



CENTRE RECOGNITION POLICY



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1. PURPOSE

1.1. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that Smart Awards maintains a consistent and transparent approach to the recognition of Centres. It provides guidance to our approach to Centre recognition.

2. SCOPE

2.1. This policy applies to all UK and international Centres considering recognition from Smart Awards to deliver regulated qualifications (Ofqual) and SQA Accreditation.

2.2. For current Centres who wish to add additional products to their approval please see the Qualification Approval Policy.

3. OFQUAL GENERAL CONDITIONS

3.1.C1.1: Where an awarding organisation arranges for a third party to undertake, on its behalf, any part of the development, delivery or award of qualifications which the awarding organisation makes available, or proposes to make available, the awarding organisation must – a) ensure that the arrangements which it establishes with that third party enable the awarding organisation to develop, deliver and award qualifications in accordance with its Conditions of Recognition, and b) monitor and, where appropriate, enforce such arrangements so as to ensure that it is able to develop, deliver and award qualifications in accordance with its Conditions of Recognition.

3.2.C1.2: An awarding organisation must take all reasonable steps to ensure that, in making any such arrangements, it does not impose unnecessary or unduly burdensome requirements on third parties.

3.3.C2.1: Where a Centre undertakes any part of the delivery of a qualification on behalf of an awarding organisation, this condition applies in addition to the requirements in Condition C1.

3.4.C2.2: Where this condition applies, an awarding organisation must ensure that arrangements between it and the Centre include a written and enforceable agreement.

3.5.C2.3 That agreement must in particular include provisions which –

a). require the Centre to take all reasonable steps to ensure that the awarding organisation is able to comply with its Conditions of Recognition, b). require the Centre to take all reasonable steps to comply with requests for information or documents made by the awarding organisation or Ofqual as soon as practicable, c). require the Centre to assist the awarding organisation in carrying out any reasonable monitoring activities and to assist Ofqual in any investigations made for the purposes of performing its functions, d). set out all the requirements with which the Centre must comply in order to continue to deliver the qualification, e). establish a sanctions policy to be applied in the event that the Centre fails to comply with these requirements, f). require the Centre to retain a Workforce of appropriate size and competence to undertake the delivery of the qualification as required by the awarding organisation, g). require the Centre to have available sufficient managerial and other resources to enable it effectively and efficiently to undertake the delivery of the qualification as required by the awarding organisation, h). require the Centre to undertake the delivery of the qualification required by the awarding organisation in accordance with Equalities Law, i). require the Centre to operate a complaints handling procedure or appeals process for the benefit of Learners, j). set out any Moderation processes that the awarding organisation will undertake or that will be undertaken on its behalf, k). specify a process to be followed in any withdrawal of the Centre (whether voluntary or not) from its role in delivering a qualification and l). require the Centre to take all reasonable steps to protect the interests of Learners in the case of such a withdrawal.

3.6.C2.4: In the event that the Centre withdraws from its role in delivering a qualification,

the awarding organisation must take all reasonable steps to protect the interests of Learners.

3.7.C2.5: The awarding organisation must, in respect of the parts of the delivery of qualifications which the Centre undertakes:

(o) provide effective guidance to the Centre, and

(p) make available to the Centre any information which, for the purposes of that delivery, the Centre may reasonably require to be provided by the awarding organisation.

4. SQA ACCREDITATION PRINCIPLES

4.1. Principle 7. The awarding body shall have effective arrangements for communicating with its staff, stakeholders and SQA Accreditation.

5. RESPONSIBILITIES

5.1. 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 approval of Smart Awards centres. 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.

6. GENERAL

6.1. A Centre is defined as 'An organisation undertaking the delivery of an assessment (and potentially other activities) to learners on behalf of an awarding organisation.' (Ofqual 2018)

6.2. Centres wishing to deliver Smart Awards qualifications and courses must gain Centre recognition and relevant qualification approval before commencing delivery.

6.3. Centres will only be approved where they can clearly demonstrate that they are able to consistently meet the requirements of our Centre recognition agreement, our policies and procedures and any additional requirements which relate to specific qualifications laid down in the qualification guide for the number of learners they intend to register.

7. APPLICATION

7.1. Applications are welcomed from all Centres, whether based in the UK or overseas regardless of the size or type of organisation. Smart Awards' provision may be delivered and assessed internationally with the express permission in advance of Smart Awards.

