



CENTRE HANDBOOK GUIDANCE FOR CENTRES



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INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

1. Introduction

1.1 This centre handbook is designed to provide guidance and information to all centres that are approved to deliver Smart Awards qualifications, and apprenticeship assessments. The handbook aims to outline the key responsibilities of centres and to provide an overview of our policies and procedures and quality assurance arrangements. We expect all centres to adhere to the guidelines outlined in this handbook and to ensure that all staff involved in the delivery of our qualifications are familiar with its contents. This handbook is to be used in conjunction with related policy and guidance documents, as well as any relevant qualification and assessment documentation.

1.2 All information we hold about your centre, key contacts, and your learners is held securely on our database and only used for the purposes provided. You will find full details on how we use and protect your information in our [\[GDPR Data Protection Policy\]](#).

2. Working With Smart Awards

2.1 Smart Awards is a private company limited by shares and was incorporated 10th June 2014 (registration number 9079735) and (VAT registration number 216 7632 08). The company is a legal entity in its own right and a subsidiary of the Swedish based Hexatronic Group AB (PUBL).

2.2. We operate as a National Awarding Organisation predominately dedicated to telecommunication, construction and utility sectors. We are approved by Ofqual to offer regulated qualifications, and apprenticeship assessments in England. Ofqual was established in April 2010 under the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009, and further supported by the Education Act 2011, Ofqual is a non-ministerial government department with jurisdiction in England. Its role is to ensure that regulated qualifications and apprenticeship assessments accurately reflect the knowledge, skills, and understanding demonstrated by learners, while also ensuring that assessments and examinations reliably measure achievement, maintaining public confidence in regulated qualifications, and providing learners, apprentices, and assessors with clear information about the full range of qualifications that we regulate.

2.3. We are also approved by Qualifications Scotland Accreditation to offer regulated qualifications in Scotland. Under Scottish Government legislation, Qualifications Scotland Accreditation quality assures qualifications offered in Scotland by approving awarding bodies and accrediting their qualifications. They do this by regulating awarding bodies and their qualifications against published regulatory requirements. Their work is underpinned by regulatory requirements which define the standards awarding bodies must meet in order to be compliant. Their work is directed by the Accreditation Committee (AC) whose members are from industry and training providers independent of Qualifications Scotland Accreditation . Decisions on approval of awarding bodies and accreditation of qualifications are devolved by AC to the Accreditation Co-ordination Group (ACG), which meets weekly to consider submissions.

2.4. Please note that access must be granted to the regulators (Qualifications Scotland Accreditation) and (Ofqual) if they choose to audit centres that are approved by Smart Awards for the purposes of performing its functions. If you have a request from the regulators to conduct an audit you must respond in a timely manner. Regulatory monitoring audits seek to confirm that Smart Awards are managing their providers/centres in alignment with their own policies and procedures and Regulatory Principles and Conditions of Recognition. The audit is not an audit of the provider/centre but rather an audit of Smart Awards activities in relation to their quality assurance of the provider/centre and its assessment arrangements.

2.6. Our **VISION** is to be a modern forward-thinking awarding organisation of choice that is committed to offering innovative products and services that align with industry standards within the sector it represents.

2.7. Our **MISSION** is to offer a value proposition with a forward-thinking approach, with a commitment to offering fit-for-purpose products and services across the sectors we represent helping to raise the standards of learners and equip them with the knowledge and skills to carry out their job safely.

We are committed to introducing innovative ideas across the business. It is our responsibility to make qualifications, apprenticeship assessments and the Network Operative Passport schemes accessible to all relevant parties to build a strong educated workforce within the sector we serve.

2.8. Our **VALUES**

- Commitment – we listen and are dedicated to the success of our customers.
- Excellence – we make every effort at being the best in providing qualifications that meet the exact needs of the industry.
- Go above and beyond – we strive to exceed the expectations of our customers, working collaboratively to solve problems.
- Innovation – we foster a climate that encourages development and innovation that makes a difference.
- Integrity – we exhibit honesty, and respect for others and embrace diversity and equal opportunity in all our operations.
- Knowledge – we are experts in our field, actively learning and improving.

3. Smart Awards Centre Support Teams

3.1 The following teams provide key support functions to centres in the delivery of our qualifications and assessments.

Team	Key centre support responsibilities
Quality Team (Awarding) quality@smartawards.co.uk	• Managing centre and qualification approvals • First point of contact for centre appeal • Management of overall centre risk. • Supporting centres with continuous improvement. • Supporting centres with queries relating to quality assurance within the centre. • Planning and reviewing quality assurance monitoring and support activities. • First point of contact for quality assurance queries. • CASS audits. • Qualification feedback and technical issues. • Site approvals. • Reasonable Adjustment requests
Customer Support Team Info@smartawards.co.uk	• General enquiries. • Quartz and system support. • Registrations and certification claims. • Online assessment entries including technical issues. • Order, invoice and credit note queries. • Publication enquiries: logbooks, centre documents, forms. • Managing centre and qualification enquiries. • Customised qualifications
Qualification Development Team Info@smartawards.co.uk	• Queries in relation to qualifications and assessment. • Feedback on qualifications. • Development of supporting products and services. • Maximise the potential of the Smart Awards qualifications portfolio by developing and maintaining existing, revised and new qualifications, in accordance with regulatory requirements.

Apprenticeship Assessment Quality Team Info@smartawards.co.uk	• Ensure compliance with the requirements of the regulatory bodies and the published Apprenticeship Assessment Plans. • Undertake quality assurance of Apprenticeship Assessments. • Standardise Apprenticeship Assessment judgements. • Manage Apprenticeship Assessment quality issues. • Develop and manage Smart Awards Apprenticeship Assessment processes and practises.
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3.2 Along with our dedicated customer-focused teams, we also offer our approved centres a range of support resources to support qualification and assessment delivery. These include:

- Live and recorded centre engagement forums.
- Guidance and best practice documents.
- Learning guides.
- Qualification development sessions.
- System training and demonstrations.

4. Use Of Smart Awards Logo

4.1 All centres are provided with a high-resolution version of Smart Awards logo on approval. The centre approval logo may be used online and on social media platforms owned by the centre. Centres should use the logo to advertise that they are recognised to deliver Smart Awards qualifications and assessments. Our logo is central to our brand, so please take care when you use it. Please refer to our [\[Advertising Policy\]](#).

4.2 Acceptable areas to use our logo.

- leaflets and posters
- website pages
- marketing videos
- social media posts
- email signatures

4.3 Do not use the Smart Awards centre logo on any item that might create confusion regarding your status as an independent organisation. Do not use the Smart Awards centre logo in any circumstance that might damage our reputation.

4.4 We have the right to request the removal of our logo from any promotional or publicity material that has the potential to damage our reputation. It is strictly forbidden to add Smart Awards logo to centres' own in-house certificates.

4.5 Using the regulators' logos. Each of the regulators sets separate rules which govern the use of its own logo on certificates. Centres are NOT permitted to use the regulator logos. Centres should contact info@smartawards.co.uk for any queries or to request usage of logos.

BECOMING A CENTRE

5. Centre Recognition

5.1 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.

5.2 Centres wishing to deliver Smart Awards qualifications must gain centre recognition and relevant qualification approval before commencing delivery.

5.3 Centres will only be approved where they can clearly demonstrate that they are able to

consistently meet the requirements of our terms and conditions, our policies, procedures, audits and any additional requirements which relate to specific qualifications laid down in the qualification guidelines.

5.4. 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 overseas with the express permission of Smart Awards.

5.5 Applications for centre recognition are made by submitting the relevant, fully completed online application process. If you meet the criteria set out in this process Smart Awards will approve your organisation as a Smart Awards approved centre.

