

Vocational and General centre and qualification approval in high-risk locations policy

Document summary

Centres seeking approval to deliver General or Vocational qualifications in high-risk locations or centres operating in a country that has been flagged by our Corporate Security Team as a high-risk location because there have been changes to local circumstances.

Contents

Pearson Education Ltd – our mission and values	3
1. Scope of policy	4
2. Policy statement	4
3. Regulatory references	5
4. Policy review date	6
5. Version control	6

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.

1. Scope of policy

- 1.1 This policy applies to any centre seeking approval to deliver General or Vocational qualifications including Pearson's Self Regulated qualifications, and Pearson English International Certificate.

2. Policy statement

- 2.1 Pearson's Centre and Qualification approval processes involves the checking of facilities, staffing, physical resources, and compliance with the [General Conditions of Recognition](#).
- 2.2 There are several internal checks that need to be carried out by Pearson before we can approve a new centre. First, trade sanctions are in place for some locations. Sanctioned territories are classified as high, medium, or low risk. Trade transactions in high-risk locations or with people from high-risk locations are generally prohibited.
- 2.3 Second, security intelligence informs a Pearson security risk rating for each country. The risk ratings are:

- Prohibited.
- Restricted.
- Unrestricted.

Pearson staff may not be able to visit centres that are in countries that have been given a "prohibited" rating, and additional security measures may be needed for visits to countries that have been rated as restricted. Pearson Regional Teams can advise prospective centres about which risk category their location comes under.

- 2.4 Where a high-risk trade sanction is in place, we cannot approve new centres in that location or accept new registrations or entries from an existing centre. Where a centre is operating in a country and trade sanctions are imposed, we will work on a case-by-case basis to support existing learners.
- 2.5 We cannot approve a new centre in a country that is listed by our Corporate Security Team as being in a prohibited location, except on an exceptional case-by-case basis, because:
- For vocational qualifications we cannot visit to provide support and maintain quality assurance processes and procedures such as standards verification.

- For General Qualifications, we cannot carry out Test Inspections to ensure the integrity of our examinations.
- 2.6 In exceptional cases a rationale will need to be provided to our Head of Centre Management who must authorise this before approval can proceed.
 - 2.7 If an existing Vocational Centre is operating in a country which becomes flagged as a prohibited location, we will support the centre as much as possible to prevent any disadvantage to existing learners. This may involve meeting centre staff in a neighbouring safe location, appointing local standards verifiers or remote standards verification. We cannot approve any additional qualifications until the security risk rating changes.
 - 2.8 If an existing General Qualification centre is operating in a location which becomes flagged as a prohibited location, we will support the centre as much as possible to prevent any disadvantage to existing learners. This may involve appointing local Test Inspectors, working with a local third party or carrying out remote test inspections.
 - 2.9 If an existing General Qualification centre is operating in a location which becomes flagged as a prohibited location, we may not be able to send hard copy exam papers, and these will be sent by Secure File Transfer only.
 - 2.10 Where an existing Vocational or General Qualifications centre becomes flagged as operating in a prohibited location and we are unable to appoint a third party to conduct test inspections, we may restrict new entries and registrations until the security risk rating changes. If this is the case, we will always ensure that existing learners are not disadvantaged as far as possible.
 - 2.11 For countries that have been classed as restricted and where there is a significant threat to the safety of Pearson staff, but a centre is not in a prohibited location, we will consult with our Corporate Security Team to ensure appropriate security measures can be put in place. In some circumstances, we may not be able to approve a centre in a restricted location if an appropriate package of security measures cannot be implemented.
 - 2.12 If an existing centre is operating in a location that becomes restricted, we will work with the centre to implement an appropriate package of security measures wherever possible.

3. Regulatory references

- 3.1 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.

3.2 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	C1.1; C2.1; C2.2; C2.3; C2.4; C2.5

4. Policy review date

4.1 This policy will be reviewed in September 2026.

5. Version control

Version	Changes	Date
1.4	Removed text 'Pearson Edexcel accredited Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQs) are excluded from being delivered outside the United Kingdom and they are outside the scope of this policy.'	31 st October 2025
1.4	2.9 Clarified that we may not be able to send hard copy papers as opposed to will not be able to send hard copy papers	31 st October 2025
1.4	2.10 Clarified that where we are unable to use a third party to conduct test inspections, we may restrict new entries and registrations until the security risk rating changes.	31 st October 2025