Guide to Endorsed Programmes

ACCREDITATION SERVICES

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Contents

Section 1: Introduction 3
Section 2a: About Endorsed Programmes 3
Section 2b: Digital badges 3
Section 3: Initial application process 4
Section 4: The endorsement process 5
Section 5: Annual quality monitoring audit 7
Section 6: Advertising stipulations 7
Section 7: Certification 8
Section 9: Use of NCFE's Endorsed Programmes logo 9
Appendix 1: Brand guidelines 10
Appendix 2: Digital badge taxonomy 11

Section 1: Introduction

Thank you for your interest in NCFE's Endorsed Programmes. This guide will explain the endorsement process, from your initial application to recognising the achievements of your learners.

If you need any additional advice or guidance, feel free to get in touch with our Accreditation and Employer Services team by emailing accreditationteam@ncfe.org.uk.

Section 2a: About Endorsed Programmes

Endorsed Programmes (EP) are ideal for adding the NCFE stamp of approval to existing or new internal training activities that have no formal learning and assessment outcomes. With our quality hallmark you can add credibility and a level of quality assurance to a whole range of CPD activities or training courses.

Examples of activities that could fit within Endorsed Programmes include:
• presentations
• workshops
• webinars
• seminars
• online training
• short courses
• E-learning modules.

Endorsed Programmes are written and owned by you, so you'll retain all ownership and intellectual property (IPR). While we won't advertise your programmes, we're happy for you to market them by referring to NCFE endorsement and using our NCFE Endorsed Programme logo.

Section 2b: Digital badges

Digital badges are secure, verifiable, digital assets that validate a learner's or employee's educational achievements. Centres who offer NCFE Endorsed Programmes are able to provide a tangible way for their learners to evidence their achievements through our digital badges service. Our service is powered by Accredible, the world's largest network of digital credentials, with over 170 million issued worldwide.

Digital badges are:

- flexible and personalised to suit the content of your Endorsed Programmes, with branded digital badges
- secure and tamper-proof, with encrypted data stored on secure servers

- verifiable in real-time, maintaining the integrity and credibility of the award
- portable and shareable, empowering learners to publicly highlight their learning

  an effective way to brand awareness and demonstrate your commitment to learning and development.

Section 3: Initial application process

To apply for this service all organisations (including current customers of NCFE) need to download and complete the Endorsed Programme application form from our website and email it to us at accreditationteam@ncfe.org.uk.

Before you apply

In order to offer Endorsed Programmes please ensure you have the following policies in place:
- equality and diversity
- safeguarding
- complaints procedure
- health and safety.

We may ask for evidence of these policies during our annual quality monitoring audit, and your application may be delayed if you are unable to provide them.

Initial application

Once your application form has been received, we'll acknowledge receipt of this by email within 3 working days. Your organisation details will be added to our system and you'll be invoiced for the application fee.

Your company will undergo a credit check and we'll email you feedback of this within 2 working days. If the credit check is passed, a Subject Matter Expert will then review your Endorsed Programme(s), we'll provide feedback on this within 15 working days.

Credit check

NCFE uses Credit Safe to perform credit checks on new customer applications which are not public sector organisations for the purposes of deciding whether to offer credit, and also to prevent fraud, money laundering and any other unlawful activity. We reserve the right to request that a blended credit check be undertaken using these details. A blended check allows us to gain insight into the wider business interests and track records of the people behind the company, as well as the company's data. This credit check against individuals may subsequently show on an individual's credit history. From this check and where appropriate, NCFE may refuse credit and/or custom without further explanation.

Section 4: The endorsement process

Once the initial application process has been completed, we can review your Endorsed Programme application. If you are already an NCFE customer or want to apply to offer additional programmes after the initial application, please download and complete the Endorsed Programme Application Form (Existing Customer) from our website and send it to us at accreditationteam@ncfe.org.uk.

Programme review process

We will conduct a review of your programme(s) against the questions below:

Is the structure of the informal activity logical?	Is the scope of the informal activity too limited?
Is the purpose of the informal activity clearly stated?	Are key points repeated to help the learner?
Is the topic relevant to the content?	Is there too much for the size of the content?
Is the informal activity clear and free from ambiguity?	Are technical details and terminology provided, explained if necessary, and the informal activity?
Does the informal activity meet the level of literacy of the audience?	Does it reflect various groups in a positive, non-discriminatory/non-derogatory manner?
Is the writing style and vocabulary straightforward and easy to follow?	Is the informal activity accessible for different abilities?
Is the content appropriate for the target group?	How do you feel about the overall quality?
Is the content materially different to any qualification that NCFE has produced?	

