

# Collaborative and consortium arrangements for the delivery of vocational qualifications policy

2023

## Who and what is this policy for:

This policy is for centres to use when working with other centres in formal, informal, and exceptional collaborative arrangements to deliver Pearson vocational qualifications. This policy describes the requirements needed to ensure quality assurance and certification can take place.

# 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. Scope of policy

- 1.1 This policy:
- Describes the models of collaborative (also known as consortium) arrangements that we will approve.
  - Describes the process for centres applying to have collaborative arrangements.
  - Describes the role of centres in different types of arrangement.
- 1.2 We can approve collaborative arrangements between international centres on a case-by-case basis only. Please contact the team via the [Pearson Support Portal](#).
- 1.3 If you are unsure of the type of arrangement you have, please contact us for help and advice via the [Pearson Support Portal](#).
- 1.4 **This policy applies to** centres which deliver vocational qualifications, including **regulated BTECs, NVQs, and SVQs<sup>1</sup>**. For information about delivering Functional Skills or ESOL qualifications collaboratively, contact our experts for advice via the [Pearson Support Portal](#).
- 1.5 Arrangements for Pearson's Self-Regulated Framework qualifications include:
- International SRF qualifications can operate in a consortium with Pearson approval. This can be applied for through a formal collaborative arrangement.
  - Centres who own the intellectual property of the SRF qualification can operate across consortium arrangements in agreement with us. Centres can apply to do this through an exceptional arrangement.

## 2. Policy statement

- 2.1 Most vocational qualifications are suitable for collaborative arrangements. However, qualifications that include forms of external assessment may not be suitable, due to the requirements of safe storage at unapproved sites. Please contact us for advice via the [Pearson Support Portal](#).

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<sup>1</sup> Note that SVQs and SQA Accredited qualifications cannot be offered internationally. T Levels are not within the scope of these arrangements.

- 2.2 It's important that you have approval from us before you begin delivering programmes so that we can support you and put in place quality assurance mechanisms which will strengthen your collaborative arrangement. There is a risk that we would not be able to allow certification for learners that have been assessed as part of an unapproved collaborative arrangement.
- 2.3 Failure to inform us of a collaborative arrangement may lead to the removal of your centre approval or a malpractice investigation. For more information about this please read our [Policy on the removal of programme or centre approval](#).
- 2.4 We monitor all centres involved in a collaborative arrangement as part of our quality assurance process. This could include unannounced and short notice visits.
- 2.5 We reserve the right to withdraw approval, suspend approval or suspend certification if there is unapproved collaboration, a change of circumstances or there has been a breach of our terms and conditions.

### 3. What are the different types of collaborative arrangements?

**Informal collaborative arrangements**

**Formal collaborative arrangements (also known as consortium).** You must apply for approval for these types of arrangements via the Pearson Support Portal.

**Exceptional collaborative arrangements.** You must apply for approval for these types of arrangements via the Pearson Support Portal.

#### Informal collaborative arrangement

- 3.1 **Two or more approved centres**, each with their own centre number and qualification approval, work together to share information, assignments, staff, and physical resources. There is no shared assessment, and each centre has total ownership of its own quality assurance.
- 3.2 You do not need approval from us for this arrangement.

## Formal collaborative arrangements (also known as a consortium)

- 3.3** Formal collaborative arrangements should be applied for if two or more approved Pearson centres work together to deliver, assess and quality assure specific Pearson qualifications.
- 3.4** You must apply for approval for this type of arrangement before you recruit or start delivering any qualifications under a formal collaborative arrangement. Formal collaborative arrangement approvals are made via the [Pearson Support Portal](#).
- 3.5** To be considered for a collaborative arrangement all centres in these proposed arrangements, must have approval for each qualification (including the appropriate qualification size and pathway) that they intend to deliver this way.
- 3.6** Learners who are being taught and/or assessed as part of a collaborative arrangement programme are the responsibility of the centre at which they are registered.
- 3.7** Each centre that registers learners within the arrangement, must ensure that they have oversight of the quality assurance of the qualification(s) that they have registered learners on, in the arrangement.
- 3.8** **For UK centres**, the centre which receives public funding must register learners and must retain oversight of the quality assurance of the qualifications. **Certificates will show the details of the centre of registration.**
- 3.9** One centre will act as the lead centre for the collaborative arrangement. The lead centre is responsible for:
- Ensuring that all centres have programme approval and that the Collaborative Arrangements Application Form is completed and submitted to Pearson Approvals via [Pearson Support Portal](#).
  - Coordinating the quality assurance for each qualification being delivered and assessed in a formal collaborative arrangement.
  - Ensuring that a Lead Internal Verifier is registered appropriately, for each qualification delivered within the arrangement.
  - Ensuring that standardisation activities are completed by all staff undertaking formal assessment of learners within the arrangement.
  - Monitoring and developing the quality of provision within the collaborative arrangement. This includes coordinating an annual review of the quality of delivery and/or assessment for each qualification approved across the formal collaborative arrangement. The records and reviews must be made available to us.
  - Ensuring that all learners have been recruited with integrity and are registered on the correct course code at their respective centre/s within the arrangement.

