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Level 2 Transition Arrangements

Introduction

With the introduction of new qualifications, it is inevitable that transition arrangements will be required to ensure that RHS learners are able to complete their studies successfully.

As an Awarding Organisation, RHS Qualifications is only aware of registrations for the individual certificates that learners are currently studying, as well as previous achievements. Whilst our centres may know the ultimate destination of their learners, this is not always the case, and learners often learn piecemeal, always leaving open the possibility of further study at a later date. Thus although we have combination qualifications, we have no way of knowing whether learners are seeking to undertake all those requirements or whether they are simply undertaking one qualification.

Additionally, since learners can take breaks between their certificates, it is entirely possible that they may choose to return many years later to complete the requirements for combination qualifications. RHS Qualifications is fully aware that centres have to be able to plan for this eventuality and for the awarding organisation to provide suitable pathways.

Consequently, RHS Qualifications needs to be able to define the ways in which learners can progress. It is the current working assumption that:

- RHS Qualifications will be introducing the new qualifications for Level 2 and 3 to be available for first teaching from September 2021, and that all centres will migrate to these new versions at that time. Although there are exceptions, as noted below, the broad rule is that existing Level 2 qualifications will NOT be permitted to be delivered from academic year 2021/22. Note this does NOT apply to assessment arrangement (again noted below).
- many learners will be seeking to complete pathways which lead to the current combined qualification certificates (i.e. the Level 2 Certificate in the Principles of Horticulture, and Level 2 Diploma in the Principles and Practices of Horticulture). They need to understand how the existing and new qualifications will work, and what rules of combination will be available to allow them to achieve the combined qualifications over the next few years. This is particularly important for those commencing their RHS Level 2 studies in Autumn 2020 who are seeking the full Level 2 Diploma qualification.

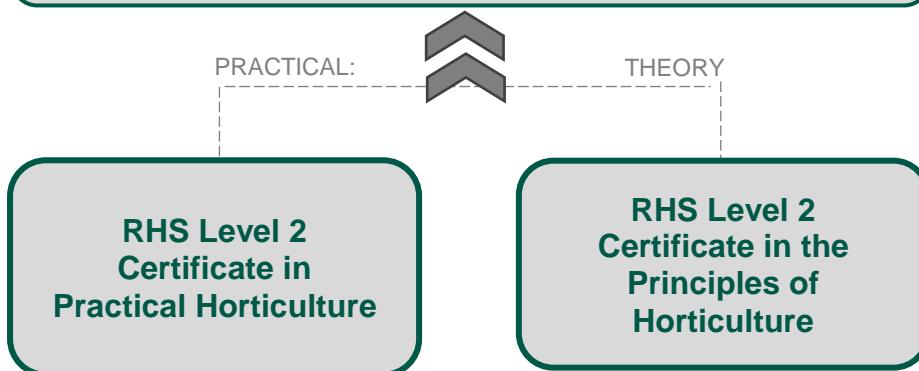
Proposed Transition Arrangements

Recommendations

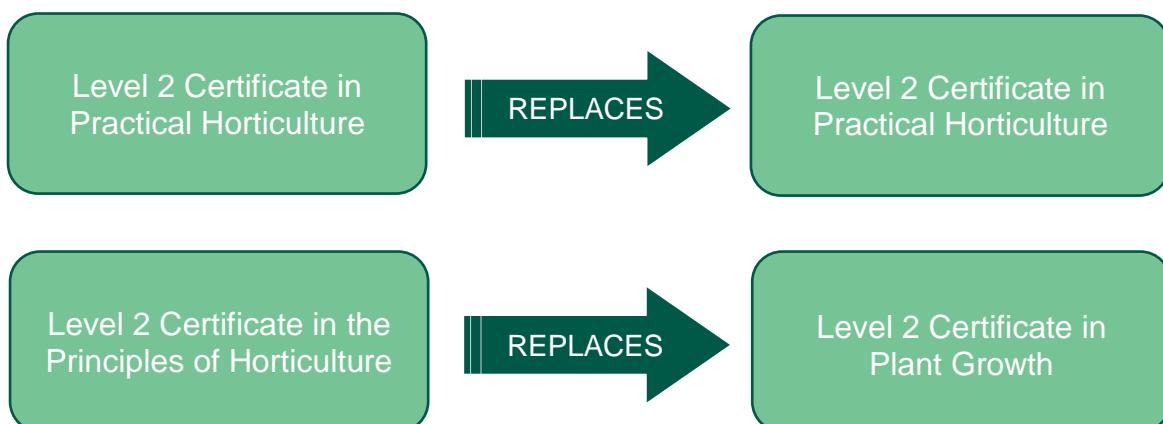
It must be noted that the following statements are made in good faith however, the new qualifications are yet to be approved by the national regulators and therefore the below should be considered a draft statement which could be subject to change. Nevertheless, it is hoped that it will be informative to all users of our qualifications and RHS Qualifications will endeavour to ensure that any subsequent changes are kept to a minimum as far as possible.

