

# A guide to recruiting learners onto Pearson qualifications

2023

## Who and what is this guide for:

This guide is for centres who are delivering Pearson qualifications. It aims to support centres in recruiting learners onto our qualifications in a fair, equitable, and appropriate way. It is intended to help centres and learners make the right decisions when recruiting for, or enrolling onto, our qualifications.

If you have any questions about recruiting with integrity you can contact [Pearson Support Portal](#) for advice and support.

# Pearson Education Ltd – Our Mission and Values

At Pearson, our purpose is simple: to add life to a lifetime of learning. We believe that every learning opportunity is a chance for a personal breakthrough. That's why our c.20,000 Pearson employees are committed to creating vibrant and enriching learning experiences designed for real-life impact. We are the world's leading learning company, serving customers in nearly 200 countries with digital content, assessments, qualifications, and data. For us, learning isn't just what we do. It's who we are. Visit us at [www.pearsonplc.com](http://www.pearsonplc.com)

We are regulated by the UK qualifications regulators Ofqual (England), SQA Accreditation (Scotland), CCEA Regulation (Northern Ireland) and Qualifications Wales (Wales). Our regulatory policies are integral to our approach and articulate how we meet regulatory requirements. These policies are designed to support centres and students and set out clearly our approach to the design, delivery, and award of Pearson qualifications and services.

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# 1. What does this guide cover?

- 1.1 This guide covers recruitment for non-regulated and regulated qualifications offered in the UK and internationally.

## What are the aims of this guide?

- 1.2 To support you in taking the right decisions when considering recruiting learners onto qualifications and helping learners make appropriate choices.
- 1.3 To make sure that there is a fair and consistent approach to recruiting with integrity across our qualifications.
- 1.4 To clarify our recommendations of the age at which learners should begin studying for our general, vocational, higher national and apprenticeship qualifications.
- 1.5 To help you understand what we mean by 'recruiting with integrity' and how you can make sure that you meet your commitments in relation to recruitment under our Terms and Conditions.

# 2. What is recruiting with integrity?

- 2.1 When we say that you need to 'recruit with integrity' we mean that you must make sure that learners are recruited onto qualifications that will benefit them, that will meet their aims and aspirations and that they have the capability and opportunity to achieve. It is important that you understand this essential activity and that not recruiting with integrity may form malpractice and might lead to removal or your centre or programme approval. Read more about this in our [Removal of centre or programme approval policy](#).
- 2.2 For information about entering students for exams in a name that does not appear on official documentation please refer to our [Guidance on learner gender in registration and certification](#).
- 2.3 You must ensure that your marketing of Pearson qualifications reflects the principles set out in this policy. You must not market or promote qualifications to groups of learners for whom the qualification would be inappropriate because of age restrictions or other qualification requirements. You must not imply in your marketing that you can guarantee that learners will achieve a particular qualification outcome.

## 3. Recruiting with integrity: what to check

**3.1** Below is a list of things to consider when recruiting learners. These apply across all types of qualification. Before recruiting learners onto a qualification, you should check that the learners:

- Meet any eligibility criteria that are set. For example, some apprenticeships in the UK require learners to have the right to work in England.
- Understand whether the programme they are being recruited onto leads to a regulated qualification or not, what that qualification can lead to and whether this meets their needs and aspirations.
- Understand the requirements of the qualification they will be undertaking, including how they will be assessed and the need to adhere to academic requirements of the qualification.
- Are given the correct information and advice on their selected qualification(s).
- Have language skills that meet the required level for the assessment (where the language of the assessment is not the learner's first language).
- Understand what options are available to help them successfully meet the assessment requirements for example, using evidence from previous learning and experience. This may also include any reasonable adjustments to support learners with disabilities and/or long-term health conditions to meet the assessment requirements and whether these adjustments are permissible within the specification and relevant regulatory criteria (this requirement is also necessary for you to comply with the Equality Act 2010 and other associated UK legislation).
- Understand where they may not be able to achieve parts of the mandatory requirements and/or assessment for the qualification(s) (for example if a learner's requirements, even with reasonable adjustments, will prevent them from undertaking an assessment) and any limits on progression routes that may result from this.

## 4. Recruiting learners onto vocational qualifications

**4.1** In addition to the above, if you are recruiting learners onto vocational qualifications, you should make sure that they:

- Choose qualifications that are at an appropriate level - neither too high to restrict their ability to achieve, nor too low to prevent them from achieving their potential.

- Are registered onto the qualification before the published operational end date (available in the specification, on our website and on the relevant Regulator's register – for example Ofqual's Register of Regulated Qualifications).
- Have the capability and opportunity to achieve. It is good practice, if you are not already familiar with a learner's ability, to carry out a diagnostic assessment to help clarify their level of knowledge and skills and how that may match to a qualification level and requirements. There are a range of tools and activities for this, but as a minimum it should enable you to assess the confidence, commitment, and that the level of the qualification is appropriate to their learning and progression goals. You should make justifiable and professional judgements about each learner's potential to successfully achieve the qualification, including checking the learning outcomes and assessment criteria of mandatory units and selecting the most appropriate optional units.
- Can plan and study independently to create and submit only evidence that is their own work.
- Have access to the necessary resources and facilities to complete any practical activities or relevant work-based contexts such as work experience and real work environments.
- Can make an informed choice. This may include the opportunity to watch or participate in activities from different vocational areas or participate in a preparatory programme to familiarise themselves with assessment methods and learn techniques for managing their own learning, for example how to plan time, to research, to make notes.

