

 **Registration and Certification Policy 2023-24**

**Learner Registration**

We as a Centre must have Awarding Organisation (AO) approval for every qualification we run. This approval must be received in writing from the relevant Awarding Organisation (AO) before any learners can be registered on an accredited course, For further information on the Centre Approval process, please refer to relevant AO Approval Policy and Procedures.

Once our Centre has been approved to deliver a qualification, we are able to submit learner registrations through Quartz Web, provided that:

1. a) we have signed and returned a validated Centre Agreement and Terms and Conditions.
2. b) we have paid all outstanding invoices in line with Awarding Organisation payment terms.
3. c) we do not have a Sanction related to Centre Quality Monitoring Procedures.

**Privacy Notice and Learner Data**

* We are required to comply with the Data Protection Act (2018) and have a written policy/privacy notice in place to make learners aware of how their data will be used, shared and stored as set out in AO Centre Agreements and Terms and Conditions.
* We must ensure that learners are provided with and agree to a Data Protection Policy/Privacy Notice, prior to any training or assessment activities. Learners must be willing to share their full name, date of birth, address, contact number and email address for registration to proceed. Learners must be aware of how they can exercise choice in respect of the use of their personal data, however, they must be aware that if they choose not to share their data they cannot be registered and therefore cannot complete any courses or assessment with us as a Centre.
* Our Centre’s Data Protection Policy/Privacy Notice must allow personal data to be transferred to an Awarding Organisation for the following purposes:
* To initially register the learner on the relevant qualification and then any subsequent administration required to amend the registration.
* To provide certificates of learner achievement, including the issue of replacement certificates.
* To perform quality assurance activities, including the conducting of investigations into suspected malpractice or maladministration. This may mean that AOs will be required to contact the learner directly.
* To disclose or respond to information requests from Qualification or Industry Regulators, sector skill bodies or any other professional body, where an AO is legally required to provide the information.
* To administer requests for Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations.
* To respond to requests for appeals.
* To carry out statistical analysis and monitor equal opportunities (anonymised).
* We must ensure that all learners sign a data sharing agreement to confirm their acceptance that their data can be shared for the above purposes, and we encourage tutors to include this information within registration documentation.
* The data sharing agreement must be available for external quality assurance purposes and must be provided to AOs on request.
* We must respond to any request by AOs for the sharing of learner data within **5 working days**. Failure to provide data as requested may lead to sanctions in line with an AO Malpractice and Maladministration procedures.

**Learner Identification**

As an approved Centre we must adhere to the specific assessment and regulatory requirements for the qualifications/products the learner is being registered against, in terms of verifying and validating learner identification. We must carry out sufficient checks on learner identification during the learner’s induction. Some products have specific ID requirements which must be adhered to, please refer to the individual product specification for further information, available on AO websites.

Our verification of learner identity must confirm that the learner is who they say they are and that they are meet the minimum age requirements of the qualification, as detailed within the product’s specification. Full records of the identification checks must be kept and provided to AOs on request.

Failure to conduct the required identification checks will be considered as malpractice and will be investigated in line with AO Malpractice and Maladministration procedures.

**Accuracy of Learner Names and Amendments**

As an approved Centre we are responsible for ensuring the accuracy of learner registration data at the time of submission to an AO. Under the law in the United Kingdom, an individual may change their name at any time, provided there is no intent to deceive or defraud another person. There is no legal procedure to follow, and people may change their forename, surname, add names or re-arrange existing names. Notwithstanding this, Awarding Organisations have a duty to prevent fraud and reserve the right to set their own requirements.

All AOs require registrations to be made in the legal name of the learner. Learners must not be registered using nicknames or preferred names. Aside from an incorrect spelling of a learner’s name, name changes will only be permitted before certification has taken place. A ‘second check’ process is operated to try and avoid submission of incorrect information regarding Learner details to the AB.

Where certification has not taken place and a name change is required, we must contact the relevant AO Customer Services Team as soon as the name change is identified. We must confirm to them, in writing, that we have completed the required checks of the learner’s identification showing their updated name. In some circumstances, an AO may be required under its regulatory obligations to request documentary evidence of the name change, such as a photocopy of a name change deed poll.

Where a spelling error is identified regarding a learner’s name, we must contact the AO Customer Services Team as soon as the error is identified to allow it to be corrected. We must confirm the correct spelling of the learner’s name and confirm that the spelling has been checked against the learner’s valid identification. In some circumstances, an AO may be required under its regulatory obligations to obtain a copy of the learner’s valid identification to correct the spelling of the name.

**Registration Types**

For learners studying regulated qualifications, the appropriate qualification must be selected at the point of registration. This includes the option to register a learner on a tailored course e.g. Pathway to Health and Wellbeing etc. which includes a list of units from a qualification. In instances where a qualification includes optional units, we as the Centre, must still select the qualification at registration and we will then have the option to select the units required.

Should we choose to deliver specific units that do not lead to the award of a qualification, the relevant course of learning should be selected, together with the specific units and the credit values but the qualification selection should be left blank.

For non-regulated courses, learners should be registered by selecting the appropriate course of learning. In these cases, no qualification is available for selection.

