

The logo for PAAVQ-SET features the text 'PAAVQ-SET' in a bold, white, sans-serif font. The letters are set against a dark purple background that contains several large, overlapping, lighter purple circular and curved shapes, creating a sense of motion and depth. A thin white vertical line runs down the left side of the page, passing through the logo area.

# PAAVQ-SET

## GUIDE FOR CENTRES

### Achieving QCF Centre Recognition

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# GUIDE FOR CENTRES

## ACHIEVING QCF CENTRE RECOGNITION

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## ABOUT PAA\VO-SET

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PAA\VO-SET is an independent UK Specialist Awarding Body offering vocational qualifications in a wide range of specialised sectors. It is recognised and accredited by UK Government Qualification Regulators; the Office of the Qualifications and Examinations Regulator (Ofqual), the Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills of the Welsh Assembly Government (DCELLS) and the Council for the Curriculum Examinations and Assessment (CCEA). Qualifications offered by PAA\VO-SET are accredited through the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) - this framework recognises and accredits qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, and is designed to make the vocational qualification system more flexible and relevant to the needs of employers and learners.

PAA\VO-SET works closely with the UK business community, colleges and training providers using a national network of centres to ensure that the qualification provision is responsive, flexible and quality assured.

PAA\VO-SET has been accredited for ISO 9001 since 1998 to ensure that we operate effective and efficient administration systems. All staff are highly competent experts to ensure that our portfolio of over 100 specialised qualifications have integrity and quality.

PAA\VO-SET offer over 100 specialised vocational qualifications to a wide range of sectors including:

- Chemical, Pharmaceutical and Petro-Chemical
- Engineering
- Glazed Ceramics Manufacture
- Hydrocarbons and Refineries
- Laundry and Dry Cleaning
- Meteorology
- Nuclear
- Paper Manufacture
- Polymers and Composites
- Process Manufacturing
- Signmaking

PAA\VO-SET also offer qualifications that will benefit various sectors, such as:

- Business Improvement
- Laboratory Operations
- Learning and Development
- Warehousing and Storage

PAA\VO-SET is committed to providing accreditation of unique and specialised qualifications for the above sectors. PAA\VO-SET operates in close partnerships with these businesses to meet customer needs and to provide valued qualifications for their skilled workforce.

## INTRODUCTION TO THE GUIDE

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This Guide for Centres has been developed to meet the needs of potential and new centres. Its purpose is to advise and recommend good practice on how to become a centre for PAA\VO-SET offering specified QCF qualifications, as well as a point of reference for the general principles and policies of PAA\VO-SET.

The information provided is of a general nature - where more detail is sought other publications will be recommended or further discussions are needed with the centre's External Verifier or direct to PAA\VO-SET.

The Guide will assist and support new centres to implement a specific QCF qualification and set up the rigorous quality assurance procedures necessary to run it.

## EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

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PAA\VO-SET recognises that the diversity of our community of learners, colleges employer centres, training providers, External Verifiers, other specialist teams and our staff is a huge asset and therefore will not tolerate the less favourable treatment of anyone on the grounds of their gender, age, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, responsibility for dependents, trade union or political activities, religious or other beliefs, or any other reason which cannot be shown to be justified.

In driving forward this policy we will: -

1. Seek to ensure that our Learners, Staff, External Verifiers and Development Teams reflect the diverse Communities where we offer qualifications and that every person we deploy to deliver services on our behalf is treated fairly during the whole of the time spent working with us.
2. Take action to eradicate discrimination and inequality when developing and delivering qualifications.
3. Fulfil our obligations by adopting legal, national and local guidelines that seek to ensure equality of opportunity, eradicate discrimination and promote good relations between all the Stakeholders that are involved in our Qualifications.
4. Evaluate the impact of our policies, services and functions on learners, training providers, colleges and employers then make changes to them where they impact unfairly or adversely on any group or individual.
5. Make equalities a part of everyday working practice and in an appropriate manner and level; train our employees and every person we deploy to carry out this policy.
6. Make any necessary changes to our working practices, our publicly available information and documents so that PAA\VO-SET's information and services are accessible.
7. Work with others to prevent and remove any harassment and intimidation, particularly with vulnerable individuals.
8. Use our influence to assist others to make equality a reality for all and to rid of prejudice, discrimination and disadvantage.
9. Consult with people from all the diverse communities involved with PAA\VO-SET to help shape the qualifications we deliver and our policies and practices.
10. Consider the needs of all Stakeholders in the methods we use for communicating with Learners, Colleges, Employers Centres, Training Providers, External Verifiers, other Development teams and our Staff.

### Corporate Responsibility

The ultimate responsibility for this policy rests with the Chief Executive, who will ensure compliance and that there are systems in place to put this policy into practice on a day-to-day basis then review the outcomes as part of the Management Review Process.

PAA\VO-SET requires that no learner is subjected to unfair discrimination on any grounds in relation to access to assessment and fairness of the assessment process. This policy will complement PAA\VO-SET's policies for:

- Children and Vulnerable Adults
- Data Protection
- Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations
- Malpractice

This policy will be available in the Centre Portfolio, Learner Guide, Guide for Centres - Achieving QCF Centre Recognition, Centre Qualification Handbook; on the PAA\VO-SET Website and will be made available to all interested parties on request.

Specifically in ensuring Equality and Diversity PAA\VO-SET will encourage all the organisations we work with to operate similar policies and practices on equality and diversity.

PAA\VO-SET will provide all information and assessment materials in plain English.

From time to time, Approved Policies will be supplemented with codes of practice or guidelines on behaviour and these will be disseminated as appropriate.

## Qualifications

PAA\VO-SET will ensure that its qualifications are appropriate for learners of all abilities as far as possible so that it does not knowingly discriminate on grounds of race, disability or gender. This will be achieved by consulting with learners and user groups through its Centre Network to access Learners, Employers, Assessment Specialists and External Verifiers during the development process and this is embedded throughout its procedures to support this.

PAA\VO-SET will work in partnership with other Sector Representatives such as Sector Skills Councils through research projects and forums to ensure that its qualifications meet the needs of and provide access to learners without unnecessary barriers; should any occur PAA\VO-SET will identify these to learners.

## Assessment

Development of assessment methodologies will take account of learners' requirements so that the design provides fair access to all learner groups via consultation with learners and user groups; this will be done through PAA\VO-SET's Centre Network to access Learners, Employers, Assessment Specialists and External Verifiers. PAA\VO-SET will continue to review advancements in technology to assist in evolving development of its assessment practices.

PAA\VO-SET will also provide opportunities to learners via Special Consideration and Reasonable Adjustment guidance which is agreed prior to the assessment process.

## Monitoring

PAA\VO-SET will monitor and evaluate this Policy and compliance with equalities legislation and regulatory criteria. This will be achieved by collecting data via:

- External Verification Visit Reports
- The use of Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations by Centres
- Statistical analysis of achievement rates via race, disability and gender
- Relevant data from related organisations (SSCs, Colleges of FE etc.)

This data will be evaluated at the Management Review Meetings and be included in the Self Assessment Process to ensure that PAA\VO-SET continually improves its qualification provision and fair access to learners. We will produce an Equality and Diversity Action Plan to show how we will be implementing this policy and carrying out the work necessary to reach each level of the Equality Standard. The Equality and Diversity Action Plan will be updated each year as part of our Self Assessment to reflect changes in the actions planned.

