

Approval Criteria

To gain approval to offer an NCFE qualification, award or unit you must meet the criteria detailed in the tables below. NCFE will review the evidence in support of the approval criteria either on the initial approval visit or on the first External Moderator/Verifier visit following approval. You don't need to enclose the evidence with your application.

Management Systems	
Criteria	Possible Sources of Evidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ The centre's aims and policies in relation to programmes are supported by senior management and understood by the assessment team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Documented quality procedures ◆ Progress reports and staff updates
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ The centre's access and fair assessment policies and practices are understood and complied with by candidates and Assessors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Documented policies and procedures ◆ Access and fair assessment policy review mechanisms
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ The roles, responsibilities, authorities and accountabilities of the assessment and moderation/verification teams across all assessment sites are clearly defined, allocated and understood 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Documented quality assurance procedures ◆ Organisational chart ◆ Documented and signed agreements indicating the lines of accountability of partner organisations in relation to the management of assessment and internal quality assurance ◆ Records of all assessment sites and personnel ◆ CVs of the assessment team and Internal Verifiers/Moderators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ There is effective communication within the assessment team and with NCFE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Staff handbooks and updates ◆ Organisational charts ◆ Minutes of team meetings ◆ Records of communication with NCFE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ NCFE is notified of any changes which may affect the centre's ability to meet the approved centre criteria 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Notification of change to the assessment and moderation/verification teams

Resources	
Criteria	Possible Sources of Evidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Assessor and Internal Moderator/Verifier have sufficient time, resources and authority to perform their roles and responsibilities effectively 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ A record of Assessor/candidate allocation ◆ Candidate/Assessor ratios and time allocation ◆ Oral confirmation Assessors and Internal Moderators/Verifiers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ There are sufficient competent and qualified Assessors and Internal Verifiers/Moderators to meet the demand for assessment and moderation/verification activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ CVs and development plans for the assessment team ◆ List of qualified Assessors and Internal Verifiers/Moderators ◆ Assessor to candidate ratios
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ A staff development programme is established for the assessment and moderation/verification team in line with identified needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Staff induction and guidance materials ◆ Records of meetings, briefings and/or updates ◆ Records of individual development plans ◆ Action plans to acquire the A and V awards, where appropriate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Resource needs are effectively identified in relation to the specific programme, and resources are made available 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Records of resource availability ◆ Evidence of any additional resources obtained
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Equipment and accommodation used for the purposes of assessment comply with the requirements of relevant Health and Safety legislation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Public employee liability certificates ◆ Records of equipment and accommodation ◆ Maintenance schedules

Candidate Support	
Criteria	Possible Sources of evidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Information, advice and guidance about programme procedures and practices are provided to candidates and potential candidates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Candidate guidance and induction materials ◆ Details of support services available ◆ Appeals procedures ◆ Oral confirmation by candidates, if appropriate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Candidates' development needs are matched against the requirements of the programme and an agreed individual assessment plan is established 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Candidate initial assessment procedures ◆ Candidate assessment plans ◆ Learner/trainee contracts

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Candidates have regular opportunities to review their progress and goals and to revise their assessment plan accordingly to meet their target awards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Candidate assessment plan, frequency of review meeting, examples of revisions to assessment plans ◆ Learner record ◆ System to track candidates' progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Particular assessment requirements of candidates are identified and met where possible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Materials, equipment and/or facilities to support candidates with particular requirements
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ There is an established appeals procedure which is documented and made available to all candidates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Documented appeals procedure, including details of grounds for appeal and timescales ◆ Records of appeals made and their outcomes

Assessment and Moderation/Verification	
Criteria	Possible Sources of Evidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Queries about the Qualification Award or Unit Specification, assessment guidance or related NCFE materials are resolved and recorded 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Record of queries raised with NCFE ◆ Records of queries raised with the Internal Moderator/Verifier
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Requests are complied with from the awarding organisation or qualifications regulators for access to premises, records, information, candidates and staff for the purpose of external moderation/verification or other monitoring activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Data and information management systems ◆ Candidate tracking systems ◆ Assessment and internal moderation/verification records
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Access to assessment is encouraged through the use of a range of valid assessment methods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Assessment plans and candidate assessment records ◆ Provision for candidates with particular assessment requirements
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Internal moderation/verification procedures and activities are clearly documented, consistent with national requirements and ensure the quality and consistency of assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Internal moderation/verification plans and reports ◆ A sampling strategy and schedule of activity ◆ Records of assessment team meetings ◆ Assessor networking opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Assessment decisions and practices are regularly sampled and findings are acted upon to ensure consistency and fairness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Sampled assessment (observation, candidate portfolios, knowledge evidence etc) ◆ Internal moderation/verification plans and records of internal moderation/verification activity ◆ Records of assessment sampling strategies ◆ Minutes of assessment team meetings ◆ Records of networking

