

## **REGULATED QUALIFICATION FRAMEWORK (RQF) GUIDE FOR AWARDING ORGANISATIONS**

### **GUIDANCE FOR CENTRES AND CANDIDATES 2024**



These guidance notes can be downloaded from our website at [www.irr.v.net](http://www.irr.v.net)

## Contents

1. Introduction
2. What are RQF units?
3. Centre recognition
4. Candidate registration
5. Initial assessment
6. Candidate Induction
7. The assessment process
8. Responsibilities of the assessor
9. Requirements for an assessor
10. Assessment decisions
11. Management of assessment/candidate records  
& counter signing
12. Management of assessor/Internal Quality Assurer register
13. Diversity/Safeguarding/Prevent
14. Special assessment arrangements
15. Portfolio of Evidence
16. Responsibilities of the Internal Quality Assurer
17. Requirements for an Internal Quality Assurer
18. Responsibilities of the External Quality Assurer
19. Requirements for an External Quality Assurer
20. Certification
21. Replacement certificates
22. Direct Claim Status
23. Malpractice
24. Conflict of interest
25. Review and appeals
26. Artificial Intelligence
27. Tariff of sanctions
28. IRRV Customer Service

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This guidance document is designed for organisations that are, or are seeking to become, approved assessment centres to deliver IRRV RQF units. This document should be read in conjunction with all other IRRV policy documents which are available from the IRRV website ([www.irrv.net](http://www.irrv.net)) and contain the specific assessment requirements and quality assurance arrangements for the qualifications.

The following bodies are mentioned in this document and have key roles in the development, regulation and monitoring of RQF units.

### Relevant government authorities

Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation  
[www.ofqual.gov.uk/](http://www.ofqual.gov.uk/)

Wales  
<http://qualificationswales.org/?lang=en>

The IRRV qualifications and the administration of the qualifications comply with the principles of:

- fitness for purpose;
- quality assurance and quality control;
- workplace assessment and simulation where appropriate; and
- the competence and development of assessors, verifiers.

## Awarding Organisations

The IRRV is an approved awarding organisation for RQF units. To become an awarding organisation it must be approved by the regulatory authorities. To gain approval, the organisation must demonstrate that it is capable of developing and delivering qualifications to the required standard. Once approved, awarding organisations are regularly audited to ensure that they continue to comply with the statutory regulations.

## 2. What are RQF Units?

RQF units are work-related, competence or knowledge units. To achieve a RQF unit an individual must show that they can perform a range of tasks competently and in line with the standards over a period of time.

RQF units recognise the ability to gain and, where relevant, apply a range of knowledge, skills and understanding.

A qualification is made up of one or more units. Units can be separately certificated. For example, the Welfare Benefits and Local Taxation qualifications comprise mandatory and optional units. An individual must achieve the specified number of units in order to gain a full qualification.

## Learning outcomes

Each unit is made up of:

Learning outcomes that:

- set out what a learner is expected to know, understand or be able to do as the result of a process of learning
- are clear and coherent, and expressed in language that is understandable by the learners for whom the unit is intended or by an assessor where the learners themselves are not able to understand the learning outcomes
- make sense to a learner both before a unit is offered and after the learning outcomes have been achieved
- are capable of assessment and, in conjunction with the **assessment criteria** related to that outcome, set a clear assessment standard for the unit.

## Assessment criteria

All units contain assessment criteria that:

- specify the standard a learner is expected to meet to demonstrate that the learning outcomes of that unit have been achieved
- relate to an individual learning outcome in language consistent with it
- are sufficiently detailed to support reliable, valid and consistent

judgements that a learning outcome has been achieved, without creating an undue assessment burden for learners or assessors