The Chief Executive will lead an 'Action on Diversity Group' which will be responsible for developing and delivering this policy and the equality and diversity objectives on an ongoing basis. The Action on Diversity Group will meet quarterly, and comprises of:-

*The Chief Executive, Company Secretary, Administration Manager and an External Verifier*

## Complaints

Any complaint will be taken seriously and dealt with in a timely and sensitive manner, in accordance with the appropriate appeal's procedure.

## SECTION 1 - THE QUALIFICATIONS AND CREDIT FRAMEWORK (QCF)

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The QCF is a framework for recognising and accrediting qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, and is designed to make the vocational qualification system more flexible and relevant to meet the needs of employers and learners. Through the QCF, credit is awarded to learners through a unit-based approach (see Credit and Level below).

### Credit and Level

The QCF recognises achievement through the award of credit for units and qualifications, and provides a flexible route to full qualifications, allowing learners to achieve by small steps. Each unit has a Level, Credit Value and Guided Learning Hours (GLH) and in some cases, units are presented individually as knowledge units and competence units.

- The Level reflects the complexity of the unit and the learner's autonomy and responsibilities in demonstrating competence and/or understanding. The level structure starts at entry level and goes through to level 8.
- The Credit Value shows the number of credits a learner achieves through successful completion of a unit; one credit is equal to 10 hours of total learning and assessment. Credits can be transferred between qualifications - but there are rules that apply, called rules of combination, which outline the number of credits required and units appropriate to specific qualifications.
- Guided Learning Hours (GLH) represent the time the learner is given specific guidance or tuition towards a Learning Outcome (see below).

All units contain 'Learning Outcomes' and 'Assessment Criteria':

- Learning Outcomes set out what a learner is expected to know, understand or be able to do as a result of a process of learning.
- The Assessment Criteria specifies the standard a learner is expected to meet to demonstrate that a learning outcome or set of learning outcomes has been achieved.

These Learning Outcomes and Assessment Criteria are likely to relate to National Occupational Standards, developed by occupational experts working for standard setting organisations, and describe what a person needs to do, know and understand in a job to carry out the role in a consistent and competent way.

### Awards, Certificates and Diplomas

The size of a full qualification is shown by the title given to it - Award, Certificate or Diploma. This is determined by the credit value of the full qualification as follows:

*Award* = 1 - 12 credits

*Certificate* = 13 - 36 credits

*Diploma* = 37 credits +

In the new framework, Awards, Certificates and Diplomas can be taken at all Levels as they represent the size of the qualification, not how difficult it is (see following page).



Taken from QCDA website

### Unique Learner Number (ULN)

Learners require a unique learner number and a learner record (see below). The unique number is used to identify an individual learner and this number remains forever with learners so that in the future all learning experiences, exam results and qualifications can be linked together. A ULN can be obtained via the Learner Registration Service (LRS) by either the Learner or by a UKPRN Centre on behalf of a learner.

### Learner Record

Learners will have access to an online learner record using their ULN - this record will capture all unit and qualification achievements in one place. Credit awards will be recorded by PAAVQ-SET in the learner record and, where learner consent is given, PAAVQ-SET can view previous achievements in the learner record to ensure that opportunities for credit transfer and exemption are maximised. At any time, learners will be able to log on to a website to view their own record of achievement.

### Transfer of Credit

Where qualification rules of combination allow, learners will be able to build credit and transfer the credit they have been awarded for unit achievement between awarding organisations and across qualifications. This supports a step by step approach to learning and achievement, and allows learners to build up their units incrementally towards one or more qualification.

### Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

Recognition of Prior Learning is the process of documenting, assessing, validating and certificating learning gained outside the formal education and training system. Through RPL non-formal or informal learning counts in the same way as that which has been achieved via a formal route, and allows learners to claim credit for achievements that have not previously been certificated.

The QCF defines RPL as: 'A method of assessment [leading to the award of credit] that considers whether a learner can demonstrate that they can meet the assessment requirements for a unit through knowledge, understanding or skills they already possess and do not need to develop through a course of learning'.

For individuals with learning or achievements that have not been certificated, it will be possible to assess and validate these through an RPL process. The process will help to recognise the achievements of an individual by comparing their knowledge, skills and competencies to the requirement of a standard (a QCF unit of assessment). Learners must accompany any evidence of experience with reliable and valid evidence of the learning that they achieved. It will be possible for learners to be awarded credit when they have successfully demonstrated that they meet the learning outcomes and assessment criteria of a QCF unit.

Further information regarding RPL is outlined in the following document: Claiming credit - Guidance on the recognition of prior learning within the Qualifications and Credit Framework (2008).

### Exemptions

In some circumstances exemptions for units may be granted based on the existing achievements of learners.

The QCF defines exemptions as: 'The facility for a learner to claim exemption from some of the achievement requirements of a QCF qualification, using evidence of certificated, non-QCF achievement deemed to be of equivalent value.'

Exemptions are certificated achievement of qualifications which are outside of the QCF, which can be used to exempt learners from specified units. Equivalent QCF units may also be identified as appropriate. In both cases the Awarding Organisation determines suitable exemptions.

If an exemption is claimed the learner will not be required to provide further evidence for the unit, but it should be noted that the credit value relating to the unit will not be awarded.

## SECTION 2 - BECOMING A PAA\VO-SET QCF CENTRE

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It is a requirement of the Regulatory Authorities that all Centres are recognised against the Regulatory Arrangements for the Qualifications and Credit Framework.

This is a standardised process which is ISO 9001.2008 approved, where information is required to be supplied by the Centre on the Centre Recognition QCF and Qualification Approval QCF forms and this is confirmed by a Centre Approval Visit made by PAA\VO-SET's External Verifier.

The following tables show what is required by a Centre, and some examples of evidence that may be available within Centres to demonstrate they meet the criteria. It is not necessary to send the supporting information to PAA\VO-SET with the application form, as this information will be viewed and discussed at the visit by the External Verifier.

### QCF Centre Recognition

QCF Centre Recognition and Qualification Approval is a formal process, which enables PAA\VO-SET to assess whether a Centre is able to deliver the QCF units and qualifications. Once QCF Centre Recognition is achieved, on-going maintenance and improvement is monitored via External Verification Visits. Below are the requirements to achieve QCF Centre Recognition:

### PAA\VO-SET QCF Centre Requirements - Policies and Procedures

To operate as a QCF Centre the following policies and procedures will be required:

- Health and Safety Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Access to Fair Assessment Statement
- Data Protection Policy
- Child Protection/Protection for Vulnerable Adults
- Employer and Public Liability Insurance Certificate
- Disability Discrimination Policy
- Learners' Disputes/Appeals and Complaints Procedure

To support these policies and procedures PAA\VO-SET will also require that Centres meet the following (see next page):

Centre requirements relating to learners:

The Centre:	Evidence may include:
will have a single named point of accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An individual who is responsible for the quality assurance and management for the assessment of units and qualifications</li> </ul>
will take all necessary steps to ensure that work submitted is the learner’s own and authentically completed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual unit assessment plans for competence-based units</li> <li>• Assessment and verification records</li> <li>• Declaration record by learner and assessor</li> </ul>
will have documented procedures for handling learners disputes and appeals against the centre’s internal assessment decisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appeals procedure</li> <li>• Records of appeals made and the outcome</li> </ul>
will ensure that valid and reliable assessments of learners’ achievements are conducted and that details of these are made available to PAA\VO-SET	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual unit assessment plans</li> <li>• Individual unit assessment and verification records</li> </ul>
will provide the public, learners and staff with centre policies and complaints procedure if requested	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Induction materials</li> <li>• Staff and learner handbooks</li> <li>• Documented quality procedures</li> </ul>
will ensure that learners are working towards qualifications that are approved for their age group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initial assessment procedures</li> <li>• Individual assessment plans</li> <li>• Unit/qualification’s assessment strategy</li> </ul>

