



Qualification Amendment/ Withdrawal Policy

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SCOPE

1. Effective implementation of this policy will help improve the compliance to meet regulatory body requirements. This policy applies Smart Awards approved centres.
2. The purpose of this policy is to outline the correct procedure to withdrawing a Smart Awards qualification. Effective implementation of this policy will help improve the compliance to meet regulatory body requirements and implement a seamless structure for Smart Awards business.

OFQUAL GENERAL CONDITIONS

3. D7.1 For the purposes of this condition, an awarding organisation withdraws a qualification at the point in time when it first –
 - (a) ceases to register Learners for the qualification,
 - (b) ceases to deliver or award that qualification to Learners,
 - (c) surrenders its recognition in respect of that qualification, or
 - (d) has its recognition withdrawn by Ofqual in respect of that qualification.
4. D7.2 Where an awarding organisation intends to withdraw, otherwise believes it to be likely that it will withdraw, or is obliged to withdraw, a qualification, it must take all reasonable steps to protect the interests of Learners in relation to that qualification.
5. D7.3 An awarding organisation must give to Ofqual reasonable notice of its anticipated withdrawal of a qualification, and must do so prior to the time at which it provides that information to any Learners, Centres, or purchasers of qualifications.
6. D7.4 Where an awarding organisation intends to withdraw, or is obliged to withdraw, a qualification, it must – (a) promptly prepare, maintain, and comply with a written withdrawal plan, which must specify how the interests of Learners in relation to that qualification will be protected, and (b) provide clear and accurate information about the withdrawal to Learners, Centres, and purchasers of qualifications who are likely to be affected by the withdrawal.
7. D7.5 An awarding organisation must ensure that any withdrawal plan which it prepares complies with any requirements which Ofqual has communicated to it in writing.
8. E3.4 An awarding organisation must promptly amend the specification for a qualification following any revision by it of

SQA ACCREDITATION PRINCIPLES

9. Principle 9. The awarding body shall ensure that it has robust systems and processes for the identification, design, development, implementation and review of qualifications, which meet the needs of users.

RESPONSIBILITIES

10. This policy is for qualifications offered by Smart Awards. This policy is for centres accessing Smart Awards qualifications and related services and all those involved with the development, delivery and quality assurance of Smart Awards qualifications. Smart Awards has overall responsibility for ensuring this policy complies with our legal and ethical obligations, and that all those under our control comply with it. Smart Awards has the day-to-day responsibility for implementing this policy and for monitoring its use and effectiveness and dealing with any queries on its interpretation.

R	Responsibilities	The person who actually carries out the process or task. The person is responsible for action/implementation. Responsibilities can be shared											
A	Accountabilities	The person who is ultimately accountable for the process or task being completed and who has the authority to make decisions, yes or no authority and veto power. Responsible person (s) are accountable to this person. Only one A can be assigned to a task											
C	Consulted	The person to be consulted prior to a final decision or action (two-way communication). People who are not directly involved with carrying out the task but are consulted with.											
I	Informed	Anyone whose work depends on the process or task and who has to be updated about the progress after a decision or action has been taken (one-way communication).											
POLICY													
		BOARD	CEO	MD	OPS DIRECTOR	QUALITY PORTFOLIO MANAGER	STANDARDS COMPLIANCE OFFICER	QUAL ADMIN OFFICER	IT CONSULT	FINANCE AUDITOR	EQA	NOPS BOARD	CENTRES
Qualification amendment		A	R	R	R	R	R	R	I	I	C	I	R
Holiday/Sickness Cover													
The MD, CEO and Operations Director cover holiday/sickness and absenteeism for areas where the person is responsible for action/implementation of a task. The MD, CEO and Operations Director hold company wide experience to be able to carry out these tasks and hold no conflicts of interest.													

PROCEDURE AMENDMENT OF QUALIFICATIONS

11. If the situation arises where Smart Awards deems it appropriate to amend an approved qualification or scheme, Smart Awards will follow the process as defined by the regulators.
12. Where Smart Awards have consulted with key interest groups and if appropriate the relevant industry in relation to any proposed changes then the nature of the outcome of such consultation will be recorded and evidence of these made available with the regulators.
13. Once any amendments have been formally approved with the regulators, Smart Awards will seek to implement those changes within 3 months, provided this does not impact negatively on any learners.
14. All centres approved to offer that particular qualification or scheme will be informed of the amendments. This information will take the form of a letter/email sent to the named contact person at each centre approved to offer the qualification. Any guidance documentation relating to the amended qualification will be updated to reflect the amendments and sent to centres within the given timeframes.
15. The letter will include the following information:
 - Details of the amendments made to the qualification or scheme
 - Timescales for implementing the changes
 - Any action that may be required on the part of the centre

16. Smart Awards will also make this information more widely available through inclusion of this information on Smart Awards website it information management system SAMS. All previous materials will be archived.

PROCEDURE WITHDRAWAL OF QUALIFICATIONS

17. If the situation arises where Smart Awards wishes to withdraw one its qualification, the regulators will be contacted in the first instance in order to discuss the appropriate procedure for this to take place.

18. Once withdrawal of the qualification has been agreed with the regulators, Smart Awards will inform all centres approved to offer that particular qualification that the qualification is due to be withdrawn.

19. This information will take the form of a letter sent to the named contact person at each centre approved to offer the qualification.

20. This letter will include the following information:

- A rationale for withdrawal of the qualification
- End date for the qualification i.e. date after which centres will no longer be able to register learners for the qualification.
- Reassurance that those learners currently registered for the qualification and those registered before the end date will be able to achieve the qualification so long as they did so within a reasonable time of the end date for the qualification
- Any action that may be required on the part of the centre to complete the process of withdrawal

21. Smart Awards will also make this information more widely available through inclusion of this information on Smart Awards website and Smart Awards updates that are sent out to centres as well as a widely circulated newsletter. All previous materials will be archived by Smart Awards.

PROCESS

22. Process for amendments

- Product identified for amendment with key industry groups
- Rationale for amendments is received
- Advice is sought from regulators to discuss the appropriate procedures with the conclusion of the consultation given
- Check that the regulators are happy for the product to be amended
- Formal approval from regulators received
- No impact on the current learner
- 3 months to implement changes and communicate to centres so as not to disadvantage current learners
- Smart Awards procedure is followed, materials are amended, and any previous materials achieved

23. Process for withdrawal

- Product identified for withdrawal
- Rationale for withdrawal
- Advice is sought from regulators to discuss the appropriate procedures

- Check the regulators happy for the product to be withdrawn
- Withdrawal approved
- Time scale for removal agreed
- Notification sent to all centres that all materials must be removed from their systems
- Smart Awards procedure is followed and materials are removed and any retention dates are agreed

REVIEW OF THIS POLICY

24. This policy is reviewed and revised annually in response to feedback, changes in legislation and guidance from the regulators, SQA Accreditation or Ofqual.