



Centre Approval Policy

Contents

Introduction.....	3
Regulatory Framework and Obligations	3
Centre Application Requirements.....	3
Staff Requirements.....	3
Staff Requirements – Transferring from other Awarding Bodies	4
Satellite Centres	4
Policies and Procedures	4
Due Diligence and Suitability Checks	4
Premises, Resources and Delivery Capacity	5
Application Process	5
Timelines and Outcomes.....	5
Grounds for Refusal	5
Post-Approval Requirements	5
Contact Us	5

Introduction

This policy sets out the regulatory framework governing the approval of centres seeking to deliver qualifications awarded by Focus Awards. It outlines the evidence required as part of the application process, the due diligence and suitability checks undertaken, and the standards that must be met and maintained both at the point of approval and throughout the centre's operational lifecycle.

Centre approval is a regulatory decision made in accordance with Focus Awards' obligations under Ofqual's General Conditions of Recognition, particularly Conditions C1 (Governance), C2 and C3 (Arrangements with Centres), D1 (Management of Conflicts of Interest), G1 and G4 (Maintaining Standards), H1 and H2 (Malpractice and Maladministration), and E2 (Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration).

Approval is not guaranteed. Applications may be refused where the centre does not demonstrate the required capacity, capability or compliance to deliver regulated qualifications safely, effectively and in line with national standards.

Approval, once granted, remains conditional upon continued compliance with Focus Awards policies, regulatory requirements, and ongoing External Quality Assurance (EQA) monitoring.

This policy applies to all organisations seeking approval to deliver regulated or unregulated qualifications awarded by Focus Awards, including Training Providers, Further Education Colleges, Higher Education

Institutions, private training businesses, subcontracted delivery partners and organisations operating satellite or additional delivery sites.

Regulatory Framework and Obligations

Focus Awards has a statutory responsibility to approve only those centres that can demonstrate the governance, resources, staffing, systems and quality assurance arrangements required to deliver qualifications to the standards expected of a regulated awarding organisation. Focus Awards must refuse or withdraw approval where a centre fails to meet these requirements, or where risks cannot be sufficiently mitigated.

By submitting an application, centres acknowledge that Focus Awards will conduct proportionate and risk-based due diligence and that approval decisions are final, subject only to the published appeals process.

Centre Application Requirements

Applicants must complete the Centre Application Form and submit all required evidence to enable Focus Awards to determine suitability. Centres must provide accurate, complete and verifiable information, including qualification certificates for all key staff, valid identification, CPD records, staff CVs, centre-specific policies and procedures, and any External Quality Assurance (EQA) reports issued within the past twelve months.

Where evidence is incomplete, inconsistent or unclear, the centre will be required to provide additional documentation. Applications may be closed or refused if the centre fails to submit required evidence within specified timescales.

Staff Requirements

Centres must demonstrate access to appropriately qualified, occupationally competent and suitably experienced Tutors, Assessors and Internal Quality Assurers (IQAs). Staff must hold, or be actively working towards, recognised qualifications aligned with national standards.

Tutors are expected to hold a teaching qualification at Level 3 or above (e.g., Level 3–5 Education and Training or CertEd) and must demonstrate current and relevant occupational competence.

Assessors must hold, or be working towards, a recognised assessor qualification. Where individuals hold only the knowledge-based assessor unit, further study is required before independent assessment decisions can be accepted. Trainee assessors must have decisions countersigned.

IQAs must hold, or be working towards, a recognised IQA qualification. Trainee IQAs must have decisions countersigned until competence is demonstrated. All staff must maintain up-to-date CPD and must be actively engaged in delivery; listing staff who are unavailable or unwilling to participate constitutes grounds for refusal. Freelance staff are permitted where they meet all qualification, competency and CPD requirements. Centres must submit full documentation for all freelance staff and must demonstrate that contractual arrangements ensure consistent quality assurance oversight.

Staff Requirements – Transferring from other Awarding Bodies

Where a centre transfers from another awarding organisation, or adds qualifications with Focus Awards, delivery staff who do not fully meet the standard Tutor, Assessor and/or IQA requirements may be considered through a competence review.