Centre requirements relating to its obligations to PAA\VO-SET:

The Centre:	Evidence may include:
will be aware that the information supplied to PAA\VO-SET could be required by the Regulatory Authorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Documented quality procedures</li> <li>• Record keeping policy</li> </ul>
will ensure that internally assessed work is submitted to agreed deadlines as specified by PAA\VO-SET	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessment and verification strategy</li> <li>• Documented quality procedures</li> </ul>
will report immediately to PAA\VO-SET any suspected malpractice in line with the statutory regulation and respond speedily and openly to all requests for an investigation into an incident. A nominated representative of the centre will personally supervise all investigations resulting from an allegation of suspected malpractice / maladministration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Documented procedure for dealing with malpractice</li> </ul>
will agree to provide the Regulatory Authorities and PAA\VO-SET with access to premises, staff / contracted staff and records, and to cooperate with PAA\VO-SET’s monitoring activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data and information management systems</li> <li>• Learner tracking systems</li> <li>• Assessment and verification records</li> </ul>
will ensure that all centre policies are up to date and reflect any legal changes which have been implemented or changes to the centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Documented quality procedures</li> <li>• Notification process for changes to the assessment or examination team or resources</li> </ul>
complies with all relevant legal, regulatory criteria and codes of practice as directed by	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Documented quality procedures</li> </ul>

PAA\VO-SET	
agrees to abide by all stipulations by PAA\VO-SET concerning the use of its logos	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Documented quality procedures</li> </ul>
has arrangements in place to obtain on behalf of its learners a unique learner number (ULN) and a learner record	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UK Provider Reference Number</li> <li>• Documented quality procedures to support this activity</li> <li>• Administrative systems in place to track the progress of learners towards their target awards</li> </ul>
uses access to the record of the learner's previous achievements in their learner record to ensure that opportunities for credit transfer and exemption are maximised	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Documented quality procedures to support the activities</li> <li>• Data and information management systems</li> <li>• Learner tracking system</li> <li>• Assessment and verification records</li> </ul>

Centre requirements relating to staff and resources:

The Centre:	Evidence may include
will ensure the security and confidentiality of assessment materials and records, including examination question papers, examination scripts, records of marking, portfolios of evidence, before, during and after the assessment has taken place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Documented quality procedures</li> <li>• Record keeping policy</li> <li>• Examination procedure</li> <li>• Assessment and verification records</li> </ul>
has a documented quality management system in place that is systematically reviewed to ensure that learners and staff needs are addressed, that all appropriate persons are kept up to date with the quality policy, procedures and standards, and that responsibilities for the management of these systems are clearly and appropriately allocated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Documented quality procedures</li> <li>• Records of meetings/briefings/updates</li> <li>• Training records</li> </ul>
has the staff, resources and systems necessary to support the assessment of units and the award, accumulation and transfer for credits and, where necessary, the recording of exemptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff CVs and copies of relevant certificates</li> <li>• Individual development plans and training records</li> <li>• Organisation charts</li> <li>• Records of resources</li> </ul>
has effective communications systems in place both internally and with PAA\VO-SET, clients and learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Induction records and handbooks</li> <li>• Assessment and verification records</li> <li>• Learner progress reviews</li> <li>• Records of meetings/briefings/updates</li> </ul>
will provide all new staff with an induction to the centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff induction and guidance materials or handbooks</li> <li>• Records of meetings/briefings/updates</li> <li>• Records of individual development plans and training records</li> </ul>
has an appropriate and effective system for the management of all sub-contracted services and that all policies and requirements referred to in this application will apply to all satellite sites affiliated to the centre, for example remote assessment sites or delivery points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Documented and signed agreements indicating the lines of accountability of partner organisations in relation to the management of assessment and verification</li> </ul>

Please see further information for Centres intending to offer PAAVQ-SET's:

*Competence-based Qualifications*

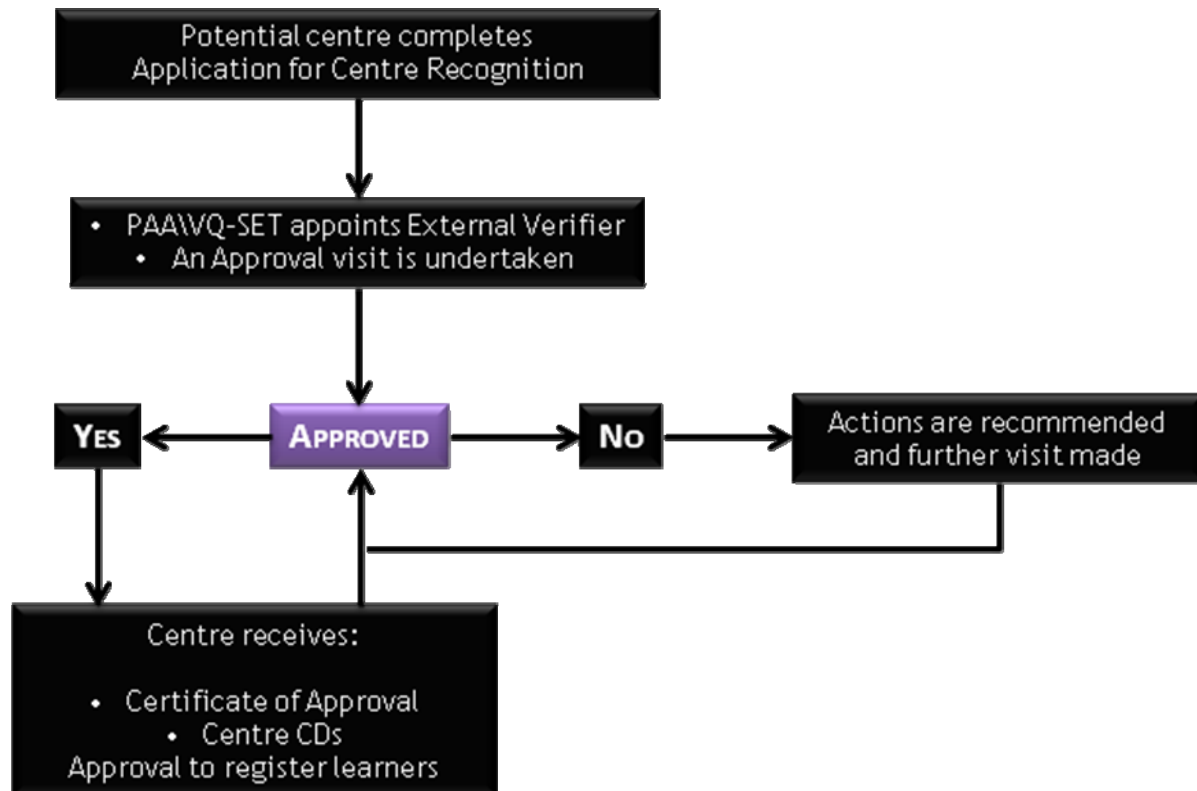
*Appendix 1*

*Knowledge-based (externally examined) Qualifications*

*Appendix 2*

## SECTION 3 - ACHIEVING QCF RECOGNITION CENTRE STATUS

The flowchart below illustrates the process of QCF Centre Recognition. When completing the Application for QCF Centre Recognition, reference to the charts listing possible sources of evidence in Section 2 will help you to identify your evidence. This evidence should be available for the External Verifier to view when they carry out the Approval Visit.



