



Centre Handbook

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1. Introduction

The Centre Handbook provides approved centres with helpful information and guidance and we recommend that centre staff are familiar with its contents. Centres wishing to offer our qualifications need to complete our centre approval process. Further details on how to become an approved centre are available on the VTCT website.

To keep this document short for the ease of centres, the Centre Handbook will signpost to other policies, procedures and/or documents where appropriate which will give further information. The centre handbook sets out the different stages of operating as a VTCT centre with administrative arrangements.

If you require any further information, please contact our Customer Support Team on 023 8068 4500 or customersupport@vtct.org.uk.

2. Approval

Before a centre can begin offering and delivering VTCT qualifications they need to be approved by us for the qualification, likewise approved centres may need to add qualifications to their approved provision after their initial approval. The following sections give details on how to gain approval.

2.1. Centre approval

Centres must complete the VTCT approval process to be able to offer VTCT qualifications. The approval process may include a visit to the centre to ensure that the centre meets all of VTCT's requirements.

More information on gaining centre approval is available on the 'Become a centre' page on the VTCT website.

2.2. Site approval

Centre approval will include approval for the centre's main site, any additional sites will need to seek approval through the site approval process. The centre will need to complete a site approval application per additional site.

The site approval application is available to download and complete from the VTCT website.

2.3. Qualification approval

Your centre/site will have been given approval for a number of qualifications as part the initial approval process. A centre/site is able to request for additional qualifications to be added to their provision by using one other the following options:

- Where a centre is already approved for a sector, adding additional qualifications from that sector can be requested during an EQA visit or by emailing qualityassurance@vtct.org.uk. The request will be reviewed and qualification certificates may need to be seen before approval can be given.
- If a centre wants to add a new qualification outside of their current approved sector(s), the centre will need to complete an additional sector application form, available on the VTCT website behind the centre login.

Note on replacement qualifications: When VTCT publishes a replacement qualification for a qualification which a centre/site is already approved, the centre will be automatically approved to offer the replacement qualification.

3. Enrolment and registration

3.1. Learner enrolment and induction

Centres need to ensure that learners understand their and the centre's responsibilities when undertaking any course. As good practice, centres should:

- provide a learning contract or agreement, between the centre and the learner;
- provide information and guidance on the qualification, including how it will be delivered;
- provide access to centre's complaints and appeals policies (e.g. link on website/intranet or hard copy);
- identify learners who need reasonable adjustments applied and or requested;
- identify whether recognition of prior learning (RPL), exemption and/or equivalence can be applied;
- have learners complete an induction checklist evidencing areas covered.

Note on reasonable adjustments: VTCT's policy, guidance and forms for Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations are available on the VTCT website.

Note on RPL, exemption and equivalence: VTCT's guidance for applying and documenting RPL, exemption and equivalence is available on the VTCT website.

3.2. How to register learners

The centre's examinations officers will need to submit registrations using Linx2Online. Details of how to register learners and help on associated matters are given in the FAQs section the VTCT website

Note: To use Linx2Online, examinations officers will need to have a secure login (see section **Error! Reference source not found.** for details on how to request a login).

8-week rule: Registrations must be made for learners within 8 weeks of starting their qualification

3.3. After registration

After registrations are made, exams officers will then be able to schedule exams from the following day for those learners.

After registrations are made on a qualification which needs to be external quality assured, VTCT will allocate an EQA to the centre. Registrations should be made as soon as possible such that the centre can benefit from an EQA's support and guidance. Once an EQA has been allocated, the EQA will contact the centre to introduce themselves and discuss arrangements for a visit.

Note: VTCT may be unable to accept summative assessments undertaken by learners before they are registered.

4. Qualification delivery

All VTCT qualifications are assessed through external and/or internal assessment, the following sub-sections give details on the processes around assessment. The qualification specification and/or record of assessment book give details of the external and internal assessment requirements for each qualification.

Note: You can view all qualification specifications and record of assessment books on the VTCT website.

4.1. Language of the assessment

VTCT qualifications will normally be assessed in English, however, if a centre is interested in assessing a VTCT qualification in a language other than English, please submit your request to exams@vtct.org.uk for your request to be considered.

Where a qualification is assessed in a language other than English, VTCT will clearly identify any certificate with 'The assessment for this qualification has been undertaken in the language of XX'.

4.2. External assessment

Many of VTCT's qualifications are partly or entirely assessed through external assessment (examination papers). For details on how external assessment is set, marked and moderated, please refer to the qualification specification and/or record of assessment book, which are available to view on the VTCT website.

VTCT supply external assessment to centres securely within Linx2Achieve through e-testing and/or paper assessment available to download.