### **3. CENTRE RECOGNITION AND APPROVAL (GENERAL REQUIREMENTS OF CENTRES)**

1. All approved centres must provide a single named point of accountability for the quality assurance and management for the assessment of units and qualifications
2. All approved centres must devise approved procedures for holding and transmitting securely details of assessment outcomes to the awarding organisation
3. All approved centres must have staff, resources and systems necessary to support the assessment of units and the award, accumulation and transfer of credits and, where necessary, the recording of exemptions
4. Centres must have arrangements in place to obtain on behalf of its learners a unique learner number (ULN) and a learner record, unless a learner chooses not to have one
5. Where learner consent is given the centre must use access to the record of the learner's previous achievements in their learner record to ensure that opportunities for credit transfer and exemption are maximised
6. A centre must have administrative systems in place to track the progress of learners towards their target awards
7. Centres must adhere to the Awarding Organisation Recognition of Prior Learning policy and procedures and ensure that all learners are aware of Recognition of Prior Learning policy.
8. A centre must document the respective roles and responsibilities of each partner where a centre is a partnership arrangement between organisations
9. If the Assessment centre decides to withdraw from the qualification they should give the IRRV at least 2 months notice.
10. A centre must have all centre policies up to date and readily available.
11. In the event of an assessment centre withdrawing from the qualification the assessment centre must protect its registered Learners, by part refunding or finding another assessment centre that will complete the assessment of the Learners, with no extra fee chargeable to the learner.
12. Once the IRRV has received written notice that an assessment centre will withdraw, an IRRV representative will visit the centre (withdrawal visit) to provide approval for any remaining certification or oversee all documentation regarding the transfer to another centre of all current learners. A written record of the visit will be kept on IRRV systems, and will be sent to the current and new assessment centre.
13. A centre must agree to provide the awarding organisation and the qualifications

regulators with access to premises, people and records, and to cooperate with the awarding organisation's monitoring activities.

### **For competence based assessments**

Organisations seeking to register and assess candidates for RQF units must be approved by an accredited awarding organisation. For Welfare Benefits and Local Taxation qualifications, the awarding organisation is the IRRV.

Assessment centres may be a single organisation, a partnership between two organisations (e.g. two local authorities, a local authority and a college, a local authority and a training provider) or a consortium made up of several organisations (e.g a group of neighbouring local authorities).

To gain approval, centres must meet criteria set by the awarding body in relation to:

- the provision of adequate physical and staff resources
- appropriate management information systems
- effective assessment and quality assurance procedures

In cases where the centre is made up of more than one organisation, the application for approval must make it clear how the centre will operate in terms of:

- lines of responsibility
- methods of communication
- management of the assessment and quality assurance process.

The application for centre approval must be made on the IRRV centre approval form and submitted with the current centre approval fee. The approval form, notes for completion and fee details are available to download from the IRRV website ([www.irrv.net](http://www.irrv.net)).

When a centre submits an application for approval, an IRRV External Quality Assurer is appointed to conduct an approval visit to ensure that the appropriate systems, resources and quality assurance procedures are in place to support to delivery of the RQF units. The External Quality Assurer submits a report of the visit to the IRRV which is considered by the Qualifications Management Board (QMB). The Board may decide to grant approval or to seek further information in support of the application. Approval is only granted when the centre has provided sufficient evidence that all of the centre approval criteria have been met.

A centre may appeal against a centre approval or reapproval decision. See IRRV review and appeals procedure available from the Institute's website ([www.irrv.net](http://www.irrv.net)).

## **4. CANDIDATE REGISTRATION**

Once a centre is approved and has enrolled candidates on a RQF qualification, individuals are registered with the IRRV on-line at [www.irrv.net](http://www.irrv.net). Each individual is given a unique candidate number. Registered learners are granted the relevant category of IRRV membership.

## 5. ENROLMENTS OF CANDIDATES

All prospective learners must undergo initial assessment by the centre before embarking on the qualification.

The process starts with the learner and his/her assessor looking at the evidence the candidate already has and deciding how closely that evidence matches the occupational standards, what additional evidence is required for each unit, and when assessments could realistically take place. In some cases, the result of the initial assessment is that the candidate's work role will not provide them with the opportunity to gather the evidence required to demonstrate competence and a different qualification or programme of training might need to be agreed.

## 6. CANDIDATE INDUCTION AND PRE-EXIT GUIDANCE

Once it has been established that the IRRV qualifications are suitable for the learner, s/he must be inducted by the centre on all aspects of the assessment process, including methods for collecting and presenting evidence. Candidates should also be given copies of the centre's appeals procedure and its policy on equal opportunities.

It is at the induction stage that candidate information is normally collected by the centre for its internal records and completion of centre registration forms.

## 7. THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS

The language of all assessments is English. Welsh may also be used by arrangement

RQF assessment requires an assessor to make a judgement on the occupational competence of a candidate using evidence of occupational performance. The occupational standards and evidence specification provided by the Awarding Body set out the scope of the assessment and indicate the minimum amount of evidence that must be provided by the candidate to demonstrate competence.

