



52 Ickburgh Road, London E5 8AD

Telephone: +44 (0)20 8806 4910

Mobile: +44 (0)780 8296278

Website: www.homelandsecurityqualifications.co.uk

E mail: denise.clarke@homelandsecurityqualifications.co.uk

HOMELAND SECURITY QUALIFICATIONS

CENTRE GUIDANCE PACK

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INTRODUCTION

WHO WE ARE

1. Homeland Security Qualifications (HSQ) is a company set up to deliver awarding body and competence-related services to the explosives industry.

2. Contact details:

Homeland Security Qualifications
52 Ickburgh Road
London
E5 8AD

Tel: +44 (0)20 8806 4910

Email: denise.clarke@homelandsecurityqualifications.co.uk

Website: www.homelandsecurityqualifications.co.uk

PURPOSE AND USE OF THIS PACK

3. This pack has been designed to help organizations to gain and maintain approval to operate a variety of qualification schemes offered by HSQ. These comprise:
 - Vocational Qualifications (VQs);
 - Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) qualifications;
 - Bespoke qualifications.
4. Please note that this pack refers to VQs (ie not National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs)). However, HSQ VQs are entirely derived from the National Occupational Standards (NOS) and are operated in the same way as NVQs.
5. To operate an HSQ qualification scheme, organizations must be approved as an assessment centre by HSQ. Once the centre is approved, then approval must be gained for each qualification scheme that the assessment centre intends to offer.

VQ STRUCTURE

6. A range of VQs can be based on NOS which are defined by Standard Setting Bodies (SSB) and which have been approved by the UK Commission for Employment and Skills.
7. NOS are statements of performance that describe what competent people in particular occupations are expected to be able to do and know and in what circumstances. They cover all the main aspects of an occupation, including current best practice, the ability to adapt to future requirements and the knowledge and understanding that underpin competent performance. Where appropriate, supervisory or managerial requirements are included.
8. VQs are usually made up of mandatory and optional units. All mandatory units must be taken by all candidates. Optional units, if any, can then be chosen by the candidate or their employer to match their job role and speciality within the rules of the qualification. The ratio of mandatory and optional units varies from qualification to qualification.
9. Within reason, VQs do not have to be completed in a specified amount of time. They can be taken by full-time employees or by college students with a work placement or part-time job that enables them to develop the appropriate skills. There are normally no age limits and no special entry requirements. However, it is essential that VQ candidates can produce evidence of the quality and type specified by the SSB and the awarding body concerned.
10. There are 9 levels of qualification in the revised National Qualifications Framework (NQF). However, in the past, NVQs usually fell between levels 1 – 5, defined below:

Level 1 – The candidate can do a range of work activities which are fairly routine

Level 2 – The candidate can do a range of work activities, some of which are complicated and non-routine. The candidate may take responsibility working on their own, but also work as part of a team

Level 3 – The candidate can do a wide range of work activities most of which are complicated and non-routine, but can work on their own

Level 4 – The candidate can work on a large range of complicated or professional work activities. The candidate takes a great deal of responsibility for the work of others and for sharing resources

Level 5 – The candidate can do a wide range of complicated activities in a variety of work conditions. The candidate takes on a lot of responsibility for their own work and for distributing resources. The candidate works out, designs, plans, carries out and checks his or her own work and that of other people.

How Do HSQ VQ Schemes Operate?

11. HSQ VQs operate in a manner effectively identical to that required of regulated National Vocational Qualifications.
12. Our VQs work by testing a person's abilities in the workplace. To complete one, a person needs to prove that they can do certain work-related tasks to a specified standard. Candidates must be registered with an approved VQ assessment centre. VQs are assessed in a combination of ways; by portfolio – the candidate builds evidence of what they have done at work; and by observation – an assessor watches the candidate at work and checks that they can do the tasks. Candidates produce evidence to prove they have competence to meet the VQ standards. Assessors sign off units when they judge that the candidates are ready. An assessor tests the candidate's knowledge, understanding and work-based performance to make sure that they can demonstrate competence in the workplace.
13. The whole system is quality assured by internal verifiers (whose role is to confirm the quality and equity of assessment within the assessment centre) and external verifiers (employed by HSQ) whose role is to confirm the quality and equity across all assessment centres.

THE ROLE OF THE APPROVED ASSESSMENT CENTRE

14. The approved assessment centre plays a lead role in delivery of VQ schemes. This may be a company where the candidates work or a training establishment or both, working together. Between them, the centre and the candidate are responsible for gathering the evidence and demonstrating that the candidate has acquired all the practical skills and knowledge necessary to achieve the VQ. The centre will monitor progress and send details of achievement to HSQ for processing. The centre is responsible for the co-ordination and consistent internal quality assurance of its VQ schemes to meet HSQ requirements across all of its facilities, including any satellite centres.
15. The centre is responsible for ensuring that all assessors and internal verifiers:
 - hold appropriate assessor/verifier qualifications as approved and specified within 18 months of commencement in role;
 - meet any requirements for occupational expertise, as specified by the assessment strategy of the qualification concerned before commencing their role;
 - are fully familiar with HSQ requirements for the recording of assessment decisions and the maintenance of candidate assessment records;
 - understand the content, structure and assessment requirements for the awards they are verifying.
16. The centre is also required to ensure that the assessment decisions of unqualified assessors are checked, authenticated and countersigned by an assessor or internal verifier who has the appropriate assessor and/or internal verifier qualification and the requisite occupational expertise.

QCF QUALIFICATIONS STRUCTURE

17. QCF qualifications comprise units of assessment that accredit either knowledge or competence or a combination of both. The units are expressed as learning outcomes and assessment criteria.

18. QCF qualifications exist at entry level plus levels 1 – 8 and are based on the achievement of credit. There are 3 sizes of qualification:

- Award: 1 – 12 credits (ie 10-120 hours);
- Certificate: 13 – 26 credits (ie 130-260 hours);
- Diploma: 37+ credits (ie 370+ hours).

The level of the qualification is based on the level of the majority (50%+) of the credits that it contains.

19. The rules of combination for QCF qualifications may vary but the requirements of qualifications usually involve the achievement of mandatory and optional units (see the section on VQs above). Until HSQ becomes a regulated awarding body, it will seek to operate QCF qualification schemes as closely as possible to the national regulatory standards. Please refer to www.ofqual.gov.uk for more information about the QCF. HSQ offers QCF qualifications in collaboration with the Institute of Commercial Management (ICM), an Ofqual-accredited national awarding body. These QCF schemes are therefore operated in accordance with prevailing Ofqual policies, rules and regulations.

BESPOKE QUALIFICATIONS

20. HSQ can accredit an organization's own in-house training or competence measurement mechanisms. HSQ bespoke qualifications have no position in national qualifications databases and each scheme will vary from others, depending upon the requirements of the organization.

THE ROLE OF THE REGULATOR (OFQUAL)

21. The Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual) currently accredits national qualifications and regulates the policies, procedures and standards applicable to all regulated qualifications in England and, working with the appropriate local bodies, in Wales and Northern Ireland. Ofqual also regulates awarding bodies. Ofqual's is not responsible for university qualifications. Ofqual's counterpart in Scotland is the Scottish Qualification Authority (SQA).

22. Ofqual is currently responsible for the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), (sometimes known as the National Database of Accredited Qualifications (NDAQ)) and for the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF). Only qualifications that have been accredited by the regulatory authorities are included in either framework. The NQF will probably cease to exist in 2011, The NDAQ can be found at www.ndaq.org.uk. More information on Ofqual and its work can be found at www.ofqual.gov.uk. As a matter of interest, publicly-funded training and learning provision is regulated by Ofsted, the Office for Standards in Education. Most public funding for vocational education is provided by the Skills Funding Agency (SFA).

THE ROLE OF THE SSB FOR EMSO

23. Every industry is entitled to establish a standards setting body to be responsible for deciding what practical skills employees need to do a particular job efficiently and effectively. It will agree on the amount and level of knowledge also needed. When all this has been agreed, the SSB will publish the NOS deemed necessary for the industry that it represents. For example, the SSB for EMSO has developed and sought accreditation for NOS for the explosives sector and has suggested qualifications frameworks.

THE ROLE OF THE AWARDING BODY

24. The main role of the awarding body – HSQ – is to provide vocational qualification systems that meet the differing needs of learners, employers and training providers and satisfies the requirements of the regulator. The awarding body provides the means for registering candidates for awards and issuing certificates to successful candidates. At present, HSQ is unregulated but will seek to meet the same standards as a regulated awarding body. Bespoke qualifications do not fall within this main role as they are unregulated.
25. For information, full details of the responsibilities of regulated awarding bodies are in the NVQ Code of Practice 2006. HSQ recognizes the importance of the principles set out in this document but is not currently bound by them.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

ASSESSMENT OF VQS

26. Assessment is the process by which the occupational competence of VQ candidates is confirmed by an assessor.
27. HSQ's Equality and Diversity policy requires that all candidates are treated fairly and have the equitable access to assessment. The principles underlying this are that wherever possible:
 - assessment arrangements are determined according to a particular need, disability or learning difficulty;
 - special assessment arrangements do not give unfair advantage over other candidates;
 - users of certificates are not misled as to candidates' achievements.
28. Assessment arrangements may be varied where suitable opportunities allow for candidates with special needs. The nature of need will be determined by the candidate's individual needs and the requirements of the qualification (or components of it) being assessed. In all cases, the requirements of the assessment strategy must be observed.