Individuals must provide evidence that they:

- Have been identified as an Assessor and/or IQA on an EQA report issued within the last 12 months;
- Maintain a current CPD record relevant to their role; and
- Can demonstrate occupational competence in the subject area they will deliver, assess or quality assure.

Focus Awards will review the evidence and determine whether the individual has the knowledge, skills and experience required to undertake the role.

This arrangement is only available where a centre is transferring provision from another awarding organisation and staff qualification requirements differ from those of Focus Awards.

Individuals are encouraged to work towards the qualifications specified by Focus Awards. However, where competence has been demonstrated through this review process, these qualifications will not be mandatory.

Satellite Centres

Organisations seeking to deliver from satellite or additional sites must submit all required documentation for each location, including full addresses, trading names, staffing details and a signed third-party agreement outlining responsibilities and quality assurance expectations. Approval for satellite delivery is not automatic and may be refused even where the main centre is approved. No delivery or assessment may take place until written confirmation is issued by Focus Awards.

Policies and Procedures

Centres must submit current, centre-specific policies covering equality and diversity, malpractice and maladministration, appeals, complaints, staff induction and CPD, learner registration and certification, learner induction, conflict of interest, internal quality assurance, data protection, safeguarding, plagiarism, whistleblowing, sanctions and third-party arrangements where applicable.

Policies must accurately reflect operational practice. Copying exemplar policies without adapting them to reflect centre-specific processes is not acceptable.

Due Diligence and Suitability Checks

Focus Awards conducts proportionate, risk-based due diligence as part of every application. Checks may include identity verification, Companies House searches, review of online activity and course advertising, financial stability indicators, staffing consistency, safeguarding arrangements, market behaviour, and reputational risk factors. Focus Awards may contact other awarding organisations to verify historical compliance, sanctions or previous concerns.

Where adverse evidence is identified, approval may be delayed, additional conditions may be applied, or the application may be refused.

Premises, Resources and Delivery Capacity

Centres must demonstrate access to suitable premises, facilities, equipment and secure systems that support compliant delivery, assessment and storage of learner evidence. Centres delivering digital or blended learning must evidence secure online platforms, appropriate learner authentication methods and effective systems for managing assessment integrity.

Application Process

Applications must be submitted in full and within the timescales specified. All supporting evidence must accompany the application at the point of submission. Upon receipt, Focus Awards will review the documentation and carry out all necessary checks. Where further evidence is required, the centre must supply this promptly.

Incomplete applications may be closed after two requests for additional information.

Timelines and Outcomes

Where complete evidence is submitted, decisions are normally made within seven to ten working days. Some applications may require an Initial Monitoring Meeting (IMM) or an on-site approval visit; fees will apply in accordance with the Fees and Invoicing Policy. Approval is granted only when all requirements have been met. Approval must not be assumed and does not confer entitlement to deliver all qualifications. Qualification approvals are granted separately and may be subject to additional requirements.

Grounds for Refusal

Focus Awards reserves the right to refuse approval where risks cannot be mitigated or where the centre fails to demonstrate compliance. Non-exhaustive grounds for refusal include unsuitable governance arrangements, adverse outcomes from due diligence checks, inadequate premises or resources, weak assessment or quality assurance arrangements, unqualified staff, unmanaged conflicts of interest, unresolved issues with other awarding organisations, safeguarding or data-protection concerns, misleading marketing practices, unethical recruitment behaviours, unresolved compliance risks or failure to provide requested documentation. Focus Awards will communicate reasons for refusal clearly. Centres may reapply once concerns have been addressed; however, re-applications may not be accepted within a specified period if risks are considered significant.

Post-Approval Requirements

Approval remains conditional upon continued compliance. Centres must undergo an Initial Monitoring Meeting (IMM) within two months of approval and must comply with all ongoing External Quality Assurance (EQA) requirements. Approval may be suspended or withdrawn if a centre fails to comply, fails to engage with monitoring, or poses a risk to learners or qualification integrity.

Contact Us

Enquiries relating to this policy may be submitted to:
Email: info@focusawards.org.uk
Telephone: +44 (0)333 3447 388

Version History

The version history for this policy is maintained within the Focus Awards Policy Document Control List.