	/ standardisation events
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Assessment is conducted by qualified and occupationally expert staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Details of the assessment team including occupational background, experience and possession of A and V awards (if appropriate) ◆ Details of countersigning arrangements for any assessment decisions made by unqualified Assessors (NQF NVQs only)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Internal moderation/verification is conducted by appropriately qualified and experienced staff 	<p>NVQs (NQF):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Details of Internal Verifier's occupational background, experience and D/V awards obtained (where appropriate) ◆ Details of countersigning arrangements for any internal verification decisions made by unqualified Internal Verifiers <p>Other qualification/award/units:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Details of Internal Moderator's occupational background and experience
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ The external assessment process is carried out in accordance with NCFE's Regulations for the Conduct of External Assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Up to date NCFE Regulations for the Conduct of External Assessment ◆ Details of the arrangements for storage and return of external assessment materials
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Unless a learner chooses not to have a unique learner number (ULN), arrangements are in place to obtain the ULN and a learner record on behalf of the learner 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Facilities to obtain the ULN and access the learner record
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Where learner consent is given, uses access to the record of the learner's previous achievements in their learner record to ensure that opportunities for credit transfer and exemption are maximised 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Learner record ◆ Record of recognition of prior learning (RPL) ◆ Record of exemptions

Records	
Criteria	Possible Sources of Evidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Information supplied to NCFE for the purposes of registration and certification is complete and accurate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Records of candidate entry/registration and certification claims
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Candidate records and details of achievements are accurate, kept up to date and securely stored in line with NCFE's requirements and are available for external 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Candidate registration details ◆ Candidate assessment records ◆ Evidence files or portfolios ◆ Security and access arrangements

moderation/verification and auditing	◆ Assessment outcomes
◆ Unit certification is made available to candidates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Records of units registered, claimed and/or awarded ◆ Induction materials ◆ Access to learner's previous achievement in their learner record to ensure any credit transfer or exemption are maximised
◆ Records of internal moderation/verification activity are maintained in line with NCFE's requirements and are made available for the purposes of auditing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Internal moderation/verification plans and sampling records ◆ Minutes of assessment team meetings
◆ The effectiveness of the internal moderation/verification strategy is reviewed against national requirements and corrective measures are implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Internal reviews of sampling strategies ◆ External Moderator/Verifier reports ◆ Evidence of corrective actions taken
◆ The centre's achievements are evaluated and reviewed and used to inform future centre programme developmental activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Internal audit/self assessment arrangements ◆ Record of findings against the approval criteria ◆ Evidence of corrective actions taken
◆ Candidate, Employer (NQF NVQs only) and other feedback is used to evaluate the quality and effectiveness of programme provision against the centre's stated aims and policies, leading to continuous improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Evaluation forms/surveys ◆ Users' charter/customer service statements
◆ Actions identified by external moderation/verification visits are disseminated to appropriate staff and corrective measures are implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ External Moderator/Verifier report(s) circulated to the assessment team and senior management ◆ Action plans
◆ Information and recording systems enable candidates' achievements to be monitored and reviewed in relation to the centre's equal opportunities policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Achievement records in relation to access and fair assessment policies ◆ Statistical information and certification rates analysed by factors such as ethnic origin, disability and gender
◆ Has the staff, resources and system necessary to support the assessment of units and the award	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Learners record
◆ Has the staff, resources and systems necessary to support the accumulation and transfer of credits, the recording of exemptions and recognition of prior learning if applicable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Records of candidate exemptions ◆ Records of candidate credit transfers ◆ Records of exemptions ◆ Records of recognition of prior learning claims ◆ Robust process/facilities to validate claims for exemptions and

	recognition of prior learning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Candidate personal data is collected and held in accordance with the Data Protection Legislation, including the Data Protection Act 1998. Such records are held with the explicit consent of the candidate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Signed declarations from candidates ◆ Security and access arrangements

Centre Staff Roles and Responsibilities

In order to ensure the effective operation of NCFE qualification/award/units, you should allocate members of staff to carry out the following roles. Allocation of staff members to these roles must be stated on the application form.

