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A guide to coding in REMS

1. Developing the Coding Framework

The development of coding frameworks for research would normally start with a set of hypothesis or key questions which the research is seeking to answer. However, the REMS database is designed to serve multiple purposes, provide information to 9 strand teams in QCA or external agencies and deal with questions that emerge as the reforms progress. We needed an approach where the coding framework was flexible, would cover all strands of work, would allow us to interrogate as issues emerge and generate hypothesis, identify trends or answer questions.

There were 3 main areas we needed to consider

1. Qualifications - The 9 Strands of work in QCA (e.g. Diploma, Functional Skills, 14-19 curriculum etc)
2. Curriculum Aims - 14-19 reform aims (e.g. Personalisation, Engagement, Participation, Strengthening Skills etc)
3. Stakeholders - in the reforms (Schools, FE, Employers, Learners Awarding Bodies etc)

With the needs of internal stakeholders in mind the strands of work within QCA are a key element of categorisation but these overlap significantly and are themselves part of a bigger picture. The initial attempts to build a coding tree based on strand of work illustrated that the issues which affect one area are also of interest to the others – for example for Functional skills the areas of interest are:

- Stakeholders
- Assessment
- Funding
- Pedagogy
- Delivery
- Accountability
- Consortia

This would mean we would need a similar list of nodes for each strand, and coding could not easily identify where one piece of information was relevant to multiple strands. For example Functional skills in the context of Diploma or GCSE

The strategy adopted was as follows

- Develop a set of Nodes as an initial portal or entry based on 'qualifications'

14-19 Reform Research Evidence Management System (REMS)

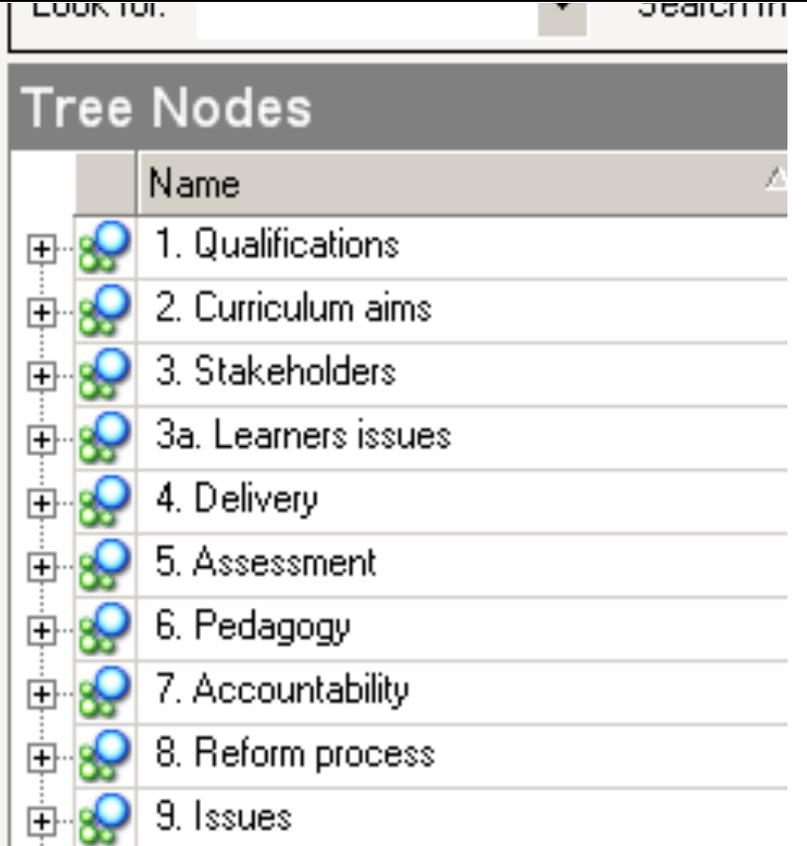
- Provide a similar set of nodes for each 'Curriculum Aim' and 'Stakeholder'
- Strategy of coding **all evidence** initially to these top 3 areas
- A series of nodes covering Delivery, Assessment, Pedagogy, Accountability and Reform process from which **at least one must be selected** to code the extract
- A set of nodes identifying important issues

In practice the approach is based on multi-coding each piece of evidence to between 4-6 nodes. For analysis purposes:

- 'Qualifications' is the main route back to evidence (i.e. Functional skills & Assessment, Diploma & Consortia)
- The 'Stakeholder' node indicates the proportion of evidence recovered in each search which is relevant to each group (learners, employers etc)
- 'Curriculum aims' are designed for longer term analysis of the reforms.