Please also see the next section for 'Instructions for Conducting Examinations'.

Note: For details on how to gain access to Linx2Achieve please refer to section 6.2.

4.3. Instructions for conducting examinations

All external assessment (examinations) must be administered in accordance with either VTCT's or JCQ's Instructions for Conducting Examinations. Centres must ensure that this guidance is available to, and understood by, the centre's invigilators.

You can view VTCT's Instructions for Conducting Examinations on the VTCT website.

4.4. Internal assessment

Internal assessment is marked and internally quality assured by the centre to clearly demonstrate achievement of the learning outcomes. Internal assessment will either be externally moderated by or externally quality assured by VTCT.

For more information on how the internal assessment will be marked, moderated and/or externally quality assured please refer to the qualification specification or record of assessment book for the qualification, which is available to view on the VTCT website.



4.5. Requirements for staff (Teachers, Assessors, IQAs)

Centres are required to have appropriately qualified and occupationally competent staff as required to deliver the qualification. Staff may also be required to complete CPD.

The requirements for a qualification will be given in one of the following documents:

- the qualification specification;
- the assessment strategy; or
- Section 10 of VTCT's approval criteria (where there is no qualification specification or assessment strategy for the qualification).

Qualification specifications and assessment strategies for VTCT qualifications as well as the Approval criteria are available to view on the VTCT website.

4.6. External quality assurance visits

4.6.1. Verified qualifications (VRQs, NVQs and SVQs)

VTCT will allocate an External Quality Assurer (EQA) to the centre to arrange and conduct external quality assurance visits to the centre. Please note that VTCT is unable to process certificates until an external quality assurance visit for a qualification has occurred.

4.6.2. Technical Qualifications

VTCT will allocate an External Quality Assurer (EQA) to the centre to arrange and conduct two external quality assurance visits to the centre. One will be for Unit Graded Assessment and one will be for Synoptic Assessment. Please note that VTCT is unable to process certificates until an external quality assurance visit for a qualification has occurred.

4.6.3. Workplace Core Skills

VTCT will plan and allocate dedicated centre monitoring visits for centres running Workplace Core Skills qualifications to ensure that the external quality assurance of Workplace Core Skills occurs at centres delivering the qualification. These centre monitoring visits will be in addition to the monitoring visits that the EQA conducts to externally quality assure other VTCT qualifications that the provider delivers.

After an external quality assurance visit, direct claims status for eligible qualifications will be considered where the centre's internal quality assurance processes are proven to be robust and effective and where VTCT has been able to conduct sufficient sampling.

Note: Cancellation of an agreed and planned visit with less than 14 days' notice will incur a fee as stated in our service fees document.

4.7. Spot check visits

VTCT plans and conducts announced and unannounced spot checks to centres. These visits do not carry an additional fee. Centres must provide VTCT, upon request, with access to premises, staff, learners and records



relating to learner assessment, achievement and internal quality assurance. A centre that fails to provide access will be sanctioned by VTCT.

4.8. Regulator monitoring visits

Regulators of qualifications (Ofqual, Qualifications Wales, CCEA, and SQA Accreditation) may request access to locations and records for monitoring purposes. From time to time, regulators will conduct monitoring visits to randomly selected approved centres. Selected centres will be contacted in advance. Centres are required to ensure that all learner portfolios are available for inspection on the day of the monitoring visit. Centres are asked to cooperate fully with the regulator's officers who will be auditing VTCT's quality assurance processes.

5. Certification

5.1. How to claim certificates

Centres will need to submit certification claims using Linx2Online. Valid claims for qualifications which have direct claims status approved at the centre will be processed and certificates dispatched. Alternatively, where direct claims status is not approved the certificate claims will require approval by the centre's allocated External Quality Assurer before the claims can be processed and certificates dispatched.

5.2. Certification restrictions for SVQs and Workplace Core Skills (10-week rule)

The 10-week rule is an SQA Accreditation directive that applies to SVQs and Workplace Core Skills Units only. The 10-week rule requires learners seeking certification for a full SVQ or a Workplace Core Skill Unit to be registered for at least 10 weeks before a claim for certification is made.

5.3. Certification requirements for First Aid qualifications

To comply with Health and Safety Executive requirements, certificate claims for First Aid qualifications must record the date that the student completed the course, not the date the certificate is claimed. It is the responsibility of centres to provide the correct date and EQAs will conduct sample checks to ensure adherence to this rule.

5.4. Retention and release of learner work

VTCT requires the following, as a minimum, to be retained for 3 academic years in an electronic or paper format.