### Centre Recognition

Once Centre Recognition has been achieved, the Centre is sent the following:

- Certificate of Approval stating:
  - the qualifications that can be offered
  - the period of Approval
- Confirmation Letter
- Qualification Centre CD(s) containing all required qualification information
- Centre Portfolio CD containing information on PAAVQ-SET's procedures, contact names and numbers to be used by the centre as a point of reference.
- Copy of Approval Visit Report by External Verifier.

The Centre is then able to register learners.

## Support, Guidance and Advice Provided by PAA\VO-SET

### *External Verifiers*

PAA\VO-SET External Verifiers act as a liaison between Centres and PAA\VO-SET, the Awarding Body.

External Verifiers will offer guidance and support to Centres via the following visit structures:

- Centre Approval visits
- Verification visits, usually:
  - 2 interventions (including a minimum of one visit) per year for active centres delivering competence-based qualifications OR
  - 1 per year for centres delivering knowledge-based (externally examined) qualifications depending on the centre's activity.
- Advisory visits - as requested by Centre

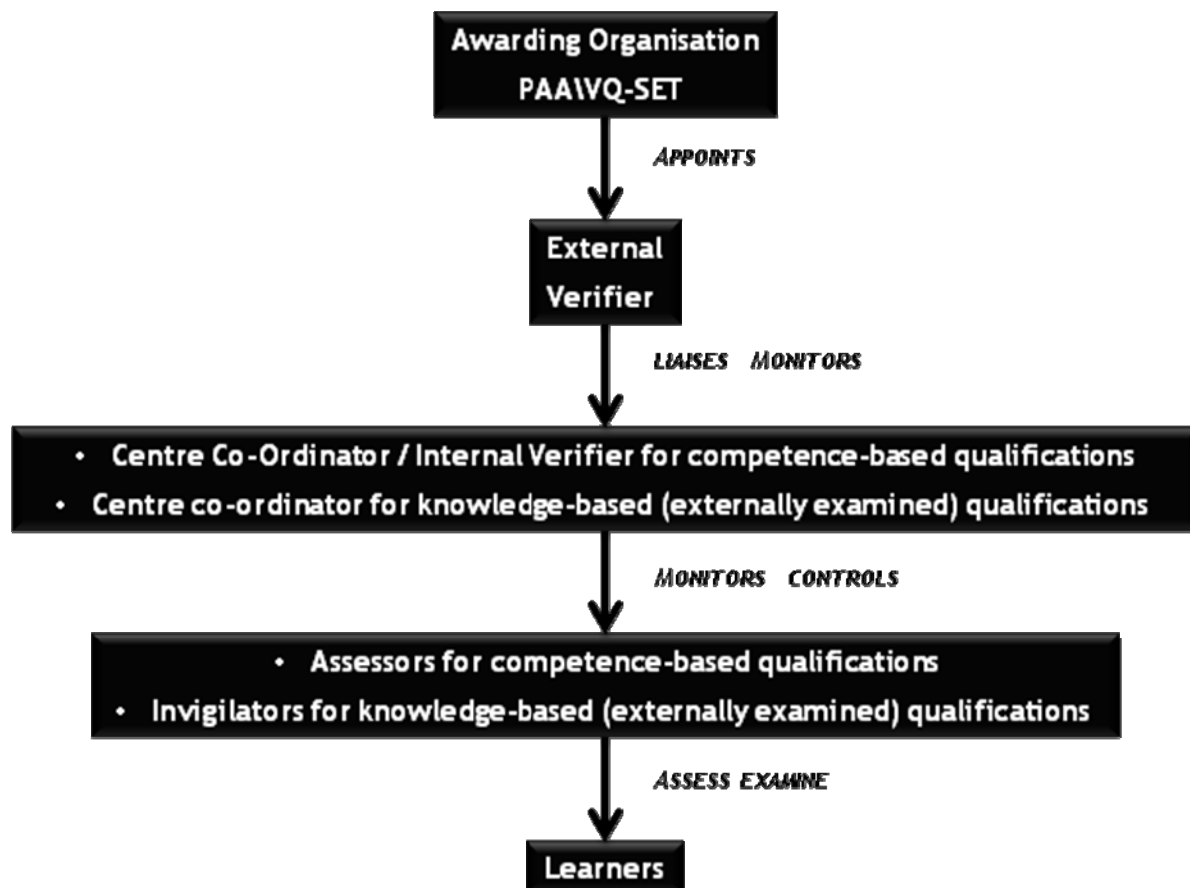
### *Further Information*

If you require any further information or have any queries regarding the implementation of qualifications within organisations, please contact PAA\VO-SET.

## SECTION 4 - QUALITY ASSURANCE

It is PAAVQ-SET's objective to maintain the national quality of its awards through a network of External Verifiers. The External Verifiers will monitor quality by approving Centres and maintain quality via verification visits to the Approved Centre. Reports from these visits will be completed by the External Verifier and returned to PAAVQ-SET for monitoring.

The Quality Assurance structure referred to above is illustrated below



Roles and responsibilities, internal verification and general assessment guidance, relating to Competence-based Qualifications, is covered in Appendix 1.

For more detailed information regarding roles and responsibilities relating to Knowledge-based (Externally Examined) Qualifications, please refer to Appendix 2.

## SECTION 5 - FEE STRUCTURE

(United Kingdom only)

	Fees as at November 2010
Initial Advisory Visit	£300.00 + travel expenses
QCF Centre Recognition (includes visit by the External Verifier and all appropriate assessment materials)	£570.00
QCF Centre Upgrade (if an EV Visit is NOT required), Includes all appropriate assessment materials	£160.00
External Verification	£395.00 per visit
Portfolio Review	£160.00
Consultancy/Advisory Visit	£300.00 + travel expenses
Learner Registration and Certification/Award of Credit: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Certificates and Diplomas</li> <li>• Awards</li> <li>• Knowledge-based - external examination</li> </ul>	£110.00 per learner * £60.00 per learner * Contact Head Office
Unit/Award of Credit Certification	£25.00
Re-registration for an existing learner on Certificate / Diploma (includes Registration and Certification)	£90.00
Replacement Certificate	£30.00
Replacement Centre CD	£20.00

Note: All fees subject to VAT - unless VAT Exemption Certificate provided

\* Notes on registration:

- Registration is not complete until the registration fee has been received in full by PAAVQ-SET.
- Registration fee includes one certificate for the qualification the learner has been registered for.

## SECTION 6 - APPEALS PROCEDURE

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If a Centre is not satisfied with the outcome of the Centre Approval visit and the External Verifier's decision, it has the right to appeal directly to the Chief Executive of PAA\VO-SET.

The appeal must be in writing, stating clearly the points of dissatisfaction and supporting reasons. The appeal will be considered by PAA\VO-SET's Appeals Committee and their decision will be final.

## SECTION 7 - CONTACT INFORMATION

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### PAAVQ-SET

**Ann J Randall**  
Chief Executive

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The PAAVQ-SET website contains details on all awards offered plus other useful information such as:

<b>Qualifications</b>	QCF Qualifications offered, QCF Units, Expiry Dates.
<b>Centres</b>	Information on how to Update Centre Details or Upgrade to offer new QCF Qualifications. Quality Assurance Information.
<b>News and Events</b>	Latest QCF Qualification News, E-Bulletins and Newsletters. Information on PAAVQ-SET Events.
<b>Useful Links</b>	Provides links to other useful websites including Sector Skills Councils and Regulatory Authorities.
<b>Search Options</b>	To find new Qualifications or an Approved Centre.