- Communicating any changes in the collaborative arrangement to Pearson and informing us of any amendments that are required, regarding qualifications or Pearson centres within the arrangement including where a centre withdraws, or the arrangement ends (please see section 4 of this policy).
- 3.10** The delivery and/or assessment of each qualification that is delivered through a formal collaborative agreement must meet the learning outcomes and assessment requirements of the qualifications.
- 3.11** All learners will be managed as a single cohort for the qualification in a collaborative arrangement. This means that we will allocate a Standards Verifier or External Examiner (Higher National qualification) to each programme or subject, who will sample learners from across the arrangement. Any quality assurance outcomes related to the programme will apply to all centres in the arrangement.
- 3.12** If a formal collaborative arrangement is inactive for a two-year period or more, approval may be removed.

## Exceptional collaborative arrangements

- 3.13** **Two organisations work** to deliver, assess or quality assure specific Pearson qualifications. One of the organisations must be approved by Pearson to deliver the qualifications and will act as the lead centre.
- 3.14** **You must apply for approval for this type of arrangement.** All applications should be sent to the [Pearson Support Portal](#) and must be approved by Pearson Centre Management before any recruitment or delivery.
- 3.15** **The lead organisation must have approval to deliver the qualifications** included within this arrangement. If they do not have approval, they will need to submit a Pearson Vocational Qualification approval application form.
- 3.16** The lead centre is responsible for:
- Ensuring the Collaborative Arrangements Application Form is completed and submitted to Pearson Approvals via the [Pearson Support Portal](#).
  - Ensuring that all delivery sites and qualifications delivered through the arrangement have approval. A written contract between all participating organisations that will be lodged with us and subject to annual review.
  - Completing 'due diligence' checks on all organisations involved in the arrangement, if not Pearson approved.
  - Accountable for the integrity of recruiting, interviewing, enrolling and inducting learners into their study within the arrangement.
  - Ensuring learners are aware of the roles of the different centres within the arrangement, such as registration and certification details. Certificates will show the details of the approved Pearson centre in the arrangement where registrations are made.

- Ensuring the delivery, assessment and quality assurance for each qualification being delivered and assessed meets Pearson requirements.
- Registering a Lead Internal Verifier for each qualification delivered within the arrangement, as appropriate.
- Coordinating the quality assurance for each qualification being delivered and assessed in an exceptional collaborative arrangement.
- Ensuring that standardisation activities are completed by all staff undertaking formal assessment of learners within the arrangement.
- The quality of provision within the arrangement. This includes coordinating an annual review of the quality of delivery and/or assessment for each qualification approved across the exceptional collaborative arrangement. The records and reviews must be made available to us.
- Ensuring that all learners are registered with the correct course code and registered under the correct delivery site at the lead centre.
- Ensuring all marketing and promotional materials for programmes that are delivered through such an arrangement are accurate and in line with Pearson guidelines. For further information please refer to the [UK and International Centre and Qualification Approval Terms and Conditions](#) (section 5).
- Communicating any changes in the exceptional collaborative arrangement to Pearson and informing us of any amendments that are required, regarding qualifications or Pearson centres within the arrangement. This includes informing Pearson if the arrangement is to be withdrawn or ended by any of the partners in the arrangement by submitting an updated or new application form through the [Pearson Support Portal](#).

**3.17** The delivery and/or assessment of each qualification that is delivered through the arrangement must meet the learning outcomes and assessment requirements of the qualifications.