- lists of all learners registered with the awarding organisation for each qualification offered to include: learner name; date of birth; contact address; workplace address and contact details; Assessor(s) name; IQA(s) name; and registration date with VTCT;
- learner assessment records detailing: who assessed what and when; the assessment decision; the assessment methods used for each unit or component; and the location of the supporting evidence;
- records of internal quality assurance activity detailing: who internally quality assured what and when; details of the sample selected and its rationale; records of IQA standardisation meetings; Assessor and IQA competence records; monitoring records of Assessor / IQA progress toward achievement of the relevant Assessor and IQA qualifications; and requirements for the retention of learner evidence;

- records of certificates claimed including unit certificates, who claimed the certificate and when it was issued to the learner;
- all examination papers, seating plans and marking sheets must be securely stored for three years to allow for external audit and/or appeals;
- records of requests and decisions for reasonable adjustments and special considerations, including any supporting evidence and relevant documentation received from VTCT.

Portfolios for learners who have completed before the external quality assurance has occurred must be made available to the EQA for sampling at the next EQA visit. Following the visit reasonable effort must be made for portfolios to be returned to the learners; there is no requirement for them to be retained by the centre.

Where a centre has direct claims status for a qualification, the certificate claim will be automatically accepted and processed, however centres are required to retain all learner portfolios for the EQA to sample during the next visit following any direct claims made unless written agreement has been confirmed with the EQA that portfolios can be returned to learners.

Note regarding Linx2Record (VTCT's e-portfolio): Learners should make sure that they have downloaded their File Store. The learner video guides contain instructions on how to do this. Once the File Store has been downloaded the learner should be deactivated. The centre users video guides section contain instructions on how to do this. The learner and centre video guides are available to view behind the centre login page on the VTCT website.

6. Administrative arrangements

6.1. Fees, costs and annual minimum spend

VTCT advertises all fees and costs in the Course Prospectus and fees lists, these are available to view via the VTCT website. Approved centres are required to meet VTCT's annual minimum spend requirement, which is set per VTCT financial year (1st August to 31st July). Centres that have been approved after 1st August will not be subject to the charge for the remainder of that financial year (up until 31st July).

6.2. Accessing VTCT's systems

Exams Officers and other staff will need a secure login to be able to access the following VTCT systems. A secure login is needed to:

- Make registrations and certificate claims;
- Access assessment and assignment briefs;
- Schedule exams and download paper exam papers through e-testing;
- Access VTCT's e-portfolio system.

Centre staff can request a secure login by emailing linx2help@vtct.org.uk.

Note: A secure login is not needed to be able to order Record of Assessment Books, these can be ordered using the general access login provided as part of the approval confirmation.



6.3. Updating your details (Inc. changing address)

When a centre's details change, they can inform VTCT of the new details by completing and returning a 'Centre Update Form' which is available on the VTCT website.

6.4. Closing your centre account

Should you wish to close your centre account with VTCT, please let us know by emailing your request to qualityassurance@vtct.org.uk. You will need to give at least 1 months' notice as set out in the centre agreement

6.5. Transferring centre accountability (Inc. mergers)

Centre's which are planning or have changed accountability or merged, must notify VTCT by either emailing qualityassurance@vtct.org.uk or in writing on signed letterhead. VTCT will consider transfers of centre accountability on a case-by-case basis and will inform of the course of action that VTCT will take.



Document amendment history page

Version	Document Owner	Issue Date	Changes	Role
v1		01/03/2012	First published	Quality Assurance Supervisor
v2		01/11/2013	Policy simplified and shortened.	Quality Assurance Supervisor
v3		01/02/2014	Updated with new branding	Quality Assurance Supervisor
v4		01/02/2015	Sections removed to create new documents for Enquiries and Appeals, Sampling Strategy, Sanctions Policy, and Approved Centre Criteria. Added information on international centre, record and retention requirements, cancelled centre visits, linx2systems and Glossary	Quality Assurance Supervisor
v5		01/04/2016	Revision of content and layout, the following sections have been removed to create new documents: Malpractice and Maladministration and Occupational Competence Guidelines.	Quality Assurance Supervisor
v6	Quality and Processing Manager	13/04/2017	Updated with new branding.	Quality Assurance Supervisor
v6.1	Quality and Processing Manager	13/04/2017	Added appendix for revisions to this document.	Quality Assurance Supervisor
v7	Quality and Processing Manager	03/08/2017	Updated links and corrected wording.	Quality Assurance Supervisor
v8	Quality and Processing Manager	12/02/2018	Formatted and updated branding	Qualification Administrator
v9	Quality Manager	06/03/2019	Formatted and updated branding	Compliance Manager
V10	Head of Quality	17/07/2019	Additional detail in section 4.6	Compliance Manager



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Quality and Processing Manager	Reviewed

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