Competence based RQF units are essentially based on the assessment of activity. However, where this is not available it may be supplemented by evidence from other sources.

Candidates can provide a variety of evidence to demonstrate occupational competence including:

### **Evidence of performance at work**

Workplace evidence forms the main basis of assessment. Written or verbal statements from of a suitable third party (e.g. a line manager) who has witnessed the candidate's performance may also be submitted as evidence if the testimony relates directly to the standards.

### **Documentation produced at work**

In occupations such as Housing and Council Tax Benefits and Local Taxation, documentation is likely to provide a substantial amount of additional performance evidence. Centres and candidates must ensure that, under the Data Protection Act, personal details do not appear on items of evidence contained in a candidate's portfolio.

### **Simulation**

Simulations can be used to provide additional evidence of competence or as a substitute for evidence that is not readily available from day-to-day workplace activities. Simulations could take the form of:

**IRR V The Professional Body for Local Taxation, Benefits and Valuation 167 – 169**  
**Great Portland Street, 5th Floor, London. W1W 5PF Web: [www.irrv.net](http://www.irrv.net)**



- Case studies
- Projects or assignments to gather evidence to solve functional problems.
- Exercises in carrying out job functions
- Role play exercises

The principles for simulated workplace assessment are that:

- All simulations must clearly identify the aspects of the qualification which are being assessed
- The success of the candidate in the simulation will be assessed against the performance criteria, and knowledge requirements identified within the Standards
- Where applicable computerised systems used in simulations may allow the candidate to fulfil the requirements of performance.
- The conditions under which the simulation is carried out should resemble the workplace as closely as possible.

### **Assignments/Projects**

Centres may wish to devise assignments or projects in order to obtain alternative or additional evidence of candidates' knowledge and understanding. Assignments or projects must contain the following information for candidates:

- The theme or purpose
- Unit it covers/refers to
- Clear instructions on work to be undertaken and the length/format/presentation required.
- Date of completion
- Criteria for successful completion.

### **Past achievements/experiences, e.g. letters of endorsement; past certificates.**

Evidence of prior learning, achievement or experience may be accepted for assessment, if it relates directly to the standards and demonstrates current competence.

### **Oral or written questioning.**

In some cases, knowledge and understanding may be inferred through performance, and this should always be the preferred form of evidence. In others, performance evidence alone may not be sufficient and candidates' knowledge and understanding will need to be assessed using a different method. For example, the assessor may use oral or written questioning to obtain further evidence of the knowledge and understanding. The assessor should ensure that a written record is kept of oral questions used as part of the assessment.

Evidence may be common to a number of units or elements. The candidate should be advised to keep the volume of evidence to a minimum by cross referencing.

Candidates are expected to provide evidence from a variety of sources for each unit, over time, which demonstrates their competence against the Standards.

IRR V will recognise certificates of unit credit issued by other awarding organisations where the units form part of the qualification. (See IRR V Credit Accumulations and Transfer Policy)

## 8. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE ASSESSOR

A RQF unit assessor is responsible for:

- Assessing evidence of ongoing learning and achievements
- Assessing any relevant candidate evidence of prior learning and achievements. This is referred to as Recognition of Prior Learning. (See RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING policy) .
- Keeping accurate records of the achievements of candidates and notifying the candidate and the Awarding organisation when each unit of competence has been achieved
- Notifying and guiding a candidate where evidence is insufficient for the person to be judged as competent.
- Taking part in all approved centre activities concerned with the verification of assessment standards.

## 9. REQUIREMENTS FOR AN ASSESSOR

In order to become an assessor, a person must:

- have a thorough understanding of the national occupational standards for the occupational area concerned, and the ability to interpret the standards within the working environment;
- have relevant, credible and sufficient occupational experience, including understanding of current and emerging practice, issues and legislative requirements in the occupational area concerned;
- hold a relevant vocational/professional award or other recognised evidence of occupational competence at least one level above that of the qualification being assessed or verified;
- have knowledge and experience of the relevant operational processes as required by the awarding body for the qualification concerned;
- have good interpersonal skills, including those required for effective communication within the role;
- hold the Assessor qualification, or be committed to obtaining it within the timescale the regulatory authorities prescribe;
- have a commitment to their own continuing professional development.