5.6 Our regulators 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.

5.7 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 due diligence check of the centre.

5.8. Following centre approval, you will be informed by e-mail, and you will receive a unique username 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.

5.9. 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.

5.10. We reserve the right to refuse recognition or impose additional requirements on centres that cannot meet the minimum requirements of recognition.

5.11. A prospective centre which has not been granted centre approval within 6 months of applying will have its application archived. Should recognition be required in the future, a new application will be required.

5.12. Smart Awards will communicate relevant information to the nominated centre engagement forum 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.

5.13. Confirmation of the outcome of this process will be formally communicated to the nominated centre contact, and a centre approval certificate will be issued.

5.14. 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.

5.15. Newly approved centres are initially classified as High Risk. This status remains in place until a full audit has been completed and the EQA is satisfied that the centre is operating in line with Smart Awards requirements.

5.16. 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 [Centre Assessment Standard Scrutiny \(CASS\) policy](#). This may include an action plan which must be completed before recognition is confirmed.

5.17. Centres enter into an agreement which details the centres 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.

5.18. 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.

5.19. 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. Supplements will be charged to cover international travel and additional travel time.

5.20. 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.

5.21. 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 the recognition of lapsed centres.

5.22. Centres have the right to appeal against the outcome of centre recognition by following Smart Awards centre appeal process.

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

5.24. 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.

5.25. Centres that 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 the withdrawal of recognition.

6. Centre Roles And Responsibilities

6.1 The [\[terms and conditions\]](#) of centre approval outline the centres' responsibilities. There may be occasions where we may need to amend these terms and conditions. Any changes will be communicated to all centres. These terms and conditions shall be governed by and interpreted in accordance with English law, and the parties shall submit to the jurisdiction of the English courts.

6.2 Centres must inform Smart Awards of any changes to details that may impact their ability to meet requirements for delivery and/or assessment of our qualifications. Changes include the following:

- Centre name, contacts and address
- Staffing resources, including directors and senior management.
- The removal or adding additional assessors and IQA staff.

- Physical resources
- Company structure
- Details of any satellite sites, additional sites and subcontracted providers.

6.3 If Smart Awards finds a centre has provided inaccurate or misleading information during the approval process or as a registered centre this will lead to an investigation into potential malpractice and could result in the termination of the centre contract.

6.4 There are several key centre roles involved in the quality assurance process. The table below lists the roles and their key responsibilities in relation to working with us:

Role	Key Responsibilities
Centre Manager	The centre manager is the person responsible for the overall management of the centre, including the administrative and quality assurance for our qualifications are properly maintained throughout the centre.
Centre Administrator	The centre administrator is the person responsible for registering learners and submitting certificate claims via Smart Awards Management System - this person can also be the assessor.
Internal Quality Assurer (IQA)	IQAs monitor the work of all assessors involved with a particular qualification to ensure they are applying the standards consistently throughout assessment activities. They ensure the consistency of the assessment decisions/judgements that have been made and ensure that these are valid. The scope of responsibility will vary according to the type of assessment system in which they are involved (refer to relevant qualification documentation).
Lead IQA	Lead IQAs are responsible for leading the team of IQAs, creating the team's IQA strategy, leading standardisation meetings and managing centre follow-up actions to issues identified through external quality assurance. It is suggested good practice for the Lead IQA role to be regularly rotated between IQA team members.
Assessor	Assessors are responsible for delivering qualification assessments and making valid, consistent assessment judgements. They ensure that our assessments are administered in line with our published requirements and assessment documentation.
Invigilator	Invigilators are responsible for the secure conduct of all assessments, whether paper-based or online. Our assessments must be administered according to published requirements which also detail the specific roles and responsibilities of the invigilator. All invigilators must familiarise themselves with the contents of Smart Awards [invigilation policy] and the specific qualification assessment strategy.
Centre Engagement Forum Contact	Centre Engagement Forum Contact can be a minimum of two persons, who are nominated by the centre to receive updates, communication, and attend the Smart Awards Engagement Forums.
For apprenticeship assessments, additional roles may apply depending on the assessment model.	
Independent Assessor	Responsible for making impartial assessment decisions for apprenticeship assessments, where independence from training delivery is required.
Apprenticeship Assessment Coordinator	Responsible for ensuring apprentices are entered for assessment at the appropriate stage and that gateway or readiness requirements are met. Centres must ensure that any independence requirements defined within apprenticeship standards are maintained.

6.5 In some instances (for example at smaller centres) one person may take on several elements of these roles. Where this is the case, centres must ensure that it is still practicable and manageable for quality assurance standards to be maintained. Centres seeking further guidance on quality roles and responsibilities should refer to [\[Smart Awards CASS Strategy Policy\]](#) or contact the Quality team at quality@smartawards.co.uk

6.6 All staff involved in the delivery and assessment of Smart Awards qualifications must be appropriately qualified, occupationally competent, and experienced in the subject area they are delivering. Centres are responsible for ensuring that all staff meet these requirements and are capable of delivering training and assessment to the required standard.

6.7 Where a member of staff does not yet hold a recognised qualification, they may still operate in an assessor or IQA role under specific conditions. In such cases, centres must ensure that:

- The individual is occupationally competent and has relevant, up-to-date industry experience in the subject area.
- They are working towards an appropriate assessor or IQA qualification.
- Evidence must be available to confirm the individual has started working towards the qualification, including a recorded start date within the last 12 months.
- They are fully supervised by a qualified and experienced assessor or IQA during assessment activities.
- All assessment decisions made by the unqualified assessor or IQA are reviewed and approved by a qualified assessor or IQA.
- Where assessments are delivered via the App, centres must implement a system or documented process to evidence that all assessment decisions are supervised, reviewed, and approved by a qualified individual (in place of countersigning).
- Their assessment decisions are subject to monitoring, sampling, and verification by a qualified Internal Quality Assurer (IQA) to ensure consistency and validity

6.8 Centres must have a clear development plan in place for unqualified assessors and IQAs, including access to training, mentoring, and regular feedback to support their progression to full qualification.

6.9 We strongly recommend that all staff, regardless of experience, engage in ongoing training and continuous professional development (CPD). This should include keeping up to date with current industry practices, regulatory requirements, and best practices in teaching, learning, and assessment.

6.10 Centres should maintain records of staff qualifications, CPD activity, and progress towards any required qualifications, and these may be reviewed as part of quality assurance activities.

6.11 Courses that are deemed to present a higher level of risk will require staff to hold current and relevant accreditations prior to approval. This ensures that individuals involved in the delivery and assessment of these courses have the necessary competence, knowledge, and safety awareness to operate safely and effectively.

6.12 Maintaining valid accreditations supports compliance with regulatory requirements and quality standards, ensuring that qualifications are delivered and assessed appropriately and that risks associated with higher-risk training activities are effectively managed.

6.13 The following Smart Awards qualifications are classified as high risk:

- SA001 Overhead Safety
- SA002 Underground Safety
- SA006 Safe Working in Civils
- SA008 Cabling Over Overhead Obstacles
- SA010 Work in Medium Risk Confined Spaces
- SA022 Safe location and avoidance of underground services
- SA060 Combined Entrant and Entry Controller for Medium Risk Confined Spaces

6.14 Centres must comply at all times with the Smart Awards Centre Agreement and Terms and Conditions, all Smart Awards policies, and all applicable regulatory requirements. Centres must act openly, honestly, and cooperatively in all dealings with Smart Awards and must not undertake any action or omission that may:

- place Smart Awards in breach of regulatory requirements;
- compromise the integrity of qualifications or assessments;
- adversely affect learners; or
- damage public confidence in Smart Awards or its qualifications.

6.15 Centres are responsible for ensuring that all staff, contractors, and third parties involved in the delivery, assessment, and administration of Smart Awards qualifications understand and comply with these requirements.