INTERNAL VERIFICATION OF VQS

29. Internal verification is the process by which centres operate and document their internal quality assurance processes to meet HSQ requirements ie to ensure:
 - the accuracy and consistency of assessment decisions between assessors operating within the centre;
 - that assessors are consistent in their interpretation and application of the national occupational standards contained within the award.

EXTERNAL VERIFICATION OF VQS

30. External verification is the rigorous quality assurance and control arrangements put in place by HSQ to ensure the accuracy and consistency of assessment and internal verification decisions relating to qualifications (or components of them) and compliance with other requirements specified in this document. External verification ensures the credibility of the qualification and the integrity of the way in which it is operated by assessment centres.
31. An external verifier will visit each centre as part of the awarding body's quality strategy. The external verifier must not visit centres in which they have a direct or indirect personal or financial interest.
32. The normal frequency of external verification visits is two per year, with one before the first application for certificates under any of a centre's scheme approvals. However, the exact frequency and duration of the external verifier's visits will reflect the centre's performance and its throughput of candidates.

QCF QUALIFICATIONS

33. Centres must satisfy HSQ that they can meet the following requirements:
 - sound administrative processes and procedures including;
 - tracking, registration and certification of candidates;
 - the issue and management of Unique Learner Numbers (ULNs) and the management of Individual Learner Records (ILRs) – if required;
 - the Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL (see separate guidance));
 - recognizing and recording exemptions claimed;
 - the maintenance of records of proof of learner knowledge and/or competence;
 - the recognition of special candidate needs;

- internal quality assurance processes that ensure that candidates are assessed to the standard required by the award for which they have been entered.
- there is a clear distinction of responsibilities where there is potential for conflicts of interest (eg where the trainer is also the assessor) and mechanisms to address such conflicts;
- all staff are suitably trained;
- robust performance management systems are in place.

BESPOKE QUALIFICATIONS

34. Centres must satisfy HSQ that they can meet the following requirements:

- sound administrative processes and procedures including;
- tracking, registration and certification of candidates;
- the maintenance of records of proof of learner knowledge and/or competence;
- internal quality assurance processes that ensure that candidates are trained and assessed to the standard required by the organization.

CENTRE APPROVAL

BECOMING AN APPROVED CENTRE

35. Companies, colleges and training organizations may become approved centres for any HSQ qualification(s). Organizations may wish to have two or more approved centres. However, the approval criteria apply equally to all centres.
36. First, you need to contact HSQ to register your interest in becoming an approved centre, using the form contained in Appendix 3. Except for EV expenses, payment will be due at this point (see Appendix 10).
37. HSQ will then:
 - send a letter containing additional information and acknowledging the centre's completed Statement of Intent form;
 - arrange for an External Verifier (EV) or Systems Auditor (SA) to visit the proposed centre;
 - advise you on the requirements of becoming an approved centre;
 - process the completed application, Statement of Intent and financial documents;
 - issue the approved centre with a letter and certificate of centre approval.
38. When the EV/SA visits the proposed centre, s/he will be seeking evidence that the centre conforms with the approval criteria and that suitable, robust systems are in place to run the scheme. The length of the visit will vary according to the situation but typically it is likely to last between half a day and one full day. It is strongly recommended that each aspiring centre also requests a developmental visit to ensure that its preparations for the formal approval visit are comprehensive and thus more likely to succeed; developmental visits are charged at the same rate as other EV/SA visits.

39. There are three possible outcome of the visit:
- approval is granted;
 - approval is withheld subject to the implementation of an action plan;
 - approval is denied.
40. When approval is granted, a certificate will be issued, the centre allocated a number (which should be used in all communications with HSQ) and the registration of candidates may begin.
41. The balance of payment (ie EV expenses) will be due in respect of centre approval at this point whether or not approval is granted.

QUALIFICATIONS REQUIRED OF INTERNAL VERIFIERS AND ASSESSORS

42. Personnel in approved centres with internal verification or assessment roles for any NOS-based qualification programme must either hold or, at the very least, be working actively towards the appropriate qualifications before undertaking the associated responsibilities unsupervised. They must also be demonstrably occupationally competent. If involved in state-funded programmes, assessors and internal verifiers must have the minimum threshold Qualified Teacher Learning & Skills QTLS award, the *Level 3 or Level 4 Preparing to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector (PTLLS)* and be scheduled to gain at least the *Level 4 Certificate in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector (CTLLS)* within a specified period. Scheme coordinators are to ensure that this is the case, working in conjunction with heads of department where appropriate.
43. HSQ can provide advice on access to assessment and internal verification training programmes and awards. Details of acceptable qualifications for assessors and internal verifiers are at Appendix 9

MONITORING OF INTERNAL VERIFIERS AND ASSESSORS

44. The competence of assessors must be monitored by their respective internal verifiers who are to operate and document a monitoring schedule. Similarly, the competence of internal verifiers will be monitored by external verifiers, who will include their findings in visit reports.
45. Such monitoring – which should include regular programmed sampling of all aspects of VQ assessment and internal verification of which records are kept – is to include debriefs for the individual concerned including:
 - constructive criticism and suggestions for improvements;
 - suggestions as to additional training in his/her VQ role¹.
46. Strategic monitoring and evaluation of QA functions and procedures in approved assessment centres will be achieved through regular visits by EVs/SAs appointed by HSQ. Such visits will normally take place according to a schedule agreed between the external verifier and scheme coordinator concerned, in consultation with HSQ.

QUALITY ASSURANCE (QA)

47. Although all aspects of the implementation of qualifications must be of the highest possible quality, the importance of effective QA procedures cannot be over-emphasized. The credibility of all qualifications, and the institutions that offer them, is inextricably linked with the integrity of all involved.
48. In terms of NOS-based qualifications, QA is effectively the sum of the work of the assessors, internal verifiers, scheme co-ordinators and external verifiers involved. Every approved centre is required to specify its QA processes in written form to the satisfaction of HSQ. This may take the form of a separate QA manual or a section within the centre's operations manual. HSQ can advise or provide a template for such a manual².

¹ HSQ strongly recommends that assessment centre staff directly involved in the operation of its VQ schemes maintain their occupational competence and record their participation in at least 10 hours relevant CPD annually. This can include, for example, participating in VQ scheme standardization meetings, attending in-house or externally-provided seminars, or gaining additional qualifications, eg VQs or free-standing VQ units (such as those in Learning & Development, Health & Safety, Coaching & Mentoring in a Work Environment) or similar.

² The Homeland Security Qualifications' Quality and Procedures Manual is a chargeable document but the cost is included in the Centre approval fee

SCHEME APPROVAL

VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

49. You need separate approval for each scheme that you will offer in the centre. Note that a VQ scheme comprises the VQs relating to a particular Key Role (eg Test and Evaluation). Please complete the application form contained at Appendix 4 in respect of each Key Role that you wish to offer and send it to HSQ.
50. HSQ will then:
- review the completed scheme approval application form;
 - determine whether or not an EV visit is needed;
 - obtain advice from the EV as to whether approval may be granted on the basis of the centre's track record and the application;
 - carry out a visit if it is deemed necessary;
 - process the completed application(s);
 - issue the approved centre with a letter of approval to offer the scheme.
51. When an EV conducts a scheme approval visit to the centre, s/he will be seeking evidence that the centre conforms with the approval criteria in that:
- all staff involved in assessment and verification understand their roles and responsibilities;
 - evidence is available confirming that the centre has met the scheme approval criteria;
52. The length of the visit will vary according to the situation but typically it is likely to last between half a day and one full day.

53. There are three possible outcome of the visit:
- approval is granted;
 - approval is withheld subject to the implementation of an action plan;
 - approval is denied.
54. When scheme approval is granted, a letter will be issued specifying the scheme for which approval has been granted and the duration of approval. The registration of candidates may then begin.

QCF QUALIFICATIONS

55. You need separate approval for each scheme that you will offer in the centre. Please complete the application form contained at Appendix 5 in respect of each qualification that you wish to offer and send it to HSQ.
56. HSQ will then:
- review the completed scheme approval application form;
 - determine whether or not an SA visit is needed;
 - obtain advice from the SA as to whether approval may be granted on the basis of the centre's track record and the application;
 - carry out a visit if it is deemed necessary;
 - process the completed application(s);
 - issue the approved centre with a letter of approval to offer the scheme.
57. When an SA conducts a scheme approval visit to the centre, s/he will be seeking evidence that the centre conforms with the approval criteria in that:
- all staff involved in assessment understand their roles and responsibilities;
 - evidence is available confirming that the centre has met the scheme approval criteria.
58. The length of the visit will vary according to the situation but typically it is likely to last between half a day and one full day.

59. There are three possible outcome of the visit:
- approval is granted;
 - approval is withheld subject to the implementation of an action plan;
 - approval is denied.
60. When scheme approval is granted, a letter will be issued specifying the scheme for which approval has been granted and the duration of approval. The registration of candidates may then begin.