All Welfare Benefits and Local Taxation RQF assessors must be approved and registered by the IRRV. Assessor registration forms may be downloaded from the IRRV website ([www.irrv.net](http://www.irrv.net)).

## 10. ASSESSMENT DECISIONS

In making an assessment decision, the assessor must decide whether the evidence is:

- Valid - does the evidence relate directly to the standards and have all of the performance and knowledge and understanding criteria been covered?
- Authentic – is it the candidate's own work?
- Current – does the evidence reflect current working practices and procedures?
- Sufficient – does the evidence demonstrate that a candidate has, over time, fully satisfied the requirements of the unit(s) being assessed?

An assessment decision will be either that a candidate is competent or not yet competent. Candidates should receive feed back from their assessor on all assessment decisions and their assessment plan should be reviewed and revised accordingly by mutual agreement.

**IRRV The Professional Body for Local Taxation, Benefits and Valuation 167 – 169** 10  
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**Assessment decisions must be subject to internal (ie centre-focused) standardisation – see Sections 12 and 17 below.**

## **11. MANAGEMENT OF ASSESSMENT AND CANDIDATE RECORDS & COUNTER SIGNING; CENTRE STANDARDISATION OF ASSESSMENT DECISIONS**

Centres must establish and maintain systems for recording assessment decisions which are reliable and auditable.

Candidate records must include:

- candidate name
- date of birth
- contact address
- workplace address and contact details
- assessor(s) name
- Internal Quality Assurer(s) name
- date of registration with the awarding organisation.

When a candidate assessment takes place, the centre must record the name of the assessor, the type of assessment, the date, time and location of the assessment. The assessment record must be signed by the candidate and the assessor. If the assessor has not yet attained the Assessor unit, the assessment record must be counter-signed by a qualified assessor or a qualified Internal Quality Assurer.

Centres ensure that the assessment decisions of uncertificated assessors are checked, authenticated and countersigned by an assessor or Internal Quality Assurer who has the appropriate qualification and relevant occupational expertise as specified by Asset Skills for the RQF units in question. The Internal Quality Assurer must sample an increased ratio of assessment decisions by uncertificated assessors and must be responsible, and accountable, for arranging the checking and countersigning process. The External Quality Assurer centre monitoring reports will include a sanction if counter signing procedures are not followed. (See External Quality Assurer centre monitoring reports) The IRRV will also monitor via the EQA centre monitoring reports that the Internal Quality Assurers do not verify evidence that they have assessed.

Details of all involved in the assessment process, including witnesses, must be recorded in order for the assessment decision to be considered valid.

In addition, the centre must keep records of internal verification activity, including who verified a particular assessment, when it was verified and what the outcome was.

### **Centre-based Assessment Standardisation**

*Internal verification activity must include regular consultation with Assessors over the full range of qualifications content and the assessment requirements and standards. Centres with more than one IQA should arrange for periodic IQA standardisation meetings, and regular meetings between IQAs and Assessors. Meetings should cover a wide-range of examples of both actual assessment decisions made and consideration of best assessment practice based on samples from the relevant unit Learning Outcomes and Assessment Criteria. See also Section 17.*

Records of standardisation and assessor/IQA meetings must be kept for inspection by the External Quality Assurer, together with assessor and verifier competence records and monitoring records of progress towards the Assessor and IQA units respectively.

A record should be kept of all full and unit certificates claimed.

Centres must retain records for a minimum of three years and make them available to the awarding body or the regulatory authority, should they be required.

Although a portfolio of evidence belongs to the candidate, the External Quality Assurer may wish to see the portfolio during the visit that follows the award of a certificate. The centre should arrange with the candidate for the portfolio to be made available if required.

To conform to the centre approval criteria, RQF centres must operate a system of document control.

Where a centre fails to maintain auditable records, the awarding body will conduct an investigation and may impose sanctions or penalties if malpractice or maladministration is found to have taken place.

## **12. MANAGEMENT OF ASSESSOR & INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURER REGISTER**

Centres will be required by the IRRV to submit evidence of the number of qualified/unqualified assessors and Internal Quality Assurers. Centres will be prompted on a monthly basis by the IRRV for an update, and if assessors/Internal Quality Assurers have subsequently qualified, Evidence in the form of a copy of the relevant certificates must be sent to the IRRV.

