

Edexcel QCF NVQs and competence-based qualifications - Quality Assurance

This communication sets out the developments for Edexcel NVQs, the implementation of the Qualification and Credit Framework (QCF) and the changes to the external quality assurance model for QCF NVQs and competence-based qualifications during 2010, following changes to the regulatory requirements.

For the purpose of this document, QCF NVQs and QCF competence-based qualifications will be referred to collectively as QCF NVQs.

Edexcel wishes to make the transition for centres from NQF NVQs to QCF NVQs as smooth and seamless as possible, whilst maintaining the highest levels of customer service.

The changes to the external quality assurance model have been made with the support of the regulator, Ofqual, and in response to the call from centres to reduce the volume of interaction caused by repeated visits by NVQ external verifiers.

The revised external quality assurance model places emphasis on working collaboratively with centres to improve the quality management of programme delivery and will take effect from September 1st 2010.

Edexcel QCF Timescales

- The QCF is expected to be fully operational by 1st January 2011 by which time Edexcel NQF NVQs will have been migrated across as QCF NVQs
- The timelines and dates for the accreditation of the QCF NVQs are being managed by the individual SSCs
- Edexcel NQF NVQs will not have an accredited end date beyond 31st December 2010 - certification claims may be made after this, up to the certification end date
- Any new accreditations from 1st January 2011 will have to be within the QCF.

The Role of the Centre Quality Nominee

The 'Regulatory arrangements for the Qualifications and Credit Framework' require Edexcel to ***'put in place procedures that must ensure each centre has arrangements to identify a single named point of accountability for the quality assurance and management for the assessment of units and qualifications'*** - the centre Quality Nominee.

Edexcel holds the details for each centre Quality Nominee on its systems. These details are accessible to centres and must be kept up to date by the centre via the secure portal, Edexcel Online.

The Quality Nominee is integral to the quality assurance model for Edexcel QCF NVQs and is the principal point of contact for all Edexcel personnel, centre Quality Reviewers and Standards Verifiers.

It is essential that the Quality Nominee is in a position of influence in the centre and is able to provide a means of communication between key centre personnel and Edexcel Centre Quality Reviewers and Standards Verifiers.

The centre Quality Nominee is the key to the effective interaction between the centre and Edexcel in order to ensure the safe and timely certification of QCF NVQ candidates.

Quality Assurance of Edexcel QCF NVQs

- The majority of SSCs have published or intend to publish overarching assessment strategies for QCF NVQs
- These assessment strategies specify that assessors and verifiers for QCF NVQs are qualified to perform their roles as assessors and verifiers and are suitably occupationally competent
- As part of the Centre Recognition Process, Edexcel will need to ensure that centres meet the requirements for the delivery of QCF NVQs
- For the internal quality assurance process, centres will need to ensure that they employ assessors and verifiers that meet these requirements and that internal verification procedures are robust
- As part of the external quality assurance process, Edexcel will need to ensure that centres meet the requirements for internal quality assurance.

The Quality Assurance Model

Quality review and development

- Centres offering Edexcel QCF NVQs will receive an annual visit for 'Quality Review and Development' by an Edexcel 'Centre Quality Reviewer'
- The annual visit by a single Centre Quality Reviewer will address the management of all the QCF NVQs approved at the centre
- This visit will focus on building a partnership to help centres review and develop the quality management of their Edexcel programme provision
- The process will place an emphasis on supporting centres at management level to enhance and improve their internal quality assurance processes and programme delivery through development
- The review will be based on a set of 'Quality Objectives' that are common to the effective management of the delivery of all Edexcel QCF qualifications

Standards Verification

- In addition, centres will also receive a separate annual visit by sector-specific and occupationally competent 'Standards Verifiers' for each QCF NVQ sector who will sample candidates' work in the usual way
- The Standards Verifier will review evidence to ensure that the National Occupational Standards for assessment, internal verification and for the occupational sector are met
- Standards Verifiers will provide advice, support and guidance to the centre on best practice for implementation of assessment and internal verification and for the achievement of the National Occupational Standards for the occupational sector
- Recommendation for certification or otherwise for the respective occupational sectors will be made by the Standards Verifier
- In order for certification to be released, confirmation is required that the following are met:

1. the Quality Objectives for the effective management of the delivery of all Edexcel QCF qualifications, in particular the Quality Objective for internal verification

and

2. the National Occupational Standards for assessment, verification and for the specific occupational sector.

Certification and Registration

Edexcel Standards Verifiers will provide support, advice and guidance to centres to achieve Direct Claims Status (DCS). Edexcel will maintain the integrity of the QCF NVQs through ensuring that the awarding of these qualifications is secure. Where there are quality issues identified in the delivery of programmes, Edexcel will exercise the right to:

- direct centres to take actions
- limit or suspend certification
- suspend registration.

The approach of Edexcel in such circumstances is to work with the centre to overcome the problems identified. If additional training is required, Edexcel will aim to secure the appropriate expertise to provide this.

Regional Quality Managers

Edexcel has a team of 13 regionally based BTEC Regional Quality Managers. One of the roles of the BTEC Regional Quality Managers is to support centres through intervention at senior management level within the centre, when there are significant quality issues identified in the delivery of qualifications. The BTEC Quality Manager for the region in which a centre falls will make such an intervention where a centre repeatedly:

- does not meet National Occupational Standards, as revealed by sampling
- does not have in place Quality Measures to secure the Quality Objectives that form the basis of centre Quality Review and Development.

NVQ Deliver and Assessment Manager - Peter Jackson. March 2010.