6.16 Centres must take all reasonable steps to prevent any action or event that may negatively impact learners, the integrity of assessment, or the reputation of Smart Awards.

6.17 Centres must hold appropriate and valid insurance to cover their activities relating to the delivery, assessment, and administration of Smart Awards qualifications. Evidence of insurance must be provided to Smart Awards upon request.

7. Centre Policies Requirements

7.1. We require centres to hold a number of policies which are listed in 7.4. Your policies must be mapped against policy criteria outlined in the Centre Policy Requirements Document ensuring your policies contain the relevant information.

7.2. Please note that policies must be specific to the learning and assessment environment and if training/assessing third parties then the term employee should not be used. If a company policy comes under a group policy, then an extension procedure can be added specifically to the training environment for the policy subject in question.

7.3. Policy documents must have the company logo on them and be version control and review date as per company policy.

7.4. Centre policy document requirements

- Appeals Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Conflict of Interest Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- GDPR/Data Protection Policy
- Malpractice and Maladministration Policy
- Prevent Policy
- Quality Policy and IQA Strategy
- Reasonable Adjustments Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Whistleblowing
- Examination/Invigilation Policy

8. Smart Awards Policy Documents

8.1 Smart Awards policy documents are available to download or view from our website.
<https://www.smartawards.co.uk/>

8.2. Smart Awards policies are for centres and learners accessing Smart Awards qualifications, apprenticeship assessments and related services and all those involved with the delivery and quality

assurance of Smart Awards qualifications. Smart Awards has an overall responsibility to ensure all our policies comply with our legal and ethical obligations, and that all those under our control comply with them. Smart Awards has the day-to-day responsibility of implementing our policy and for monitoring its use and effectiveness and dealing with any queries on its interpretations.

Policy Name	Interpretation
Advertising Policy	This policy is to support internal and external customers with guidance when advertising products and services with Smart Awards. This Smart Awards policy, unless otherwise apparent from the context, includes advertising on the Smart Awards website and any of its assets. This policy maps to Ofqual general conditions.
Adverse Effect Policy	This policy covers potential incidences relating to Smart Awards qualifications, third parties and centres engaged in the development, delivery of qualifications, and assessment that could have an adverse effect on learners. This policy maps to Ofqual general conditions and Qualifications Scotland Accreditation principles.
Anit-Bribery and Corruption Policy	The purpose of this policy is to establish controls to ensure compliance with all applicable anti-bribery and corruption regulations, and to ensure that Smart Awards business is conducted in a socially responsible manner.
Appeals Policy	This policy outlines how Smart Awards deals with appeals. An appeal is defined as an application for a decision taken by Smart Awards in relation to a Centre, learner or service user to be overturned. Smart Awards is committed to providing a fair and transparent appeals service.
CASS Strategy Policy	The document clearly sets out the internal and external quality assurance for Smart Awards centres, external quality assurers, internal quality assurers and assessors.
Centre Handbook	This centre handbook is designed to provide guidance and information to all centres that are approved to deliver Smart Awards qualifications. The handbook aims to outline the key responsibilities of centres and to provide an overview of our policies and procedures and quality assurance arrangements.
Centre Policy Requirement	We require centres to hold a number of policies which are outlined in this document.
Centre Terms and Conditions	This document sets out Smart Awards terms and conditions for approved centres. There may be occasions where we may need to amend these terms and conditions. Any changes will be communicated to all centres. These terms and conditions shall be governed by and interpreted in accordance with English law, and the parties shall submit to the jurisdiction of the English courts.
Certification Policy	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 delivery and quality assurance of Smart Awards qualifications.
Comparability of Assessment Policy	The purpose of this policy is to protect our integrity as an awarding body point assessment organisation. To monitor the quality of assessments to ensure that apprenticeship assessment assessors meet the standard and assessment requirements. To provide quality assurance on the assessment processes and to give guidance and support to centres, employers, training providers and learners.
Competition Law Policy	Smart Awards Ltd is subject to both UK and EU competition law. It is the general policy of Smart Awards to comply with all laws applicable to its activities. This general policy includes strict compliance with UK and EU

	Competition Law.
Complaints Policy	It is the responsibility of all staff who carry out work for Smart Awards to ensure all our customer expectations are met and if possible surpassed. Our customers are the most important people in our business. All persons representing Smart Awards will endeavour to portray a professional image and attitude to ensure Smart Awards standing is maintained at the highest possible level.
Conflicts of Interest Policy	This policy is for Smart Awards staff, Centres and other third parties who access Smart Awards qualifications and related services and all those involved with the development, delivery, and quality assurance of Smart Awards qualifications where conflicts of interest arise when there is an influence or appear to be an influence by personal and professional interests.
Direct Claims Status Policy	Smart Awards provides an 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).
Environmental Policy	Smart Awards accepts that it has a responsibility to the principles of sustainability and environmental awareness. Smart Awards is committed to reducing its environmental impact and continually improving environmental performance as an integral and fundamental part of its business strategy and operations.
Equality and Diversity Policy	Smart Awards strives to ensure that it does not create any unnecessary barriers to achievement and provides fair assessment opportunities for all learners, including those with particular assessment requirements. Smart Awards have a duty under The Equality Act 2010 to make reasonable adjustments to the way their qualifications are delivered, to ensure that they are accessible to learners with disabilities.
Fair Access Policy	Smart Awards strives to ensure that it does not create any unnecessary barriers to achievement and provides fair qualifications for all learners, including those with particular assessment requirements and protected characteristics. All learners and potential learners should be able to enter and successfully participate in a qualification in pursuit of their learning objectives.
Fees	This document outlines all Smart Awards fees.
Fraud Policy	This policy applies to any fraud involving employees, external consultants, suppliers, contractors, centres and any other entities conducting business with Smart Awards.
GDPR Policy	Smart Awards need to collect and use certain types of information about the Individuals or Service Users (known as data subjects) who come into contact with Smart Awards in order to carry on our work. We are committed to a policy of protecting the rights and privacy of individuals.
Health and Safety	The health and safety policy aim to promote safe systems of working whilst delivering Smart Awards business and ensure compliance with all relevant health and safety legislation. Smart Awards is committed to achieving best practice in the management of health and safety and regularly monitors health and safety to ensure that it provides a safe environment for those who work or represent Smart Awards
Information Security Policy	Smart Awards need to collect and use certain types of information about the Individuals or Service Users (known as data subjects) who come into contact with Smart Awards in order to carry on our work. We are committed to a policy of protecting the rights and privacy of individuals. This personal information