Before a centre monitoring visit, the centre will be asked to provide the External Quality Assurer with the current register of qualified/unqualified assessors and Internal Quality Assurers which will be reconciled with the records kept by the IRRV.

## **13. DIVERSITY POLICY**

To gain accreditation, centres must have a Diversity policy that seeks to ensure that assessment is fair to all candidates regardless of their age, sex, ethnic origin, disability or religion. Adherence to this policy is monitored by the awarding organisation.

The IRRV's policy on Diversity may be found on the IRRV website ([www.irrv.net](http://www.irrv.net)).

## **13. SAFEGUARDING POLICY**

To gain accreditation, centres must have a safeguarding policy which ensure all learners understand the safeguarding and reporting procedure. Learners should know who the point of contact is within an assessment centre.

Its purpose is to enable assessment centres to achieve consistent and robust arrangements for safeguarding people with care and support needs and to implement effective safeguarding plans which minimise risks of harm and adopt a zero tolerance approach to abuse, maltreatment and neglect .

### **13. PREVENT POLICY**

Centre's need to ensure all learners know and understand prevent reporting procedures.

Prevent addresses all forms of extremism and has 3 strategic objectives: Tackle the causes of radicalisation and respond to the ideological challenge of terrorism.

Safeguard and support those most at risk of radicalisation through early intervention, identifying them and offering support. This should be reflected in the policy

### **14. SPECIAL ASSESSMENT ARRANGEMENTS AND REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS**

The IRRV is committed to ensuring that there are no unnecessary barriers to assessment which prevent candidates from effectively demonstrating their competence.

A centre may make special assessment arrangements according to the needs of the individual candidate, which reflect the candidate's usual method of working and meet the assessment requirements as set out in the specification and any guidelines set down by the regulatory authorities. Permission for such arrangements must be sought from the IRRV. The Institute's policy on Candidates with Particular Assessment Requirements is available on the IRRV website ([www.irrv.net](http://www.irrv.net)).

### **15. PORTFOLIO OF EVIDENCE**

A portfolio of evidence is a file or folder that may be used to bring together evidence of current occupational competence for assessment.

As part of the candidate induction process, centres should advise their candidates on building a portfolio of evidence and how to reference the evidence to the national occupational standards. As well as evidence, the portfolio should contain candidate details and details of those involved in the assessment of the qualification.

Some candidates may wish to use evidence that is held electronically. This is acceptable to the IRRV, but they should bear in mind that assessors, Internal Quality Assurers and External Quality Assurers must be able to access all assessment evidence. The portfolio should state clearly where the electronic evidence is located.

The portfolio is the property of the candidate and should be returned to the candidate when not required for assessment, internal or external verification purposes.

### **16. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURER**

Internal Quality Assurers are appointed by centres to ensure quality and consistency of assessment within the centre.

The Internal Quality Assurer is responsible for:

- advising assessors
- co-ordinating the work of the assessors
- maintaining the quality of assessment within the centre
- achieving consistency of assessment within the centre through sampling of assessment decisions.

The sampling of assessment decisions is a key function in a centre's internal quality assurance process in order to ensure that all assessors understand and are complying with the assessment requirements. The Internal Quality Assurer must adopt a suitable strategy to sample, over time

- assessors
- candidates
- units
- assessment methods
- types of evidence
- assessment records
- assessment locations.

The sampling strategy should also include observation of assessors conducting assessments at different stages of the assessment process.

Full records of the Internal Quality Assurer's sampling activities must be maintained for sampling by the External Quality Assurer.

In exceptional circumstances the internal verification function may be performed by an appropriately qualified External Quality Assurer. The internal verification decisions made by the External Quality Assurer will be subject to scrutiny by another External Quality Assurer. This should not be considered a long-term arrangement and is normally used by newly approved centres whose assessors and Internal Quality Assurers are not yet qualified.

Internal Quality Assurers need to identify their assessment decision. This will help the External Quality Assurer identify between the assessor and Internal Quality Assurer's sign off. Assessors need also to identify their decisions and sign off.