## 5. Age entry recommendations for qualifications

- 5.1.** Some qualifications may have age restrictions for legal reasons (such as serving alcohol) or other restrictions relating to funding rules. You should first refer to the qualification specification to check, before accepting someone on to a course, that they meet all the necessary criteria (our specifications and centre handbooks are available on our website). It is your centre's responsibility to check funding rules for any restrictions.
- 5.2.** We cannot consider applications for special arrangements or special considerations for learners made on grounds related to the learners' age, so please make sure that you have checked the qualification specification and guidance to make sure that you are aware of any age restrictions.

## Guidance on the age of learners taking GCSE and A Levels

- 5.2 There are no formal entry requirements or age restrictions except for the November GCSE series for mathematics and English<sup>1</sup>. However, learners being recruited onto these qualifications need to be able to understand what is expected of them, including their responsibilities to submit only evidence that is their own work, and that they are aware of any activities they will be expected to take part in for authentication purposes. Learners will also need to understand what is required of them under exam conditions.

## Guidance on the age of learners taking vocational qualifications in England

- 5.3 DfE (Department for Education in England) guidance states that:
- Technical Awards are high quality level 1 – 2 qualifications that equip 14–16-year-olds with applied knowledge and practical skills.
  - Technical Certificates and Tech Levels are level 2 – 3 qualifications that equip post 16 students with the knowledge and skills they need for skilled employment or for further technical study.
  - Applied General qualifications are level 3 qualifications for post 16 learners who wish to continue their education through applied learning.
- 5.4 BTEC Firsts provide learners 14-16 years old with the opportunity to take a vocational qualification in their chosen area of study. These qualifications are designed to equip both sets of learners with the skills and knowledge they will need to progress to further study.

## Guidance on the age of learners taking Higher National qualifications

- 5.5 These qualifications are designed to be **appropriate for learners aged 18 or over**, however in some exceptional cases younger learners can be entered onto a Pearson BTEC Higher National programme.
- 5.6 Your responsibilities about consumer protection law as a Higher Education (HE) provider are set out in the following guide: Advice on Consumer Protection Law.

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<sup>1</sup> The November GCSE series for mathematics and English is restricted to those candidates who have attained the age of 16 by 1 September in the year of sitting.

## Guidance on the age of learners taking Apprenticeships

- 5.7** **Apprenticeships** are packages of training and, sometimes, qualifications, which are designed by industry bodies to give employees the appropriate skills and knowledge for a sector or job role. You should ensure support is given for employers as well as apprentices in making decisions about suitable Apprenticeship Standards and, where appropriate, mandatory qualifications required to progress to Gateway. Apprenticeship standards are supported by the UK government and **cannot be undertaken by people aged under 16**.
- 5.8** During the recruitment process, consideration must be made to the achievement of the knowledge, skills, and behaviours, as directed by the assessment plan.
- 5.9** Initial Screening must ensure that apprentices are in the correct role and are able to perform all duties in ensuring relevant and suitable evidence can be collated in informing their End-Point Assessment.
- 5.10** A suitable plan must also be drawn up to ensure the Apprentice has access to 20% off the job training, to further develop their knowledge and skills, which takes effect from day 1 of the Apprentice enrolling onto an Apprenticeship Standard.
- 5.11** In meeting Education Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) funding rules, agreements must be made between the apprentice, employer, and training provider to ensure the correct training, support and guidance is offered. To ensure compliance with ESFA funding rules, all evidence must be stored in the apprentice's evidence pack.

## 6. Other useful resources

- 6.1** There are other policies, documents and laws which will support you to recruit with integrity:
- [JCQ Access Arrangements, Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration General and Vocational qualifications](#)
  - [Equity, diversity, and inclusion in Pearson qualifications and related services policy](#)
  - [Policy for late registration and certification on withdrawn or expired Pearson qualifications](#)
  - [Pearson Policy for the removal of centre and programme approval](#)
  - [Pearson Supplementary guide for reasonable adjustment and Special considerations in vocational internally assessed units](#)
  - [Pearson Recognition of Prior Learning policy and process](#)
  - [Equality Act](#)



## 7. Regulatory references

- 7.1 UK regulators require all awarding organisations to establish and maintain their compliance with regulatory conditions and criteria. As part of this process, policies and guides that relate to Pearson’s status as an awarding organisation will reference any conditions and criteria that they address.

<b>Qualification regulator or relevant governing body</b>	<b>Regulatory rule or guidance document</b>	<b>Regulatory condition, criteria, or principle</b>
Ofqual	<u>General Conditions of Recognition</u>	C2
Ofqual	<u>General Conditions of Recognition</u>	D2
Ofqual	<u>General Conditions of Recognition</u>	G6
Qualifications Wales	<u>Standard Conditions of Recognition</u>	C2
Qualifications Wales	<u>Standard Conditions of Recognition</u>	D2
Qualifications Wales	<u>Standard Conditions of Recognition</u>	G6
CCEA Regulation	<u>General Conditions of Recognition</u>	C2
CCEA Regulation	<u>General Conditions of Recognition</u>	D2
CCEA Regulation	<u>General Conditions of Recognition</u>	G6
SQA Accreditation	<u>Regulatory Principles (2021)</u>	5
SQA Accreditation	<u>Regulatory Principles (2021)</u>	14
JCQ	<u>General regulations for approved centres</u>	5.3 f
JCQ	<u>General regulations for approved centres</u>	5.3 g
JCQ	<u>General regulations for approved centres</u>	5.4
JCQ	<u>General regulations for approved centres</u>	5.5

## 8. Review date

- 8.1. This guide will be reviewed in October 2024.