BESPOKE QUALIFICATIONS

61. You need separate approval for each bespoke scheme that you will offer in the centre. Please complete the proposal form contained at Appendix 6 in respect of each bespoke qualification that you wish to offer and send it to HSQ.
62. HSQ will then:
- review the completed proposal form;
 - determine whether or not an SA visit is needed;
 - carry out a visit if it is deemed necessary;
 - process the completed proposal(s);
 - issue the approved centre with a letter of approval to offer the scheme.
63. When an SA conducts a scheme approval visit to the centre, s/he will be seeking evidence that the centre conforms with the approval criteria in that:
- all staff involved in assessment understand their roles and responsibilities;
 - evidence is available confirming that the centre has met the agreed criteria;
64. The length of the visit will vary according to the situation but typically it is likely to last between half a day and one full day.

65. There are three possible outcome of the visit:
- approval is granted;
 - approval is withheld until an HSQ-approved action plan has been implemented;
 - approval is denied.
66. When approval to operate a bespoke award is granted, a letter will be issued specifying any conditions to be met and the duration of approval. Thereafter, requests for certification may be submitted once the candidates concerned have met the agreed requirements of the scheme in full.

UPDATING APPROVAL INFORMATION

67. Where substantial changes have taken place that might affect the approval of the centre, HSQ must be informed using the format at Appendix 7 of this pack. Where substantial changes have taken place that might affect the scheme offered, HSQ must be informed using the format at Appendix 8 of this pack.
68. The following points should be noted:
- an additional EV visit may be needed to confirm that the approval criteria continue to be met;
 - certification may be withheld pending an additional visit and a satisfactory report. Centres will be kept up to date with progress on such matters;
 - scheme approval may be withdrawn either temporarily or permanently if a centre fails to declare significant changes that may affect the quality of provision.
69. The sorts of changes that need to be notified could include:
- change of contact details;
 - changes to key personnel, notably centre contact, scheme co-ordinator, internal verifiers and assessors;
 - change of organization ownership or purpose;
 - changes in the availability of resources;
 - refusal, suspension or withdrawal of any accreditation by another awarding body;
 - changes in the availability of appropriate learning and assessment opportunities.

NON-COMPLIANCE

70. Whilst HSQ currently offers industry-recognized VQs, the systems and quality requirements are closely aligned to those for national qualifications and in future, it is intended to offer a range of national qualifications. Therefore, centres are required to meet HSQ's standards which closely resemble national requirements.
71. Centre approval may be suspended or withdrawn if HSQ believes that:
- there are major deficiencies which indicate that the centre is not operating as required;
 - the centre has registered no candidates on an approved scheme for at least one year;
 - payment has not been received in accordance with the payment terms;
 - the centre becomes bankrupt, insolvent or faces any similar serious financial difficulties;
 - key centre staff may have engaged in doubtful or potentially fraudulent activities that may have affected the integrity of the centre;
 - there are material changes in the ownership, structure or management arrangements of the centre or its parent organization that might affect the centre;
 - the centre can no longer provide the resources, learning and assessment opportunities required.
72. Suspended centres may be re-instated on satisfactory resolution of the cause of suspension.

73. Scheme approval may be suspended or revoked if the centre has not complied with the scheme criteria, requirements and/or the terms set out in this handbook if:
- there are major deficiencies in assessment which indicate that the quality of assessment cannot be maintained;
 - payment has not been received in accordance with the payment terms;
 - centre staff may have engaged in doubtful or potentially fraudulent activities that may have affected the integrity of the scheme;
 - there are doubts about the centre's ability to operate the scheme.
74. HSQ may suspend or withdraw approval for any or all of a centre's activities including its ability to register candidates for a limited period of time or indefinitely.
75. Centres have the right to appeal against suspension and withdrawal and HSQ will usually work with the centre to help it to achieve the required standards.

COMPLAINTS

76. Any complaint by an assessment centre or an individual about HSQ in terms of its policies, procedures or the actions of its staff (including external verifiers) should be put in writing and sent to HSQ. All complaints will be investigated thoroughly and the complainant will be informed of the outcome promptly by HSQ whose decision is final.
77. Any complaint by a candidate regarding their assessment centre should in the first instance be taken up with the centre concerned. If it cannot be resolved to the satisfaction of both parties, it should be directed to HSQ who will investigate the matter. The complainant will be informed of the outcome promptly by HSQ whose decision is final.
78. Centres must have a complaints (or grievance) policy and procedure in place. This should:
- identify the people by whom and with whom the complaint is lodged;

- state the format in which the complaint must be made;
- make clear the timescales within which complaints may be lodged and outline the complaints process;
- provide a system to support those making complaints;
- ensure that complaints documentation is as simple as possible.

79. HSQ's complaints policy is described at Appendix 1.

APPEALS BY CENTRES

80. Centres may appeal to HSQ if they feel that the policies, procedures or actions of its staff have been unfair or improper to the detriment of the centre, candidates or both. The appellant will be informed of the outcome promptly by HSQ whose decision is final.

APPEALS BY CANDIDATES

81. Any appeal by a candidate regarding an assessment decision taken at their centre or related matter should in the first instance be taken up with the centre concerned. If it cannot be resolved to the satisfaction of both parties, it should be directed to HSQ for further investigation. The appellant will be informed of the outcome promptly by HSQ whose decision is final.

82. Centres must have an appeals policy and procedure in place. This should:

- identify the people from whom and with whom the appeal is lodged;
- state the format in which the appeal must be made;
- incorporate an Appeals Panel that is objective and independent;
- make clear the timescales within which appeals may be lodged and must be decided;
- provide a system to support those making appeals;
- ensure that appeals documentation is as simple as possible.

83. HSQ's appeals policy is described at Appendix 1.

TERMS OF BUSINESS

84. **Contract.** This handbook forms part of the contract between the centre and HSQ. Centres are required to comply with HSQ's policies, rules, terms and requirements.
85. **Settlement of invoices.**
- **Approved Centres.** Centres approved by HSQ to offer qualifications schemes are required to settle invoices within 14 days. Any such centre not settling a legitimate invoice in full within 14 days will be suspended (with the result that no requests for candidate registration or certification will be processed until payment is made). Failure to pay within 30 days will result in the centre's approval being withdrawn, Reinstatement of a centre thus disqualified will involve repeating the full centre and scheme approval process, including payment of the associated fees at the rate due from any other new centre. Queries about invoices are to be raised with HSQ at the earliest possible opportunity so that any dispute can be resolved before the payment becomes overdue.
 - **Potential centres and other clients.** Payments by potential centres and other clients (ie not approved centres) for HSQ products and services must be received and cleared before any order can be processed. The only exception is payment for the legitimate expenses of HSQ staff carrying out work on behalf of a potential centre or other client (not an approved HSQ centre), which will be invoiced in arrears and must be settled within 14 days.
 - **Methods of payment.** All payments must be made by cheque or BACS (or any similar agreed electronic transfer system). Other forms of payment may be made by negotiation.
86. **Full business terms.** Full details of business terms are available on request.

87. **Communication.** HSQ welcomes feedback from its customers on the quality of its products and services and on the need for new or adapted products and services. From time to time, we may be in touch to carry out customer satisfaction surveys or to seek support for new products or services. We may also need to carry out labour market surveys to fulfil our obligations to government agencies and will need to carry out this research with your participation and help.

CUSTOMER CHARTER

88. We aim to be the leading provider of Homeland Security-related VQs and learning support for adults in the UK and beyond.
89. Our values:
- efficiency;
 - quality;
 - equality;
 - responsiveness;
 - integrity.
90. We believe that our customers' interests are paramount and we aim to deliver the best service possible. To do this, we will:
- listen to requests and respond promptly to them, directing customers to other sources of information or support if we cannot help;
 - answer queries courteously, promptly and as fully as possible;
 - aim to resolve queries as swiftly and fully as possible;
 - acknowledge correspondence promptly;
 - apply integrity and quality in all things;
 - provide effective and efficient services;
 - be supportive of industry, clients and candidates;
 - provide flexible and imaginative solutions;
 - use clear documentation;
 - maintain competitive pricing;
 - try to "go the extra mile";
 - update this charter regularly, after consulting customers.

APPENDIX 1: HSQ POLICY STATEMENTS

COMPLAINTS POLICY

91. As an organization committed to fairness and openness, HSQ offers all of its assessment centres and candidates the right to make complaints or raise issues about HSQ-related matters that cannot otherwise be resolved.
92. All such matters will be investigated and the complainant informed of the outcome promptly by HSQ whose decision is final.
93. All assessment centres must have in place and operate a transparent complaints policy.

APPEALS POLICY

94. As an organization committed to fairness and openness, HSQ offers all of its assessment centres and candidates the right to appeal about HSQ-related matters that cannot otherwise be resolved.
95. All such matters will be investigated and the appellant informed of the outcome promptly by HSQ whose decision is final.
96. All assessment centres must have in place and operate a transparent appeals policy.

EQUALITY & DIVERSITY POLICY

97. HSQ values equality and diversity, and it is fully committed to a working environment free from direct or indirect discrimination or prejudice. Unfair or unlawful discrimination on the basis of race, ethnic origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation, social background, marital status or age is unacceptable and will be reported to the appropriate authorities.