	must be collected and dealt with appropriately. Personal data can be held on computers, databases, laptops and mobile devices, or in a manual file, and includes email, minutes of meetings, photographs or recorded on other material and there are safeguards to ensure this under the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).
Invigilation Guide	Smart Awards have developed this guidance for approved centres that are offering Smart Awards qualifications to learners with an online assessment method that requires invigilation. All Smart Awards online assessments are accessed through a secure link that is provided to approved centres. The guidance covers all invigilation protocols set out by Smart Award for qualifications including but not limited to regulated, non-regulated, and apprenticeship assessments.
Malpractice and Maladministration Policy	This policy is aimed at approved centres and their learners, who are delivering/registered on a regulated or non-regulated qualification(s) or unit(s). It is used by staff to ensure they deal with all malpractice or maladministration in a consistent manner.
Plagiarism Policy	This document outlines the policy for dealing with plagiarism when delivering or undertaking a Smart Awards qualification. It is the Policy of Smart Awards that learners, assessors or centres who are found to have committed plagiarism may be liable to actions as outlined in this document.
Prevent Policy	Smart Awards understands its responsibilities under the Counter Terrorism & Security Act 2015 to prevent people of all ages being radicalised or drawn into terrorism and seeks to meet its obligations, as documented in this policy.
Qualification Withdrawal Policy	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 compliance to meet regulatory body requirements and implement a seamless structure for Smart Awards business
Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration Policy and Guide	We seek to provide equal access to examinations for all learners, ensuring that there are no unnecessary barriers and that any reasonable adjustments or special considerations for learners preserve the validity, reliability, and integrity of the qualification. We will endeavour to accommodate the needs of learners with a particular examination requirement, according to individual circumstances, ensuring such learners are not disadvantaged in relation to other learners and that certificates accurately reflect learner attainment.
Recognition of Prior Learning Policy	This policy is designed to provide guidance to centres, instructors, assessors, EQAs, IQAs and learners regarding recognition of prior learning (RPL) so that learners can achieve without duplicating any previous learning or assessment they have undertaken.
Resit Policy	This policy outlines the processes to be followed should a learner fail any element of their assessment. A resit involves the learner sitting one or more failed assessment components again, without the need to undertake further training.
Safeguarding Policy	This policy seeks to ensure that Smart Awards undertakes its responsibilities regarding the protection of children and/or vulnerable adults and will respond to concerns appropriately. Smart Awards makes a positive contribution to a strong and safe community and recognises the right of every individual to stay safe.
Sanctions Policy	Smart Awards has a responsibility to protect the interests of learners completing our qualifications to ensure that centres deliver qualifications in accordance with our requirements and standards. We also have a responsibility to the regulators to maintain the standard of our qualifications.

	This policy is aimed at approved Centres and their learners, who are delivering/registered on a regulated or non-regulated qualification(s) or unit(s). It is used by Smart Awards staff and External Quality Assurers to ensure they deal with sanctions in a consistent manner.
Sustainability Policy	Smart Awards is committed to promoting sustainability. Concern for the environment and promoting a broader sustainability agenda are integral to Smart Awards activities and the management of the organisation. We aim to follow and promote good sustainability practices, reduce the environmental impacts of all our activities, and help our clients and partners to do the same.
Validity Policy	This policy outlines the process of validity ensuring the qualification measures what it claims to measure, the evidence matches the competencies, skills, knowledge, and expertise that are being demonstrated by the learner at the appropriate level.
Whistleblowing Policy	'Whistleblowing' is the term commonly used to describe public disclosure of suspected wrongdoing within an organisation. Whistleblowing may be carried out by any staff member of Smart Awards or persons, involved with the development and delivery of Smart Awards qualifications, including centres, learners, assessors, verifiers, and internal and external quality assurers. Smart Awards expects that persons will act with goodwill towards the organisation and use the whistleblowing policy in good faith.

DELIVERY SETUP

9. Smart Awards Qualifications

9.1 Our product offering will be predominately regulated and non-regulated qualifications, apprenticeship assessments and the network operative passport scheme (NOPS) which we will review annually to make sure we are continuously offering value for money across our product and service range.

9.2 Our qualifications and apprenticeship assessments are available for delivery through our network of approved quality-assured centres. This ensures that employers and learners can access qualifications to meet the needs of their sector, health and safety legislation, and industry good practice. The following outlines the types of qualifications we offer.

Type	Description
Ofqual Regulated Qualifications	We are approved and regulated by Ofqual to design, develop, deliver, and quality assure qualifications in England. These qualifications sit on the Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF), ensuring they meet nationally recognised standards.
Qualifications Scotland Accreditation	We are approved and regulated by Qualifications Scotland Accreditation to design, develop, award, and quality assure regulated qualifications in Scotland, ensuring alignment with national standards.
Awareness accreditation	Awareness accreditations are industry-recognised programmes that do not include a practical assessment. As such, they do not sit within a formal regulatory framework but still provide valuable knowledge and understanding in specific subject areas.
Street Works Qualifications	We are an approved Street Works awarding organisation, authorised by HAUC (UK) to deliver and award all Street Works qualifications in line with national requirements.
Industry Accreditations	We design, develop, award, and quality assure technical qualifications on behalf of industry partners. These accreditations are tailored to meet specific sector needs and, while industry-recognised, do not sit on a formal regulatory framework.

Customised Qualifications	Centres, employers, and industry can design their own in-house qualifications across any sector and Smart Awards will accredit them in line with our quality assurance criteria. Our technical expertise at Smart Awards can help to tailor products to certain markets and sectors.
NVQs	NVQs are work-based qualifications based on national occupational standards, which define the skills, knowledge, and performance required for competence in a particular role. They cover all key aspects of an occupation, including best practice and adaptability to future developments. NVQs are flexible, with no fixed completion timeframe. They can be undertaken by employees, as well as students in work placements or part-time roles.
SVQs	SVQs operate in a similar way to NVQs but are primarily used in Scotland. They are credit-rated and levelled within the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF), supporting clear progression pathways into further qualifications and Modern Apprenticeships.
Apprenticeship Assessment	Apprenticeship Assessment Plans (AAPs) define the minimum requirements for assessing specific apprenticeship standards. Assessment organisations must design and deliver assessments that meet these requirements, ensuring consistency, quality, and compliance with relevant regulations.

9.3 Smart Awards Quartz web is the dedicated place where centres can find all the operational resources they need to get started to deliver our qualifications. Each qualification is supported by a qualification handbook and supporting materials which are available through the Quartz Web portal and listed below.

Documents	Description
Assessment Strategies	We have a number of assessment strategies that set out the quality assurance arrangements for the assessment and verification of Smart Awards qualifications and provide centres with a consistent approach to assessment. The key areas assessment strategies will cover are: How external quality control of assessment will be achieved; The extent to which a realistic work environment and simulated working conditions may be used to assess competence; Internal quality control of assessment; Requirements of assessors and verifiers and assessment requirements.
Assessor Guides	Assessor guides support the delivery of the qualification and accompany the PowerPoint presentations to aid the assessor in the delivery of the qualifications.
PowerPoints	Smart Awards have developed several PowerPoint presentations to support the delivery of some of our qualifications. These should be adapted to suit centre and learner requirements. Smart Awards do not produce PowerPoint presentations for all its qualifications; it is the centres responsibility to produce training content to aid the delivery of the qualification.
Qualification Handbook	The qualification handbook sets out the rules for the combination of the qualification, the structure, and its units. The handbook also outlines the content of the qualification including grading criteria.
Practical Assessment	This document sets out the practical assessment observation requirements and will be completed by the assessor as supporting evidence of the learner's achievement.

Unit Of Assessment	The unit of assessment details the unit content to include the learning outcomes and assessment criteria.
Qualification Specification	The qualification specification gives a detailed overview of the qualification.
Question papers	Where a qualification has a multiple-choice test, the centre will be required to use Smart Awards online assessment platform. Paper-based tests will only be available for a reasonable adjustment or special request. Smart Awards cannot give centres the answers to the questions. Centres are however able to download a report from Smart Awards online assessment platform which shows the categories of questions that a learner has marked as incorrect. Please refer to Smart Awards guidance videos which are available to download in the centre portal.

9.4 Some of Smart Award's qualifications may be eligible for government funding. Smart Awards does not have direct influence in the allocation of funding, but takes steps, where possible, to make qualifications available for public funding.

9.5 Further information regarding our products and services can be found at <https://www.smartawards.co.uk/>

9.6 Smart Awards delivers apprenticeship assessments in line with the requirements of the relevant apprenticeship standard and associated assessment plan.

