

Centre Recognition Policy

1 General

- 1.1 Skills and Education Group Awards¹ is required to ensure that learners entered for its assessments and examinations are given such training, tuition, support and access to resources which will offer them the best chance of success.
- 1.2 An organisation must go through a centre recognition process before it is allowed to deliver and assess regulated² units/components and qualifications. Centres must not start delivery without written confirmation of approval.
- 1.3 Centre recognition does not endorse the activities or credibility of the organisation, other than in its standing to apply for approval to run courses/programmes that lead to the award of units and qualifications and to accept and apply our policies and procedures in support of that activity.
- 1.4 We consider applications from all centres and do not discriminate³ against type or size of organisation. We judge a centre's application on its ability to quality assure the delivery and assessment of our units and qualifications.
 - 1.4.1 We consider applications from international centres which are organisations in their own right or international sites of an approved organisation in the UK.⁴
- 1.5 Centre recognition embraces all annexes, sites and franchised locations of the named organisation. Such extensions of the recognised centre are not considered to have an independent approval and the recognised centre will be deemed wholly responsible for activities undertaken at these sites.
 - 1.5.1 An organisation may determine such a site as eligible to receive communications directly from us. Eligibility is defined by the presence of an Examinations Officer or persons with the appropriate authority to manage one or more of the following:
 - process enrolments / registrations;
 - assessments and claims for certification.

¹ ABC Awards is a brand of Skills and Education Group awards. Any reference to ABC Awards, its registered address, company or charity number should be deemed to mean the Skills and Education Group Awards.

² Regulated qualifications are accredited and monitored by Ofqual in England, Qualifications Wales, CCEA in NI

³ Cf. Equality and Diversity Policy

⁴ Centres seeking recognition and operating in international markets must either have established links with an approved UK centre or must be able to demonstrate robust quality assurance arrangements which can readily be monitored by our external moderators and examiners.

- 1.6 Centres which plan to sub-contract any part of the enrolment, delivery or assessment of our qualifications to another independent organisation must declare that partnership and have the appropriate agreements in place to ensure those arrangements do not put the recognition of the approved centre at risk. We will hold the recognised centre wholly responsible for such arrangements.
- 1.6.1 All Partner Organisations must be registered as a site and full details of their location and staff given.
- 1.7 In order to maintain a high level of support to a centre throughout a period of recognition, all centres will be charged an annual fee, invoiced at the beginning of September each year. Centres approved in year will not be invoiced until the following September.

2 Applying for Centre Recognition

- 2.1 Visit 'Become a Centre' on the website, read the available documentation and complete
- the CR1 Recognition Application Form;
 - the CR2 Qualification Intent Form confirming which qualification / units the centre is intending to offer;
- and provide the relevant third party reports / endorsements and agreements that will support the application.
- 2.1.1 If assistance is needed when completing these forms please read the centre recognition guidance. We can also support centres in preparing to become a recognised centre. For more information, please contact centrerecognition@skillsedugroup.co.uk or tele: 0115 8541620.
- 2.2 Applications must confirm that centres have the policies and procedures in place to support the quality assurance at the centre and so ensure that qualifications are delivered and assessed in a robust, fair and reliable way.
- 2.3 Centres must be able to evidence their quality procedures during a quality assurance visit which could be at the point of centre recognition, qualification approval or during the external moderation process.
- 2.3.1 The point at which this visit takes place is determined by a risk assessment of a centre and the level of support we believe a centre will require when preparing to deliver and assess regulated units / components and qualifications.
- 2.3.2 The criteria upon which these judgements are made include a centre's experience and expertise and its association and performance with other nationally recognised awarding organisations.

2.3.3 Experienced centres may be mutually recognised and in these cases will move directly to the process for Qualification Approval.⁵

3 Centre Recognition Visits

- 3.1 These are required where a centre has demonstrated little or has no experience working with an awarding organisation.
- 3.2 All recognition visits will be conducted by a Quality Assurance Moderator who will review the evidence supplied by the centre in support of their application.
- 3.3 Fees for recognition visits are available on the website and are non-refundable.
- 3.4 We reserve the right to charge for any pre-arranged visit and/or activities that a centre cancels without sufficient or reasonable notice, and the right to invoice and require payment of visit fees before the visit takes place.
- 3.5 Following a visit, a report is written and an action plan (if required) agreed with the centre. A centre will not be recognised until all actions have been completed.

