# Direct Claims Policy

**SMART AWARDS**
Awarding Platform for Smart Qualifications

# INTRODUCTION

1. Smart Awards provides an accreditation and awarding service by which learners can gain formal recognition of their achievements. This policy relates to Smart Awards Approved Centres that have achieved good quality assurance reports, a 'low risk' status and qualify for Direct Claims Status (DCS).

2. DCS allows Centres to sign-off certification claims without having to wait for a visit by an External Quality Assurer (EQA).

# PURPOSE

3. The purpose of this policy is to:
   - State Smart Awards approach to DCS.
   - Provide guidance to Approved Centres.

# OFQUAL GENERAL CONDITIONS

4. I4.1: An awarding organisation must, in relation to qualifications which it makes available – (a) publish the expected dates or timescales for the issue of certificates, (b) ensure that the issue of certificates is timely, (c) issue only certificates which are clear and readily capable of being understood by Users of qualifications,(d) issue only certificates which are accurate and complete and which reflect accurate and complete results,(e) maintain a record of all certificates and replacement certificates which it issues, and (f) not include a qualification which is not a regulated qualification on a certificate which contains regulated qualifications.

5. I4.2: An awarding organisation must take all reasonable steps, including having procedures in place, to ensure that it – (a) issues a certificate and any replacement certificate to any Learner who has a valid entitlement to that certificate or replacement certificate, (b) does not issue any certificate to a Learner who does not have a valid entitlement to that certificate, (c) revokes any certificate if the result on the certificate is false because of malpractice, maladministration, or is revealed to be inaccurate as a consequence of an appeals process, and (d) meets any date or timescale published by it in respect of the issue of certificates and replacement certificates.

# SQA ACCREDITATION PRINCIPLES

6. Principle 5. The awarding body shall provide clear information on its procedures, products and services and ensure that they are accurate and appropriate to SQA accredited qualifications.

# RESPONSIBILITIES

7. This is 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 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). |

| POLICIES | BOARD | CEO | MD | OPS DIRECTOR | QUALITY PORTFOLIO MANAGER | STANDARDS COMPLIANCE OFFICER | QUAL ADMIN OFFICER | IT CONSULT | FINANCE AUDITOR | EQA | NOPS BOARD | CENTRES |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Awarding Policies and Process** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Direct claims | A | C | R | C | R | R | R | I | X | C | C | C |
| **ASSOCIATED POLICIES** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Risk management | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Sanctions | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Certification | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Quality assurance of centres | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **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. | | | | | | | | | | | | |

# DEFINITION

8. DCS applies to all regulated and no-regulated qualifications that Smart Awards offer. DCS is awarded on a qualification-by-qualification basis and is awarded to Approved Centres that consistently have no quality assurance issues and have consistently achieved a 'low risk' rating as an outcome of EQA quality assurance visits.

# DIRECT CLAIM STATUS (DCS)

9. Obtaining DCS is an earned right for an Approved Centre; however, when DCS is awarded it allows the respective centre to:

- Claim certification for a Smart Awards qualification without having to wait for an EQA visit.
- Receive one EQA visit every 12 months; however, Centres may request, as necessary, 2 or more EQA visits.

10. Approved Centres will be expected to retain proof that assessment and internal quality assurance has been completed for all qualifications/units for which DCS has been claimed; this must be available for the next EQA visit. Each DCS approval is reviewed annually.

# DIRECT CLAIMS STATUS APPROVAL

11. Approved Centres are awarded DCS based on achieving good quality reports and a 'low risk' rating reported by EQAs following external quality assurance visits.

12. New centres will, be considered for DCS following the achievement of 2 successful, consecutive EQA visits with 'low risk' status and where no sanctions and no unaddressed action plans are in place. Centres may apply for DCS by apply by sending a request to info@smartawards.co.uk

13. Every Centre awarded DCS must:
   - Keep records relating to Learners for whom direct certification has been claimed for at least 3 years from the date of the claim.
   - Make evidence and assessment records available to Smart Awards for random sampling checks
   - Ensure that claims made under the DCS agreement relates only to Learners assessed at the Centre.
   - Ensure that certification claims will be signed only by the Internal Quality Assurers whose name(s) have been registered with Smart Awards

# WITHDRAWING DIRECT CLAIMS STATUS

14. DCS may be withdrawn at any time if, in the opinion of Smart Awards, any of the following information given is no longer current, the conditions of this approval are not met or the quality of assessment and verification at the Centre is compromised. When Approved Centre may have DCS withdrawn are as follows:
   - An Approved Centre incurs a sanction (at any level).
   - An Approved Centre is subject to a compliance/malpractice investigation.
   - When an EQA visit has not been undertaken for 12 months.
   - When an Approved Centre does not make direct certification claims for the qualification within a 12-month period.

# REVIEW OF THIS POLICY

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

# PROCESS FOR APPROVING DIRECT CLAIMS

| Process Step Description | Process | Person Responsibility | Organisation Responsibility |
|---|---|---|---|
| Award DSC status against Smart Awards criteria | Decision | MD holds responsibility and experience to make decisions and apply suitable actions. | Smart Awards |
| Process DSC on SAMS for relevant qualification | Process | MD | Smart Awards |
| Communicate DSC to centre | Process | MD | Smart Awards |
| Keep learner records for 3 years from the date of the claim | Process | Centre Manager | Centre |
| Ensure that claims made under the DCS agreement | Process | Centre Manager | Centre |

| relates only to Learners assessed at the Centre. | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Ensure that certification claims are signed by the IQA | Process | Internal Quality Assurer (IQA) | Centre |
| Keep under review | Process | External Quality Assurer (EQA) | Smart Awards |
| Stop | End | MD | Smart Awards |