## SECTION 8 - GLOSSARY

Term	Definition
Access Arrangements	Arrangements that are approved in advance of an examination or assessment to allow achievement to be demonstrated by learners with a disability, special learning needs (including where the learner's first language is not English, Welsh or Irish) or to avoid unlawful discrimination
Accreditation	The process through which the qualifications regulators confirm that a qualification conforms to the requirements of the QCF regulatory arrangements
Appeal	The process through which an awarding organisation may be challenged on the outcome of an enquiry about results or, where appropriate, other procedural decisions affecting a centre or an individual learner
Assessment	The process of making judgements about the extent to which a learner's work meets the assessment criteria of a unit, or any additional assessment requirements of a qualification
Assessment Criteria	Descriptions of the requirements a learner is expected to meet to demonstrate that a learning outcome has been achieved
Assessor	A person who assesses a learner's work
Award of Credits or Qualifications	A certificate (electronic or paper-based) issued to an individual that recognises their achievement
Award	A qualification with a credit value between 1 and 12
Awarding Organisation	A body recognised by the qualifications regulators against the requirements set out in the regulatory arrangements to award credits and qualifications
Centre	An organisation accountable to an awarding organisation for assessment arrangements leading to the award of credit or qualifications
Centre Recognition	A process through which a centre wishing to offer an award or awards is confirmed as being able to maintain the required quality and consistency of assessment, and comply with other requirements of the awarding organisation
Certificate (1) for a Unit or Qualification	A record of attainment of credit or a qualification issued by an awarding organisation
Certificate (2)	A qualification with a credit value between 13 and 36
Credit	An award made to a learner in recognition of the achievement of the designated learning outcomes of a unit
Credit Accumulation	The process of putting together a combination of credits to meet the achievement requirements of a qualification

Term	Definition
Credit Transfer	The process of using a credit or credits awarded in the context of one qualification towards the achievement requirements of another qualification
Credit Value	The number of credits that may be awarded to a learner for the successful achievement of the learning outcomes of a unit
Diploma	A qualification with a credit value of 37 or above
Exemption	The facility for a learner to claim exemption from some of the achievement requirements of a QCF qualification, using evidence of certificated, non-QCF achievement deemed to be of equivalent value
Guided Learning Hours	The number of hours of teacher-supervised or directed study time required to teach a qualification or unit of a qualification
Learner Record	An authoritative record of all credit and qualification achievements made by an individual learner in the QCF
Learning Outcome	A statement of what a learner can be expected to know, understand or do as a result of a process of learning
Learning Time	The amount of time a learner at the level of the unit is expected to take, on average, to complete the learning outcomes of the unit to the standard determined by the assessment criteria
Level	An indication of the relative demand, complexity and/or depth of achievement, and/or the autonomy of the learner in demonstrating that achievement
Mandatory Units	Units in a set of rules of combination that must be achieved for the qualification to be awarded
National Occupational Standards (NOS)	Describe what a person needs to do, know and understand in a job to carry out the role in a consistent and competent way
Optional Unit	A unit named in a set of rules of combination that a learner may choose to complete to achieve the required number of units/credits for award of the qualification
Pathway	A route to the achievement of a qualification that requires a combination of credits to be achieved from particular units and is identified by an endorsement to a qualification title
Qualification	An award made to a learner for the achievement of the specified combination of credits, or credits and exemptions, required for that award
Qualification Level	An indication of the relative demand, complexity and/or depth of achievement, and/or the autonomy of the learner, represented by a qualification
Qualifications Regulators	Government-designated statutory organisations required to establish national standards for credits and qualifications and secure consistent compliance with them

Term	Definition
Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)	A method of assessment that considers whether a learner can demonstrate that they can meet the assessment requirements for a unit through knowledge, understanding or skills they already possess and do not need to develop through a course of learning
Sector Skills Council	A body responsible for formulating and reviewing occupational standards for a specific sector across the UK, and for supporting the development of units and qualifications based on these standards. Each SSC is an employer-led, independent organisation and is licensed by government
Standardisation Of Assessment	A process to ensure that assessment leading to the award of credits and qualifications is applied consistently by individuals, centres and awarding organisations
Unique Learner Number (ULN)	The unique number that is used to identify an individual learner
Unit	A coherent and explicit set of learning outcomes and assessment criteria, with a title, credit value and level

## APPENDIX 1 COMPETENCE – BASED QUALIFICATIONS

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### ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

#### PAA\VO-SET

PAA\VO-SET is quality assured by the Office of the Qualifications and Examinations Regulator (Ofqual) and carry out regular audits to ensure that:

- Centres meet the QCF Recognition Criteria before being allowed to implement the qualification(s).
- Appeals procedures are in place to support Centres and learners who feel they are unfairly treated.
- External Verifiers are in place to monitor QCF Recognised Centres and the quality of assessments.
- There are audits of QCF Recognised Centres' procedures by the External Verifier.
- All Assessors and Internal Verifiers are trained to achieve the relevant Assessor and Internal Verifier national standards and there are procedures for internal verification and assessment in place.

#### The Role of the External Verifier

External Verifiers are appointed by and accountable to PAA\VO-SET and do not work in the same organisation as the learner. External Verifiers will:

- Sample learners' assessment evidence.
- Monitor internal assessment and verification procedures to ensure that:
  - Assessments are occurring and are meeting the requirements of the assessment criteria.
  - Assessors meet regularly to discuss the assessment criteria and agree on a consensus of assessment practice.
  - There is evidence of internal verification taking place on a regular basis.
  - There are records available for all learners, Assessors and Internal Verifiers.
- Observe assessments wherever possible.

External Verifiers will also assess that Centres are suitable and can meet the above requirements before assessment of learners is undertaken. External Verifiers will accredit Centres as PAA\VO-SET "Recognised Centres".

All PAA\VO-SET External Verifiers will be qualified to the V2 or D35 Award and have occupational experience as outlined in the assessment strategies for the specific qualification(s) used by the Centres.

### QCF Recognised Centre Responsibilities

PAA\VO-SET recognises Centres to enable them to offer their facilities for learners to obtain its qualification(s).

It is the responsibility of the Centre:

- to identify and appoint:
  - Centre Co-ordinator
  - Internal Verifier(s)
  - Assessor(s)
- to register learners with PAA\VO-SET, obtain a ULN and inform them of their registration status
- to arrange for assessment of learners
- to issue learners with information and documents required for their qualification
- to provide workplace opportunities or simulation experiences for assessment purposes
- to monitor assessments to ensure validity, integrity, consistency and reliability
- to liaise with the PAA\VO-SET External Verifier for verification visits, and provide access to premises, people and records relating to assessment and internal verification
- to advise PAA\VO-SET of achievement of units or full awards for certification
- to notify PAA\VO-SET and the External Verifier of any significant changes in staff, programme content and delivery methods which affect the qualification(s) that the Centre has been approved to offer.

### Single point of Accountability

Each Centre must ensure that it has a single point of Accountability; this is the Accountable person responsible for the quality assurance and management of the assessment of units and qualifications at the QCF Recognised Centre.

## GENERAL ASSESSMENT GUIDANCE

The delivery and achievement of qualification(s) requires assessment and verification systems that meet the assessment criteria, and requirements of the assessment strategy and the Awarding Body. These systems must give maximum opportunities to allow learners access to achieve their qualification.

