

Certification Policy

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v1.2	20-02-26 02-04-26 13-04-26	Annual review - QMS SLT subgroup, RM and SME review, Minor formatting updates, section 4.1 cert claims updated to include any queries related to T levels certs should be directed to DfE and how to request a replacement cert with link added. Executives approved

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1. Policy principles

At NCFE, we want to cultivate a purpose-led, collaborative, vibrant and high-performance culture where our people are connected with and align to achieving our ambitious goals.

We are committed to simplifying the processes of our customers and the usage of our systems to enable a comprehensive understanding and control.

2. Introduction

This policy establishes NCFE's framework for certifying learners upon completion of NCFE qualifications. It outlines the policy and the associated processes and procedures for our customers.

This policy outlines the responsibilities of NCFE as a regulated awarding body, as well as the obligations of our approved centres regarding the certification of learners.

2.1. Purpose

This policy forms part of a suite of awarding policies, all of which are designed to:

- protect learners who are registered with us
- minimise the risk of an Adverse Effect occurring (as specified in the regulators' Conditions of Recognition)
- help ensure NCFE and our centres comply with GDPR
- help improve and refine our products and services.

This policy also supports centre compliance with the Centre Agreement. It does not replace any of the requirements contained within that agreement. Non-adherence to our awarding policies and mandatory documentation may constitute maladministration, malpractice and/or a breach of the Centre Agreement.

The policy should be read in conjunction with NCFE's Mandatory Policies and the Centre Agreement which are available on the [NCFE website](#). Please ensure you read the policies in this suite carefully and implement them fully.

2.2. Scope

This policy pertains to NCFE (referred to as "we," "us," "our," etc.). The term 'NCFE' encompasses NCFE and all its affiliated brands, such as 'CACHE'. This policy applies to all individuals working for or on behalf of NCFE, including all colleagues at all locations and levels, members of the Executive team, external contractors, flexible workers, agency workers, partners, suppliers, centres, customers, associates, subsidiaries or their employees, and any other persons associated with us (collectively referred to as 'individuals').

This policy excludes Active IQ.

Furthermore, this policy is applicable to both our regulated qualifications and unregulated products, which are owned and/or offered by NCFE.

We will ensure that all our colleagues, including temporary and flexible workers, are thoroughly informed about the contents of this policy. Additionally, as a centre, you are

required to ensure that your staff (including those at centre, satellite, sub-contract centres, or contractual staff), who are involved in the administration, design, delivery, management, assessment, and quality assurance of our qualifications and products, as well as your learners, are aware of and familiar with the contents of this policy. This includes any policies you have regarding your practice and procedures related to registration and certification.

2.3. Responsibilities/duties

- The Document Owner is responsible for ensuring this policy is adhered to.
- NCFE’s Head of Delivery and EUC is responsible for maintaining the NCFE Awarding systems to support the required Certification Policy and supporting processes.
- NCFE’s customers are responsible for the adherence to this policy and the accuracy of data required for NCFE to function as a regulated awarding organisation.
- The Director of Tech, Data and PMO is responsible for ensuring this policy is up to date.
- NCFE’s Internal Teams are responsible for answering queries relating to the Certification policy and supporting processes.
- Subject matter experts are responsible for reviewing the specific content, within the document and associated procedures.

2.4. Definitions

Word/Acronym	Definition
DCS	Direct Claims Status
EUC	End User Computing
GDPR	The General Data Protection Regulation
LRS	Learner Records Service
PLR	Personal Learner Record
PMO	Project Management Office
QMS	Quality Management System
Qualification	Regulated or Unregulated Product
ULN	Unique Learner Number

2.5. Location

This document will be available to the public via the NCFE website.

<https://www.ncfe.org.uk/qualifications/mandatory-policies-fees/>

3. Certification information

3.1. Learner identification and validation

As a regulated awarding organisation, it is necessary to implement procedures that allow for NCFE customers to verify and validate the identity of their learners. This ensures that achievements are accurately associated to learners.

Upon completion of our qualifications, centres are required to present and distribute a "Certificate" to the designated individual to ensure the appropriate achievement is awarded to the correct learner.

All records and evidence which are used to identify learners should be retained for quality assurance purposes and in compliance with relevant data protection legislation.

3.2. Unique Learner Number

Achievement data will be sent to the Personal Learner Record (PLR) only if a learner has a valid ULN. Therefore, it is necessary for customers to register their learners with the ULN as part of the registration process. Please refer to the NCFE [Registration Policy](#) for more information.

We will validate this information during the initial registration process and verify the details via Learner Records Service (LRS). If any ULNs are invalid, we will inform you of this and provide instructions on how to correct the error.

T levels and integrated dental qualifications now require the ULN as a mandatory data field at the point of registration.

Further information on the LRS can be found at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/learning-records-service-lrs>

www.gov.uk/government/publications/lrsunique-learner-numbers

3.3. NCFE Portal

The [Portal](#) is NCFE's secure extranet which allows customers to register learners, book learners for external assessment, submit internal units for graded qualifications, claim certificates and view learner information.

It is the centres responsibility to ensure that the data held against their learners and the certification information is accurate and aligned to the correct qualification(s).

Each qualification has a unique code which is published on our website and in the qualification specification for cross reference purposes.

4. Results and certification information

Results for NCFE qualifications will be available on the NCFE Portal on the specified dates. All result release dates are listed on the NCFE website as part of its "[Key Dates and Timetables](#)" publications. These dates vary based on the specific qualifications and change annually.

4.1 Certification claims

Customers with Direct Claims Status (DCS) can submit a claim for learner certificates via the NCFE Portal. Your claim will automatically be processed to be printed, and your certificates will be issued to the registered business address held by NCFE. E-Certificates will be available to view immediately within the NCFE Portal.