9.7 Centres involved in apprenticeship assessment must ensure that:

- assessment is delivered in line with the published apprenticeship assessment plan
- all gateway requirements (where applicable) have been met prior to final assessment
- assessment decisions are valid, reliable, and based on sufficient evidence of competence
- assessors or independent assessors meet the competence and independence requirements set out within the standard
- assessment is conducted in a way that ensures consistency, fairness, and standardisation across all learners

Where apprenticeship assessment differs from qualification assessment, centres must follow the requirements of the apprenticeship standard and Smart Awards apprenticeship assessment guidance.

9.8 All qualification materials, assessment content, and Smart Awards documentation remain the intellectual property of Smart Awards. Centres must not copy, adapt, distribute, or commercially exploit Smart Awards materials except where explicitly permitted for delivery of approved qualifications.

10. Smart Awards Systems

10.1. All centres have access to the following online systems, depending on the qualifications they are approved to offer. Our systems support the administration, registration, certification assessment and quality assurance of our qualifications and apprenticeship assessments.

System	What is it used for?
Quartz Web – Smart Awards Management System (SAMS)	Smart Awards Management Systems (SAMS) is hosted by Quartz. All approved Smart Awards centres will have access to Quartz Web on approval. Centre will use the system for the following centre activities. • registration of learners • certification claims • download e-certificates. • upload centre documents and policies.

	• additional assessor approval and withdrawal • additional product approval and withdrawal • additional site approval and withdrawal • additional IQA approval and withdrawal • adding centre administration staff and withdrawal • requesting reasonable adjustments • requesting special consideration • initiating a complaint • initiating an appeal • initiating malpractice and/or maladministration • accessing centre reports • download qualification materials.
Smart Awards Online Assessment Platform	Where Smart Awards qualifications have a multiple-choice test as the assessment this will be delivered through our online assessment platform. Our online assessment platform has a direct API to Smart Awards management system. Our online assessment platform also supports the uploading of evidence for practical assessments.
ACE360/ROGO	Where our qualifications support remote invigilation, we will use an alternative online assessment platform ACE360 powered by Rogo® which is a customisable e-assessment platform with multiple testing options. ACE360 is also an online platform used by training providers and assessment organisations to manage, track, and deliver apprenticeship assessments and learner progress in one place.
Smart Awards App	Smart Awards app is available on Android and Apple devices via Google Play and Apple Stores. The app is free to download and provides a number of key features that are beneficial to the learner and centre as shown below. • free pre-learning materials and videos for operatives • free online courses • links to the latest health and safety legislation • links to industry updates • virtual NOPS card

11. Learner Induction

11.1 Centres are required to ensure that learners registered on Smart Awards qualifications and apprenticeship assessments have sufficient capability at the right level to undertake the learning and assessment. This might include a review of the learners' prior achievements/qualifications, as well as reviewing their current job role (where relevant).

11.2 Reasonable adjustments must be identified as part of the induction process, and in advance of any learner assessment, this includes identifying non-English-speaking learners. Before you register non-English-speaking learners, you will need to apply for approval if you intend to deliver Smart Awards qualifications in a language other than English. It is the responsibility of the centre to translate learner materials. Please note the assessment must be delivered in English and supported by a reasonable adjustment.

11.3 For apprenticeship assessments, centres must ensure that learners have met all readiness or gateway requirements, where applicable, before undertaking final assessment.

This may include:

- completion of on-programme learning
- achievement of required qualifications

- employer confirmation of readiness
- Evidence of gateway achievement must be retained and made available for quality assurance.

LEARNER MANAGEMENT

12. Learner Registrations

12.1 All learners undertaking Smart Awards qualifications, must be registered on Smart Awards Management Systems Quartz web.

12.2 Your procedures must:

- Comply with the data protection provisions in the contract between ourselves and your centre, and legal requirements on data protection.
- Ensure that you can formally identify a learner to ensure that the person named at registration and on Smart Awards certificate is the person who completed the assessment. For quality assurance purposes you should ensure that you keep a record of the evidence used to formally identify a learner.
- Where learners have previously been registered, we recommend that they use their original learner ID on subsequent qualifications to ensure that the system recognises prior achievement.
- Ensure learner names are spelt correctly and entered onto Quartz web in the correct format, as this is what will appear on their certificates when issued.

12.3 You are required to ensure the accuracy of learner details on registration and prior to claiming results. The centre will not be able to amend learner details once registered on Quartz web. Centres will be required to complete a learner amendment through Quartz web to request any amendments.

12.4 For name changes, you will be required to submit an original or certified copy of a document that shows the learner's new name e.g., driving licence, passport, marriage certificate, decree absolute or Deed Poll.

12.5 For accidental misspellings, the above, or a birth certificate would be suitable evidence. This can be uploaded to the learners' records via Quartz web.

12.6 For qualifications or recognised programmes lasting more than 3 months, you must register learners no later than 12 weeks after the start of the programme. For shorter programmes, it's advised your learners need to be registered ahead of the start of delivery.

12.7 Learners must be registered prior to assessment, where registration is a requirement for the qualification.

12.8 After registration we send you the invoice for any registration fees. Full payment must be made within 30 days; you will still be issued an invoice for your records.

12.9 All apprentices must be registered on ACE360 within two weeks of enrolment to ensure timely access to required assessments during their programme.

13. Learner Amendments/Withdrawals

13.1 Any change of learner details must be requested through the centre on Quartz. These changes will be put into effect within 10 working days. Notification of learner withdrawal from a qualification must be completed on Quartz web.

13.2 Any changes to apprentice details must be submitted by the centre via ACE360. Notification of apprentice withdrawal from an apprenticeship assessment must also be completed via ACE360.

14. Reasonable Adjustment and Special Considerations

14.1 A reasonable adjustment is an alteration that would enable a disabled person or someone who may have trouble carrying out qualification or assessment activities without being at a disadvantage compared to others. Under the Equality Act 2010, there is a legal duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled people. Reasonable adjustments must be identified before registration. Please refer to Smart Awards reasonable adjustment and special consideration policy.

14.2 Special consideration is consideration given to a Learner who has temporarily experienced; an illness or injury or some other event outside of the Learner's control, which has had, or is reasonably likely to have had, a material effect on that Learner's ability to take an assessment or demonstrate his or her level of attainment in an assessment. Please refer to Smart Awards reasonable adjustment and special consideration policy.

ASSESSMENT & CERTIFICATION

15. Assessment Documentation/Records

15.1 Smart Awards collect learner details for the purpose of registration and certification of qualification and/or apprenticeship assessment. Information collected can be learner names, gender, date of birth, and any other personal data which is necessary in relation to a specific qualification learner are registered on.

15.2 Smart Awards may also collect personal data if required to administer quality assurance processes, investigations, complaints, and appeals. This personal data is provided by centres, providers, awarding bodies, or other industry bodies the learner may have registered and/or contracted with to receive learning, training, assessment, and/or certification products and/or services provided by Smart Awards

15.3 Assessment records are the property of the centre and centres must have in place systems to securely document and retain a range of accurate, up-to-date learner information and are able to provide this when required by Smart Awards. All records must be kept for a minimum of three years following an EQA visit. Your procedures should cover sufficient steps to protect the integrity of assessments before and after the assessment takes place. The centre must have adequate arrangements for the safe disposal of confidential waste following the full retention period.

15.4 Learner evidence - Where a qualification requires it, learners will hold their evidence of competence within a portfolio unless uploaded to Quartz web for practical-based assessments. Centres that choose to keep physical copies of evidence must be made available along with the following assessment documentation until an EQA visit has been completed.

- Assessment plans and feedback reports
- IQA sampling plans and reports
- IQA observation records
- Learner interview records
- Record of achievement and tracking documentation

15.5 Centres must comply with all applicable data protection legislation, including UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018.

Centres must:

- ensure learners are informed how their data will be used and shared with Smart Awards and regulators
- securely store and process all personal data
- report any actual or suspected data breach to Smart Awards without delay

Data must only be used for purposes relating to qualification delivery, assessment, certification, and quality assurance.