This section sets out the general principles and good practice of the assessment of qualifications and the various methods available to ensure the competence of an individual meets the requirements of PAA\VO-SET. The guidance will look at four areas within assessment, these are:

1. The Assessor's Role
2. Assessment Methods
3. Assessment Materials
4. The Assessment Process

### 1. The Assessor's Role

#### *Selection of Assessors*

The Assessor is at the front-line of the quality assurance process within a scheme at an Approved Centre. It is the Assessor who will decide:

- Whether the learner is competent
- Whether the learner has met the requirements of the assessment criteria.

It is critical that the selection of those to become Assessors meets the criteria of PAA\VO-SET and the assessment strategy, given below:

#### *Assessors should:*

- *Either hold the qualifications needed to carry out assessment - D32, D33, A1 or A2 - or within 18 months of commencing their role achieve A1 or A2.*
- *Carry out assessment to the A1/A2 standards as appropriate.*
- *Have the occupational expertise specified in the relevant assessment strategy before commencing their role and maintain the currency of this expertise for the duration of their role.*
- *Know the awarding body requirements for recording assessment decisions and maintaining assessment records.*

PAA\VO-SET requires the above as a minimum to be recognised as an Assessor within its approved centres. In addition, PAA\VO-SET also requires that Assessors working at levels 1 and 2 must have D32 or A2 as a minimum, Assessors working at level 3 and above must have D32 and D33 or A1.

#### *Induction of Assessors*

All Assessors should be thoroughly inducted into the scheme they are assessing; to understand how the assessment criteria should be assessed e.g. observation requirements, how and when simulation may be used and other areas of interpretation and usage. This briefing can be undertaken by the Centre, the Standard Setting Body or by PAA\VO-SET.

#### *Training and Development of Assessors*

All Assessors who do not hold D32 and/or D33 or A1 or A2 must have a clear action plan of achievement within 18 months of commencing their role as required by PAA\VO-SET. PAA\VO-SET also recommends that Assessors should attend some form of training to introduce trainee Assessors to the background and philosophy of qualifications and the skills required to become an Assessor (details of such courses and further guidance can be obtained from PAA\VO-SET).

## *Countersigning*

Assessment decisions of unqualified assessors must be checked, authenticated and countersigned by a qualified Assessor or IV with appropriate occupational competence in line with the requirements of PAA\VO-SET.

## **2. Assessment Methods**

When assessing an individual's competence there are a variety of methods available to an Assessor to give the widest opportunity of gaining achievement, these are:

- Observation
- Questioning - written and verbal
- Products - records, a product, documents, etc.
- Witness reports, testimonies, etc
- Simulation
- Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)
- Professional Discussion
- Learner Statements
- Photographs and use of other media

### *Observation of Performance*

Observation allows the Assessor to see learners carrying out their work activities. It will take place primarily in the workplace but can also be undertaken in a training scheme. Natural discussion should take place where possible during observation, allowing the Assessor to ask questions relating to what they are observing at the time. Assessors must capture their observations either by a written report and/or other methods (e.g. video, audio recording).

### *Questioning*

This method of assessment can be used to ensure that the learner has knowledge and understanding to support their skills. Questions can be used to check knowledge - these questions can either be verbal during or at the end of an observation, or they can be set in a written format in formal or informal conditions. As some QCF units focus entirely on learners' knowledge, assessors may encourage a variety of evidence to meet the assessment criteria - use of verbal and/or written questions, learner statements and professional discussion (see below). Verbal questioning or professional discussion should be captured, either by written notes or audio recording.

### *Products*

Work product evidence may be generated as a result of work activities undertaken by learners, and could include reports, letters, or records of work carried out.

### *Witness Statement or Testimony*

A Witness Statement or Testimony is confirmation by others that the learner carried out an activity or series of activities relevant to the assessment criteria. It could be written by the learner and signed by the witness to confirm that it did take place, or the witness may write the statement. Alternatively, the assessor could speak to the witness and record the discussion. The statement can then be used as evidence within an assessment.

There may be occasions when an Expert Witness may be required to contribute to the assessment process. PAA\VO-SET's definition of an Expert Witness is 'an experienced employee who works in partnership with the Assessor, by observing the learner carrying out their duties and recording their observations in line with the assessment procedures'. It should be noted that while the Expert Witness makes a valued contribution to the assessment process, it is the Assessor who makes the assessment decision.

### *Simulation*

Simulations are a source of performance evidence showing how an activity is carried out. Simulations require careful planning to ensure that they reflect as near as possible “real life” conditions and the requirements of the qualification(s). As a result of this the costs to set up a simulation may be considerable. Simulations are likely to be used in the following situations:

- They occur infrequently (e.g. dealing with emergencies)
- They involve unusual working conditions (e.g. working in isolation, outside the workplace)
- The work is hazardous
- It is not cost effective

Any use of simulation should be discussed and agreed with the PAAVQ-SET External Verifier using guidance from the assessment strategy for the qualification being assessed.

### *Professional Discussion*

A Professional Discussion gives the learner the opportunity to tell their Assessor what they are doing and why they are doing it in a particular way. The discussion should be supported by appropriate evidence - an observation report, work product or witness testimony. Professional Discussions should be planned to give the learner the chance to prepare, and should be recorded.

### *Learner Statements*

A Learner Statement is an account of an activity that took place, described by the learner. A detailed statement could demonstrate skill, and also provides evidence of knowledge and understanding. Learner statements should be authenticated by an appropriate person.

### *Photographs and use of other media*

Photographs and use of other media, e.g. video and audio, can provide detail of work activities carried out and questioning. Photographs are more effective when used with supporting statements. Video and audio evidence should be effectively referenced to allow specific activities or questioning to be found easily. It is important to note that if photographs and other media are to be used, the learner and Assessor should ensure that permission is gained from all people who may be involved.

## **3. Assessment Materials**

To enable a centre to meet the requirements of PAAVQ-SET and the assessment strategy it is essential that a reliable and rigorous system is developed to record the assessments undertaken and decisions made for units/qualifications on an on-going basis. When an External Verifier makes a verification visit they will want to be able to audit how an assessment decision was made, by whom, when, what methods were used, etc. It is essential that a centre develops assessment material that meets the requirements of A1/A2 and allows this process of audit to be undertaken.

In addition a form of assessment checklist will need to be developed which maps the current working practices of the Centre to the requirements of the unit/qualification and identifies which assessment methods will be used. This will be used by all Assessors within the scheme to ensure consistency of the assessment process.

A Centre may also develop examples of model answers relating to knowledge and understanding to assist in the consistency of assessment.

All assessment material must be reviewed and approved by the External Verifier; this ensures consistency across all centres using the same standards.

All records of assessments carried out must be kept in a secure location so that they may be reviewed if necessary by the External Verifier or other auditing bodies such as Ofqual.

#### 4. Assessment Process

Implementing a qualification will require some planning on how this will take place, in particular, the amount of learners likely to wish to take up the opportunity so that the Internal Verifier/Centre Co-ordinator identifies sufficient Assessors to meet the needs of the individuals who wish to achieve the qualification.

##### *Assessment Timetable*

Consideration needs to be made by the Centre on how the qualification will be introduced to the workforce and a timetable needs to be developed covering the following issues:

- Training and development of the assessment team
- Mapping to local work practices
- Induction to the qualification
- Registration of learners
- Internal verification systems.