Materially different

An awarding organisation wanting to offer an unregulated qualification which falls within the description of qualifications for which it is recognised, may choose to surrender recognition for that specific qualification. For the surrender to be effective, thereby allowing the awarding organisation to offer that qualification as unregulated, the qualification cannot be the same as any regulated qualification offered by the awarding organisation. In other words, it must be materially different.

NCFE will check that the proposed programme is not materially similar to qualifications on the NCFE regulated portfolio, NCFE do reserve the right to refuse endorsement of a programme if it is deemed too materially similar.

Process overview

1. Within 5 working days we'll acknowledge receipt by email, and invoice you for the Endorsed Programme review fee, which is a one-off fee of £500 for reviewing your programme. If more than two reviews are required, any additional reviews will cost £250.

2. Following confirmation, our review panel will consider your Endorsed Programme application and we'll provide you with feedback within 15 working days.

3. If we feel there is more development work needed in order for us to endorse your programme you'll have 3 months to re-submit your content. If you wish to re-submit your content after the 3 month period has expired, the review fee would be charged again.

4. Once you have addressed any feedback we have sent you and we are happy to endorse your Endorsed Programme, we'll confirm this to you by email and raise an invoice for the annual endorsement fee, which is bespoke to the size and complexity of your programmes. The endorsement only relates to the endorsed version of the programme and if changes are made, we'll need to review them again.

Digital badges

Once your programme has been endorsed by NCFE, you will then be able to claim digital badges for your learners as a form of digital certification. You can also produce your own in-house certificates alongside these, if you'd still like your learners to receive a physical recognition of their participation.

You will need to complete an application template to capture the details that will appear on your badges. It should include topics covered, aims, objectives and any outcomes that are required from learners. You can add a web link to be embedded into your digital badges, as well as any hashtags that you feel are relevant to your programme. See appendix 2 of this document for an example of what kind of information you should provide. Please send this template to accreditationteam@ncfe.org.uk

Please refer to our advertising stipulations on specific wording that can and cannot be used when advertising.

Section 5: Annual quality monitoring audit

Our Accreditation and Employer Services team conduct a desk-based annual quality monitoring audit across all of your Endorsed Programmes each year. This is an opportunity to:

- review any amendments you have made to any existing programmes ensure they still meet our endorsement criteria*
- check you have certain policies in place within your organisation
- review how you advertise your Endorsed Programme(s)
- ensure you are meeting your contractual obligations.

Process overview

1. We'll email you around 9 months after your programme has been approved to let you know we'd like to undertake an audit and we'll attach an audit report for you to complete and send back to us within 10 working days.

2. Once we've received this, we'll use the information provided to conduct a review and send you a report and any feedback within 5 working days.

3. In the report if we've identified any actions that you may need to undertake, you'll need to complete them to prove the actions have been completed and return them to us within 10 working days.
**Please be aware that if changes to Endorsed Programmes are significant we reserve the right to charge a review fee.*

Section 6: Advertising stipulations

Stipulations for advertising and promoting Endorsed Programmes

Our Endorsed Programme service is designed to endorse bespoke in-house training which is not covered by our regulated portfolio of qualifications. Programmes of recognised bespoke education or training are regarded by our qualification regulators[1] to be 'unregulated' provision, but are subject to Condition B5, 'Representations regarding qualifications' as follows:

B5.1 – Statements regarding qualifications which are not regulated qualifications *An awarding organisation must not (and must take all reasonable steps to ensure that any person connected with it does not) make any statement that would be likely to lead Users of qualifications to believe that a qualification it makes available is a regulated qualification when it is not a regulated qualification.* ***– Ofqual and CCEA***

An awarding body must not (and must take all reasonable steps to ensure that any person connected with it does not) make any statement (via any act or omission) that would be likely to lead users of qualifications to believe that a qualification it makes available (whether regulated or not) is an Approved, Designated or regulated qualification when it is not an Approved, Designated or regulated qualification – ***QW***

B5.2 – Advertising and promotion of qualifications

An Awarding Organisation must not (and must take all reasonable steps to ensure that any person connected with it does not) advertise or promote its qualifications in a manner that is likely to be misleading to Users of qualifications.

