



Name of Course:	ECDL Extra and ECDL Flexiquial (QCF) (ITQ)	 
Awarding body:	British Computer Society (BCS)	
Qualification:	Level 2 Certificate in IT User Skills (ITQ) (QCF)	

What is the Level 2 Certificate in IT User Skills (ITQ) (QCF)?

The Level 2 Certificate in IT User Skills (ITQ) (QCF) has been developed from National Occupational Standards for using IT and aims to recognise skills and ability to apply a range of IT user skills and knowledge required to operate effectively in today's ever-changing world of technology.

QCF stands for Qualifications and Curriculum Framework which has recently changed the structure of qualifications so that they can be built on credits which lead to awards, certificates and diplomas. The different levels that you can achieve are made up of selected units which have an assigned credit value. To gain a Level 2 Certificate in IT User Skills for example you have to build a programme of credits worth at least 16.

The flexibility of the ITQ (Information Technology Qualification) allows choice. You can identify the most appropriate units and skill levels to meet your needs and a range of units from other qualifications can be imported into the planned structure for the qualification.

The British Computer Society are offering two types of qualification at Level 2 that lead to the Level 2 Certificate in IT User Skills:

ECDL Extra and Flexiquial

There is a mandatory unit for each of the two certificates called Improving Productivity Using IT which requires you to complete a task using the knowledge and expertise gained from the learning you have completed through your chosen units of the Level 2 Certificate in IT User Skills.

ECDL Extra - a full level 2 qualification designed to assess the core applications

Word Processing Software, Spreadsheet Software and Presentation Software, together with the mandatory unit Improving Productivity, using make up this qualification. The units within ECDL Extra combine to give the 16 credits required to meet funding requirements.

Flexiquial – a more flexible way of planning a Level 2 Certificate in IT User Skills

If you want to include database software in your certificate then Flexiquial is for you. You complete the mandatory unit Improving Productivity, database software and a minimum of two of other programs from the following: word processing, spreadsheets or presentations.

How do I start?

If you have decided that a Level 2 Certificate in IT User Skills is for you make an appointment at your nearest Pathfinder Centre to meet with a member of staff who will work closely with you to design a programme that best meets your individual needs. This may start with an analysis of your skills and work activities or long term aims regarding employment or your personal interests.

What does the course cost?

The course is funded by The Learning Skills Council (the body that funds Adult Education in the UK) and eligibility/cost is dependent on your existing level of qualifications. Further information about eligibility can be given upon enquiry.

The units for the qualification are supported by individual courses starting from £55 per course. Depending on the level of your existing qualifications you may be eligible to complete the course for free. Fee remission is available to those receiving certain income-based benefits.

How is the course delivered?

Several of the units for the Certificate in IT User Skills can be claimed from existing IT qualifications from a range of awarding bodies, known as Accreditation of Prior Achievement or APA, such as the BCS ECDL Extra or Flexiqua certificates, or the OCR CLAiT suite of certificates, and many more. During the enrolment process options will be explored with you to see if you have any contributing qualifications that could be imported into your Level 2 Certificate in IT User Skills.

Each unit of the Level 2 Certificate in IT User Skills is supported by an individual course. You work from either manuals and/or over the Internet and the learning material is designed for you to work at your own pace. Each part of the package is structured to take you through each procedure step by step, with illustrations to help you. You will get plenty of 'hands-on' experience and practice material to prepare you for each unit exam.

If you need help at any time there is always a centre tutor on hand
although if the centre is busy you may have to be patient!

How is learning assessed?

Each of the individual units for the Level 2 Certificate in IT User Skills has a final assessment which is taken in the learning centre and will usually give you an immediate result. You will get plenty of practice and expect to discuss your progress regularly with your tutor before you make the decision to take formal assessment.

There is a mandatory unit for each of the two certificates called Improving Productivity Using IT which requires you to complete a randomly selected task to demonstrate your knowledge and expertise gained from the learning you have gained from your Level 2 Certificate in IT User Skills units.

How long will the course take?

This depends entirely on you and which option you follow. You set your own deadlines through discussion and review with our course tutor. Expect to spend approximately 15 to 25 hours per course you complete.

What are the entry requirements?

There are no formal entry requirements or prior knowledge needed for this course. If you haven't used a computer before you will be able to access additional activities to prepare you to move onto the Level 2 Certificate in IT User Skills. The course is open to anybody over the age of 16 who is not in full time education and eligible for Learning Skills Council funding – full details upon request.

Where can you get further information?

Contact Lorna Lacey, Training Manager, on 07989 398016
or e-mail: llacey@pathfinder.org.uk