4 Recognition

- 4.1 Once a centre has completed the recognition process it will be required to sign a centre agreement. The Agreement specifies the terms of approval and the joint commitment to the protection of qualification standards and the interests of the learner. When this has been signed and returned, confirmation of recognition including a recognition certificate is sent to the centre. The centre will then progress through the process for Qualification Approval.⁶
- 4.2 We will from time to time require confirmation of a centre's details and key contacts and will expect centres to alert us to any significant changes to these contacts or the structure or location of their organisation.
- 4.3 Responsibility for ongoing quality assurance and the adherence to the Centre Agreement rests with the named person accountable for the activities of the organisation i.e. the Head of Centre.
 - 4.3.1 Details of all policies and procedures which underpin these arrangements are available on the website.
- 4.4 Centres are advised that any persons named on the approval documentation will receive information from us, whether it concerns amendments to policies and procedures or to qualifications or our qualification offer. These key contacts will also be provided with information on events and training relating to a centre's

⁵ Cf. Qualification Approval Policy

⁶ Cf. Qualification Approval Policy

offer and will be responsible for the internal circulation of information to relevant centre personnel.

5 External Moderation

- 5.1 Recognition is a one off process subject to the centre continuing to enrol learners and taking part in regular monitoring activity. Our External Moderation Policy sets out the process for this monitoring activity.
- 5.2 Through external moderation, we ensure that approved centres provide learners with access to fair and reliable assessment opportunities, and that evidence of learner achievement meets the standard required in the published learning outcomes and assessment criteria of our qualifications. It confirms the authenticity, validity and objectivity of practice.
- 5.3 It is expected that centres will have an annual moderation per sub-sector (curriculum area) dependent upon the type and nature of the regulated qualifications and units / components offered. Centre requests or our requirement for additional moderation are chargeable.
- 5.4 External moderation is flexible and may be applied at any time of the year but usually towards the end of a course, when learners are still available but have completed all planned assessment requirements.

6 Sanctions

- 6.1 Sanctions⁷ may be imposed on a centre where it consistently fails to comply with the requirements of our policies or procedures or has put the integrity of our qualifications at risk and / or failed to support the achievement of learners.
- 6.2 Any actions resulting in suspension or withdrawal of centre recognition will impact on a centre's eligibility to deliver our qualifications and may impact on the eligibility to deliver qualifications with other awarding organisations.
- 6.3 Where recognition is withdrawn, we will, with the co-operation of the centre under its obligations to its learners and the conditions of its agreement with us:
 - endeavour to ensure the interests of all learners are protected;
 - and if required and where possible, identify alternative arrangements whereby learners may complete their qualifications.

7 Resources

- 7.1 Centres must have and retain a workforce of appropriate size and competence to undertake the delivery of regulated qualifications / units / components. This

⁷ Cf. Sanctions Policy

includes taking reasonable steps to ensure occupational competence where this is required for the assessment of specific qualifications and units.

- 7.2 Centres must also ensure that they have appropriate and sufficient physical resources to undertake the delivery of all units / qualifications.
- 7.3 All centre staff will be expected to co-operate with us and the Regulators⁸ to ensure that it can produce information and documentation that may be required as part of their monitoring processes.
- 7.4 The roles and responsibilities of all those responsible for the delivery, assessment and internal quality assurance of qualifications at the centre are documented in the following:
 - Delivering and Assessing Qualifications;
 - Internal Quality Assurance of Qualifications;
 - Individual Qualification Guides (specifications).

8 Equalities Law

- 8.1 Centres will be expected to undertake the delivery of all qualifications in accordance with Equalities Law.
- 8.2 Centres should show that they are clearly committed to supporting equality and diversity for learners by ensuring open access to qualifications and assessments irrespective of age, gender, ethnic origin, religious beliefs, employment status, nationality, sexual orientation, marital status or disability⁹.

9 Recognition Withdrawal

- 9.1 Centres may withdraw their recognition but are bound by the terms of our agreement and their responsibilities to their learners.

Centres which decide to relinquish their centre recognition status for whatever reason:

- must give at least one month's notice in writing of their intention to withdraw;
- must put appropriate plans in place for learners to complete their qualifications and to allow claims for full or credit /unit certification to which learners may be entitled;
- must follow any guidelines as given at the time to ensure learners are not disadvantaged throughout the process.

⁸ Ofqual in England, Qualifications Wales and CCEA in NI

⁹ Cf. Equality and Diversity Policy

9.1.1 Centres which do not notify us of their intentions to withdraw or which fail to register any learners for a period of more than three years will receive the status of 'archived'. We will not notify a centre of this action.

9.2 We will withdraw recognition:

- where new centres do not enrol any learners during the first two years following approval;
- where a sanction at level 4 has been imposed.

9.2.1 In respect of a sanction, we will give notice of our intention to withdraw recognition indicating the reason for our decision and the actions required apropos a centre's learners who may not have yet completed their studies or been certificated.

9.3 As a result of all such withdrawals, centres will be required to:

- ensure all learners registered are allowed to complete their qualifications where possible;
- pay any outstanding debts;
- remove references to their recognition status across all media;
- remove the centre recognition certificate from display.

Centres will be required to go through the centre recognition process again if they decide to offer our qualifications at a later date.

10 Quality Assurance

10.1 This policy and guidance is reviewed annually to ensure it continues to meet the needs of our customers and the Regulators.