2. The CODING TREE

The coding tree has 9 'Parent' nodes. These are the main categories of evidence for the 14-19 reform programme for QCA

CODING FRAMEWORK	GENERAL GUIDE
 <p>The screenshot shows a software interface with a search bar at the top. Below it is a section titled 'Tree Nodes' containing a list of nine items, each with a plus sign icon and a small globe icon. The items are: 1. Qualifications, 2. Curriculum aims, 3. Stakeholders, 3a. Learners issues, 4. Delivery, 5. Assessment, 6. Pedagogy, 7. Accountability, 8. Reform process, and 9. Issues.</p>	<p>1. The first category (qualifications) on the coding tree indicates which qualification or curriculum area this information pertains to. This provides an initial gateway for strand teams to find their way back to significant or relevant evidence. <u>All evidence must be coded to one of these nodes</u></p> <p>2. The second category (curriculum aims) indicates which of the aims of the 14-19 reforms this is most related to. This allows a broad analysis of the progress in meeting the reform aims. As far as possible <u>all extracts need to be coded to one of the aims.</u></p> <p>3. The third category (stakeholders) identifies a particular stakeholder, either providing the information, or to whom the evidence pertains. <u>Where it is clear, the extract should be coded to a particular stakeholder.</u> 3a Learners is a subset of stakeholders.</p> <p>Nodes 4- 9 having coded the extract to the first 3 categories the coder then needs to identify the issue or issues this evidence addresses. Coders should identify the main issue and perhaps one or 2 subsidiary issues to which this might be relevant.</p> <p><u>Summary - Each piece of coded evidence should have between 4 - 6 nodes to which they are coded - Qualifications, - Curriculum Aims - Stakeholder and then 1 or 2 nodes selected from Delivery, Assessment, Pedagogy, Accountability, Process or Issues.</u></p>

3. Expanding the Tree - Child Nodes

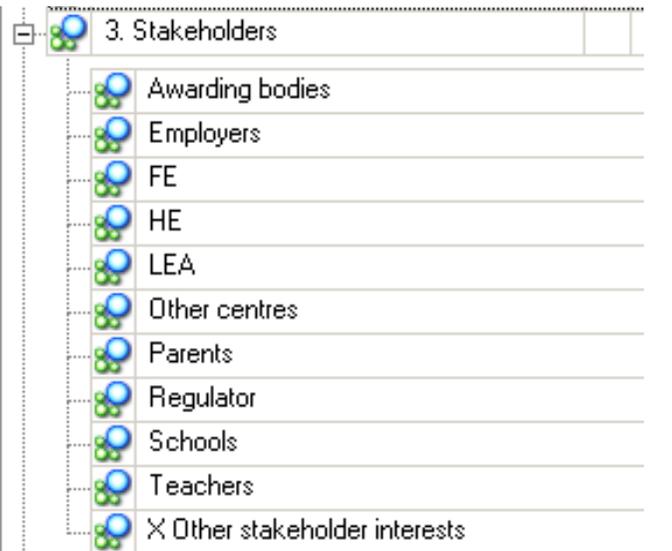
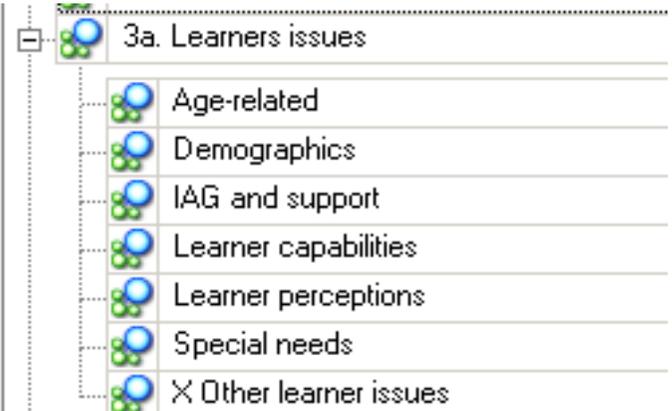
Each of the main nodes is subdivided into a separate list of 'child nodes'. There is a definition of each Node in the NVivo project (right click on the node and select 'Tree Node Properties'). A separate printed guide to all these definitions is available and this should be the key reference point. The guidance here is based on experience of applying these definitions