**Registration Timeframes**

As an approved Centre we are required to ensure that we have robust systems and processes in place to ensure timely registration of learners and to protect the interests of learners. Learners must be registered as soon as possible following their induction to the course,

* For courses of 12 weeks or less, registration must be completed within 25 working days of induction.
* For courses between 26 and 40 weeks, registration must be undertaken within 50 days of induction
* For externally set assessments, learners must be registered at least **5 working days** before the date they are planned to sit their assessment. The same timescale applies for any subsequent resit registrations
1. **In all cases, no assessment activities can be carried out until the learner is registered**. This is to ensure that the learner’s interests are protected. The only exception to this is the initial assessment carried out during the learner’s induction to ensure correct level of entry.
2. We are also responsible for ensuring that learners are registered before the operational end date of a qualification or unit. This includes the development of new qualifications and units, as well as extensions, withdrawals, amendments and any qualifications or products that are due to expire, along with the dates that the changes come into force. We must ensure that we are fully aware of all dates and changes to qualifications and products to ensure that learners are registered before registration expires.
3. If we do not meet the above timeframes for registration, or where training or assessment activities are carried out without prior registration, AOs will investigate the reason(s) why and will apply the relevant Sanctions, in line with their approaches to Centre quality monitoring procedures.

AOs reserve the right to charge a late registration fee, where registration timeframes are not adhered to.

1. Learner registration can remain active for a period of **3 years from the course start date**. After the period of 3 years, AOs will no longer accept any subsequent claims for achievement against the registration. Where claims are required to be made, a new registration will need to be made, at which point the current registration and certification fee of the product will apply and will be charged.

**Registration Fees**

1. A charge is made for each learner at the point of registration, which includes the cost for both registration and certification. The charge will be based on the qualification selected at registration, or the applicable unit. Relevant invoices will be emailed to the our Finance contact.
2. If a learner achieves additional qualifications, units or credits, above the fees already invoiced to the Centre, AOs will issue a further invoice to cover the difference between the original charge and the charges associated with the additional achievement.
3. In all cases, once an invoice has been raised, the registration fee is non-refundable.

**Certification**

**Submission of Results**

In all cases, results must be submitted to an AO within **5 working days** of Peer Review and within 3 years of the date of registration. Where a learner has sat an external exam, any further assessment materials must be returned to the AO within **3 working days** of the assessment date.

We must ensure that we are aware of the Certification End Date of the qualifications/units within their provision. AOs will not issue certificates where the Centre submits results after the Certification End Date.

As a requirement of Centre approval, all AOs require centres to ensure that the required internal quality assurance checks (i.e. our Peer Reviews) are carried out on the accuracy and validity of result claims before they are submitted to NOCN.

Where an incorrect claim is identified, we must contact the relevant AO and follow their ‘Incorrect claim’ procedures, detailing how the incorrect claim occurred and what steps have been implemented to prevent re-occurrence. We are responsible for ensuring any invalid certificates are returned to allow the processing of the incorrect claim. There will be a charge for each learner, where incorrect achievements have been claimed and any recurrence of this within a calendar year, may result in sanctions.

**Moderation or Verification of Results**

Where Direct Claims Status (DCS) for a qualification/course do not apply, results will be moderated by an External Quality Assurer(EQA) before certification is granted. It is important to note that submission of results does not automatically trigger the required external quality assurance activities and centres should liaise with their AO or External Quality Assurer directly, to progress results to certification.

Where DCS does apply, claims will usually be processed within **5 working days** of the Centre’s result submission.

For externally set and marked assessments, AOs issue results within **20 working days** of the assessment date wherever possible.

**Issuing of Certificates**

In normal circumstances AOs will aim to issue certificates to learners within **10 working days** of an accurate result claim being processed. All certificates will be sent securely (courier and recorded delivery), addressed to our Centre Admin Contact

Where a learner has not achieved a qualification, we will receive a unit certificate in confirmation of any units that the learner has achieved and an administration charge will still apply for this.

We must ensure strong internal procedures for the checking and logging of certificates. Once received, all certificates must be checked for accuracy before being securely distributed to learners in a timely manner.

Once certificates are issued, we must ensure that learners receive them and under no circumstances hold or retain them from learners.

**Amendment to Learner Names Following Certification**

Once award of achievement has taken place, AOs will only allow amendments to a learner name where a spelling error has been identified (or in cases of witness protection or gender re-assignment) In all other instances, including marriage, divorce or name change by deed poll, where a spelling error is identified and a certificate has been issued, we can apply for a replacement certificate, We may be charged for this and we must return any certificates back to the AO before a new certificate can be drawn up.

**Incorrect Claiming of Certificates**

Incorrect claims for certification are taken seriously and this may result in an investigation and sanctions. Where an error in claiming is identified and a certificate has been issued, we must return the certificate to the AO as soon as possible. We will be charged an administration fee for the incorrect claim, in line with the AO Fees and Charges.

All AOS require us to return any damaged certificates before replacements are issued. There should be no charge for this.

If a certificate is damaged at the Centre, or after they have been distributed to learners, the Centre or learner should return them to the AO and will be charged for any replacements

Where a certificate has been lost by a Centre or learner, a replacement can be reissued but it will be clearly marked as such, as well as showing the date the replacement was issued.

**Appeals**

If we as a centre fail to register or certificate a learner in line with the Operational and Certification End Dates of a qualification, a learner may wish to appeal. In this case we must follow the guidance issued by the relevant AO.