## **17. REQUIREMENTS FOR AN INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURER**

In order to become an Internal Quality Assurer, a person must:

- have a thorough understanding of the national occupational standards for the occupational area concerned, and the ability to interpret the standards within the working environment;
- have relevant, credible and sufficient occupational experience, including understanding of current and emerging practice, issues and legislative requirements in the occupational area concerned
- hold a relevant vocational/professional award or other recognised evidence of occupational competence at least one level above that of the qualification being assessed or verified;
- have knowledge and experience of the relevant operational processes as required by the awarding body for the qualification concerned;
- have good interpersonal skills, including those required for effective communication within the role;
- hold the IQA qualification, or be committed to obtaining it within the timescale the regulatory authorities prescribe
- have a commitment to their own continuing professional development.

Internal Quality Assurers for the Housing and Council Tax Benefits and Local Taxation RQF units must be approved and registered by the IRRV. Registration forms may be downloaded from the IRRV website ([www.irrv.net](http://www.irrv.net)).

## 18. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURER

The IRRV is responsible for ensuring that assessment in its approved centres has been carried out systematically, validly and to national standards. This is achieved through a system of external verification.

Each approved centre is allocated an External Quality Assurer by the IRRV. As the main link between IRRV and the centre, the centre must provide the External Quality Assurer with access to all assessment and internal verification records and the personnel involved in the process. The External Quality Assurer will normally conduct the centre's approval visit and subsequently visit the centre at least twice a year to monitor assessment activity.

The External Quality Assurer will normally pre-plan visits with the centre. However, External Quality Assurers may make a visit to a centre at short notice. The centre is expected to co-operate fully with the External Quality Assurer's requests to view documentation, portfolios and meet personnel during non-planned visits.

Where an Assessment centre cancels an External Quality Assurer monitoring visit at short or where the assessment centre cannot provide the required records and documents, a sanction may be imposed.

Once an assessment centre is approved, the External Quality Assurer will:

- check that agreed procedures have been carried out and record constructively comment on any deviations
- record and comment on the assessment methods and their suitability for achieving relevance, consistency and reliability. Particular note should be made of innovative ideas for assessment of competence
- record and comment on the suitability and acceptability of the advisory services in the context of:
  - the accessibility of advice
  - the quality of information
  - the effectiveness of the advice in achieving targets for gathering evidence and carrying out development programmes
- examine examples of assessment evidence (both acceptable and unacceptable) and comment on the appropriateness of assessment decisions.
- take note of, and where appropriate advise on, any problems encountered by centres.
- develop an action plan with the centre to facilitate on-going improvements. The action plan will be updated after each visit. Failure to comply with the requirements set out in the action plan may result in the centre's certification being suspended.
- provide feedback to IRRV on assessment and quality assurance in order to assist it in fulfilling its role as an awarding organisation
- contribute, as appropriate, to the operation of appeals procedures and investigations into suspected cases of malpractice.

## **19. REQUIREMENTS FOR AN EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURER**

To become an External Quality Assurer, a person must have –

- a thorough understanding of the National Occupational Standards for the award with the ability to interpret them across a wide variety of environments and sectors
- knowledge of current practice and emerging issues in the occupational area
- experience and a working knowledge of the operational and assessment processes specifically for the award(s) they are externally verifying
- relevant and credible occupational experience across the level and breadth of the appropriate Standards: as a minimum, External Quality Assurers should have either a relevant vocational/professional qualification or relevant occupational competence at a level above the level 3 qualification they are verifying
- hold the V2 or appropriate EQA qualification or a commitment to achieving the qualification within a 12 months timescale
- high levels of communication and interpersonal skills.

## **20. CERTIFICATION**

As soon as a candidate's Evidence has been assessed as meeting the standards and has been internally and externally verified, a centre may apply for certification. Candidates who achieve all of the units required for a full RQF qualification will receive a full certificate and a Certificate of Unit Credit which lists the units achieved. Candidates who achieve individual units will receive Certificates of Unit Credit for those units successfully completed.

Ten week rule, we cannot issue a full qualification certificate for a candidate who has been registered with them for less than ten weeks (often known as the 'ten week rule'). This is to allow sufficient time for the necessary quality assurance procedures to be carried out.

## **21. REPLACEMENT CERTIFICATES**

The IRRV will issue replacement certificates in cases where the original has been lost or damaged. An investigation may be carried out in cases of loss of certificates.

Requests for replacement certificates must be made in writing to the IRRV and should be accompanied by the current fee and appropriate pro forma available on the IRRV website. Fee details are available on the IRRV website ([www.irrv.net](http://www.irrv.net)).