16. Certification Claims

16.1 Centres must have a system in place that ensures that all certification claims are valid. Certificates can only be claimed on completion by the learner of a unit/qualification/apprenticeship (as appropriate). All claims for certification must be authenticated by a qualified Internal Quality Assurer (IQA) and align to each centre's internal quality assurance strategy.

16.2 Smart Awards will apply an internal quality assurance classification against all new and high-risk centres. This classification will be added to the centre's record on Quartz which will require the centre's IQA to upload their sampling activity onto Quartz web before any certificate claims. This information will be reviewed by the Quality Team which will approve the release of certificates subject to positive quality assurance checks.

16.3 Certification is subject to Smart Awards quality assurance controls, including External Quality Assurance (EQA) approval where required. Certificates must not be claimed or issued until all quality assurance requirements have been met and any actions identified through EQA activity have been satisfactorily completed.

16.4 All centres are required to quality sample their learners against their IQA sampling strategy before claiming certification.

16.5 Centres will submit certificate claims through Quartz Web. Smart Awards undertake a final administrative quality check before the generation of certificates. Certificate claims must show the correct qualification code and assessment numbers with the mark or grade as appropriate.

16.6 Results can only be entered once the learner has completed the requirements of the relevant unit. Under no circumstances can results be submitted prior to the learner completing the unit.

16.7 Centres must notify Smart Awards immediately of any results claimed in error and comply with the action specified. Smart Awards will amend and/or invalidate where necessary.

16.8 In instances where certificates are found to be invalid, we will inform the relevant regulatory authority and any other appropriate authorities and agree on the appropriate actions. Certificates are deemed invalid in the following circumstances:

- The evidence assessed is not the learner's own work.
- The learner is still working towards the qualification after the certificate has been claimed.
- The certificates have been claimed based on falsified or incorrect records.

16.9 Instances of invalid certification may also constitute malpractice and will be subject to further investigation.

16.10 To reduce the environmental impact, Smart Awards issues electronic certificates for its qualifications which are made available to centres within 24 hours of the certificate claim. Centres will download certificates from Quartz web. Certificates are not generated on weekends.

16.11 Centres may request a paper version of the certificate at an additional charge. Smart Awards certificates hold a unique QR identifier which validates the authentication of the certificate by an external web portal.

16.12 Replacement certificates requested will be subject to a charge. An administration fee may apply if the replacement certificate is issued to correct errors in the learner information originally supplied. Learners may independently request additional or replacement certificates at any time.

16.13 For apprenticeship assessments, centres must ensure that results are only submitted once all elements of the assessment plan have been completed and verified. Assessment outcomes must

reflect the grading structure defined within the apprenticeship standard and must not be submitted prior to completion of all required assessment components.

QUALITY ASSURANCE AND COMPLIANCE

17. Centre Quality Assurance

17.1 Our qualifications, and apprenticeship assessments are assessed through a variety of methods, including, online exams, coursework, presentations, discussions and practical assessments. Centres are responsible for ensuring that all assessments are conducted fairly and accurately and that all staff involved in the assessment process are appropriately trained and qualified and declare any conflicts of interest. Centres must ensure that assessment decisions are valid, reliable, and based on sufficient evidence.

17.2 Our moderation process ensures that the standards of assessment are consistent across all centres which are outlined in our [\[CASS Strategy Policy\]](#) and represent the minimum requirements that centres must adhere to retain centre approval.

17.3 The table below lists the criteria, along with the required sources of centre evidence to meet them. Centres must provide these at approval and as part of our external quality assurance monitoring.

Centre quality assurance criteria	Sources of evidence
The centre has a single named Centre Quality Contact	A documented named point of accountability for management of quality assurance, with secure contact details (specific to the centre). The named contact is normally the centre manager.
The centre can hold and securely transmit details of assessment outcomes	Documented procedures to ensure security when sending and receiving details of learner results to us.
The centre has the staff, resources and systems needed to support: the delivery of the assessment where necessary, the recording of any appropriate exemptions	• An organisational chart showing the structure of the training centre, including satellite centres, assessors and IQA's. • Up-to-date CVs, CPD, original certificates, and assessor/IQA qualifications of the assessment/delivery and quality team. • Documented procedures for registering learners. • Learner tracking documentation. • Procedures for recording exemptions, internal appeals, complaints, malpractice, maladministration, reasonable adjustments, special considerations and plagiarism. • Induction plans for centre staff involved with delivery, assessment and internal quality assurance. • Invigilation policy for the administration of exams. • Up to date Policies and procedures. Please refer to [Centre Policies Requirements].
The centre has administrative systems in place to track the learner's progress	• Records of learner tracking systems. • Assessment records. • Individual Learning Plans (ILP) – where appropriate.

17.4 Centres must identify, manage, and monitor any actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest that could affect the integrity of assessment or quality assurance. Centres must:

- maintain a conflicts of interest policy and, where appropriate, a register
- ensure staff declare any conflicts relating to learners or assessment decisions

- implement controls to mitigate risks (e.g. independent assessment or IQA)
- notify Smart Awards of any conflict that could impact fairness, validity, or compliance

Failure to appropriately manage conflicts of interest may result in sanctions.

17.5 For apprenticeship assessments, centres must ensure that:

- assessment decisions are standardised across assessors
- any requirements for assessor independence are maintained
- sampling and monitoring arrangements reflect the assessment model defined within the apprenticeship standard

17.6 Smart Awards may apply additional quality assurance controls where required to ensure consistency and compliance with apprenticeship assessment requirements.

18. Centre Audits

18.1 We have a robust quality assurance process to ensure that our qualifications and apprenticeship assessments are delivered to the required standard. This includes regular monitoring and review of centres to ensure that they are complying with our policies, procedures and terms of conditions. Centres are expected to cooperate fully with our quality assurance process and to provide all the necessary information and evidence required. An initial audit request will be made via email to the named quality contact, and a response is expected within 7 working days. Failing this, two further email requests will be sent, if no communication is received the centre may be put on temporary stop.

18.2 Smart Awards undertake a range of external quality assurance activities that can be remote and/or face-to-face and are tailored to each centre's risks and requirements. The scope and purpose of each activity are to minimise any risk of invalid certification and to ensure that the delivery and assessment of Smart Awards Qualifications and apprenticeship assessments meet the required standards. These activities are part of routine ongoing monitoring but may also be in response to issues of non-compliance. Where centres are found to be non-compliant, they will be subject to the implementation of sanctions including the potential removal of centre/qualification approval. Where sanctions are in place centres will be issued improvement actions and timescales for completion to address the issues. Please refer to our [\[Sanctions Policy\]](#).

18.3 Centres are subject to External Quality Assurance (EQA) activity in line with the Smart Awards EQA Strategy, which applies a risk-based approach to monitoring. All centres will receive a core programme of EQA activity, including a minimum of one onsite audit per year. The number, type and frequency of additional EQA activities, including remote and onsite audits, will be determined by the centre's risk rating in accordance with the Smart Awards EQA Strategy.

18.4 Newly approved centres are subject to enhanced EQA monitoring due to their initial high-risk classification. This will typically include a combination of remote and onsite audit activity, as defined within the Smart Awards EQA Strategy, to confirm the effectiveness of assessment and internal quality assurance arrangements before a reduced risk status can be considered.

18.5 EQA activity includes both remote and onsite audits. Remote audits focus on the review of documentation, learner evidence, assessment decisions, and internal quality assurance processes. Onsite audits include all remote audit activities, alongside observation of assessment practice, review of resources and environments, and confirmation of assessor competence in live delivery conditions.