Structure of New Qualifications:

RHS Level 2 Certificate in the Principles and Practices of Horticulture



It is proposed that the following qualifications are seen as direct replacements for their counterparts.



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Therefore, these two qualifications should act as replacements from September 2021.

The remaining Level 2 Certificate in Garden Planning will continue, but only in order to allow those learners already embarked on RHS Level 2 qualifications the opportunity to be able to complete the associated combined qualification. This certificate should not be made available to new Level 2 learners (i.e. those not already embarked on other RHS Level 2 certificates), and as part of the final arrangements with the regulators, RHS Qualifications is very likely to mandate that this is the case.

For this to be effective, it would mean that centres would be permitted to continue to offer the Level 2 Certificate in Garden Planning for at least the academic year 2021-22 and possibly 2022-23: this will be confirmed once the qualifications enter regulation.

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Transitional Arrangements for Current Combination Qualifications

The table below shows how current learners may use a combination of the old and new qualification structures to achieve the combined qualifications they planned to achieve at enrolment.

(Note: New learners should enrol only on the new qualifications)

If a learner has completed the below by September 2021	They may complete the below to achieve the stated combined qualification:	
	For the award of current Principles of Horticulture	For the award of current Principles and Practices of Horticulture (Diploma)
Plant Growth	Garden Planning	Garden Planning Practical Horticulture
Garden Planning	Principles of Horticulture	Principles of Horticulture Practical Horticulture
Practical		Garden Planning Principles of Horticulture
Plant Growth and Garden Planning		Practical Horticulture
Plant Growth and Practical	Garden Planning	Garden Planning
Garden Planning and Practical	Principles of Horticulture	Principles of Horticulture

KEY		
Original Qualification		
Revised Qualification (practical)		
Revised Qualification (theory)		

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Details on assessment availability

The structure and assessment arrangements for the revised qualifications is different from the existing qualifications. Therefore this arrangement only applies to those learners holding the full certificates i.e. recognition of unit awards will not be possible in this matching process. Learners are strongly advised to ensure they have met the requirements of the entire certificate so that their achievements can be recognised.

Due to the structure and assessment design of the revised qualifications, it will not be possible to combine awards from the current suite of qualifications with the new qualifications for the achievement of any of the revised qualifications. The proposal above is designed to permit access to the existing qualification only. Recognition against the new qualifications can only be achieved through successful completion of all the new elements only.

This arrangement will only be available for a finite time period but the exact timeframe has yet to be decided.

To conclude, it is reiterated that this is a draft position and is being published now in order to permit centres to begin to plan for the introduction of the new qualifications and to meet the needs of existing learners. It is potentially subject to change.

Assessment opportunities

Learners need the opportunity to complete examinations for the existing Level 2 theory certificates (i.e. in Plant Growth and Garden Planning).

RHS Qualifications can confirm that examinations will be held in 2021 and 2022 (February and June) for the Level 2 Plant Growth and Level 2 Garden Planning. We will also schedule opportunities for further examinations in 2023 for the Level 2 certificate in Garden Planning only, in order to provide a resit opportunity for learners completing this certificate in 2022. **Centres should therefore ensure that learners are aware that the last examinations for the Level 2 Certificate in Plant Growth are likely to be June 2022, and they should prioritise programme delivery and assessment preparation accordingly.**

Again, it should be noted that these arrangements are draft and potentially subject to change. However, as stated above, RHS Qualifications will use best endeavours to ensure that any change is kept to a minimum.



Frequently Asked Questions

The below information is subject to agreement and confirmation by Ofqual

If candidates begin an RHS Qualification this year, will they be able to finish it?

Yes they will. Please see above for transfer of certificates and those which will be extended. The garden planning certificate will still be open for assessments in the academic year 2021-22, and we hope 2022-23, pending regulatory approval.

Will candidates still be able to achieve diplomas?

The diploma at Level 3 will still be available through a combination of certificates designed to test candidates in both theory and practical skills. We have listened to your feedback and at Level 2 the qualification structure has been simplified; two certificates will be available, one theory and one practical.

We hope through this structure that more candidates who are working at a high level will be able to achieve a Level 3 qualification as a reflection of their knowledge and skills.

When will the revised qualifications be available?

Pending approval from Ofqual, they will be available for first teaching in September 2021.

How will the qualifications be assessed?

Through a mixture of knowledge and practical testing. Sample assessment materials will be available later in 2020.

Will the revised qualifications be able to be taught by distance learning?

As per the current situation, theory qualifications will be able to be taught by distance learning. We are currently considering ways in which we may be able to make the practical qualifications more widely available to candidates.

When will further information be available?

Further qualification information will be available in the autumn, which will include full qualification structures, syllabus overviews and sample assessment materials.