## 22. DIRECT CLAIM STATUS CRITEREA

DCS is awarded for an individual qualification and is based on quality criteria that are measured and reported on through the external quality assurance visits, carried out by your External Quality Assurer (EQA).

For DCS to be achieved, your centre must achieve 2 successful consecutive external quality assurance visits. And your EQA must also have been able to sample 3 completed portfolios

DCS can also be achieved after one successful visit if exclusively Level 1s are achieved, all actions are completed, at least 5 learners portfolios have been sampled and a minimum of 3 of the portfolios must be completed.

Centres that have Direct Claim (DC) status will be subjected to a DC status inspection every 2 years. Failure at an inspection will result in the loss of DC status.

### Maintaining Direct claim status

Once you have achieved DCS you need to make sure that you continue to operate to the high standard that you already have in place. You are only required to have one visit from the EQA every 12 months. In order to maintain DCS, you will need to achieve exclusively grades of 1 with any actions from the previous report completed in full.

Your EQA will also need to sample completed learner portfolios for DCS to be maintained so please ensure you retain a sample of learner work to present to your EQA. The size and range of this sample should be discussed with your EQA in advance of the visit however we recommend keeping at least 20% of completed or units across all portfolios the total number of learners that have been certificated since your last visit (including any learners currently on programme). If less than 3 completed portfolios are sampled, DCS will be withheld pending the sampling of 3 completed portfolios.

If you don't have a visit with 12 months of achieving DCS, your DCS status will automatically lapse on the anniversary you were awarded it. However; we'll send you email 1 month before the lapse date. If your DCS does lapse, you'll have 6 months from the lapse date to have a visit meeting the DCS criteria in order to regain DCS.

If there is no EQA visit within 18 months of DCS being achieved, or a visit takes place in which the DCS criteria are not achieved, DCS will be lost and 2 consecutive visits meeting the DCS criteria will be required to regain it.

Centres that have Direct Claim (DC) status will be subjected to a DC status inspection every 2 years. Failure at an inspection will result in the loss of DC status.

**Remember that we can remove your approval for Direct Claim Status, but we'd only remove it for the following reasons:**

- If you don't meet the DCS criteria during your external quality assurance visit (as detailed above).
- In the exceptional circumstance where information from a range of external sources raises concerns eg complaints, suspensions or investigations which may lead us to review of your DCS approval. If this happens, an Quality Assurance Officer from IRRV would contact you to highlight the issues and discuss the concerns
- A Level 2 sanction or above is imposed on the qualification.
- The centre is subject to a compliance/malpractice investigation.
- A centre does not make direct certification claims for the qualification for twelve months.
- A quality assurance visit has not taken place for twelve months.
- IRRV are notified of the centre's cessation of business.
- A centre does not allow an EQA visit to take place.
- A centre makes incorrect claims and/or candidate portfolios are not available for sampling by the IRRV
- Not attending 2 consecutive standardisation meetings
- Centres that have Direct Claim (DC) status will be subjected to a DC status inspection every 2 years. Failure at an inspection will result in the loss of DC status.

In cases where a centre ceases to comply with the centre approval criteria, the IRRV will remove direct claim status until the matter has been investigated and satisfactorily resolved.

## **23. MALPRACTICE**

Malpractice constitutes any action that might adversely affect the integrity and validity of assessment, the certification of qualifications, and/or undermine the authority of those responsible for conducting the assessment and certification.

It is a centre's responsibility to ensure that staff and candidates are made aware of the awarding body's policy on malpractice and the possible consequences if malpractice is proven. See IRRV Procedures for dealing with alleged Malpractice available to download from the Institute's website ([www.irrv.net](http://www.irrv.net)).

If a centre discovers or suspects learners of malpractice, the candidates should be informed in writing immediately. They should be allowed the opportunity to reply to the allegations made. If, after investigation, the centre considers that malpractice has taken place, the Centre Co-ordinator must submit a full report to the IRRV. The IRRV will conduct its own investigation, during which time claims for certificates from the centre may be suspended.

If the IRRV receives a report of alleged centre malpractice, it will conduct an investigation. In cases where the allegations are proven, the IRRV will impose the appropriate sanctions for non-compliance with the centre approval criteria.