##### *Assessment Consistency*

It is the role of the Internal Verifier to ensure that there is consistency within the assessment process. This will require the following to take place:

- Regular meetings of all Assessors with the Internal Verifier
- Observations of assessments by the Internal Verifier
- Sampling of assessment decisions

##### *Record Keeping*

A system must be developed to record and store safely and securely all assessment material generated from the assessment process and internal verification. In addition, a record charting the progress of individuals taking the qualification is required. Further information on record keeping requirements can be found later in this section under the heading Internal Verification - IV process and records.

## INTERNAL VERIFICATION

Any assessment system relies on a rigorous quality assurance system - and internal verification provides that fundamental checking process within a Recognised Centre.

This section will look at three areas within the internal verification process

1. **The Role of the Internal Verifier**
2. **Internal Verification Process and Records**
3. **Supporting and Advising Assessors**

### 1. The Role of the Internal Verifier

An Internal Verifier is responsible for establishing and maintaining the quality of assessment within an Approved Centre. It is the Internal Verifier who will:

- Confirm that all assessments carried out are reliable and valid
- Advise and support Assessors
- Keep records of assessments and internal verification undertaken at the centre.

It is essential that the recruitment of the Internal Verifier meets the criteria of PAAVQ-SET and the assessment strategy as shown below:

#### *Internal Verifiers should*

- *Either hold the qualifications needed to carry out internal verification - D34 or V1 - or within 18 months of commencing their role achieve V1.*
- *Carry out internal verification to the V1 standard.*
- *Have the occupational expertise specified in the relevant assessment strategy before commencing their role and maintain the currency of this expertise for the duration of their role.*
- *Understand the content, structure and assessment requirements for the awards they are verifying.*

PAAVQ-SET requires the above as a minimum to be recognised as an Internal Verifier. In addition, PAAVQ-SET also requires that Internal Verifiers have a working knowledge of the area in which they are acting in this role as well as being able to influence key decision makers. Internal Verifiers who are also Assessors cannot verify their own assessment decisions; other arrangements must be made for internal verification in this case and should be discussed with the PAAVQ-SET External Verifier.

#### *Induction of the Internal Verifier*

Anyone working as an Internal Verifier should be thoroughly inducted into the scheme they are verifying. This is to ensure an understanding of the requirements of the assessment criteria and how learners should be assessed, how and when simulation may be used and other areas of interpretation and usage, as well as the systems and documentation requirements of PAAVQ-SET. This briefing can be undertaken by the Centre, the Standard Setting Body or PAAVQ-SET.

#### *Training and Development of Internal Verifiers*

All Internal Verifiers who do not hold D34 or V1 - Conduct Internal Quality Assurance of the Assessment Process, must have a clear action plan of achievement of V1 within 18 months of commencing their role as an Internal Verifier, as required by PAAVQ-SET. PAAVQ-SET also recommends that Internal Verifiers should attend some form of training to introduce them to the background and philosophy of the qualification and the skills required to become an Internal Verifier (details of such courses and further guidance can be obtained from PAAVQ-SET).

#### *Countersigning*

Decisions of unqualified Internal Verifiers must be checked, authenticated and countersigned by a qualified Internal Verifier with appropriate occupational competence, in line with the requirements of PAAVQ-SET.

## 2. Internal Verification Process and Records

### *Sampling Strategy and Plans*

Internal verification begins when an assessment decision is made; it is ensuring that decision is valid and consistent. Checking every assessment decision may be necessary initially when implementing a qualification but once the assessment process has settled down and decisions are consistent a sampling strategy can be developed and implemented.

A sampling strategy would consider the appropriate amount of internal verification that should be undertaken. PAAVQ-SET recommends that a minimum of 25% is undertaken by established Approved Centres with an experienced assessment and verification team, this strategy should be discussed and agreed with the PAAVQ-SET External Verifier. Once the size of the sample is decided, the next step is the type of sample taken.

This would take into account the following properties:

- The amount and type of learners (including those at different stages of their award)
- All Assessors and their experience
- All units
- All assessment methods
- All assessment locations

The sampling strategy and an example of the framework should be kept for review by the PAAVQ-SET External Verifier in the Centre Portfolio.

### *Verification of Assessment Decisions*

To ensure a consistent approach to internal verification by either one or more Internal Verifiers a plan outlining what is checked should be available, as identified in *D34 or V1 Conduct Internal Quality Assurance of the Assessment Process*. This plan will be used when internally verifying learner portfolios, observed assessments or other assessment material. Examples of internal verification plans can be obtained from your PAAVQ-SET External Verifier.

### *Records held by the Centre*

Every Recognised Centre will have documents and records generated from the assessment process. It is the responsibility of the Internal Verifier to control and co-ordinate that material, this can also be shared with a Centre Co-ordinator in larger centres. The types of internal verification records required can be developed from existing systems, such as training or personnel records so that they are not additional bureaucracy but effective recording mechanisms. In line with the requirements of PAAVQ-SET the following records are to be retained within Centres:

Administration Records:	Learner details including ULN Assessor name IV name Registration details Unit/Award of Credit Certification claims
Assessment Records:	Who assessed what and when Assessment plans Assessment decision Assessment methods used Location of the evidence
IV Records:	Who verified what and when Details of sampling Assessor/IV meetings Assessor/IV competence - CVs Assessor/IV training/CPD records Standardisation meeting minutes

Centre Records:	Health and Safety Policy Equality and Diversity Policy Access to Fair Assessment statement Data Protection Policy Learners' Disputes/Appeals and Complaints Procedure Child Protection/Protection for Vulnerable Adults Policy Organisation chart - Assessors/IVs/Centre Co-ordinator Disability Discrimination Policy Employer and Public Liability Insurance Certificate QCF Centre Recognition Application and Approval Report External Verification Visit Reports
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Records must be kept for a minimum of 3 years and must be made available to regulatory authorities if requested.

Please note that learner evidence may be returned to them after the completed portfolio has been made available to the External Verifier at a visit.

### **3. Supporting and Advising Assessors**

An important role of an Internal Verifier is to support and advise their Assessors, this will be done in the following way:

- Induction to the qualification they will be assessing
- Identifying training and development needs of Assessors
- Providing on-going support and advice
- Organising the allocation of Assessors

#### ***Induction of Assessors***

All Assessors must be fully briefed on the requirements of the qualification they are assessing. This is to ensure that the Assessors have a full understanding of their role and the assessment procedures they are to carry out. It is important that Assessors are aware of the quality assurance arrangements and their responsibilities within them.

#### ***Training and Development of Assessors***

It is a requirement of PAA\VO-SET that all Assessors meet the minimum requirements to assess, that is to be occupationally competent and hold A1 or A2, or D32 and/or D33. The Internal Verifier must ensure that all Assessors that they are responsible for work in line with the A1/A2 standards and have an action plan and opportunities to meet those requirements.

#### ***Providing on-going Support and Advice***

The Internal Verifier as the co-ordinator of the Assessors or assessment team must ensure that they have all the information from PAA\VO-SET about the qualification regarding interpretation and assessment requirements. In addition the Internal Verifier will become the focal point for queries and advice the Assessors may need. The Internal Verifier is also the conduit for communication from the External Verifier. These communications and opportunities to discuss any issues regarding the qualification and assessments should be undertaken at meetings between the Internal Verifier and the Assessors.

#### ***Allocation of Assessors***

The Internal Verifier is responsible for the allocation of Assessors to learners. It is important that this allocation reflects the availability of the Assessors and the needs of the learners. The ratio of Assessors to learners should be notified to the PAA\VO-SET External Verifier and kept in the Centre Portfolio.

#### ***Reasonable Adjustment and Special Consideration***

It is essential that the learner's needs are considered and reasonable adjustments made for learners with particular assessment requirements to enable them to access fair assessment.