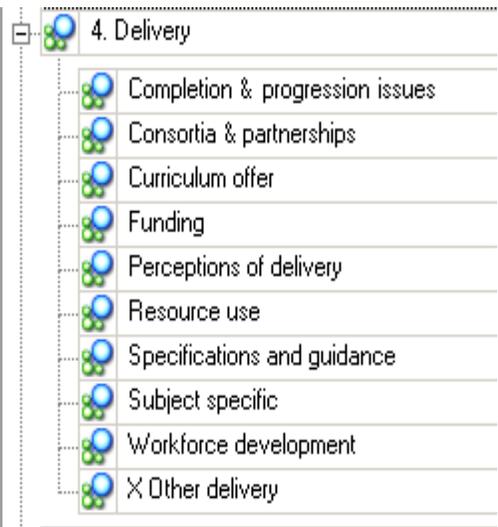
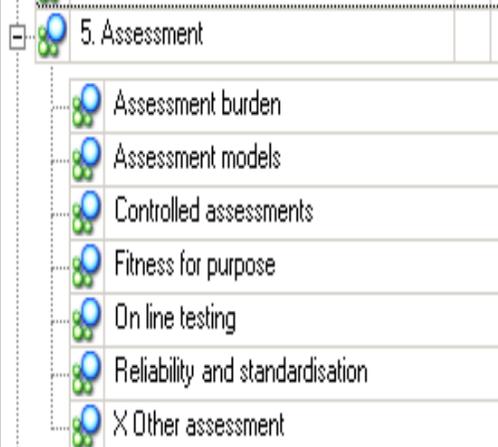
Please note you should only code to child nodes and never to the parent node

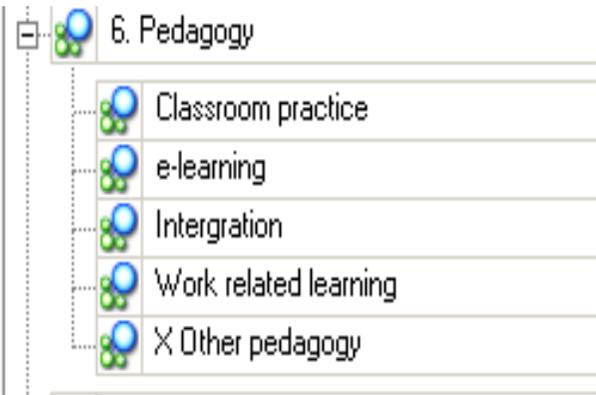
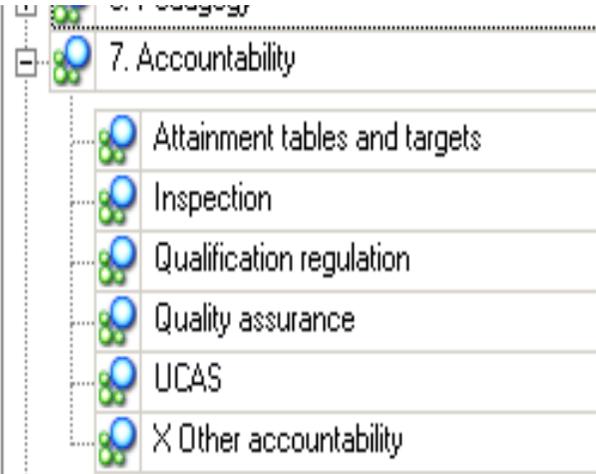
1 QUALIFICATIONS	
	<p>This is a crucial area for coding as it links directly to the stands of work in QCA. Each piece of evidence must be coded to one of the qualification nodes.</p> <p>Normally you would only code to one of these unless the extract relates clearly to 2 qualifications. For example Entry and Functional skills might also code to FLT. A reference to Diploma and BTEC would code to Diploma and Proprietary Quals.</p> <p>Two nodes relate to curriculum areas ('pre 14' or '14-19 Education') and these should only be used if there is a specific reference to them or there is no obvious qualification in context.</p> <p>It is sometimes difficult to choose between 'Proprietary brands' and 'other quals'. Proprietary brands are those existing qualifications like BTEC, C&G, NVQ which are in direct competition with the diploma while X other qualifications would cover things like GNVQ and ECDL.</p>
2 Curriculum Aims	