7.2. Applications for Centre recognition are made by submitting the relevant, fully completed, and signed application form. If you meet the criteria set in the Application for Centre Approval, Smart Awards will approve your organisation as a 'Regulated Qualification Centre'.

7.3. Regulations require awarding organisations to approve each Centre for specific Qualifications, regardless of any other activities that organisation may undertake. Learners cannot be assessed for any part of a qualification unless they have been registered with Smart Awards by an approved Centre. Only approved Centres can register learners.

7.4. All applications will be risk rated according to their ability to meet regulatory recognition and any specific qualification requirements set out within the qualification guides. This process includes a financial credit

check.

7.5. Following Centre approval, you will be informed by e-mail and you will receive a unique user name and password to access your online Centre profile, enabling you to obtain documentation to support the administration of Smart Awards' qualifications that you are approved to offer. This unique name and password must not be shared with third parties.

7.6. It is the responsibility of the approved Centre to ensure that all assessors are competent to deliver and assess the units they are teaching. They must be competent to make judgements about the level and scope of individual learner performance and competent to make assessment judgements about the quality of assessment and the assessment process.

7.7. We reserve the right to refuse recognition or impose additional requirements on Centres who are not able to meet the minimum requirements of recognition.

7.8. A prospective Centre which has not been granted Centre approval within 12 months of applying will have its application archived. Should recognition be required in the future, a new application will be required.

7.9. Smart Awards will communicate relevant information to the nominated Centre contact. This individual is responsible for ensuring all relevant staff within the organisation are aware of their responsibilities under the terms of the Centre agreement.

7.10. The outcome of this process will be communicated to the applicant.

8. CENTRE RECOGNITION

8.1. Once the application has been accepted, each prospective Centre will be allocated a Smart Awards appointed External Quality Assurer (EQA). This individual will contact the Centre to arrange a centre audit.

8.2. At this stage, a risk assessment will be carried out by the EQA. This will be based upon but not be limited to size, other qualifications offered, staff numbers and type of qualifications. A Centre will be classed as either Low, Medium or High Risk – the rationale for the EQA decision about risk rating will be communicated to the Centre manager.

8.3. Where risk dictates, Centres will be subject to a Centre recognition visit. If required, the visit will be arranged at a mutually convenient time between the Centre and their allocated EQA. The outcome of the Centre recognition visit/audit will be communicated to the Centre in line with our CASS strategy. This may include an action plan which must be completed before recognition is confirmed.

8.4. Centres are required to sign an agreement which details the Centre's and Smart Awards commitments and the Centre's responsibilities in relation to administration, finance, delivery, assessment, and quality assurance. Continuing compliance with the Centre agreement is monitored through ongoing monitoring activities and external quality assurance visits carried out by Smart Awards' External Quality Assurers.

8.5. Centre recognition may cover more than one site, the responsibility for confirming the suitability of each venue rests with the Centre contact. Smart Awards may wish to visit any site or location used for delivery or assessment for the purposes of monitoring Centre compliance.

8.6. If risk assessment dictates that additional visit/audit/support activity is required at any time, additional charges may be raised in accordance with the current fees and charges brochure. Supplements will be charged to cover international travel and additional travel time.

8.7. Upon being granted Centre recognition, the Centre is required to gain qualification approval for each qualification type/sector. Wherever possible initial qualification approval will take place at the point of Centre approval.

8.8. Centre recognition will lapse for Centres that do not register any learners for a period of two years from the date of approval. In this situation, a new Centre recognition application will be required. There may be a charge for visits associated with recognition of lapsed Centres.

8.9. There is no appeal against the outcome of Centre recognition. Smart Awards will, however, fully explain a decision to refuse recognition.

8.10. Smart Awards keeps its arrangements with Centres under review to ensure requirements do not unnecessarily burden Centres.

9. ONGOING APPROVAL

9.1. Once recognised, Centres are subject to ongoing risk assessment and monitoring by the Smart Awards' Quality Team. A Centre will continue to be recognised if it continues to

- meet its obligations under the Centre recognition agreement.
- operate in line with relevant Smart Awards policies and procedures.
- pay all associated fees
- register learners.

9.2. Centres who fail to meet the terms of their Centre agreement or do not abide by Smart Awards policies and procedures will be managed in line with the Sanctions Policy. This may result in withdrawal of recognition.