In order to work with us and enable us to maintain compliance for the General Conditions of Recognition you shall be responsible for the content, accuracy and legality of any Endorsed Programme information or material. This includes all advertising and promotional programme information or material which is printed; or on any website; or in any electronic form, which must adhere to our Regulators' Condition B5.1, 'Statements regarding qualifications which are not regulated qualifications'; and Condition B5.2, Advertising and promotion of qualifications'.

All bespoke programmes that are endorsed by NCFE are subject to the Stipulations for Advertising and Promoting Endorsed Programmes. NCFE reserves the right to verify what it considers advertising or promoting Endorsed Programme(s) in a manner that is likely to be misleading to learners.

Any confirmed breach of these stipulations, by your company, shall be deemed unacceptable by NCFE and NCFE has the right to withdraw endorsement of the Endorsed Programme(s) immediately and without notice.

[1]The Regulators are the Office of the Qualifications and Examinations Regulator (Ofqual) in England, Qualifications Wales (QW) and CCEA Regulation in Northern Ireland.

Section 7: Certification

As part of our Endorsed Programmes product, you will have the option of producing your own in-house certificates. You are free to design them in any way you wish but to ensure that the certificates are compliant with our Regulators' B5 Condition regarding representation, advertising, and promotion of qualifications, please design the min line with the following guidance. You can:

- only use the approved NCFE or CACHE Endorsed Programmes logos provided and not any other NCFE logos or branding, once you have received written confirmation of endorsement
- use your own company logo and branding on your in-house certificates along with our approved Endorsed Programme logo
- not mislead learners into thinking the in-house certificate they have received was issued by NCFE, you must be clear to learners that the in-house certificate has been produced and issued by your organisation
- not use wording on your in-house certificates that implies the programme is in any way regulated or part of any other NCFE regulated qualification other than an Endorsed Programme
- not use the term certificate of 'achievement', or attribute a level to the programme, but can use certificate of 'attendance', 'completion' or 'participation' or a similar alternative. Any alternatives must be cleared with the Accreditation and Employer Services team prior to use.

We will ask to see an example of in-house certificate during your application and you will be required to provide a copy for your annual audit to ensure that we remain compliant.

Section 9: Use of NCFE's Endorsed Programmes logo

We provide Endorsed Programmes customers with a logo for you to use to promote your endorsement with us. This can be used on any documentation or media relating to your Endorsed Programme(s).

Instructions for the use of the Endorsed Programmes Logo can be found in Appendix 1.

Appendix 1: Brand guidelines

Overview of logo usage terms

Our Endorsed Programme logo is available to all customers who offer an NCFE Endorsed Programme. This logo can be used on any documentation relating to these programmes which fall under your centre's agreement with us. This includes promotional materials, online advertising and in-house certificates for your learners.

As an NCFE customer you agree that:

- you won't use the Endorsed Programmes logo on any certificates that are not produced by yourselves for your learners
- you won't advertise and promote provision under the Endorsed Programmes logo when it is outside the scope of the product.

Guidelines on how to use the Endorsed Programme logo when creating your resources and advertising materials can be found on the following pages. If you need access to our Endorsed Programme logo, get in touch with our Accreditation and Employer Services team who will also be able to advise on usage if you are still unsure.

Usage and positioning

There should always be a clear space around the logo as shown, in order to ensure clarity. No other element should be allowed to infringe this clear space. The logo has been developed to ensure it is always visible and impactful. To ensure this legibility the logo should not be reproduced below a minimum size, as shown.

Appendix 2: Digital badge taxonomy

Display name (programme name) – must include centre name

Description:
High level overview of the programme (not what the learner has to do to achieve)

The Certificate in Internal Workplace Mediation (CIWM) is a 5-day, accredited training course from Acas. *The CIWM trains people managers, team leaders and employee representatives to make a positive difference at work.* *Recipients gain new personal skills and practical techniques that can help your organisation and your career.* *Expert trainers deliver the 5-day course either in person or remotely. Recipients learn through role plays and discussions:* • *what causes conflict at work* • *how to identify issues before they become bigger problems* • *when and how to take action* • *what to do in difficult situations* • *how to encourage people to take part in mediation*

Skills: these can be auto generated in the system

Links: any links to programme pages

Links to website

Earning criteria

(Overview of what the learner had had to do in order to receive the badge, so overall outcome, these are split into categories below. You can have multiples of each category)

Knowledge Participation Reading Skill Other