18.6 EQA sampling will be determined by Smart Awards and will reflect a risk-based approach. Sampling may include assessment decisions, learner evidence, IQA activity, assessor performance, and centre systems and documentation. Centres must ensure that all requested evidence and records are made available and must not restrict sampling to pre-selected learners or assessment

evidence. Sampling will include a representative range of learner performance, and Smart Awards reserves the right to request access to any learner, assessor, or assessment records to ensure the validity, reliability, and integrity of assessment decisions.

18.7 Smart Awards reserves the right to extend the scope of EQA activity where necessary to investigate risks to the validity, reliability, or integrity of assessment. Centres must provide access to all requested information, personnel, and records to support this activity.

18.8 In addition to scheduled activity, Smart Awards reserves the right to carry out additional or unannounced EQA audits where risk indicators, suspected malpractice or maladministration, complaints, or external notifications require further investigation. These may be conducted remotely or onsite, depending on the nature of the risk.

18.9 EQA activity provides centres with guidance, clarification, and support, while ensuring that assessment decisions remain valid, consistent, and compliant with Smart Awards requirements. The primary purpose of EQA is to monitor the effectiveness of internal quality assurance processes and maintain the integrity of certification.

18.10 The EQA cycle operates on an annual basis from April to March, with activity scheduled in line with centre risk rating and delivery profile.

18.11 The Smart Awards Quality team will arrange these activities with centres and detail the scope and remit of them.

18.12 Centres will be provided with feedback reports detailing the outcomes of these activities including imposing any sanctions and identifying good practices, along with any required actions. Please refer to Smart Awards [\[CASS Strategy Policy\]](#) and [\[Sanction Policy\]](#). Upon receipt of the EQA report the centre must complete any actions set by the agreed timescales, failure to adhere to this may result in the centre being put on temporary stop until agreed actions have been addressed. Smart Awards will send an initial email reminder with one further reminder confirming the latest submission date in which the information must be received.

18.13 The Centre has the right to appeal the final outcome of the EQA audit should they believe it is not accurate with the evidence they have provided.

18.14 Centres who are placed on temporary stop will have centre approval status withdrawn if no communication is made with Smart Awards within 12 months of the date.

18.15 For apprenticeship assessments, audit activity may include:

- review of gateway evidence
- observation of final or synoptic assessments
- review of independent assessor decisions
- confirmation of compliance with apprenticeship assessment plans

Centres must ensure that all apprenticeship assessment documentation is available for review.

19. Malpractice and Maladministration

19.1 Malpractice and maladministration are defined as any act, omission, or practice which results in non-compliance with Smart Awards requirements, regulatory obligations, or the requirements of a qualification or apprenticeship assessment.

19.2 Malpractice refers to any deliberate act or practice which compromises, or is likely to compromise, the integrity of assessment, the validity of results, or the award of a qualification or apprenticeship assessment. Maladministration refers to any unintentional act, omission, or failure to follow required processes which results in non-compliance.

19.3 This policy applies to all Smart Awards provision, including regulated and non-regulated qualifications and all apprenticeship assessment activity, including end-point assessment and reformed assessment models. It applies to centres, their staff, subcontractors, satellite sites, learners, employers, and any third parties involved in delivery, assessment, internal quality assurance, or administration.

19.4 Malpractice includes, but is not limited to, the falsification of assessment records or learner evidence, plagiarism, submission of work that is not the learner's own, and the misuse of artificial intelligence tools where their use is not permitted. This includes presenting AI-generated content as original work or failing to declare its use where required.

19.5 Malpractice also includes inappropriate assistance to learners, deliberate failure to follow assessment requirements or plans, claiming certification where requirements have not been met, impersonation, fraudulent activity, and any breach or compromise of assessment materials or assessment security.

19.6 In relation to apprenticeship assessment, malpractice includes assessing learners before gateway or readiness requirements have been met, failure to maintain independence where required, inappropriate involvement of delivery staff in final assessment decisions, failure to follow the published apprenticeship standard or assessment plan, and awarding outcomes where all required assessment components have not been completed.

19.7 Maladministration includes, but is not limited to, failure to follow registration, assessment, or certification procedures, inaccurate, incomplete, or misleading learner records, failure to carry out internal quality assurance processes, poor record keeping or data handling, and failure to follow published policies and procedures.

19.8 Centres must take all reasonable steps to prevent malpractice and maladministration and must ensure that all staff understand and comply with Smart Awards requirements. Centres must implement effective internal quality assurance and monitoring arrangements and maintain accurate, complete, and up-to-date records.

19.9 Centres must ensure that all assessment decisions are valid, reliable, and based on sufficient evidence. In relation to apprenticeship assessment, centres must ensure that assessment activity is conducted in line with the relevant apprenticeship standard and assessment plan, that gateway or readiness requirements have been met prior to assessment, and that independence requirements are maintained where applicable.

19.10 Centres remain fully responsible for the actions of their staff, subcontractors, satellite sites, and any third parties involved in delivery or assessment.

19.11 Centres must notify Smart Awards immediately, and no later than two working days, of any actual or suspected malpractice or maladministration, breach of assessment security, data breach, incorrect or invalid certification, or any incident that may adversely affect learners, assessment integrity, or compliance.

19.12 Centres must preserve all relevant evidence, must not take any action that may compromise an investigation, and must cooperate fully with Smart Awards and any relevant regulatory body.

19.13 Smart Awards may carry out an investigation directly or require the centre to conduct an investigation. Smart Awards will determine the scope and requirements of any investigation.

19.14 Centres must provide all requested information promptly, comply with any instructions issued by Smart Awards, and implement corrective and preventative actions within agreed timescales.

19.15 Where malpractice or maladministration is identified, Smart Awards may take action including invalidation of results or certification, requirement for reassessment, increased monitoring or audit activity, suspension of registration or certification activity, removal of Direct Claims Status, and suspension or withdrawal of centre or qualification approval.

19.16 Serious cases may be reported to regulators, employers, stakeholders, or other relevant authorities.

19.17 Centres must ensure that learners are not disadvantaged as a result of malpractice or maladministration where they are not at fault, which may include reassessment opportunities, review of assessment decisions, or transfer to another centre where appropriate.

19.18 Centres must notify Smart Awards immediately, and no later than **2 working days**, of becoming aware of any actual or suspected:

- malpractice or maladministration
- breach of assessment security
- data breach
- incorrect or invalid certification
- event that may adversely affect learners or qualification integrity

Centres must preserve all relevant evidence and fully cooperate with any investigation.

OPERATIONAL CHANGES

20. Alternative Site Locations

20.1. Centres may use alternative locations (known as satellite sites) for the delivery and assessment of our qualifications. This will depend on the type of centre and qualification(s) being offered.

20.2. A satellite site is defined as one which operates from within a different organisation and/or geography and is independently controlled and managed from the main.

20.3. In all instances where alternative locations are used, our quality assurance standards must continue to be maintained. A centre approval power point must be emailed to the quality team to request all new assessment sites. The centre that registers and certifies learners are responsible for them. This includes the management of all quality assurance, compliance and potential malpractice issues associated with these learners.

20.4. Any assessment site either main or satellite will be considered part of the main centre for approval and quality assurance purposes. The main centre must be prepared to accept full responsibility for ensuring the quality of the assessment and/or examination processes across all assessment sites. If one of the assessment sites fails to comply with the approval criteria, the approval status of the centre as a whole will be affected.

20.5. Centres must seek agreement/approval in advance from Smart Awards to operate a satellite site. Failure to inform Smart Awards of satellite arrangements may result in centre approval being suspended or withdrawn.

20.6. It is the responsibility of the Centre to monitor and quality assure the standard assessment decisions within the satellite site through rigorous internal quality assurance. Where internal quality assurance is devolved to the satellite site, systems must be in place for monitoring assessment and quality assurance decisions within the satellite centre through the lead Internal Quality Assurer.