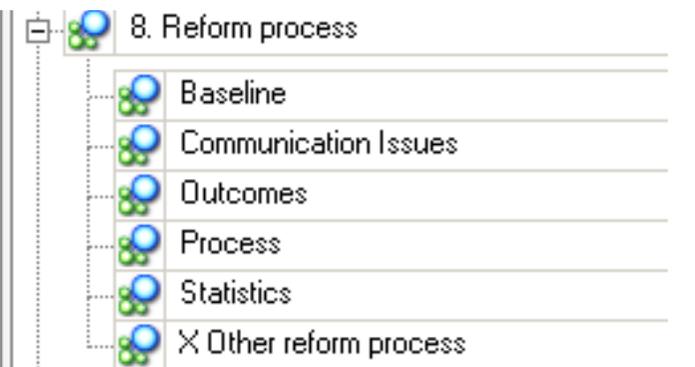
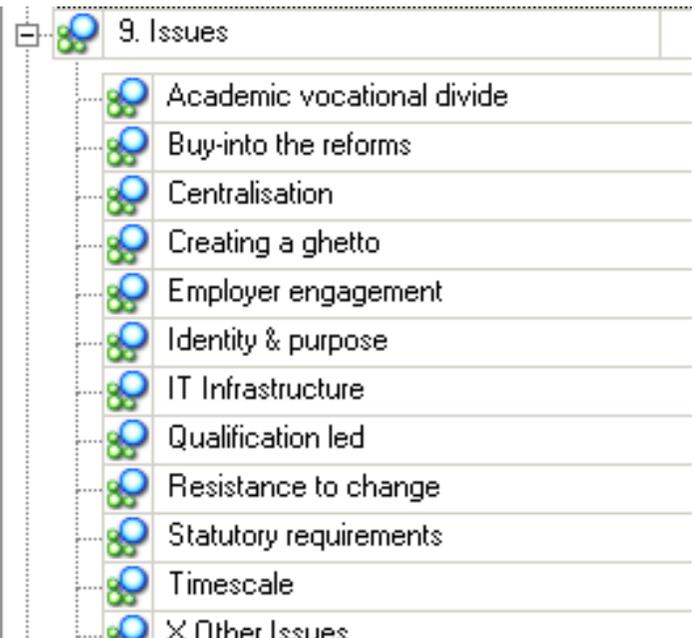
14-19 Reform Research Evidence Management System (REMS)

	<p>All evidence must be coded to one of the 14-19 reform curriculum aims. The nodes here are derived from the White Paper and the expectation is that in some way the evidence of implementation should link in some way to these aims. This is not about re- stating the aims but linking extracts to a reform aim.</p> <p>You should try to select only one where possible but experience has shown that this is one of the most difficult areas to select an appropriate node.</p> <p>Be careful not to simply link Functional skills to '<u>Strengthening skills</u>' or diplomas <u>to</u> '<u>Vocational route</u>' as this provides no additional information. Look carefully at what the extract is about and try to select the appropriate coding of curriculum aims for these two areas.</p> <p><u>A crucial element is the way the whole infrastructure of governance, funding and delivery will need to be 'Re-configured or re-organised to deliver the reforms</u></p> <p>'<u>Progression</u>' here relates to progression pathways while in delivery there is a similar node which should relate to the achievement of learners or barriers to them progressing.</p> <p>Any reference to NEETs tends to be about '<u>Engagement</u>' – this also covers references to disaffected or groups who have not participated</p> <p>'<u>Motivation & Participation</u>' is about or staying on in education or increasing learners propensity to do so.</p>
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<p>3 STAKEHOLDERS</p>	
	<p>At some stage we need to identify where reforms are either impacting on stakeholders so all evidence if possible should be coded here or in 3a.</p> <p>It may be difficult to identify the appropriate group. If the reference is not specific but you know the source of the evidence this can be used. For example NFER report on awarding bodies.</p> <p><u>Other centres'</u> is not a dumping ground - if you are not clear. Only use this if it is not a 'school' or 'FE'- so this could include, prisons, training centres etc. If you don't know - you can't code it to a centre and so code it to other stakeholders interest.</p> <p>If you are coding to '<u>Teacher</u>' you would not also code to school or FE.</p> <p>You should not normally code to stakeholders if you are also coding to 'learners' which are part of the same family of nodes</p>
<p>3a LEARNERS</p>	
	<p><u>'Age related'</u> and <u>'demographics'</u> should cover most of the different categories of learners.</p> <p>There may be an overlap on <u>'special needs'</u> and <u>'learner capabilities'</u> – Usually special needs are a specific disability and capability is about dealing with IT or new styles of assessment etc</p> <p>Talent and gifted would come under <u>'capabilities'</u> rather than <u>special needs.</u></p> <p><u>'Learner perceptions'</u> covers the actual views of learners on any aspect of current or planned changes and should only be used where their views can clearly be discerned.</p>

