multiple mandatory and optional elements, including RPL, equivalences, exemptions, etc.

- Supports recording of partial achievement and individual test results.

CRM, Organisation and Contact Management

- Built-in (not bolted-on) Customer Relationship Management (CRM) supporting customer service and business development.
- Manage individuals, organisations, and contact information including multi-sites and multi-role structures. Track communications, documents and actions for contacts and organisations.

QuartzWeb (the Quartz Portal)

- Sophisticated 'Smart Client' application for awarding body staff, and a secure QuartzWeb application to provide the exact functionality needed by external users.

Certification

- Certificates content and layout defined locally and tailored, including multiple formats (and languages) for a course.
- Flexible production of certificates, e.g. for an individual, for all learners on a 'course', or for all learners achieving at a particular provider.
- Certificate content can be reviewed on screen before printing, or at any time in the future for reference. A full audit trail of certificate versions is automatically maintained.

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Administration of learner/student cohorts

- Highly flexible functionality to allow the definition of cohorts of learners/students for providers/centres such as colleges, employers, training organisations, etc.
- Entry of learners/students through screens, or via a wide range of electronic formats for integration with providers'/centres' systems (e.g. college MISs) with sophisticated fuzzy-matching to minimize duplicate registrations.

Programme development

- Definition of programmes of learning including a full hierarchy of pathways (specific to programmes), modules (reusable groups of related units), and stand-alone units.

Operational reporting & business intelligence

- Standard, built-in reports for day-to-day access to real-time management and operational information.
- Additional (local) reports can be developed in Microsoft Reporting Services, and automatically integrated into Quartz.
- Fully configured for use with the industry leading business intelligence tool 'Business Objects' for outstanding end-user ad-hoc querying and reporting.

Electronic Data Interchange and Integration

- Services Oriented Architecture (SoA) ensures ease of integration including "B2B" transactions.
- Support for *e-registrations* and achievements through 'CSV' and 'XML'.
- Integration with e-Assessment systems, and with local finance, HR, etc.

Document management & integrated mail merge

- Fully integrated with Microsoft Office (Word, Excel and PowerPoint). A wide range of data is available for integrated 'mail-merges'.
- Create, save, track, check-in, check-out capabilities for 'documents' of all types.

Centre approval and management

- Centre approval and management configured to your local approach – track progress/status.
- Record and manage other processes such as approval and review of verifiers.

QCF Service Layer

- Integrated results submission management; Service Layer API testing in Autumn 2009.

Diploma Aggregation Service (DAS) for CABs

- Management of results submission to the DAS, fully automated integration through the DAS web-services 'API' (compliance tested).

MIAP Compliance

- ULN validation and automated verification (via the LRS 'API').
- Compliant with Common Data Definitions (CDD).

General & technical facilities

- Highly scalable – from a one or two to several hundred concurrent users.
- 'Smart-Client' fully exploiting the graphical user interface, plus secure QuartzWeb for external stakeholders.
- Functional access security implemented on a per-user basis.
- Built using web-services (SoA) technology, using web-protocols, with the latest Microsoft '.Net' development and deployment tools.

Ongoing development of Quartz

Portico is committed to ongoing development of the Quartz system and recognize the rapidly developing information and system needs in the area of credit-based learning. This commitment is also underpinned by the system architecture and tools chosen in the development Quartz.

Portico Consulting

Portico Consulting provides a range of management consultancy and technology services in the public, not for profit, and education sectors. We have extensive experience of supporting the operations of awarding bodies and our systems have managed the achievement records and certification of millions of learners.

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