20.7. Please note some qualifications can be completed in a live environment before this can happen the centre must provide Smart Awards evidence of written consent from the network asset owner via the Quartz web system. Please refer to individual qualification handbooks for guidance.

20.8 Centres must not subcontract, outsource, or permit any third party to deliver, assess, or quality assure Smart Awards qualifications, and/or apprenticeship assessments without prior written approval from Smart Awards.

20.9 Where approval is granted, the centre remains fully responsible for:

- quality assurance
- compliance
- assessment decisions
- actions of the subcontractor or satellite site

21. Cross Boarder Approval

21.1 In all circumstances where a centre seeks to operate across national borders, in order to deliver any aspect of any of our qualifications, they must seek prior approval from Smart Awards Quality team.

21.2 Please note, this does not apply to the United Kingdom e.g., if a centre in England intends to operate a centre in Scotland.

21.3 Smart Awards will treat each request on a case-by-case basis, based upon the details of the request and the capacity of the centre(s) in question, additional charges will apply.

22. Overseas Provision

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

22.2 In addition to section 5, and prior to submitting an application, non-UK-based centres, and UK based centres wishing to deliver qualifications overseas, 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.

22.3 Overseas centres and UK based centres which require an overseas EQA visit will be expected to pay the travel costs and subsistence for the EQA for each visit plus any additional EQA consultancy days required. Centres must ensure assessments are consistent in all language versions.

23. Mergers and Acquisitions

23.1 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.

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

23.3 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 process before beginning to advertise or run qualifications.

ISSUES, SANCTIONS AND CLOSURE

24. Cancellation of Orders

24.1 Learner registration will not usually be cancelled, or fees refunded, once processed unless to correct a genuine error. Another learner cannot replace an individual who was part of the original order. An administration fee may apply if the request to cancel an order is received more than 2 working days after the date of the original order. Smart Awards fees apply at the point of registration.

25. Removal of Centre Approval

25.1 Smart Awards may remove centre and/or qualification approval with written notice to the centre at any time. Reasons for this include, but are not limited to:

- if the centre has not complied with the terms and conditions, the approval criteria, or with any of our policies, regulations, requirements, or procedures.
- if there is confirmed centre malpractice.
- if there are major deficiencies in the assessment process and we reasonably believe that the centre can no longer assure the appropriate quality of assessment provision.
- where we are notified of any equivalent sanctions placed on a centre by another Awarding Organisation.
- if centre and/or qualification approval has been removed, centres must provide affected learners with the information or support considered to be reasonable, within a specified timeframe. In these instances, the Quality Team will advise centres of the process.

25.2 We may, however, decide not to withdraw approval immediately but to discuss the problem instead with the centre and develop appropriate actions and an agreed timescale to put the issues right. We will work with the centre to look at which criteria they are failing to meet and set specific actions to help them address these, incorporating an agreed review programme. Activities related to this ongoing development and review may be chargeable.

25.3 We may decide to suspend all or any centre activities (including the ability to register and certificate learners) for either a specified period or indefinitely. This may be while a situation is remedied, or to protect learners and/or ourselves. Centres have the right to appeal against removal or suspension of centre/qualification approval.

26. Centre Closure

26.1 If an organisation no longer wishes to operate as a Smart Awards centre, and/or can no longer meet our centre approval criteria, they should contact the Quality team who will provide the centre with the withdrawal form. Where possible. It is the obligation of the centre to ensure they provide the following information to the Quality team:

- details of the arrangements in place for learner portfolio, learner records, internal verification records and assessments to be passed on or stored securely by the governing centre. The date the centre proposes to close or withdraw from delivering our qualifications.
- details of the arrangements that will be in place for registered learners that have not yet completed including any transitional arrangements that will be in place with the governing centre.

26.2 Centres must have contingency arrangements in place to protect learners in the event of:

- disruption to delivery

- loss of staff or resources
- sanctions or suspension
- withdrawal of centre approval
- centre closure

These arrangements must ensure:

- learners can continue or complete their qualification
- learner records and evidence are securely maintained and transferable
- clear communication is provided to learners

26.3 Centres must cooperate fully with Smart Awards in implementing learner protection or transfer arrangements where required.

FINANCIAL AND SUPPORT

27 Fees

27.1 Smart Awards charges fees based on the following:

- A centre application fee
- An individual learner fee for registration and certification.
- Quality Assurance audit fee

27.2 The Centre application fee is a one-off fee, payable at the point of application. The learner fee is payable at the point of registration not certification and is independent of learner achievement outcomes. Quality Assurance audit fee's are payable on the completion of an audit.

27.3 Our fees are reviewed annually and are available in the fees and charges section of our website. Please refer to the [\[Fees\]](#) document for more information.

27.4 Smart Awards charges an annual fee for both planned audits conducted. The centre is subject to additional fees if they request additional advisory visits.

28. Service Level Agreement

28.1 Smart Awards is committed to openness and transparency in all its work and to improving the products and services we provide for our customers and stakeholders. We aim to provide quality products and services to our customers.

28.2 Smart Awards is aware that establishing and maintaining effective communication with centres are essential in meeting company objectives and by communicating and cooperating with qualification regulators we help secure standards and protect learners.

28.3 Our aim is to:

- Offer qualifications of a high standard that reflect the skills and needs of the industry.
- Monitor and support Smart Awards centres in the delivery of Smart Awards qualifications.
- Promote awareness of Smart Awards.
- Offer anyone involved with us appropriate support, information and resources.
- Certificate learners within certificate turnaround times.

28.4 Although the detailed discussion is limited to the use of email/electronic communications, the general principles underlying all parts of our service level agreement also apply to written/telephone, photocopies, printers/fax, scanners/Internet/intranet/Instant messaging/social media.

28.5 There are various laws relating to written communication, which equally applies to electronic messages, including copyright, obscenity, fraudulent misrepresentation, freedom of information act and wrongful discrimination. They apply to all resources provided for all our approved centres

and learners. To comply with the GDPR, consent is obtained from individuals to use their personal data for the purpose of communication. They are also made aware that they may withdraw their consent at any time.

Service	Service Level Agreement (working days)
E - Certification	1 working day from the date the claim is submitted and/or approved on SAMS, whichever is the latest.
Replacement E - Certificates	5 working days from the date the claim is submitted.
Reasonable adjustment and special consideration Requests	5 working days from receipt of the request
Assessor /IQA approval applications	10 working days from receipt of the application
Site approval applications	Date of onsite visit agreed 10 working days from receipt of the application
Qualification approval applications	10 working days from receipt of the application
Appeals, Complaints, Malpractice	SLAs are provided within each policy document.
Centre enquiries	No later than 5 working days from receipt for correspondence sent via email to: info@smartawards.co.uk Quality@smartawards.co.uk No later than 10 working days from receipt for any other correspondence and correspondence sent via post.
CASS (EQA) Audit Report	10 working days from the date of the CASS EQA Audit

29. Questions/Feedback/Complaints/Appeals

29.1 Smart Awards take all complaints and appeals seriously and have a clear process for dealing with them. Centres are expected to have their own complaints and appeals procedures in place, which should be made available to learners. If a learner wishes to make a complaint or appeal to us, they should follow our procedures, which are outlined in our [\[Complaints\]](#) and [\[Appeals Policy\]](#).

29.2 Centre Complaints - In many cases Smart Awards will be able to resolve any questions/queries swiftly (within 5 working days). If a complaint cannot be resolved immediately and requires to be formally addressed by Smart Awards the complaint process applies.

29.3 Centres are encouraged to feedback on our products and services to the quality team at quality@smartawards.co.uk

DOCUMENT CONTROL

30. Review Of This Policy

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