

# VRQ Awards in Fish and Shellfish

- New qualifications for managers/supervisors in seafood businesses
- Six new Level 3 Vocationally Related Qualifications (VRQs)
- Nationally recognised qualifications
- Delivered as part of training programmes from Seafish approved training providers and centres.

## What are VRQs?



A new type of qualification for the fish and shellfish industry, and which combine the best of occupational standards, with the best of sector specific training programmes.

Individuals and businesses have always welcomed our training courses for the valuable skills and knowledge delivered by our expert trainers.

Now, many of our training programmes can bring even greater business benefits by delivering these new nationally recognised qualifications.

VRQs are not a replacement for NVQs, although they are also based on national occupational standards (NOS). VRQs are not delivered in the workplace, but are part of an advanced training programme. Each of these qualifications will meet a clear need in the seafood industry and bring added value to our training programmes.

## What are the benefits?

Building a qualification around occupational standards makes for a better qualification. If a training course is linked to this new qualification then you get a better training course as well as access to the qualification.

## Tell me more

Usually, a VRQ is made up of two types of units. There are units that cover the general underpinning knowledge that is needed to carry out a particular task or activity. For example, one of our VRQs has a unit called *principles of brining and salting fish or shellfish*. What this unit covers is self-explanatory and it is one of four units in the VRQ in seafood smoking.

One of the other units that make up the smoking VRQ is a skills unit called *demonstrate skills in brining and salting fish or shellfish*. The smoking VRQ is completed by one more *principles* unit and another *demonstrate skills* unit on smoking.

The ability to bring together a few higher level knowledge units and combine them with some carefully designed skills units has created an excellent opportunity to produce a qualification that meets the needs of specific industry groups. The only fish and shellfish VRQ not to have skills unit is the Product Knowledge VRQ which comprises two substantial knowledge units.

Unlike NVQs, these new qualifications are not assessed in the workplace, but as part of the training course. This means that they can be delivered by trainers in training centres rather than by assessors in the workplace.

## What VRQs are available?

There are six fish and shellfish VRQs available. The topic areas they cover are:

- **Fish and shellfish product knowledge** – from harvesting to selling, sustainability to recipes. Two substantial principles units cover marine finfish and almost every other type of marine food product and non marine finfish;
- **Seafood smoking** – the theory of brining, salting and smoking, plus skills units covering all of these topics;
- **Quality assessment** – the principles of seafood quality science and also assessment methods, plus skills units covering fish, shellfish and cooked product quality;
- **Fishmonger skills** - two principles units covering the theory of fishmonger practices and fish/shellfish displays are combined with two units that provide an opportunity to demonstrate skills in displays and the hand processing of fish and shellfish;
- **Fish frying operations** – this VRQ in fish and chips is made up of a theory unit covering the frying process itself, plus another theory unit that explores the principles of managing shop operations and resources. The VRQ is ‘topped off’ with a demonstrate skills in frying unit;
- **Bivalve purification operations management** – this VRQ expects you to have a good understanding of how to control the purification operation and how to manage safety in the workplace. These two theory units are supported by three skills units covering operations, data collection and safety;



## How do I register for the qualification?

As these qualifications are only accessible via a Seafish approved training programme, your course provider will contact you as part of the usual course registration process.

## Costs

In addition to the cost of the course there are costs for the qualification. These will vary from VRQ to VRQ depending on the degree of post course assessment required.

## How can I find out more?

Seafish is leading on these developments. For more information please contact Lee Cooper at Seafish T. 01482 486482 or E. [academy@seafish.co.uk](mailto:academy@seafish.co.uk)

More information can also be found on the Seafood Training Academy website at: <http://www.seafoodacademy.org/> - follow the link to VRQs. A range of individual leaflets will be available from this site.



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