BULLYING AND HARASSMENT POLICY

98. HSQ abhors bullying, harassment and victimization of all kinds and will take all action possible to ensure that such behaviours are discouraged and, where appropriate, reported to the appropriate authorities.

HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

99. HSQ is fully committed to contributing to the health and safety of all involved in their work, staff and candidates alike. The HSQ schemes make frequent reference to health and safety legislation and regulations and as such, require great attention to these important matters.

DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION POLICY

100. As previously stated, HSQ values equality and diversity, and it is fully committed to a working environment free from direct or indirect discrimination or prejudice. As with other forms of unfair or unlawful discrimination, such discrimination on the basis of disability is unacceptable and will be reported to the appropriate authorities. Please see earlier references in this handbook to HSQ's provision for special assessment. Please note that disability discrimination legislation relating to the provision of access to goods and services applies to the provision of learning and qualifications.

DATA PROTECTION POLICY

101. HSQ complies with the Data Protection Act 1998, having registered as a data controller. HSQ may share information gathered on an individual with government agencies and as required by law and regulation (eg for statistical purposes). HSQ will only otherwise share information on individuals with their written permission. The Data Protection Act gives individuals the right to request to see the information held about them. If an individual wishes to see the data held on them, a "subject access request" should be made in writing to HSQ.

ACCREDITATION OF PRIOR LEARNING, EXPERIENCE AND ACHIEVEMENT (APLEA)

102. Subject to contemporary best practice and regulatory direction, it is the policy of HSQ to encourage the widest possible use of opportunities for the accreditation of candidates' prior learning, experience and achievement.
103. Centre staff should be aware that, usually, no more than one third of a VQ may be gained using the accreditation of prior learning. This may be in the form of either full evidence for one third of the required units or 30% of the overall evidence covering all the required units. Queries about APLEA should be directed in the first instance to the external verifier concerned.
104. An exception to the provision of paragraph 101 above applies in situations where the holder of an industry-specified qualification seeks to obtain its nationally accredited counterpart, where the content of both is identical in terms of skills and knowledge. In such cases, candidates who have successfully achieved an HSQ industry VQ may apply by the APEL process for the nationally recognized equivalent when HSQ has been accredited by the qualifications regulator provided that either:
- the industry VQ was gained no more than 2 years before the conversion application;
 - or, that the applicant can demonstrate regular use of the skills and knowledge reflected in the qualification concerned during the 2 years before the conversion application.

A small administrative fee will be charged for this service.

105. With regard to QCF qualifications, detailed guidance regarding Recognition of Prior Learning is available from Ofqual.

INFORMATION SECURITY

106. Further to its Data Protection Policy, it is HSQ policy that all information relating to individuals and other entities be held as securely as possible. To this end, paper documents containing personal, commercial or any other type of sensitive information are to be secured within locked

containers and that these are to be in locked accommodation when not in the immediate custody of a member of staff. Keys and codes to locks are to be in the sole custody of a nominated senior manager. Digital data of all kinds is to be protected by the concurrent use of protective software and the comprehensive use of standard security measures including passwords. Digital data is to be encrypted before leaving office premises. Documents containing personal data such as addresses or commercially confidential information are to be hand-delivered where possible or sent by courier or postal services equating at least to recorded delivery.

APPENDIX 2: STATEMENT OF INTENT

See over for the statement of intent form.

NEW CENTRE STATEMENT OF INTENT

Centre name

Address

Town

Postcode

Country

Name of centre manager

Telephone

Email address

This centre intends to apply for approval as an HSQ approved centre. We understand that the centre will need to:

- complete this form and forms for centre and scheme approval fully
- give all reasonable access and co-operation to HSQ personnel on matters relating to scheme delivery
- comply with HSQ requirements and those of any relevant regulatory authority
- notify HSQ of any material change in circumstances that may affect the delivery, quality or integrity of scheme and HSQ-related matters
- make a non-refundable payment of £900 + VAT (see Appendix 10) (EV expenses will be charged after the visit has taken place regardless of the outcome)

Please invoice my centre / cheque enclosed (delete as appropriate)

Signature of centre manager

Name (capitals)

Date

For HSQ use only: Confirmation of acceptance

Signature of HSQ Quality Manager

Date

APPENDIX 3: APPLICATION FOR CENTRE APPROVAL

See over for the application form for centre approval.

APPLICATION FOR CENTRE APPROVAL

Submit this form only if your organization is not currently approved to offer any scheme through HSQ. Please complete this form as fully as possible in black ink.

SECTION 1: CENTRE DETAILS

Centre name

Address

Town

Postcode

Country

Name of centre manager

Telephone

Email address

Name of the person who will be responsible for the quality assurance of all HSQ schemes your centre intends to offer. This person will be referred to as the Quality Assurance Co-ordinator.

Name

Telephone

Email address

Please list any quality assurance standards your centre currently holds (eg IIP, ISO 9000 etc)

QA standard(s)

Please list the addresses of your main site and state the number of candidates expected yearly in each:

Main Centre

Annual candidates:

SECTION 2: DETAILS OF SATELLITE CENTRES (IF ANY)

Please list the addresses of your satellite sites and state the number of candidates expected yearly in each:

Satellite Centre 1

Satellite Centre 2

Satellite Centre 3

Satellite Centre 4

Satellite Centre 5

Satellite Centre 6

Explain briefly the relationship between the centre and its satellite sites

SECTION 3: READINESS TO DELIVER

Please complete the “Evidence” column in the table below, showing how your organization meets the assessment centre approval criteria (some examples are listed in the second column to help you do this). Please be specific and refer to named procedures and documents wherever possible.

All the criteria must be satisfied. External Verifiers will need access to the evidence you are offering when carrying out their centre approval visits. All approved centres are audited by HSQ to ensure their continuing compliance after the initial approval. By submitting an application for centre approval, that centre is making a commitment to maintaining the arrangements that meet the criteria.

Criteria	Examples of evidence	Evidence
1 The centre has/will develop aims and policies for promoting, implementing and reviewing the qualifications for which approval is sought	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Centre marketing/business plan 	
2 Procedures are specified for communication throughout the centre about the implementation of the qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communication flowcharts Written/oral explanation of procedures used 	
3 Procedures are specified for communication between the teams responsible for implementing qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Centre Quality Co-ordinator appointed Team meeting recording system Written/verbal explanation of procedures used (eg candidate’s initial assessment procedure) 	
4 The roles, responsibilities, authorities and accountabilities of the assessment and verification team across all assessment sites are clearly defined, allocated and understood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Records of all assessment sites and personnel Documented quality assurance procedures Organizational chart Documented, signed agreements indicating the lines of accountability of partner organizations in relation to the management of assessment and internal quality assurance CVs of assessors and internal verifiers 	
5 Procedures for maintaining and updating databases (IT or manual) are specified	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Database seen in operation Written/verbal explanation of procedures used 	

Criteria	Examples of evidence	Evidence
6 External administrative requirements will be fulfilled promptly and correctly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge and understanding of the requirements are demonstrated • Written/verbal explanation of procedures used 	
7 Resources in relation to individual qualification requirements will be identified and provided (if applicable)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procedures used for reporting to senior management on resource availability and additional needs • Procedures used to identify resource deficiencies and to prioritize and meet resource needs • Documented health and safety policy • A safe and secure room/area for the retention of assessment materials 	
8 Staff will be allocated sufficient time to undertake their designated roles and responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Details of candidate induction programme and arrangements for assessment planning • Written/verbal explanation of guidance and support systems for reviewing candidate/assessor/IV performance and acting on the review • Written/verbal confirmation that sufficient time will be allocated for providing candidates with information/advice/support 	
9 Staff development needs will be systematically reviewed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written/verbal explanation of the process used to identify and meet staff development needs 	

Criteria	Examples of evidence	Evidence
10 A staff development programme is provided	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Details of induction programme for staff new to the qualifications • Information on recent/planned staff development events • Details of arrangements to enable assessors and internal verifiers to achieve the relevant qualifications (where appropriate) • Details of arrangements to support unqualified assessors and internal verifiers while they are working towards qualifications (where appropriate) • Written/verbal explanation of procedures for taking remedial action to support staff experiencing difficulties 	
11 There is an appeals procedure which is documented and made available to candidates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documented appeals procedure including details of grounds for appeal and timescales • Records of appeals made and outcomes 	
12 Unit certification is available (where appropriate)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Candidate records • Reference to unit certification in centre marketing materials (where appropriate) 	
13 An effective system for quality assurance of assessment is in place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality assurance flow/organizational chart showing roles, responsibilities and reporting lines • Written/verbal explanation of procedures used for reviewing/evaluating/improving quality assurance and for acting on feedback from quality assurance meetings/reviews • Written/verbal explanation of procedures used for providing quality assurance information and support to satellite sites 	

Criteria	Examples of evidence	Evidence
14 The centre has developed an explicit policy on equality and diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copy of the policy and/or details of how it is made known to all those involved with assessment 	
15 The centre's access to assessment policy and practice is understood and complied with by candidates and assessors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documented policies and procedures • An action plan for the implementation of the equal opportunities policy 	
16 The Centre also has and operates the following policies and has effective strategies/action plans: Appeals Health & Safety Disability Discrimination Bullying and Harassment Grievance and Complaint Information Security Data Protection Business Continuity Malpractice Safeguarding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copy of the policy • Copy of the policy • Copy of the policy • Copy of the policy • Copy of the policy • Copy of the policy • Copy of the policy • Copy of the policy • Copy of the policy • Copy of the policy 	
17 Information, guidance and advice on equal opportunities is provided for new candidates, staff and work providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant information and details of how this is provided to all those involved with assessment 	
18 The recording system design enables candidates' achievements to be evaluated in relation to the centres' equal opportunities policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Example of record forms • Written/verbal explanation of procedures used 	
19 Staff are required to undergo Vetting and Barring Scheme checks operated by the Independent Safeguarding Authority with the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB). Self Declaration Forms are used for new staff until such checks are complete.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate documentation. 	