External Quality Assurers may make a visit to a centre at short notice. The centre is expected to cooperate fully with the External Quality Assurer's requests to view documentation, portfolios and meet personnel during non-planned visits. If a centre fails to provide a valid reason for not accepting a short notice visit then a sanction may arise for non compliance with the centre approval criteria. During a planned visit the External Quality Assurer has the right to request and

see portfolios and candidates not on the sampling plan. If during a centre monitoring visit, a centre fails to provide the documents not on the sampling plan then a sanction may be imposed.

Centre staff are expected to co-operate fully with any investigation by the IRRV into suspected or actual cases of malpractice or maladministration. Failure to do so may result in sanctions being imposed.

#### **24. CONFLICT OF INTEREST.**

This policy needs to outline what constitutes as a conflict of interest and the procedure to follow when a conflicts of interest arise.

A conflict of interest policy is intended to help ensure that when actual or potential conflicts of interest arise, the assessment centre has a process in place under which the affected individual will advise the centre about all the relevant facts concerning the situation.

#### **25. REVIEW AND APPEALS**

Centres must have an appeals procedure in place to enable candidates to appeal against assessment decisions. The appeals procedure should be explained to the candidates during the induction process and they should receive a written copy for reference. The IRRV has a Reviews and Appeals procedure to deal with candidate appeals that cannot be resolved by the centre.

Reasonable Adjustments; Special Consideration

Candidates should be aware that the Institute will consider appeals on the basis of decisions made at the Centre, or by the awarding Organisation, concerning Reasonable Adjustments, and Special Consideration. As full a description as possible of the grounds for appeal should be provided by the candidate.

Appeals on the above grounds will be considered according to the standard process set out in the IRRV Reviews and Appeals procedure.

Centres may also appeal against IRRV decisions in relation to centre approval, external verification and the imposing of sanctions.

The IRRV Reviews and Appeals procedure is available from the Institute's website at ([www.irrv.net](http://www.irrv.net))

#### **26. ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE**

This policy needs to outline how an assessment centre will assess AI within the vocational qualification process.

An AI policy is intended to help the learner to understand how technology can be used but must make clear that plagiarism cannot be accepted. The policy should ensure that when plagiarism is identified, the assessment centre has a process in place to address it. This will allow the centre to take the appropriate action to ensure the learner re-writes the submission and that verifies that the submitted content is the student's own work.

Assessment centres can contact their allocated EQA if they are unsure and need guidance in the matter.

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**Great Portland Street, 5th Floor, London. W1W 5PF Web: [www.irrv.net](http://www.irrv.net)**

19

## 27. TARIFF OF SANCTIONS

The tariffs of sanctions are linked to the centre approval criteria. These are set out in *Table 1* below, together with a rationale for the sanction, and represent the minimum response required of an awarding body to a particular shortcoming or problem.

**Table 1 (For approved competence based unit centres)**

Level	Sanction	Rationale
Level 1	Entry in action plan	Non-compliance with approved centre criteria but no threat to the integrity of assessment decisions
Level 2	Removal of direct claim status, ie, claims for certification must be authorised by the External Quality Assurer	Close scrutiny of the integrity of assessment decisions required <b>Counter signing processes are not in place</b>
Level 3	(a) Suspension of registration (b) Suspension of registration  (c) Suspension of certification	(a) Threat to candidates (b) Centre does not have appropriate number of staff to undertake the delivery of the qualification (c) Loss of the integrity of assessment decisions danger of invalid claims for certification
Level 4	Withdrawal of centre approval of specific RQF units	Irretrievable breakdown in management and quality assurance of specific RQF units
Level 5	Withdrawal of centre approval for all RQF units	Irretrievable breakdown in management and quality assurance of all RQF units run by the centre

## 28. IRRV CUSTOMER SERVICE, COMPLAINTS AND ENQUIRIES

The IRRV is committed to providing a quality service to its customers. Details of the Institute's Customer Service Statement and Complaints Procedure can be found on the IRRV website. Enquiries relating to competence based RQF units should be directed to:

Dolores Fergus / Sue Williams-Lee  
 IRRV  
 167 – 169 Great Portland Street,  
 5th Floor, London. W1W 5PF  
 Tel: 0207 691 8981/8994

Email: [education@irrv.org.uk](mailto:education@irrv.org.uk)