**3.18** All learners will be managed as a single cohort for the qualification in an exceptional collaborative arrangement. This means that we will allocate a Standards Verifier / External Examiner to each subject or programme, who will sample learners from across the arrangement. Where this is not deemed suitable, Pearson will review this on a case-by-case basis and communicate with the Lead Centre. Any quality assurance outcomes related to the programme will apply to all organisations in the arrangement.

**3.19** If an exceptional collaborative arrangement is inactive for a two-year period or more, approval may be removed.

## Distance learning

**3.20** If a centre intends to deliver Pearson qualifications under a collaborative arrangement through distance learning, the lead centre in the arrangement must [apply for distance learning](#) approval prior to delivery. Distance learning approval only covers the specific



qualifications identified in the distance learning application and will be reviewed at individual qualification level.

- 3.21 For further information on distance learning, please see the [Pearson distance learning and assessment policy](#).
- 3.22 The responsibility for the management of qualifications delivered through distance learning always lies with the lead centre in an exceptional collaboration or formal collaboration.
- 3.23 Pearson quality assurance activities will report on programmes delivered through distance learning separately to programmes delivered through classroom-based or blended learning models.

## 4. What happens if a centre wants to leave an arrangement?

- 4.1 If any of the centres included in a formal or exceptional arrangement decide to end an agreement, it is important to inform us at least ten working days before the arrangement ends, so that we can work together to make sure that the interest of any learner is protected. You must inform us via the [Pearson Support Portal](#).
- 4.2 If a centre or organisation wishes to leave a formal collaborative arrangement or exceptional collaborative arrangement but continue to offer the qualification independently within the centre or organisation, registrations must be made on the centre approved qualification code and not the formal collaborative arrangement qualification code. If an organisation is not Pearson approved, they must first apply for Pearson recognition and qualification approval. Details can be found on the [Pearson Qualifications website - Becoming a Centre](#).

## 5. Regulatory references

- 5.1 UK regulators require all awarding organisations to establish and maintain their compliance with regulatory conditions and criteria. As part of this process, policies that relate to Pearson's status as an awarding organisation will reference any conditions and criteria that they address.
- 5.2 This policy addresses the following regulatory criteria and conditions:

<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>	C1
Ofqual	<u>General Conditions of Recognition</u>	C2
Qualifications Wales	<u>Standard Conditions of Recognition</u>	C1
Qualifications Wales	<u>Standard Conditions of Recognition</u>	C2
CCEA Regulation	<u>General Conditions of Recognition</u>	C1
CCEA Regulation	<u>General Conditions of Recognition</u>	C2
SQA Accreditation	<u>Regulatory Principles (2021)</u>	12
SQA Accreditation	<u>Regulatory Principles (2021)</u>	13

## 6. Policy review date

6.1 This policy will be reviewed in October 2024.

## 7. Useful information

7.1 For more information there is a guide on our website: [Centre consortia](#)

# Frequently Asked Questions

<b>Question</b>	<b>Informal Collaboration</b>	<b>Collaborative Arrangements</b>	<b>Exceptional Collaborative Arrangements</b>
<b>How many centres are involved?</b>	2 or more approved centres	2 or more approved centres	2 or more centres (at least one of which must be an Approved Pearson centre)
<b>Who has responsibility for registration and certification of learners?</b>	Each centre registers their own learners	Each centre registers their own learners	Lead Centre
<b>Who is undertaking the assessment?</b>	Each centre is responsible for assessment of their own learners	Centre delivering the qualification	Lead Centre/ or any party within the arrangement
<b>Who is responsible for the learners?</b>	The registering centre	The registering centre	The Lead Centre
<b>Who is responsible for quality assuring assessment?</b>	The registering centre	The lead centre and all centres that are delivering	Lead Centre
<b>Is Pearson approval required for the arrangement?</b>	No	Yes	Yes - with written agreement between all parties
<b>Who should have programme approval for the qualification they are applying for?</b>	All centres involved	All centres involved	The Lead Centre
<b>How will my EOL account reflect the arrangement?</b>	Not applicable	Not applicable	Each separate party within the arrangement will be given a sub-site reference under the Lead Centre number

Question	Informal Collaboration	Collaborative Arrangements	Exceptional Collaborative Arrangements
<b>Higher Nationals only: I have a number cap on my HN programmes, how will the cap(s) work in a collaborative arrangement?</b>	Each centre must remain within its own HN number cap(s)	Each centre must remain within its own HN number cap(s)	The Lead centre must ensure that it remains within its own HN number cap(s), which will include all HN students registered within the agreement