

Centre approval and qualification policy

Document summary

Guidelines for centres delivering Pearson Vocational qualifications UK and Internationally, including subsites, exceptional collaborations and online delivery for BTECs
2025–26

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Pearson Education Ltd – our mission and values

Our purpose is simple: to help people realize the life they imagine through learning. We believe that every learning opportunity is a chance for a personal breakthrough. That's why our c. 18,000 Pearson employees are committed to creating vibrant and enriching learning experiences designed for real-life impact. We are the world's lifelong 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 [pearsonplc.com](https://www.pearsonplc.com).

We are regulated by the UK qualifications regulators Ofqual (England), 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.

Introduction

This document describes the centre approval and qualification policy for institutions aiming to deliver Pearson Vocational qualifications UK and internationally. It addresses important elements such as the approval process, management of subsites, exceptional collaborations, online delivery, and other guidance. The policy aims to maintain consistency, quality, and adherence to Pearson's standards in educational delivery.

Specialist vocational qualifications require centres to carefully review and adhere to the specific approval guidance provided by Pearson. This can be found in the approval handbook. All customers must undergo due diligence checks to ensure compliance with our standards. A credit check may also be required in some circumstances. Pearson reserves the right to decline approval applications in accordance with our [terms and conditions](#).

1. Centre approval process

Eligibility criteria for UK and international prospective centres

1.1 Centres must demonstrate the following to be eligible for approval:

- Compliance with country regulatory and accreditation requirements.
- A robust organisational structure to support qualification delivery and assessment.
- Qualified staff with relevant experience in the subject area. **A minimum of two qualified teaching staff are assigned to each BTEC qualification** to maintain the quality of delivery and provide adequate support to learners.
- **A minimum of three qualified teaching staff are assigned to each competence-based qualification** to provide and maintain adequate support to learners.
- Adequate physical and digital facilities to support teaching and learning. Please check qualification specifications for any unique resources required for specialist pathways.
- Internal policies listed in our handbook.

1.2 Higher National (HN) qualifications require enhanced due diligence checks and additional checks including those in relation to organisational governance, relationships with other organisations including OfS and Ofsted. We reserve the right to contact any third party for references, reports, information on status and recent

activity and other relevant information. A cap on learner registrations will be placed on newly approved HN programmes.

- 1.3 All new International centres are required to pay an Approval Application and Implementation Training fee which is based on the inclusion of two Pearson VQ programmes in the first new centre application. Further charges will be made for additional programme approvals in line with the relevant fee booklet.

Automatic/fast-track qualification approval criteria

- 1.4 Centres may be eligible for automatic qualification approval for similar replacement qualifications if they meet specific criteria demonstrating their operational and quality standards. The centre must have actively delivered qualifications within the last two years, showing consistent involvement in education and training. Additionally, the centre must display clear and positive quality assurance outcomes, reflecting adherence to academic and operational standards.
- 1.5 For approval of additional qualifications in the same suite, the centre must already have approval for qualifications within the relevant suite, ensuring alignment with Pearson's requirements and objectives.
- 1.6 In accordance with Pearson's [centre closure policy](#), if a centre remains inactive for two years or more, qualification and centre approval will be removed from the Pearson platform ie Edexcel Online (EOL) and we will issue a centre closure notice to confirm this action. International centres wishing to re-establish their delivery of previously approved qualifications, will need to go through full approval including any training associated with international approval.

Approval for subsites

- 1.7 Subsites can only be approved if they maintain a relationship within the ownership structure of the main site. In cases where subsites do not possess such ownership relationships, they must follow the exceptional collaboration process outlined in this [policy](#).
- 1.8 If a centre operates multiple sites, each subsite must individually meet the eligibility criteria in 1.1 and undergo separate approval. Subsites must adhere to the same standards of quality and compliance as the main centre. This will include a sample of evidence learners at each site. This will be conducted through our quality assurance model to ensure continued adherence to Pearson's regulations.

2. Exceptional collaborations for UK and International centres

- 2.1 Exceptional collaborations, such as partnerships with industry leaders or other educational institutions, must be pre-approved by Pearson. The approval process includes:
- submission of an application detailing the nature and scope of the collaboration.
 - assessment of the collaborative partner's credentials and alignment with Pearson's objectives.
 - regular monitoring and evaluation of the collaboration's impact on student outcomes.
- 2.2 All collaborations must comply with Pearson's ethical guidelines and educational standards. See our [collaborative and consortium arrangements for the delivery of vocational qualifications policy](#).
- 2.3 International centres entering exceptional collaborations will incur fees as outlined in the fee booklet. These collaborations need extra training beyond Pearson's standard onboarding for international centres. Pearson will provide training for main and collaborating centres on topics including:
- Holistic assessment in assignments.
 - Internal verification management.
 - Standards verification.
 - Plagiarism.
 - AI in assessment.
 - Recruiting with integrity.

3. Online delivery approval

Approval for UK and international online delivery

- 3.1 Separate approval for online delivery of our qualifications is required following the full approval process, for both UK and international centres. Centres must demonstrate that their platforms and processes meet the requirements within the Annex in the policy.