SECTION 4: DECLARATION

Declaration to be signed by the head of the centre

I declare that the information in this application is correct and current and that I am authorized to sign on behalf of the centre.

The centre confirms that:

- if accepted by HSQ, this application will form the agreement between the centre and HSQ and the centre will submit an approval application update if there are any changes to the information in it;
- it will operate according to HSQ policies, regulations, requirements, procedures and guidelines set out in this handbook and any revisions or additions to those policies, regulations, requirements, procedures and guidelines which apply from time to time;
- it has not been refused any approval by any other awarding body nor had any approval suspended or withdrawn by any other awarding body other than as detailed in a detailed explanation attached;
- payment in respect of centre approval less EV expenses has already been made;
- EV expenses will be paid regardless of the outcome of the visit on presentation of HSQ's invoice.

Details of any refusal, suspension or withdrawal of any approval by any other awarding body ARE/ARE NOT (*delete as appropriate*) attached.

Name of centre manager (capitals)

Signature

Telephone no

Email address

Date

For HSQ use only:

Signature of HSQ Quality Manager

Date

Centre no

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Sub-centre no

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APPENDIX 4: APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL TO OPERATE A VQ SCHEME

See over for the application form for scheme approval.

APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL TO OPERATE A VQ SCHEME

Please complete this form as fully as possible in black ink.

SECTION 1: CENTRE DETAILS

Centre name

Address

Town

Postcode

Country

Name of centre manager

Telephone

Email address

Centre no

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Sub-centre no

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Name of scheme co-ordinator

Name

Telephone no

Email address

Name of internal verifier co-ordinator / internal verifier or quality assurance co-ordinator (please delete as applicable) (if different from scheme co-ordinator)

Name

Telephone no

Email address

Tel no

SECTION 2: DETAILS OF THE VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATION(S) THAT YOU WISH TO OFFER

As separate EV approval visits are necessary for the VQs belonging to any one Key Role (KR), you may only request approval to offer the VQs in one Key Role in any one application, plus Level 2 General Explosives Operations (if required), with each KR thus requiring a separate application. On the table below, simply tick the VQs that you wish to offer in the KR of your choice in column (e) plus, if you wish, Level 2 General Explosives Operations. Please also indicate at column (f) the date by which you wish to start operating the VQ and, at column (g), how many candidates you expect to enrol for it in the first year.

KR	Qualification	Scheme no	√	Start date	Candidates in Year 1
(a)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)	(g)
1	L4 Research into ESA	01-001-04			
	L4 Design and/or Development of ESA	01-002-04			
	L3 Research, Design and Development of ESA	01-003-03			
2	L4 Explosives safety management and/or advice and/or regulation	02-001-04			
	L3 Explosive safety supervision	02-002-03			
3	L4 Test and Evaluation Management of ESA	03-001-04			
	L3 Test and Evaluation Supervision of ESA	03-002-03			
	L2 Test and Evaluation Operations of ESA	03-003-02			
4	L4 ESA Manufacturing Management	04-001-04			
	L3 ESA Manufacturing Supervision	04-002-03			
	L2 ESA Manufacturing Operations	04-003-02			
5	L4 Explosives Maintenance Management	05-001-04			
	L3 Explosives Maintenance Supervision	05-002-03			
	L2 Explosives Maintenance Operations	05-003-02			
6	L4 ESA Procurement Management	06-001-04			
	L3 ESA Procurement	06-002-03			
7	L4 Explosives Storage Management	07-001-04			
	L3 Explosives Storage Supervision	07-002-03			
	L2 Explosives Storage Operations	07-003-02			
8	L3 Explosives Transport Supervision	08-001-03			
	L2 Explosives Road Transport Operations	08-002-02			
11	L4 ESA Disposal Management	11-001-04			
	L3 ESA Disposal Supervision/Operations	11-002-03			
	L2 ESA Disposal Operations	11-003-02			
12	L4 Planning and management of MC operations	12-001-04			
	L4 Planning and management of ST search operations	12-002-04			
	L3 Supervisory management of MC and/or ST search operations	12-003-03			
	L3 Search for and disposal of munitions	12-004-03			
	L3 Search for munitions and/or ST	12-005-03			
	L2 Contribute to the search and/or disposal function	12-006-02			
	L1 Provide support for search or munition clearance operations	12-007-01			
13	L2 General Explosives Operations	13-001-02			

Notes: ESA = Explosive Substances & Articles, MC = Munition Clearance, ST = Specified Target(s)

SECTION 3: SITES AT WHICH ASSESSMENTS WILL TAKE PLACE

Please list the names of local site contacts, addresses and telephone numbers of all sites at which assessments for the qualifications are to be offered.

Location 1
Location 2
Location 3
Location 4
Location 5
Location 6

SECTION 4: DETAILS OF STAFF INVOLVED

Please complete the table below in respect of each scheme coordinator, lead internal verifier, internal verifier, assessor peripatetic assessor, tutor and quality assurance co-ordinator (as applicable) who will be involved with the qualification(s). HSQ will expect to see proof of occupational competence via certifications and/or CVs. If held, certified copies of teaching, internal verification and assessment qualifications should be attached to CVs.

- Name Provide the name of each scheme co-ordinator (SC), internal verifier coordinator (IVC), internal verifier (IV), assessor (A), peripatetic assessor (PA), tutor (T) or quality assurance co-ordinator (QAC)
- SC/IVC/IV/A/PA/T/QM Using the appropriate abbreviation, indicate which role(s) the named person will be undertaking. *Note that one person may fulfil any or all of the roles of SC, IVC or QAC. A qualified IV may also be an A but may not internally verify his or her own assessments. IVCs are only necessary where there are more than 2 IVs supporting a scheme.*
- Location reference This is the number which corresponds to the sites you listed (if any) above. Use this number to indicate the site at which the SC, IVC, IV, A, PA, T or QAC is based. Leave blank if the named person is based at the main centre address.
- Occupational expertise Tick this box to confirm that the SC / IVC / IV / A / T / PA / QAC has the occupational expertise necessary to perform the role.
- Staff qualifications Tick the appropriate box(es) to indicate the qualification/unit(s) achieved (if applicable). *Note that an SC does not need have any of the qualifications shown and that assessors and IVs do not need teaching qualifications unless working on state-funded programmes, where the minimum is PTLLS.*

Name	SC/QA C/A/T	Loc ref	Teaching qualifications				IV qualifications			Assessor qualifications			
			Cert Ed	PTLLS	CTLLS	DTLLS	V1 or D34	LLUK Units		A1 or D32+D33	LLUK Units		
								4 & 5	4 5 & 8		1 & 2	1 & 3	1, 2 & 3

Continue on a separate sheet if necessary. If in doubt about the qualification requirements contact HSQ.

SECTION 5: EVIDENCE

Please complete the “Evidence” column in the table below, showing how your organization meets the qualification approval criteria (some examples are listed in the second column to help you do this). Please be specific and refer to named procedures and documents wherever possible.

All the criteria must be satisfied. External Verifiers will need access to the evidence you are offering when carrying out their scheme approval visits. All approved centres are audited by HSQ to ensure their continuing compliance after the initial approval. By submitting an application for qualification(s) approval, that centre is making a commitment to maintaining the arrangements that meet the criteria.