10. WITHDRAWAL OF RECOGNITION

10.1. Smart Awards reserves the right to withdraw recognition where Centres are no longer able to meet the terms of their agreement or are no longer able to deliver/assess Smart Awards qualifications.

10.2. Withdrawal of recognition will be managed in line with our Sanctions policy and the Centre agreement.

10.3. Centres who withdraw or have their recognition withdrawn by us must ensure that learner's interests are protected throughout the withdrawal process. Registered learners must be able to complete their qualification, but if this is not possible, Smart Awards will support the transfer of learners to alternative providers.

11. FEES AND CHARGES

11.1. Centre recognition is charged in advance in line with Smart Awards' current fees and charges and invoicing policy. Note payment of the recognition fee does not guarantee recognition. Where Smart Awards is unable to recognise a Centre, Centres may be able to claim back up to 50% of the recognition fee.

11.2. International Centres may be expected to supplement the cost of an international approval visit.

11.4. Annual approval fees will not be refunded where Centres withdraw or have their recognition withdrawn in year.

12. INTERNATIONAL PROVISION

12.1. Smart Awards differentiates UK based Centres delivering in the UK, UK based Centres delivering and assessing internationally and those Centres that are wholly international.

12.2. In addition to the above and prior to submitting an application, non-UK based Centres, and UK based Centres wishing to deliver qualifications abroad, should take into consideration the following: a. All transactions will be in UK Pounds (Stirling). b. All assessments should be in English except for specific language qualifications. Where a Centre would like to assess in a language other than English, they should contact Smart Awards to discuss the full requirements. c. All relevant materials must be translated at the Centre's own cost by a translator approved by Smart Awards.

12.3. International Centres and UK based Centres which require an international EQA visit will be expected to pay the travel costs and sustenance for the EQA for each visit plus any additional EQA consultancy days required.

12.4. Centres must ensure assessments are consistent in all language versions.

13. MERGERS AND ACQUISITIONS

13.1. Smart Awards adopts the following definitions: a. Merger- Two or more Centres join. The existing Centres cease to be legal entities and merge to become a new legal entity. b. Acquisition - This is where one Centre "buys" or acquires another Centre. The acquiring Centre retains its legal status, the acquired Centre ceases to be a legal entity.

13.2. Smart Awards recognises that mergers and acquisitions can be a long and protracted processes. We will work closely with all merged and acquired Centres to ensure that the interests of learners are always protected throughout the process, and the risk to the reputation of the organisation and/or qualification are appropriately managed. We will ensure proportionate risk management of both reputational and compliance risk throughout the process.

13.3. Qualification approval held by each recognised organisation at the point of merger/acquisition will be applied to all sites unless separate qualification approval is required. In this case the Centre must apply in line with the Qualification Approval Policy before beginning to advertise or run qualifications.

14. REVIEW OF THIS POLICY

14.1. 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 CENTRE RECOGNITION

Process Step Description	Process	Person Responsibility	Organisation Responsibility
Complete centre application	Process	Centre Manager	Centre
Submit to application	Process	Standards and Compliance Officer	Smart Awards
Review application for completeness and due diligence	Process	Standards and Compliance Officer	Smart Awards
Add to SAMS	Process	Standards and Compliance Officer	Smart Awards
Pre-approval site visit to approve centre and site	Decision	EQA holds responsibility and experience to make decisions and apply suitable actions.	Smart Awards
Approve qualification	Decision	Standards and Compliance Officer holds responsibility and experience to make decisions and apply suitable actions.	Smart Awards
Approve assessors and IQA	Decision	Standards and Compliance Officer holds responsibility and experience to make decisions and apply suitable actions.	Smart Awards
Sign centre contract if given overall approval	Process	MD and centre manager	Smart Awards and Centre
Set up centre records on SAMS	Process	Standards and Compliance Officer	Smart Awards
Set up records on Finance system Xero	Process	MD	Smart Awards
Issue centre approval pack/certificate	Process	Standards and Compliance Officer	Smart Awards
Invoice for fees	Process	MD	Smart Awards
Add centre to website	Process	Standards and Compliance Officer	
Add centre risk rating on SAMS	Process	Standards and Compliance Officer	Smart Awards
Allocate EQA	Process	Standards and Compliance Officer	Smart Awards
Keep under review on centre risk	Process	Standards and Compliance Officer	Smart Awards
Stop	End		Smart Awards

CENTRE RECOGNITION FLOWCHART