- 3.2 International centres wishing to deliver qualifications to learners within the UK, can offer international versions of those qualifications. However, if they intend to deliver UK-regulated qualifications, they must be set up and approved as a UK centre. For more guidance, see our [distance learning and assessment policy](#).

4. Assured by Pearson approval

Approval for UK and International Assured by Pearson qualifications

- 4.1 Assured by Pearson is our tailored service, which ensures your programmes meet the highest standards of excellence, backed by Pearson's expertise in education, quality assurance and digital innovation. Assured by Pearson is designed for organisations looking to enhance the quality, consistency and credibility of their training programmes.
- 4.2 Centres must be able to demonstrate the following to be eligible for approval:
- Policies and processes are in place to ensure the training meets global benchmarks for quality.
 - Internal quality assurance processes are in place.
- 4.3 [Find out more about Assured by Pearson programme approval.](#)

5. Operational implications of a finance block

- 5.1 A finance block imposes specific restrictions and operational requirements on centres. Until the block is lifted, centres are prohibited from engaging in certain activities, including:
- Advertising or promoting qualifications
 - Enrolling new learners.
- 5.2 Additional checks and validations may be required to clear the finance block and resume standard operations. These checks ensure that the centre is compliant with financial and operational standards set by Pearson.

- 5.3 During a finance block, Pearson continues to maintain quality assurance for learners who were registered prior to the block. Certification will also be provided for learners who meet the necessary requirements. This approach safeguards the integrity of the qualifications and ensures that learners are not adversely affected by the block.
- 5.4 Once the finance block is cleared, centres must adhere to [Pearson's guidelines](#) and ensure compliance with all operational procedures to prevent future disruptions.

6. Ongoing monitoring and quality assurance

- 6.1 All approved centres, subsites, and collaborative ventures will be subject to regular monitoring to ensure compliance with Pearson's standards. This includes:
- Annual reviews of teaching practices, assessment methods, and student outcomes.
 - Feedback mechanisms for students and staff to report issues or suggest improvements.
 - Periodic renewal of approval based on the centre's performance and adherence to guidelines.
- 6.2 See the [BTEC centre guide to quality assurance](#) for more information.

7. Countries of risk

- 7.1 Pearson recognizes that geopolitical, economic, and regulatory risks may arise in certain countries. As such, we maintain a dynamic onboarding and offboarding policy for centres operating in these regions. This policy ensures compliance with international standards, safeguarding learner outcomes, and protecting the integrity of Pearson's qualifications.
- 7.2 Centres in countries identified as high-risk will undergo an enhanced approval process, including:
- Enhanced due diligence to evaluate operational and legal compliance.
 - Assessment of the centre's contingency plans to mitigate identified risks.
 - Regular monitoring through periodic audits and evaluations to support ongoing compliance.

- 7.3 Should a country be newly identified as high-risk due to emerging circumstances, Pearson reserves the right to temporarily suspend the onboarding process or initiate offboarding procedures for centres in these regions. Centres will be informed of the risks and given an opportunity to address specific concerns before any final decision is made.
- 7.4 Conversely, if risks in a previously high-risk country are deemed to have subsided, Pearson will reassess the operational environment and consider re-onboarding centres, subject to the full approval process. Centres are encouraged to maintain open communication with Pearson representatives to stay informed of any changes to risk assessments that may impact their approval status.
- 7.5 This policy ensures that Pearson continues to uphold its commitment to delivering high-quality education in a responsible and ethical manner.

8. Conclusion

- 8.1 Pearson is committed to supporting centres in delivering world-class qualifications that empower learners. Centres are encouraged to engage with Pearson representatives for guidance and support throughout the approval process and during the delivery of qualifications. See our [becoming a Pearson centre page for more information](#).
- 8.2 For all validation processes requiring signatures, whether approval forms, collaboration agreements or compliance documentation, we will accept either wet signatures or email signatures as valid. Centres must ensure that these signatures are securely obtained and properly documented to maintain the integrity of the approval process. Pearson representatives may request verification of the signature method during audits or evaluations.

9. Regulatory references

- 9.1 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.
- 9.2 This policy addresses the following regulatory criteria and conditions:

Qualification regulator or relevant governing body	Regulatory rule or guidance document	Regulatory condition or criteria
Ofqual	General Conditions of Recognition	B5.1; B5.2; C1; C2; C2.3; D2; E4; E7; G1; G6; G8; G9
CCEA Regulation	General Conditions of Recognition	B5.1; B5.2; C1; C2; C2.3; D2; E4; E7; G1; G6; G8; G9
Qualifications Wales	Qualification Wales Standard Conditions of recognition	B5.1; B5.2; C1; C2; C2.3; D2; E4; E7; G1; G6; G8; G9

10. Review date

10.1 This policy will be reviewed in June 2026.

11. Version control

Version	Changes	Date
0.2	1.3 New criteria added All new International centres are required to pay an Approval Application and Implementation Training fee which is based on the inclusion of two Pearson VQ programmes in the first new centre application. Further charges will be made for additional programme approvals in line with the relevant fee booklet.	27 th March 2026
n/a	New policy	27 th June 2025