- ◆ Qualification/Award/Unit Contact
- ◆ Internal Moderator/Verifier(s)
- ◆ Assessor(s)
- ◆ Examinations Officer or equivalent

Centres must also have an appropriate number of Invigilator(s) for qualifications requiring external assessment under exam conditions. For further details of NCFE's requirements relating to invigilation, please refer to NCFE's Regulations for the Conduct of External Assessment, available from the NCFE website (www.ncfe.org.uk) or from the Centre Support team at NCFE.

Qualification/Award/Unit Contact

The qualification/award/unit Contact should:

- ◆ act as the main point of contact between NCFE, your organisation and the External Moderator/Verifier
- ◆ ensure that the qualification, award or unit is run in accordance with the programme agreed with NCFE and the relevant External Moderator/Verifier across all sites and departments
- ◆ ensure that NCFE is informed of any changes in staffing or accommodation
- ◆ liaise with the External Moderator/Verifier and provide the information required by him/her
- ◆ ensure that all personnel involved in the delivery and assessment of the qualification/award are appropriately trained, have access to the Qualification, Award or Unit Specification and assessment requirements, and that they meet regularly to monitor the progress and quality of delivery across all sites.

Internal Moderator/Verifier

Qualifications classed as vocationally related or general by qualification regulators¹ will be quality assured by the process of moderation.

Some National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) must be quality assured by the process of verification in accordance with the NVQ Code of Practice (2006) and associated guidance available from the Ofqual website (www.ofqual.gov.uk). **Please note that the Code of Practice does not apply to any NVQs on the**

¹ The qualifications regulators are Ofqual in England, DCELLS in Wales and CCEA in Northern Ireland.

Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF). If you're not sure which type yours is, please contact the Centre Support team on 0191 239 8000 or email us at info@ncfe.org.uk.

NCFE national awards and national partnership awards will also be quality assured by the process of verification.

The Internal Moderator/Verifier should:

- ◆ sample assessments to ensure all assessments are carried out to the same standard by all Assessors
- ◆ ensure that Assessor(s) are trained and hold appropriate qualifications, identifying training needs and providing training as appropriate
- ◆ complete and sign Certificate Claim Forms and organise their return to NCFE.

The Internal Moderator/Verifier can be the same person as the Qualification/Award/Unit Contact.

Internal Verifiers for NVQs (NQF) must hold, or be working towards, the new V1 (verifier) unit.

Internal Moderators must have a qualification and/or recent occupational experience in the subject area they are moderating.

Please note: where an Internal Moderator/Verifier is also an Assessor of the qualification, award or unit, his/her assessment decisions must be internally moderated/verified by a different Internal Moderator/Verifier.

Assessor

The role of the Assessor is to:

- ◆ carry out assessment in accordance with the qualification or award's criteria as detailed in the Qualification, Award or Unit Specification
- ◆ ensure candidates' evidence is valid and meets the standards of the qualification, award or unit. The Assessor must be satisfied that candidates have achieved all learning outcomes related to the unit/qualification/award being assessed prior to deciding whether candidates have been successful
- ◆ provide support and feedback to candidates throughout the assessment process
- ◆ Assessors for NVQs (NQF) must hold, or be working towards, the new A1 and/or A2 (assessor) units.
- ◆ Assessors for other qualifications, awards and units should possess a relevant qualification at the level above that being assessed and/or relevant, recent occupational experience. Where no A1/A2 units are held, centres must provide adequate staff development to ensure Assessors are working to national standards (eg attendance at NCFE centre support events).

Please refer to NCFE's *Occupational Competence Guidelines* and individual *Qualification or Award Specification* for details of specific criteria required for individual qualifications and awards.

Invigilator (qualification/award/units requiring external assessment under exam conditions only)

Qualification/Award/Units requiring candidates to complete a formal external assessment component under exam conditions require Invigilators. Invigilators are responsible for supervising the external assessment process, completing the Invigilator's Register (supplied with external assessment papers) and ensuring the assessment is administered according to NCFE's Regulations for the Conduct of External Assessment, available from the NCFE website (www.ncfe.org.uk) or from the Centre Support team at NCFE.

Examinations Officer or equivalent

The Examinations Officer is responsible for processing candidate registrations and requesting certificates for successful candidates. NCFE will only issue certificates to the nominated Examinations Officer, who is then responsible for distributing these to candidates.

The Examinations Officer is also responsible for coordinating the external assessment process for qualifications with this requirement. This involves liaising with the Qualification/Award/Unit Contact within your organisation to ensure that external assessment papers are requested in advance of the proposed assessment date, that suitable accommodation is available and that the appropriate number of trained Invigilators are available and familiar with NCFE's Regulations for the Conduct of External Assessment, available from the NCFE website (www.ncfe.org.uk) or from the Centre Support team at NCFE.