It is important that any situation not covered in the assessment guidance accompanying the assessment criteria should be discussed with the External Verifier who will advise on the most appropriate approach. If a centre identifies learners with particular assessment requirements they should contact either their External Verifier or PAA\VO-SET, and guidance will be taken from the PAA\VO-SET Reasonable Adjustment and Special Consideration policy.

### **Further Information**

If you wish to discuss this information further please do not hesitate to contact your External Verifier or PAA\VO-SET.

## APPENDIX 2 - KNOWLEDGE-BASED (EXTERNALLY EXAMINED) QUALIFICATIONS

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### EXAMINATION PROTOCOL

A QCF Recognised Centre for externally examined Units and/or Qualifications must ensure that all examinations are undertaken in consistent, reliable and fair manner for all registered learners; that due consideration has been taken to ensure that there has been fair opportunity for the learning prior to the examination for all learners; and that the results are given in confidential and positive way to aid the development of the learner and the integrity of the scheme.

#### Examinations - General Requirements

The Centre Co-ordinator is the person nominated by the QCF Recognised Centre to take responsibility for the arrangements of examinations which require all of the following:

- Security of the examination papers
- That the examination conditions ensure that the examination paper submitted is authenticated to that of the learner alone using only the assessment materials specified.

The Centre Co-ordinator registers the learners with PAA\VO-SET six weeks before the specified dates of the external examinations provided by PAA\VO-SET. The Centre Co-ordinator will also ensure that:

- Suitable arrangements are made for the secure storage of examination papers prior to the examination
- Arrangements are made for the invigilation of the examination.
- Any reasonable adjustments are applied for and approved by PAA\VO-SET
- Any exemptions are notified and approved prior to the examination

Failure to provide these requirements may result in disqualification or examination void.

**Health and Safety Requirements** - All examinations must adhere to local requirements of the centre; should any infringement of these requirements occur, PAA\VO-SET reserves the right to declare the examination void for all or any of the learners. In addition, this may, after further scrutiny, result in the withdrawal of QCF Centre Recognition status.

**Copyright** - All examination papers are the copyright of PAA\VO-SET and may not be reproduced without the permission of PAA\VO-SET.

**Inspection** - All QCF Recognised Centres who offer PAA\VO-SET's external examinations must be available for inspection at any time by PAA\VO-SET Verifiers or other external auditors.

**Examination papers** - All papers completed by learners are the property of PAA\VO-SET and are not returned to centres. All examination papers are archived and may be used in moderation exercises with learner details removed to ensure anonymity.

**Examinations** - Examinations must be held at QCF Recognised Centres unless notified to PAA\VO-SET and approved in advance.

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

This section reviews the roles and responsibilities of:-

- the External Verifier
- the QCF Recognised Centre

and how the partnership between each ensures the maintenance of the requirements of the PAAVQ-SET Examination Protocol

### The Role of the External Verifier

The External Verifier is appointed by PAAVQ-SET to monitor and control quality assurance and consistency for QCF Unit(s) and/or Qualifications within the QCF Recognised Centre. External Verifiers will also provide support and advice to Centres.

The External Verifier is the link in the quality assurance chain between PAAVQ-SET and QCF Recognised Centres. Although the External Verifier has the two roles, their priority will be in the area of examination practice.

External Verifiers will have:

- competence in external verification, carried out to the V2 standard
- an understanding of the QCF Units and Qualifications
- thorough knowledge of PAAVQ-SET procedures and documentation
- an understanding of how the QCF works

### Verification Visits

It is recommended that a QCF Recognised Centre should receive one verification visit per Approval year. Additional visits will be at the discretion of the External Verifier in conjunction with PAAVQ-SET and the QCF Recognised Centre.

### Prior to the Verification Visit

The External Verifier and Centre Co-ordinator will arrange the visit and agree the following:

- The date, time and length of visit
- The structure of the visit
- The management systems of the QCF Recognised Centre to be inspected
- Which learners the External Verifier would like to speak to
- The opportunity for the QCF Recognised Centre to seek guidance and advice
- Feedback on the performance of the external examination

Also, likely discussions at this point would be any areas that the Centre would welcome some input or feedback and, if relevant, any changes likely or that have occurred within the Centre.

Prior to the visit, the External Verifier will check previous reports of external verification that may have an impact on the structure of the visit, for example, points from the previous action plan.

The prime objective of the visit is to verify the examination procedures at the Centre.

- The External Verifier will review the examination procedures at the Centre.
- The External Verifier will review whether the management systems put in place are providing sufficient quality assurance as required by the QCF Regulatory Arrangements and/or PAAVQ-SET requirements

- Actions raised and agreed at the previous verification visits will be reviewed to ensure these have been carried out.
- Other issues will also need to be considered, e.g. Reasonable Adjustment and Special Consideration arrangements and Equality and Diversity implementation.

At the end of the visit, an action plan will be agreed with the QCF Recognised Centre on points raised during the visit and a visit report will be written. A copy will be sent to the Centre after it has been reviewed by the Administration Team and signed by the Chief Executive of PAA\VO-SET; the original is kept by PAA\VO-SET.

### Advisory visits by the External Verifier

These can be arranged by contacting PAA\VO-SET who will make arrangements convenient to both the Centre and the External Verifier. An extra charge will be made for this service.

### Roles and Responsibilities of the Centre

It is the responsibility of the Centre to appoint personnel of sufficient position to carry out the role of Centre Co-ordinator.

### Centre Co-ordinator

The Centre Co-ordinator is the first point of contact for PAA\VO-SET and the External Verifier within a QCF Recognised Centre. In order for a QCF Recognised Centre to function efficiently it requires an effective Centre Co-ordinator. A Centre Co-ordinator can be based in an HR Department or hold an Administration role, occupational competence is not required only an understanding of the QCF Regulatory Arrangements and the requirements of PAA\VO-SET.

### The Role

- To maintain effective liaison with the External Verifier and PAA\VO-SET
- To process Registration Forms and Certification/Award of Credit Claims as required by PAA\VO-SET's systems and procedures
- To maintain the QCF Recognised Centre's Records as required by PAA\VO-SET
- To ensure all QCF Regulatory Arrangements and PAA\VO-SET's requirements are met

### Responsibilities

- To act as a single point of contact for PAA\VO-SET and the External Verifier
- To arrange and organise External Verification visits
- Ensure actions identified on the External Verification Visit Report are completed within identified target dates
- To notify the External Verifier and PAA\VO-SET of any changes affecting the Centre.
- To register learners for the examination and obtain a ULN
- Arrange secure storage of examination papers
- Arrange examinations, including the venue and invigilators
- If required, apply for Reasonable Adjustment and Special Consideration
- To distribute results information to learners and the learning programme team, and certificates to learners
- Ensure the Centre's records are available and up-to-date with regards to:-
  - Learners Registered
  - Units and Qualifications
  - Learner Progress
  - Certification/Award of Credit claimed
- Maintain PAA\VO-SET's Centre Portfolio:-
  - Copies of Certificates and CV's for Invigilators
  - Centre's Quality Assurance Organisation Chart

- Keep up-to-date copies of Centre's Policies
- Keep EV Visit Reports and Centre Recognition Approval Report and Application.

### **Single point of Accountability**

This is the Accountable Person responsible for the Quality Assurance and Management of the assessment of Units and Qualifications at the QCF Recognised Centre.

### **Further Information**

If you wish to discuss this information further please do not hesitate to contact your External Verifier or PAAVQ-SET.