Criteria	Examples of evidence	Evidence
1 There are sufficient occupationally competent and qualified assessors to assess the qualification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Criteria for appointment of assessors • Curriculum vitae for each assessor • Copies of certificates achieved 	
2 There are sufficient occupationally competent and qualified IVs to ensure quality assessments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Criteria for appointment of IVs • Curriculum Vitae for each IV • Copies of certificates achieved 	
3 IVs have appropriate access to assessors for assessment decisions and practices to be reviewed regularly and acted upon to ensure consistent, fair assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schedules/records of meetings or other contact between IVs and assessors • Confirmation that sufficient time is allocated for above • Internal verification plans 	
4 Sufficient time is allowed for administering the programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work schedules/timetables 	

Criteria	Examples of evidence	Evidence
5 There are arrangements to ensure that equipment, procedures and accommodation are sufficient, safe and fit for use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspection of site to evaluate safety and adequacy of resources • Records of equipment maintenance and accommodation checks • Written/verbal explanation of how candidates will get access to scarce of specialist equipment 	
6 There is effective communication within the assessment team and with the awarding body	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff handbooks and updates • Organizational charts • Minutes of team meetings • Records of communication with the awarding body 	
7 Information, advice and guidance on assessment is provided to candidates and to potential candidates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written/verbal explanation of how candidates can access information and guidance on assessment • Written/verbal explanation of how candidates are provided with appropriate documentation 	
8 An appropriate range of assessment methods is used	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirmation via candidate records that assessment methods are appropriate to candidates' needs and cover the range of competences across which candidates will be assessed to meet qualification requirements • Statement of the opportunities the centre can provide for evidence collection and assessment • Examples of assessment plans • Examples of internally-devised assessment materials • Examples of draft assignments 	

Criteria	Examples of evidence	Evidence
9 Candidate's development needs are matched against the requirement of the qualification and an agreed assessment plan is established	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Candidate initial assessment procedure • Candidate assessment plans • Candidate/trainee contracts 	
10 Candidates have regular opportunities to review their progress and goals and to revise their assessment plan accordingly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Candidate assessment plan • Examples of revisions to assessment plans 	
11 Accurate records of the assessment of candidates are maintained	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Example record of a candidate's progress from registration to certification • Flowchart or other document showing recording system • Information on number of candidates undertaking each qualification • Written/verbal explanation of recording system used 	

Criteria	Examples of evidence	Evidence
12 There are effective procedures for implementation and review of internal verification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scheme IVC identified (where appropriate) • Details of arrangements for reviewing/evaluating/improving the effectiveness of internal verification/qualification co-ordination procedures • Written/verbal explanation of procedures for monitoring and sampling the work of all assessors • Records of actions/procedures for taking action where assessment is unsatisfactory • Indication of time allowances for internal verification/qualification co-ordination responsibilities and confirmation that this is sufficient • File of policy documents 	
13 Appropriate provision is made for candidates with particular requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List of sources of information on materials/equipment/facilities to support candidates with particular requirements • Examples of such materials/equipment/facilities • Copy of Access to Assessment booklet 	
14 The quality and fairness of assessment is systematically reviewed and monitored	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See 13 • Standardization activities 	

OTHER INFORMATION

Does the centre offer other vocational qualifications at the same level or higher?	Yes / No
CVs for all members of the programme delivery team have been provided?	Yes / No
Sample assessment materials have been provided?	Yes / No

SECTION 6: DECLARATION

Declaration to be signed by the Quality Assurance Co-ordinator on behalf of the centre.

I declare that the information in this application is correct and current and that I am authorized to sign on behalf of the centre.

The centre agrees that it will submit an approval application update if there are any changes to the information in this application, and if qualification approval is given, the terms of the centre approval agreement will apply.

The centre agrees to pay the following fees for the processing of this scheme approval application regardless of the outcome:

£450 + VAT per key role (non-refundable) for scheme approval **plus**
£450 + VAT per EV visit (not refundable once the visit has taken place) **plus**
EV expenses will be paid on presentation of HSQ's invoice

Please invoice my centre / cheque enclosed (delete as appropriate)

Name (capitals)

Signature

Date

Email address

Tel no

For HSQ use only:

HSQ comments:

Signature of HSQ Quality Manager

Date

APPENDIX 5: APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL TO OPERATE A QCF QUALIFICATION SCHEME

See over for the application form for scheme approval.

APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL TO OPERATE A QCF QUALIFICATION SCHEME

Please complete this form as fully as possible in black ink.

SECTION 1: CENTRE DETAILS

Centre name

Address

Town

Postcode

Country

Name of centre manager

Telephone

Email address

Centre no

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Sub-centre no

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Name of scheme co-ordinator

Name

Telephone no

Email address

Name of quality assurance co-ordinator (if different from scheme co-ordinator)

Name

Telephone no

Email address

Tel no

SECTION 2: DETAILS OF THE QCF QUALIFICATION(S) THAT YOU WISH TO OFFER

On the table below, please indicate at column (f) the date by which you wish to start operating the qualifications and, at column (d), how many candidates you expect to enrol for it in the first year.

Qualification	Scheme no	Start date	Candidates in Year 1
(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)
Level 4 Diploma in Defence range safety	Q02-D4-001		
Level 3 Diploma in Defence range safety	Q02-D3-002		
Level 3 Certificate in Defence range safety	Q02-C3-003		
Level 4 Diploma in Planning and management of munition clearance operations	Q12-D4-001		
Level 3 Diploma in Supervisory management of munition clearance operations	Q12-D3-003		
Level 3 Certificate in Search for and disposal of munitions	Q12-C3-005		
Level 2 Diploma in Contribution to the disposal function	Q12-D2-007		
Level 1 Award in Support for munition clearance operation	Q12-A1-009		
Level 4 Diploma in Planning and management of specified target search operations	Q12-D4-002		
Level 3 Diploma in Supervisory management of specified targets search operations	Q12-D3-004		
Level 3 Certificate in Specified targets search	Q12-C3-006		
Level 2 Certificate in Contribution to the search function	Q12-C2-008		
Level 1 Award in Support for specified targets search operations	Q12-A1-010		
Level 2 Award in Movement of explosives	Q08-A2-001		

SECTION 3: SITES AT WHICH TRAINING AND/OR ASSESSMENTS WILL TAKE PLACE

Please list the names of local site contacts, addresses and telephone numbers of all sites at which assessments for the qualifications are to be offered. Please indicate whether training and/or assessment will take place at each location.

Location	Training and/or assessment (T, T&A or A)
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	

SECTION 4: DETAILS OF STAFF INVOLVED

Please complete the table below in respect of the scheme coordinator, quality assurance co-ordinator and assessors (including test markers) and teachers/trainers who will be involved with the qualification(s). HSQ will expect to see proof of occupational competence via certifications and/or CVs. If held, certified copies of teaching and assessment qualifications should be attached to CVs.

- Name** Provide the name of each scheme co-ordinator (SC), quality assurance co-ordinator (QAC), assessor (A) and teacher/trainer (T). NB: it is good practice for the teaching/training and assessment functions to be undertaken by different people.
- SC/A/QAC/AT** Using the appropriate abbreviation, indicate which role(s) the named person will be undertaking. *Note that one person may fulfil any or all of the roles of SC, QAC or A.*
- Location reference** This is the number which corresponds to the sites you listed (if any) above. Use this number to indicate the site at which the SC, QAC, A or T is based. Leave blank if the named person is based at the main centre address.
- Staff qualifications** Tick the appropriate box(es) to indicate the qualification/unit(s) achieved (if applicable). For PTLLS, CTLLS and DTLLS, please also list the level achieved. *Note that an SC does not need have any of the qualifications shown.*

Name	SC/QA C/A/T	Loc ref	Teaching qualifications				IV qualifications			Assessor qualifications			
			Cert Ed	PTLLS	CTLLS	DTLLS	V1 or D34	LLUK Units		A1 or D32+D33	LLUK Units		
								4 & 5	4 5 & 8		1 & 2	1 & 3	1, 2 & 3

Continue on a separate sheet if necessary. If in doubt about the qualification requirements contact HSQ.

SECTION 5: EVIDENCE

Please complete the “Evidence” column in the table below, showing how your organization meets the qualification approval criteria (some examples are listed in the second column to help you do this). Please be specific and refer to named procedures and documents wherever possible.

All the criteria must be satisfied. HSQ Systems Auditors will need access to the evidence you are offering when carrying out their centre approval visits. All approved centres are audited by HSQ to ensure their continuing compliance after the initial approval. By submitting an application for qualification(s) approval, that centre is making a commitment to maintaining the arrangements that meet the criteria.

Criteria	Examples of evidence	Evidence
1 There are sufficient occupationally competent teachers/trainers and assessors to assess the qualification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Criteria for appointment of teachers/trainers and assessors • Curriculum vitae for each teacher/trainer and assessor • Copies of certificates of relevant qualifications achieved 	
2 There are sufficient occupationally competent Quality Assurance Co-ordinators (QACs) to ensure quality assessments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Criteria for appointment of QACs • Curriculum Vitae for each QAC • Copies of certificates of relevant qualifications achieved 	
3 QACs have appropriate access to assessors for assessment decisions and practices to be reviewed regularly and acted upon to ensure consistent, fair assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schedules/records of meetings or other contact between QACs and assessors • Confirmation that sufficient time is allocated for above • Quality Assurance plans 	
4 Sufficient time is allowed for administering the scheme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work schedules/timetables 	

Criteria	Examples of evidence	Evidence
5 There are arrangements to ensure that equipment, procedures and accommodation are sufficient, safe and fit for use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspection of site to evaluate safety and adequacy of resources • Records of equipment maintenance and accommodation checks • Written/verbal explanation of how candidates will get access to scarce of specialist equipment 	
6 There is an effective system for communicating internally and externally	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff handbooks and updates • Organizational charts • Minutes of team meetings • Records of communication with external agencies 	
7 Information, advice and guidance on assessment is provided to candidates and to potential candidates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written/verbal explanation of how candidates can access information and guidance on assessment • Written/verbal explanation of how candidates are provided with appropriate documentation 	
8 Appropriate assessment method(s) is/are used	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An explanation of the proposed assessment method(s) • Confirmation that the assessment process covers the range of competences/knowledge needed to meet qualification requirements • Examples of assessment plans • Examples of internally-devised assessment materials • Examples of draft assignments 	

