

## Qualification Approval Policy

### 1 General

- 1.1 This policy covers the Skills and Education Group Awards<sup>1</sup> approval arrangements for regulated qualifications. It seeks to inform centres of the requirements and review of such approvals, and of the advice and guidance available for centres wishing to apply.
- 1.2 Organisations must first be recognised as a centre (cf. Centre Recognition Policy) before approval to offer qualifications and units / components is given.
- 1.3 Notification of a new or an approved centre's intentions to deliver qualifications or units must be submitted on form CR2 Qualification Intent. Guidance on completing this form can be found in Centre Guidance for Centre Recognition.
- 1.4 Centres must neither advertise the Group's qualifications in their prospectuses or on their websites, nor deliver them before approval is given to do so.

### 2 Risk Assessment

- 2.1 Once an intention to offer qualifications is received, centres will be risk assessed to determine the level of support they require.
- 2.2 The risk assessment is based upon the experience of centres delivering similar qualification types and levels. Centres may be considered low, medium or high risk.
  - 2.2.1 Centres that are considered low risk will be approved immediately and will be allowed to enrol learners.
  - 2.2.2 Centres that are considered medium risk will be required to submit further information to clarify their readiness and expertise to deliver the intended qualifications. This will usually be in the form of a desk top review of a selection of assessment tasks.

Centres falling into either of the categories above may still request a Qualification Advisory Visit from a subject specialist which can be tailored to centre staff requirements. A small fee is charged for such visits.

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<sup>1</sup> ABC Awards is a brand of Skills and Education Group Awards, a recognised awarding organisation and part of the Skills and Education Group. Any reference to ABC Awards, its registered address, company or charity number should be deemed to mean the Skills and Education Group Awards.

2.2.3 Centres which are considered high risk will usually have no experience in the qualification subject area or level or learner demographic<sup>2</sup> and consequently will have a Qualification Approval Visit.

### **3 Qualification Approval Visits**

- 3.1 These are arranged at a time to suit the centre.
- 3.2 We reserve the right to invoice and collect fees prior to the visit taking place and to charge for any visit that a centre cancels without sufficient or reasonable notice. Fees are non-refundable.
- 3.3 All approval visits will be conducted by a subject specialist who will:
  - 3.3.1 determine that adequate and appropriate physical and human resources are in place;
  - 3.3.2 review assessment plans and assessment tasks to ensure the content of assessment is fit for purpose, appropriate to the method of assessment chosen and consistent with the qualification's learning outcomes / assessment criteria.
  - 3.3.3 offer specialist advice on delivery and assessment of the qualification / units;
  - 3.3.4 confirm appropriate internal quality assurance is in place to protect both the integrity of the qualifications to be delivered and the interests of all learners.
- 3.4 Following a visit, a report is written and an action plan, if required, agreed with the centre.
  - 3.4.1 Some actions may need to be completed before centres are allowed to enrol learners.
  - 3.4.2 If actions are minor we may allow enrolments subject to the actions being completed by the timescales specified.

### **4 Continuation of Approval**

- 4.1 Once approved, centres may continue to offer the qualifications for which they have gained approval as long as they remain available.
- 4.2 Any changes to qualifications / units are notified to centres. However, as a result of these changes, a centre's qualification approval to offer them may be reviewed.

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<sup>2</sup> This list is not exhaustive and other criteria may suggest a visit is required

- 4.3 Approval will also be reviewed following monitoring activities if centres fail to meet the standards required.

## 5 Resources

- 5.1 Centres must ensure all appropriate staff, physical resources and systems are in place to deliver and assess the qualifications according to the standards, policies, procedures and guidelines as published. These standards and requirements are identified in the following documents which are available on the website:

- Qualification Guides (specifications);
- Additional Assessment Guidance (if applicable);
- Sample assessment materials;
- Sample quality assurance templates;
- Delivering and Assessing Qualifications;
- Internal Quality Assurance of Qualifications;
- Centre Record Keeping;
- Centre Health and Safety;
- Equality and Diversity;
- Copyright;
- Centre Invoicing;
- Despatch of Assessment Evidence.

## 6 External Moderation and Sanctions

- 6.1 We will monitor qualification standards through our external moderation process<sup>3</sup>. This process may require actions by the centre. Serious actions or a failure to complete actions may result in sanctions<sup>4</sup>.
- 6.2 We will always offer further support to a centre which may be struggling to achieve or maintain the qualification standard required, but may in some circumstances need to temporarily or permanently withdraw a centre's qualification approval.
- 6.3 Any actions resulting in a permanent withdrawal of qualification approval may impact on a centre's eligibility to deliver other qualifications, its centre recognition or its approval with other awarding organisations in that sector.
- 6.3.1 We will give centres guidance on protecting the interests of learners appropriate to the circumstances of withdrawing qualification approval.

## 7 Qualification Approval Withdrawal

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<sup>3</sup> Cf. External Moderation Policy

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Sanctions Policy

7.1 We will not progress an approval request in the following circumstances:

- Where new centres fail to provide the required evidence which would demonstrate their readiness to deliver and assess the qualifications for which they have applied.

7.2 We will withdraw an existing approval in the following circumstances:

- Where new centres do not enrol any learners on a qualification during the first two years following approval.
- Where an existing centre has been inactive for a period of three years;
- Where a sanction at level 3 has been imposed.

7.3 Centres which decide to relinquish their qualification approval status:

- Must give at least one month's notice of their intention to withdraw;
- Must put appropriate plans in place to allow claims for full / credit certification to which learners may be entitled;
- Must follow our guidelines at the time to ensure learners are not disadvantaged throughout the process.

7.4 Following such withdrawals, centres will be required to go through the qualification approval process again should they wish to deliver at a future date.

## **8 Quality Assurance**

8.1 This policy and guidance is reviewed annually to ensure it continues to meet the needs of our centres and the Regulators<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> Ofqual in England; Qualification Wales; CCEA Regulation in NI