Customers without DCS will trigger an External Quality Assurance activity, when claiming certificates for their learners via the NCFE Portal. Your claim will automatically be sent to your NCFE External Quality Assurance Officer. The claim will then be processed and any claims not completed correctly will be put on hold or rejected.

The following guides have been developed to facilitate the completion of all relevant processes associated with Certification:

<https://www.ncfe.org.uk/media/g54d4bvv/portal-user-guide.pdf>

Within the NCFE Portal, upon claiming certificates, you can select the correct business delivery address you would like us to send them to.

Customers requiring V Cert Model 5 certificates do not have to claim them for Level 1/2 Technical Award learners.

- On the results release date, you can **immediately access e-certificates** via the NCFE Portal. Customers will have digital confirmation of achievement immediately.
- Once claimed, approximately **four weeks after results are released**, physical certificates will be dispatched. Expect delivery shortly thereafter.
- Customers requiring V Cert Model 5 certificates will be auto-claimed six weeks after the results release date. Consequently, physical certificates will be received approximately four weeks following this auto-certification date.

This process ensures you receive e-certificates first, then physical certificates (four weeks), and specifically for Model 5 certificates (10 weeks) following this structured timeframe.

Please note that certificates for Technical Qualifications (TQ) which are part of the T Level programme, will be issued by the Department for Education (DfE). Results will be displayed on the NCFE Portal, on the same day DfE releases them. Any queries relating to T-Level certificates should be directed to the DfE rather than NCFE. Assistance can be found [HERE](#)

4.2 Certification production

Once a claim is successful, certificates are sent for printing, and e-certificates will be accessible through the NCFE Portal. Certificates are printed and dispatched by our external supplier on the next working day.

Certificates will be processed in accordance with our published Service Level Agreement, except for externally assessed qualifications, which will be issued once the learner has successfully completed the external assessment.

Our list of Service Level Agreements can be found:

<https://www.ncfe.org.uk/about-ncfe/our-customer-service/>

Customers requiring V Cert Model 5 certificates will be auto-certificated six weeks after the results release date. Consequently, physical certificates will be received approximately four weeks following this auto-certification date.

Please note that certificates for Technical Qualifications (TQ) which are part of the T Level programme, will be issued by the Department for Education (DfE).

4.2.1 Reprint and replacement certificates

Certificates are issued in the legal name of the learner, provided by the customer, at the time of certification. In cases where the name has changed such as due to gender reassignment or deed poll, we can reissue a certificate reflecting the learner's updated legal name, where proof can be provided

If the issued certificate contains errors or requires a name change, the original certificate must be securely destroyed, and a name change request can be submitted by the customer on the NCFE Portal, within 90 calendar days from the certification issue date.

If a replacement certificate is required because of centre led maladministration, we may apply an administrative charge to cover the cost of the replacement certificate. Should a centre fall in scope for such a charge, we will notify you in writing.

To request a replacement certificate after the 90-day period, please complete the [Replacement Certificate Form](#).

If you are a learner and require a replacement certificate, you can apply for a replacement via our website. Further information on how to request a replacement certificate is available on this page.

<https://www.ncfe.org.uk/customer-and-learner-support/learner-support/replacement-certificates/>

The fees associated with obtaining a replacement certificate are detailed in our Fees and Pricing Guide. A link to the current Fees and Pricing Guide can be found in the following location.

<https://www.ncfe.org.uk/qualifications/mandatory-policies-fees/>

4.2.2 Certificate design

To comply with regulatory requirements for regulated qualification certificate design, we cannot modify the layout of our certificate template. Any replacement certificates issued will be clearly marked as replacements.

5. Certification policy compliance

To meet the requirements of our Certification Policy, centres must:

- only submit certification claims for learners who have met the requirements of the qualifications.
- note that repeated incorrect claims will be considered maladministration and will be dealt with in accordance with our Mandatory Policies, which are available on our website at: <https://www.ncfe.org.uk/qualifications/mandatory-policies-fees/>
- regularly withdraw learners via the Portal, that are no longer on programme but have attempted an assessment during the programme period. We will also automatically withdraw learners after 36 months; these can be un-withdrawn if required via the Portal. For **T Level learners**, we will automatically withdraw learners at 48 months unless they are marked as complete
- **cancel learners, who have not attempted an assessment and are within the applicable cancellation window**
- access the ULN from the LRS and work with us to ensure the ULN is correctly validated for the learner
- support the learner in accessing their PLR when available.
- take reasonable steps to ensure that all relevant staff understand how and when to claim for certification.

6. Initial Equality Impact Assessment

An Initial Equality Impact Assessment has been completed for this policy, and no concerns were raised. A copy is available on request via the QI team.

7. References to associated documents

Portal User Guide	Portal User Guide
T-Level Portal User Guide	T-Level Portal User Guide

8. Implementation and dissemination

This policy will be available on the NCFE Website.

<https://www.ncfe.org.uk/qualifications/mandatory-policies-fees/>

9. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis.

10. Data retention

Access to learner certification data is required by NCFE for the provision of information and services to customers, regulators, and learners. We will ensure that this information is kept secure, used solely for the purposes of the relevant request, and always managed in accordance with prevailing data protection legislation.

We do not disclose confidential information to third parties unless we are required to do so, for example by our regulators, law enforcement or statutory bodies.

Disclaimer: Submission of original documentation

To protect personal information, please do not send original documents to NCFE via post. We cannot accept responsibility for the loss, damage, or return of any original documentation sent to us.

Where documentation is required, we request that you provide certified copies or high-quality scanned versions instead. This approach helps protect your documents and ensures a more secure and efficient service.

11. Contact information

If you have any queries about the contents of the policy, please contact the Customer Support team.

Email: customersupport@ncfe.org.uk

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