Criteria	Examples of evidence	Evidence
9 Accurate records of the assessment of candidates are maintained	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Example record of a candidate's progress from registration to certification • Flowchart or other document showing recording system • Information on number of candidates undertaking each qualification • Written/verbal explanation of recording system used 	
10 There are effective procedures for implementation and review of quality assurance arrangements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Details of arrangements for reviewing/evaluating/improving the effectiveness of quality assurance • Records of actions/procedures for taking action where assessment is unsatisfactory • Indication of time allowances for quality assurance responsibilities and confirmation that this is sufficient • File of policy documents 	
11 Appropriate provision is made for candidates with particular requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List of sources of information on materials/equipment/facilities to support candidates with particular requirements • Examples of such materials/equipment/facilities 	
12 The quality and fairness of assessment is systematically reviewed and monitored	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See 11 • Standardization activities 	
13 The centre is registered and is able to acquire unique learner numbers (ULNs) for their candidates via the Learner Registration Service (England only)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Description of how to acquire a ULN 	

OTHER INFORMATION

Does the centre offer other QCF qualifications at the same level or higher?	Yes / No
CVs for all members of the programme delivery team have been provided?	Yes / No
Sample assessment materials have been provided?	Yes / No

SECTION 6: DECLARATION

Declaration to be signed by the Quality Assurance Co-ordinator on behalf of the centre.

I declare that the information in this application is correct and current and that I am authorized to sign on behalf of the centre.

The centre agrees that it will submit an approval application update if there are any changes to the information in this application, and if qualification approval is given, the terms of the centre approval agreement will apply.

The centre agrees to pay the following fees for the processing of this scheme approval application:

£450 + VAT (approval to operate HSQ QCF scheme) (non-refundable) **plus**
£450 + VAT (Systems Auditor visit) (not refundable once the visit has taken place) **plus**
SA expenses will be paid on presentation of HSQ's invoice

Please invoice my centre / cheque enclosed (delete as appropriate)

Name (capitals)

Signature

Date

Email address

Tel no

For HSQ use only:

HSQ comments:

Signature of HSQ Quality Manager

Date

APPENDIX 6: PROPOSAL FOR A BESPOKE QUALIFICATION SCHEME

See over for the application form for scheme approval.

Bespoke qualifications may be based either on an organization's in-house training or on its assessment of a candidate's competence against one or more National Occupational Standard unit(s) not forming a VQ. If the NOS units form a VQ, then the organization should apply for normal VQ scheme approval using Appendix 4.

PROPOSAL FOR A BESPOKE QUALIFICATION SCHEME

Please complete this form as fully as possible in black ink. Please complete one form per proposed qualification.

SECTION 1: CENTRE DETAILS

Centre name

Address

Town

Postcode

Country

Name of centre manager / scheme co-ordinator / internal verifier co-ordinator / internal verifier or quality manager (please delete as applicable)

Telephone

Email address

Centre no

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Sub-centre no

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Proposed qualification title ³	Year 1 estimated candidate nos	Year 2 estimated candidate nos	Expected start date

Name of main point of contact for the scheme

Name

Telephone no

Email address

³ HSQ reserves the right to recommend or require changes to the proposed qualification title

SECTION 2: DETAILS OF THE PROPOSED BESPOKE QUALIFICATION

If your proposed scheme is based on in-house training, please complete the section 2A below. If your proposed scheme is based on employment activities measured against NOS, please go to section 2B.

SECTION 2A: TRAINING-BASED PROPOSAL

Please describe briefly the in-house training programme⁴ for which you are seeking accreditation.

Is the training:

Full time?

Part time?

What is its duration in learning hours⁵?

What is the proportion of theory and practice?

Theory

 %

Practice

 %

What is the target population for this qualification? (eg job titles)

⁴ HSQ may require copies of training objectives, programmes and any assessment materials

⁵ "Learning time" is defined as "All time associated with theoretical teaching and practical demonstrations, practical exercises, student-centred learning and formative and summative assessment which contributes to the achievement of the learning outcomes".

Is the qualification aimed at:

- | | |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| New entrants | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Operators (experienced) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Supervisors or technicians | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Managers | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Please describe or attach the assessment strategy for this training (see below for guidance notes)

The following points indicate the types of issues that should be borne in mind when developing an assessment strategy:

- What method(s) of assessment are to be used?
- What are the scoring/grading principles?
- How will the assessment be managed?
- What quality assurance arrangements are proposed?
- Will there be any external accreditation/recognition (other than HSQ) eg professional body memberships?
- What steps will be taken to ensure the continuing rigour of the assessment process to maintain standards and equity of assessment?
- How will instructional and/or assessment staff be recruited and developed in their job roles?

How will candidates' progress be tracked and completion recorded?

What is the target population for this qualification? (eg job titles)

Are there any entry requirements for the qualification? (eg length of relevant experience, achievement of other qualifications etc). If yes, please describe these

Is the qualification aimed at:

- New entrants
- Operators (experienced)
- Supervisors or technicians
- Managers

Please describe the proposed assessment strategy for the qualification (see below for guidance notes)

--

The following points indicate the types of issues that should be borne in mind when developing an assessment strategy:

- What method(s) of assessment are to be used?
- What are the scoring/grading principles?
- How will the assessment be managed?
- What quality assurance arrangements are proposed?
- Will there be any external accreditation/recognition (other than HSQ) eg professional body memberships?
- What steps will be taken to ensure the continuing rigour of the assessment process to maintain standards and equity of assessment?
- How will instructional and/or assessment staff be recruited and developed in their job roles?

SECTION 3: SITES AT WHICH ASSESSMENT(S) WILL TAKE PLACE

Please list the names of local site contacts, addresses and telephone numbers of all sites at which assessment(s) for the qualification is to be offered.

Location 1
Location 2
Location 3
Location 4

SECTION 4: DECLARATION

Declaration to be signed by the Quality Manager on behalf of the centre

I declare that the information in this application is correct and current and that I am authorized to sign on behalf of the centre.

The centre agrees that it will submit proposals for certificate designs to HSQ for approval and that these will include the HSQ logo.

The centre agrees that it will submit an approval application update if there are any changes to the information in this application, and if qualification approval is given, the terms of the centre approval agreement will apply.

I agree to pay the non-refundable fee of £750 + VAT (for an HSQ design) or £450 + VAT (for our own design) (please delete as appropriate) for the processing of this qualification approval application.

Please invoice my centre / cheque enclosed (delete as appropriate)

Name (capitals)

Signature

Date

Email address

Tel no

For HSQ use only:

Outcome:

Signature of HSQ Quality Manager

Date

APPENDIX 7: UPDATING CENTRE APPROVAL INFORMATION

See over for the form to update centre approval information.

UPDATING CENTRE APPROVAL INFORMATION FORM

SECTION 1: CHANGES TO CENTRE DETAILS

Centre name

Address

Town

Postcode

Country

Name of centre manager

Telephone

Email address

Change(s) to details of the person who will be responsible for the quality assurance of all HSQ schemes your centre intends to offer. This person will be referred to as the Quality Manager.

Name

Telephone

Email address

SECTION 2: CHANGES TO DETAILS OF SATELLITE CENTRES (IF ANY)

Please list the addresses of your satellite sites below:

Satellite Centre 1:

Satellite Centre 2

Satellite Centre 3

Satellite Centre 4

Satellite Centre 5

Satellite Centre 6

SECTION 3: CHANGES TO THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE CENTRE AND ITS SATELLITE SITES

APPENDIX 8: UPDATING SCHEME APPROVAL INFORMATION

See over for the form to update scheme approval information.

UPDATING SCHEME APPROVAL INFORMATION FORM

SECTION 1: CENTRE DETAILS (changes to these must be reported using Appendix 7
(Updating centre approval information form)

Centre name

Centre no:

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Scheme type: VQ / QCF / bespoke (delete as appropriate)

Scheme no:

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Name of scheme co-ordinator / internal verifier co-ordinator / internal verifier or quality manager (please delete as applicable)

Name

Telephone no

Email address

SECTION 2: CHANGES TO SITES AT WHICH ASSESSMENTS WILL TAKE PLACE

Please insert details of any changes to details of sites at which assessments for the qualifications are to be offered (i.e. notify of site closures, new sites and any changes to the name, address and telephone number of any local site contact).

Location 1
Location 2
Location 3
Location 4
Location 5
Location 6

SECTION 3: DETAILS OF STAFF INVOLVED

Refer to the appropriate sub-section below to update our records of the scheme coordinator, lead internal verifier, internal verifier(s), assessor(s), peripatetic assessor(s), tutor(s) and quality assurance co-ordinator (as applicable) who will be involved with the scheme.