4 DELIVERY	
	<p>This is an area where you might code to more than one delivery issue - For example timetabling by consortia would be coded to both 'Consortia' and 'curriculum offer'.</p> <p>Curriculum offer is not about specific qualifications but about a package of elements and how these are organised for delivery or choice – Think of it like a supermarket – Not the individual products but what is available and how they are organised and presented</p> <p>Note that '<u>Funding</u>' is about <u>sources of money</u> for consortia or centres while '<u>Resource use</u>'- covers allocating or spending it or the use of time.</p> <p>'<u>Perceptions of delivery</u>' is significant in that the views and opinions on the reforms would be coded here. If you have identified a stakeholder then perceptions would link to the appropriate group</p>
5 ASSESSMENT	
	<p>This is an area that is likely to grow as issue emerge on assessment.</p> <p>While 'burden' is generally linked to the impact on learners or teachers some of the awarding body manageability would code here.</p> <p>'<u>Models</u>' is about different types of assessment (test, assignments, exams, internal, etc), however you should not code references to '<u>Controlled assessment</u>' or '<u>on line</u>'. While these are specific models of assessment they link to individual policy and strands of work. This why they need to be coded separately.</p>

6 PEDAGOGY	
	<p>Pedagogy covers any teaching and learning issues like the impact of reforms on classroom practice for teachers from introducing diplomas or controlled assessment.</p> <p>'Work related learning' is a very broad category and as the definition explains_includes apprenticeship, but also covers visits to employers, work experience and vocational teaching methods used for example with the diploma.</p> <p>'Integration' may cover a variety of issues such as how functional skills are delivered as part of GCSE or how PLTS are covered alongside other subjects.</p>
7 ACCOUNTABILITY	
	<p>One of the key elements in the reform White Paper was how the accountability elements might be used to encourage or compel change.</p> <p>A good example of this is 'attainment tables' and points for qualifications which encourage schools to offer them.</p> <p>There is a new qualifications framework (QCF) and new qualification rules from QCA or other regulators.</p> <p>'Quality Assurance' is a much broader category and would cover centres or awarding bodies.</p>

8 REFORM PROCESS	
	<p>One of the early issues to arise in coding has been if the approach to development or implementation has had a positive or negative effect.</p> <p>So in this section Process might be about where people are questioning if this has been done in the right way i.e. development model on diplomas.</p> <p><u>Statistics</u> and <u>baseline</u> are often confused – Baseline describes the position prior to the reforms – like GCSE achievement and so might have some statistics as part of the extract.</p> <p>You should also note that statistics can include text with evidence of achievement or take up alongside tables graphs etc.</p>
9 ISSUES	
	<p>The issues node should be used sparingly and carefully – We need good examples of issues which are explicitly identified as hampering or encouraging reforms to work.</p> <p>The list outlines, the ones that emerged during early coding and it is likely we will modify this section as we code new material For example 'identity and purpose' was derived from a Nuffield paper which questioned ambiguity on the role of Diplomas.</p> <p>They also questioned the limitations of 'Qualification led reforms to re-engage disaffected'.</p> <p>EX NCVQ staff identified that GNVQ lacked 'Statutory requirements' to compel change –This might change this time with rules on. Funding of proprietary qualification.</p> <p>There are a number of critical complaints that development is being rushed</p>

4. Frequently Asked Questions

Question	Advice
What if I can't decide where something should be coded?	If you don't know where to code a passage then code it to the 'X other' node, we can then review and decide on coding and then delete or code on.
What should I do with X other?	Use sparingly. Anything in here is potentially a new node. We have to empty these out and re-code from time to time so check is this covered elsewhere first.
What do I do if I make a mistake?	<p>You can undo the last coding in the edit menu or the un-code button on the toolbar. You can also open coding stripes and un-code from there.</p> <p>If stuck - annotate and we can sort out during a review.</p>
Must I always code to the first 3 Nodes?	The first one is an absolute requirement as this the key portal to the evidence for the teams in QCA. If there are no obvious stakeholders or aims then don't code.
Do I have to code to one of the other issues after the first 3?	Absolutely – yes - If you can't find an issue then the extract is not worth coding. So the minimum would be 'Qualifications' and one other issue node