SECTION 3A: VQ SCHEME

Use the table below to update details of the following:

- Name** Provide the name of each scheme co-ordinator (SC), internal verifier coordinator (IVC), internal verifier (IV), assessor (A), peripatetic assessor (PA), tutor (T) or quality manager (QM)
- SC/IVC/IV/A/PA/T/QM** Using the appropriate abbreviation, indicate which role(s) the named person will be undertaking. *Note that one person may fulfil any or all of the roles of SC, IVC or QM. A qualified IV may also be an A but may not internally verify his or her own assessments. IVCs are usually only necessary where there are more than 2 IVs supporting a scheme.*
- Location reference** This is the number which corresponds to the sites you listed (if any) above. Use this number to indicate the site at which the SC, IVC, IV, A, PA, T or QM is based. Leave blank if the named person is based at the main centre address.
- Occ exp** Tick this box to confirm that the SC / IVC / IV / A / T / PA / QM has the occupational expertise necessary to perform the role. The EV will expect to see proof of occupational competence via certifications and/or CVs (please refer to individual qualification documentation for details).
- Staff qualifications** Tick the appropriate box(es) to indicate the qualification/unit(s) achieved (if applicable). *Note that an SC does not need have any of the qualifications shown and that assessors and IVs do not need teaching qualifications unless working on a state-funded programme, where the minimum is PTLLS.*

Name	SC/QA C/A/T	Loc ref	Teaching qualifications				IV qualifications			Assessor qualifications			
			Cert Ed	PTLLS	CTLLS	DTLLS	V1 or D34	LLUK Units		A1 or D32+D33	LLUK Units		
								4 & 5	4 5 & 8		1 & 2	1 & 3	1, 2 & 3

Continue on a separate sheet if necessary. If in doubt about the qualification requirements contact HSQ.

SECTION 3B: QCF SCHEME

Use the table below to update details of the following:

- Name** Provide the name of each scheme co-ordinator (SC), quality assurance co-ordinator (QAC), assessor (A) and teacher/trainer (T). NB: it is good practice for the teaching/training and assessment functions to be undertaken by different people.
- SC/A/QAC/A/T** Using the appropriate abbreviation, indicate which role(s) the named person will be undertaking. *Note that one person may fulfil any or all of the roles of SC, QAC or A.*
- Location reference** This is the number which corresponds to the sites you listed (if any) above. Use this number to indicate the site at which the SC, QAC, A or T is based. Leave blank if the named person is based at the main centre address.
- Staff qualifications** Tick the appropriate box(es) to indicate the qualification/unit(s) achieved (if applicable). For PTLLS, CTLLS and DTLLS, please also list the level achieved. *Note that an SC does not need have any of the qualifications shown.*

Name	SC/QA C/A/T	Loc ref	Teaching qualifications				IV qualifications			Assessor qualifications			
			Cert Ed	PTLLS	CTLLS	DTLLS	V1 or D34	LLUK Units		A1 or D32+D33	LLUK Units		
								4 & 5	4 5 & 8		1 & 2	1 & 3	1, 2 & 3

Continue on a separate sheet if necessary. If in doubt about the qualification requirements contact HSQ.

SECTION 3C: BESPOKE SCHEME

Please update the name and contact details of the centre contact:

APPENDIX 9: ACCEPTABLE ASSESSOR AND INTERNAL VERIFIER QUALIFICATIONS see footnotes 1-5

Role	Options (must have at least A, B or C) <small>see footnote 2</small>	
Assessing in workplaces	A	QCF L3 Award in assessing competence in the work environment (LLUK Units 1 & 2) or QCF L3 Award in assessing vocational achievement (LLUK Units 1, 2 & 3)
	B	L&D Unit A1 Assess candidates using a range of methods or L&D Unit A2 Assess candidate's performance through observation <small>but see footnote 3</small>
	C	T&D Units D32 Assess candidate evidence using differing sources of evidence and D33 Assess candidate performance
Assessing in training environments	A	QCF L3 Award in assessing vocationally related achievement (LLUK Units 1 & 3) or L3 Award in assessing vocational achievement (LLUK Units 1, 2 and 3)
	B	L&D Unit A1 Assess candidates using a range of methods or L&D Unit A2 Assess candidate's performance through observation <small>but see footnote 3</small>
	C	T&D Units D32 Assess candidate evidence using differing sources of evidence and D33 Assess candidate performance
Assessing in workplaces and training environments	A	QCF L3 Award in assessing vocational achievement (LLUK Units 1, 2 & 3) or QCF L3 Award in assessing competence in the work environment (LLUK Units 1 & 2) with QCF L3 Award in assessing vocationally related achievement (LLUK Units 1 & 3)
	B	L&D Unit A1 Assess candidates using a range of methods or L&D Unit A2 Assess candidate's performance through observation <small>but see footnote 3</small>
	C	T&D Units D32 Assess candidate evidence using differing sources of evidence and D33 Assess candidate performance
Internally quality assuring / verifying	A	QCF L4 Award in the quality assurance of assessment processes and practice (LLUK Units 4 & 5)
	B	L&D Unit V1 Conduct internal quality assurance of the assessment process
	C	T&D Unit D34 Internally verify the assessment process
Leading an Internal quality assurance / verification team	A	QCF L4 Certificate in leading the internal quality assurance of assessment processes and practice (LLUK Units 4, 5 & 8)
	B	L&D Unit V1 Conduct internal quality assurance of the assessment process
	C	T&D Unit D34 Internally verify the assessment process

¹ These instructions are mandatory for staff involved in assessing/verifying NOS-based VQs and QCF qualifications and are best practice for those involved in other types of qualifications provision.

² Option A qualifications will be available no later than Jan 11, when the Qualifications & Credit Framework (QCF) is fully operational. Option B qualifications are due to close for registration 31 Dec 10 and for certification 31 Dec 13. Option C awards are no longer available but are acceptable subject to the individual having recent relevant experience and attended an update to the Option B standards.

³ L&D Unit A2 Assess candidate's performance through observation qualifies an assessor to assess through observation of performance **only** (ie he or she cannot assess other types of evidence eg witness testimony and will need an A1 assessor to assess these). Approved centres are advised to require assessors or potential assessors holding this qualification to upgrade to A1 or an appropriate Option A qualification.

⁴ Staff involved in any state-funded qualifications provision **must** also hold at least the *Level 3 Award in Preparing to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector*, be scheduled to undertake at least the *Level 4 Certificate in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector* within a specified period (usually no more than 5 years of commencing the role), and join the **Institute for Learning (IfL)**. Staff involved in the provision of HSQ QCF qualifications **must** meet these additional teaching qualification requirements, whether or not the provision is funded by the state, although IfL membership, though best practice, is only mandatory for funded provision.

⁵ If in doubt about any of the above, including how to gain the qualifications listed, please contact HSQ for advice.

APPENDIX 10: SCHEDULE OF CHARGES (AS AT 16 JANUARY 2012)

Centre approval	£900 + VAT + SA/EV expenses (including Quality Manual). Compulsory to operate any scheme. Includes external verification/systems audit fees. The cost of additional support required (eg the design of systems, policies and documentation) to be negotiated separately.
Annual renewal of centre approval	£450 + VAT + SA/EV expenses (if visit required)
QCF scheme approval	£450 + VAT + SA/EV expenses per scheme approval visit A QCF scheme is defined as one or more qualifications, the titles of which (excluding the size and level) are broadly similar (eg L3 Certificate, L3 Diploma and L4 Diploma in Defence Range Safety count as one scheme).
Approval to operate any ESA VQ scheme	£450 + VAT + SA/EV expenses per Key Role including Evidence Specifications ESA VQs are based on ESA National Occupational Standards (NOS).
Approval to operate a scheme designed for or by an employer (a bespoke scheme)	£450 + VAT + SA/EV expenses (excludes qualification development costs which are charged individually) Bespoke qualifications may be based either on an organization's in-house training or on its assessment of a candidate's competence against one or more National Occupational Standard unit(s) not forming an ESA VQ. If the NOS units form an ESA VQ, then the organization should apply for normal ESA VQ scheme approval. Bespoke qualifications may be nationally accredited through the QCF.
ESA VQ Scheme External Verification and bespoke/QCF Systems Auditor Visits	£450 + VAT + SA/EV expenses per visit. Biannual in year one, annual thereafter if centre achieves direct certification claim (DCS) status. All site visits will attract expenses for the staff member(s) involved.
Candidate fees for ESA VQs Levels 1 and 2 Level 3 Level 4	Includes registration, certification and supply of requisite standard portfolio for qualification concerned £90 + VAT per person £100 + VAT per person £110 + VAT per person
Candidate fees for bespoke certificates	£30 + VAT per person - includes registration and certification (see "QCF" fees below for nationally accredited bespoke qualifications)
Candidate fees for QCF qualification schemes: Award Certificate Diploma	Includes registration, certification supply of requisite standard portfolio for qualification concerned (includes QCF nationally accredited bespoke qualifications). £90 + VAT per person £100 + VAT per person £110+ VAT per person
Separate certification of unit(s) achieved (for any type of qualification).	£30 + VAT for up to 6 units on any one certificate, £5 + VAT for each additional unit. Cannot be applied if the units concerned form a full qualification.
Personal Development Plan template	£5 + VAT each
All other products and services	Prices on application (individually calculated)

Note: SA/EV travel time will be charged at £25 per hour for any travel exceeding 2 hours in any one day.